

A RURAL GEORGIA TRAGEDY:
KOINONIA FARM IN THE 1950S

by

CHARLES S. O'CONNOR

(Under the Direction of Bryant Simon)

ABSTRACT

Clarence Jordan and Martin England established Koinonia Farm ("coin-Oh-neeah) near Americus, Georgia in November 1942. Eight years later, the deacons of the Rehoboth Baptist Church expelled commune members for practicing interracial fellowship. By 1956, they incurred numerous extralegal reprisals sanctioned by the local town leadership, all of whom were members of the Chamber of Commerce. This thesis answers why the violence ended abruptly after a dynamite attack destroyed a downtown feed store and damaged seven other popular establishments. These men's efforts to hide the lawlessness to secure manufacturing contracts explain their demands for peace.

INDEX WORDS: Koinonia Farm; Clarence Jordan; Martin England; J. Frank Myers; Americus; Sumter County; Southwest Georgia; extralegal violence; 1950s

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INTRODUCTION

Clarence Jordan and Martin England established Koinonia Farm (“coin-Oh-neeah”) near Americus, Georgia in November 1942. Trained as Southern Baptist preachers, they began their “agricultural missionary enterprise” with the intention of helping poor farmers, black and white, break the cycle of credit dependency. Jordan used his University of Georgia degree in agronomy to help impoverished sharecroppers implement more effective cultivation techniques, while applying his knowledge of the Gospel to preach a message of racial equality. In September 1944, the American Baptist Mission Board recalled England to Burma, ending his five-year furlough, which had begun with the outbreak of World War II. Jordan had met him shortly after he completed his doctoral studies in the Greek New Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Despite England’s departure, Jordan began a “demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God” by living out the concept of *koinonia*, a Greek word meaning “fellowship,” or the sharing of resources within a faith-based community.

Koinonians established the farm by initiating outreach programs to meet their neighbors’ spiritual and material needs. Angry over members’ rejection of the color barrier, local whites disapproved of blacks participating in literacy classes, agricultural workshops, vacation bible schools, interracial summer camps, and organized carpools that ensured them access to vocational training. In 1956, the farm became the focus of an extensive boycott accompanied with vitriolic reprisals targeting commune property, and later, white members and their African-American employees. These extralegal attacks

culminated with the bombing of Herbert Birdsey's feed store in downtown Americus after he broke the economic sanctions against Koinonia in May 1957. Close to a year after the first attack on the farm's roadside market, the violence came to an abrupt end. This thesis not only answers why, but it also shows how Koinonia became a state issue involving Georgia's newspapers, ministerial associations, Klu Klux Klan chapters, and political circles.

Koinonia at mid-century provides an opportunity to examine members' liberalism amidst destabilizing reprisals. The men and women who endured these attacks lived out a commitment to interracialism, didacticism, and pacifism by ministering to the poor, unlearned, and spiritually hungry. Documenting the degree to which county residents misinterpreted and rejected their beliefs and activism shows how these southwest Georgians viewed race, religion, and violence during the commune's formative years. Such an inquiry reveals not only Koinonian courage in the wake of formidable repression, but it also explains why a small, quaint county transformed into a national image of hate.

Scholarship on the subject has treated the 1950s as a transitional period in which Koinonia withstood reprisals to bear witness to the needy, while "adapting to changing circumstances," as Andrew S. Chancey has noted. He argues that members fomented an "indigenous challenge to the supposedly dominant white Protestant evangelicalism," in turn illustrating "the changing social conditions, racial climate, and religious culture in the South since the 1940s." Tracy E. K'Meyer has espoused a similar thesis writing, "Koinonians developed their Christian beliefs into a unique alternate method for solving the race problem." Both descriptions focus on Koinonian action in response to local animus without examining the voices and actions of Sumter redeemers. A look into their

distinct forms of resistance is necessary to conclude the extent to which the farm threatened county mores.¹

Chronicling the relationship between farm members and Sumter Countians also allows for new interpretations on religious and segregationist practices as they relate to the economic changes taking place in Americus throughout the decade. Koinonians had become a maligned fixture of Sumter by 1950, the year the board of deacons at Rehoboth Baptist Church expelled them for bringing a dark-skinned Indian student to a Sunday service. Only recently has the farm's history become of academic interest to scholars seeking to gauge the ubiquity of Jim Crow against the rare strains of Christian liberalism condoning interracialism. These narratives highlight Koinonians' attempts to foster African-American self-sufficiency without considering the violent and economic contexts in which they occurred. When the reprisals failed to force the farm's relocation, the Chamber of Commerce offered to buy Koinonia, a valuable 1,200-acre commune. Indeed, the county leadership's plan had as much to do with attracting new industry to Americus as it did with trying to end members' interracial practices.

This thesis exposes the legal and illegal ways that whites opposed farm members' activist efforts. They condoned the boycott as a lawful response to Koinonian interracialism, but an unknown minority initiated a clandestine operation of terrorist activity against them. These attacks severely undermined the chamber's goal of attracting northern industry, despite their attempts to maintain, before the state and national media, Sumter County's pacific image as the "Garden Spot of Dixie." The board of directors took an active role in ending the reprisals after the Marlette Coach Company from Detroit revoked its contract to relocate to Americus. Jordan described these men's struggle to balance the Christian ideal of brotherhood with the Jim Crow tradition of

black disfranchisement. The truthfulness of Jordan's statement became overwhelmingly apparent as they attempted to preserve the city's peaceful reputation, while vociferously opposing the farm's offensive practices.²

Two categories--indirect and direct violence--help codify the types of reprisals employed against Koinonia. The former refers to any attack targeting farm property, such as the roadside market bombings. This classification also includes the subtle yet psychologically damaging effects the boycott had on Koinonian morale. Direct violence includes the more perilous attacks, like the drive-by shootings, which posed an imminent danger to members' safety. The Birdsey explosion, an indirect strike, is unique because it was the first violent act that extended beyond the rural confines of the farm. The blast damaged seven other business fronts in downtown Americus. No longer was the violence a controllable agent of resistance against Koinonia. Chamber representatives feared the additional destruction of companies owned by the very proprietors who paid commerce dues to attract outside industries. They also feared that manufacturers like Marlette would no longer consider Americus a safe city for relocation. This resulted in the impermissibility of direct attacks against Koinonia. The leadership, however, continued to support the boycott as an indirect method of opposing the farm.

Sumter citizens associated Koinonia Farm with Clarence Jordan. Manifest in his efforts to combat racial and economic injustice, his religious radicalism is perhaps the single most important, although overlooked, cause for the violence against the farm. The preacher's story is a necessary precursor to any analysis of the extralegal attacks of the mid-1950s, because assessing Jordan's early life shows how his childhood, adolescent, and college experiences influenced Koinonia's controversial mission. Examining these life stages is necessary to trace the development of his social and spiritual beliefs, which

led to the farm's establishment in 1942 and the zenith of the violence in 1957. Insight into a man who used his agricultural and theological training to bear witness to the morally and materially bankrupt will provide a framework to analyze his subsequent relationship with local citizens.

The farm's original statement of purpose encapsulated the depth of Jordan's Christian liberalism. "Devoted to the proclamation of living Jesus Christ and his teachings," it declared, "Koinonia Farm hopes to make a contribution to the lives of all those who suffer and are oppressed; who are bound by ignorance and sin; and who are desperately searching for a way in the wilderness." Despite his advocacy of biblical socialism modeled on Jesus's relationship with his disciples, he was aware of the debt dependency inherent in sharecropping throughout southwest Georgia. In 1883, the *Sumter Republican* read, "Education niggers are the meanest people under the sun. . . . The best education you can give a Negro is what can be learned between the plow handles and with a hoe in his hands." Not only did this agricultural system keep blacks in a state of abject poverty, but it also resonated with slavery as an institution of moral debasement. Americus resident Lorene Floyd remembered her mother talking about planters "riding the back[s]" of female croppers despite the agonizing pleas of their husbands. She also recalled the Ku Klux Klan telling her father they would kill him if he did not stop her from attending Koinonia's summer camp. Jordan pursued racial reconciliation by offering African Americans fair employment and the opportunity for fellowship within a faith-based community, but was the farm successful in alleviating the economic hardships facing them? Koinonians struggled to assure blacks of their goodwill throughout the 1940s. Carranza Morgan believed that even a decade later, "A lot of blacks were afraid to come and work at Koinonia." Neighboring families like the

Wilson, the Jacksons, the Edwards, and the Floyds distanced themselves from the farm. Koinonians' relationships with African Americans suffered due to their fears that any association would bring severe retributive action by militant whites.³

Before the Rehoboth Baptist Church incident of 1950, African Americans could have freely associated with Koinonians without worry of reprisals. The number of those who took advantage of the commune's outreach programs is speculative due to incomplete farm records from this early period. Racist whites did initially tolerate members' initiatives; their attitudes changed once Koinonians began to minister to blacks publicly, off farm grounds. As a teenager who joined the farm in 1954, Alma Jackson remembered, "They didn't complain too much because not a lot of people [blacks] were working for them." In 1956, approximately twenty African Americans labored on the farm. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision two years earlier heightened the oppositions' concern that Koinonia was a subversive community of outside agitators determined to undermine local custom. Like the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and the crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas the same year, Koinonia Farm, which represented a similar threat to segregation in southwest Georgia, struggled to withstand an increasing tide of bellicosity.⁴

The first attack against Koinonia took place with the destruction of the farm's roadside market on July 23, 1956. Until this point, members had not publicly professed their principles, ironically for the reason of not wanting to incite controversy. The last episode of violence occurred with the Birdsey bombing nearly a year later. This distinct period of lawlessness makes it necessary to examine how Koinonians' collective theology strained their relationship with county neighbors, who branded them communist race-mixers. The ways in which Georgia's newspapers, ministerial associations, Klu

Klux Klan chapters, and political circles responded to the violence provide comparative perceptions of how these groups viewed Koinonia's presence in Sumter County.

The Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia contains the most extensive collection on Clarence Jordan and Koinonia Farm. The Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University and the Koinonia Partners Archives in Americus also have valuable holdings. This thesis makes use of these collections in addition to other sources such as the *Georgia Agriculturalist*, farm newsletters, Jordan's "Cotton Patch" translations of the Bible, and Census Bureau documents. A significant number of magazines and periodicals covered Koinonia's story during the 1950s. These accounts add a local, regional, and national perspective on the topics of interracialism and desegregation in the post-*Brown* South. No collection, however, is more important than the newly acquired papers of J. Frank Myers, long time president of the Americus and Sumter County Chamber of Commerce. Previously unexamined, his correspondence has made this revisionist history of Koinonia Farm possible.

Koinonia has long been an important part of Sumter County's history, but the violence that defined the 1950s has become a forgotten characteristic of the period. This story indicts those incorrigible leaders who refused to protect farm members because of their racial convictions. It also exposes an insidious plan to hide the violence from potential manufacturers. An alternative analysis as to why the Chamber of Commerce wanted to purchase the commune emerges from the subterfuge. This thesis will trace the interaction between town leaders and farm members among the larger social, political, and economic changes taking place throughout the decade. What results is a *tableaux vivant* of how various acts of racism--the boycott, the multiple shootings and the

bombings, the grand jury hearing, and a state bureau of investigation probing--created a rural Georgia tragedy in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 1

“A Grape-Vine Somewhere”

Clarence Leonard Jordan was born July 29, 1912, the seventh son of a wealthy Southern Baptist family in Talbotton, Talbot County, Georgia (pop. 1,200). His father owned and operated the general store and the local bank. His mother tended to the domestic duties of the household and cared for his three younger and three older siblings. A shy and uncoordinated child, Clarence preferred the solitude of his piano, but he was not so demur as to avoid confrontation. “Clarence would fight with anyone in the family,” recalled his brother Frank, “It didn’t matter if he was going up the line or down the line. That was why we nicknamed him ‘Grump’.” He was not a self-absorbed child as this characterization implies: the precocious Clarence exuded a social awareness that resulted from growing up near the county jail where chain-gang crews worked the road that he took home from school.⁵

Clarence befriended the black convicts and welcomed the piece of cornbread given to him every afternoon by the camp cook. Although listening to them sing brought joy to Clarence’s ears, his eyes could not help but notice the frequency with which Warden MacDonald beat the shackled men. What Clarence witnessed on the side of the road contradicted the message of Christian brotherhood he heard preached every Sunday. His favorite hymn, “Love Lifted Me,” spoke of how Jesus loved all children, “red and yellow, black and white.” This scene of continual injustice--unfolding during Clarence’s formative years--had a profound impact on his developing religious identity.⁶

Sociologist Arthur Raper's seven-year investigation into neighboring Macon County exposed the system of petty crime conviction that kept blacks in a position of legal servitude. Conducted under the auspices of the Georgia Committee on Interracial Cooperation in 1927, his report showed that these felons endured longer sentences due to an inability to pay court fines. Before 1908, the bonding out, or convict-leasing, of blacks was an alternative way that white farm owners' secured wage-free labor. In 1904, Judge Emory Speer exonerated Harry Jamison, a Macon black sentenced to a chain gang without a trial. The ruling set a precedent that would eliminate the state lease system four years later. Because the legislature no longer allowed for the buying of prisoners, most spent their sentences working on chain-gang crews. By 1916, Congress provided funds for the establishment of a Georgia road system allocated in accordance to the state's commitment to highway construction and repair. To ensure maximum government funding, convicts improved an inadequate transportation infrastructure. Conditions in these work camps were harsh, and as Jesse Crawford recounted, "the meaning of the word suffering" escaped all who had not heaved a forty-pound hammer in neck chains and ankle shackles.⁷

Clarence's exposure to these roadside abuses affected his impressionable moral outlook, as did the treatment of prisoners in the Talbotton jail. On a hot August night, a twelve-year old Clarence awoke to the screams of Old Ed, an elderly black prisoner stretched in a pulley-system cranked by MacDonald. "I got mad with God," he would later write, "If He was love and the warden was an example of it, I didn't want anything to do with Him." For years, Clarence witnessed the mistreatment of men like Jesse Crawford and Old Ed, and these shameful events did more than challenge his faith. He concluded that most people were "not stretched by ropes but by hunger [and] by

oppression.” This realization included county farmers unable to break the cycle of debt inherent in sharecropping. Clarence believed that an education in agronomy was the best way to help them implement more efficient and less destructive methods of land cultivation.⁸

The warden’s transgressions had a profound impact on Jordan, who grew up “asking some serious questions about the church.” He remembered that men like Old Ed “seemed more alive, more genuinely human” than worshippers like MacDonald. Jordan frequently cited his childhood exposure to chain-gang abuses, but he also remembered the importance that “debtcropping” had on his decision to seek partnership with poor farmers. Jordan’s decision to attend the University of Georgia resulted from his desire “to help poor people lift the awful burden off their backs,” but he later recalled that “there was little of God in my motives.”⁹

The overt racism of Talbotton whites offended Jordan, but the young student failed to recognize his privilege when he enrolled at the University of Georgia, College of Agriculture in 1929. Thirteen years later, Jordan admitted that his education had resulted from the underpaying of a black porter who worked for his father. “Because Warrant Trice, his wife and eight children were willing to go hungry, I went through college. I owe them a debt, which by the grace of God, I want to pay.” This epiphany resulted from his studies which did more than teach him how to combat soil erosion and boll weevils: his schooling forced him to reflect on the meaning of Christian stewardship. Despite his disgust over the warden’s hypocrisy, Jordan rekindled his faith by believing he could use his education to help struggling farmers.¹⁰

Jordan was one of a hundred and thirty-two incoming students. “Plan now for your life work and begin to prepare yourself for it,” warned the administration. For most,

this meant receiving an agricultural education and returning to their family farm with more efficient methods of harvesting the land. The college had the resources necessary to help students learn the temperament of the soil. In 1929, the school had nine academic buildings, modern equipment worth \$1,000,000, a staff of 152 resident teachers, and a library containing 6,000 books on agronomy. Over the course of his collegiate career, Jordan participated in the State Baptist Student Union, Blue Key, International Relations Club, Debating Council, and Alpha Zeta (the national honorary agricultural fraternity), but no other organization affected his developing moral consciousness more than the *Georgia Agriculturalist*, for which he wrote.¹¹

The motto of the school--a dictum close to Jordan's heart--was that of "service" to others. It was for this reason his articles continually stressed the morality associated with sharing agricultural knowledge with struggling farmers. Jordan's first publication, "Should College Graduates Return to the Farm?", discussed the importance of national farm relief. Since the government paid on average one-third of students' tuitions, he believed they had an obligation to convert farms "into real paying enterprises." The inherent value of a college education became evident once graduates advanced the quality of the land in poor areas. A college education was "worth nearly any price," he preached. But a degree in scientific farming conferred certain obligations upon all recipients, the most important being their ability to "set an example" for uneducated farmers. This was necessary because statistics showed those with agronomical training earned from five to twenty-five times more than their unlearned counterparts. By his sophomore year, Jordan had associated farming with Christian selflessness, a form of spiritual altruism. An agricultural future would allow him to carry out his commitment of service to others, while modeling Jesus's redemptive spirit.¹²

Throughout the 1930s, every issue of the *Georgia Agriculturalist* had essays on the subject of soil erosion and the need for immediate farm relief. J.W. Firor, Professor of Agricultural Economics, suggested farmers take advantage of the federal resources secured under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929 to offset the \$200,000,000 in annual damages caused by inclement weather. This legislation helped planters by subsidizing their production costs through the creation of farm boards that provided loans for the buying and leasing of equipment needed for crop production. The bill also minimized speculation and encouraged producers to organize cooperative marketing associations to limit surplus accumulation. The Act set an important precedent for the “recovery” and “relief” legislation of the Roosevelt administration.¹³

Governor Eugene Talmadge feared that government subsidies for southwest counties might interfere with the prevailing minimum wage of the state. The governor lowered taxes and utility rates for families with average gross incomes over \$200 in 1934. His local initiative benefited wealthy planters, leaving sharecropping and tenant farmers distrustful of Roosevelt’s legislation. African Americans referred to the National Industrial Recovery Act (NRA) as the “Negro Removal Act,” while whites termed it the “Negro Relief Act.” The latter vehemently opposed the NRA’s provision for fixed wage employment for blacks, because a single minimum pay scale diluted the economic inequity responsible for their penury. Most depended upon planters for employment. As a result, they had little choice but to help their landlords participate in the “plow-up” program initiated by the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). White southwestern farmers--like those in Macon County--saw a substantial return of \$84, 587 for the destruction of thousands of acres of cotton fields, which decreased surpluses and

increased bale prices in 1934. Arthur Raper's study confirmed that few blacks were compensated for their assistance.¹⁴

Jordan and his liberal *Agriculturalist* colleagues believed that farm relief should extend to both races accompanied with a "free and equal [vocational] education to all." They accurately concluded, however, that the NRA, AAA, and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) disproportionately favored planters. FERA's expenditures totaled \$4,645.66 for whites and only \$682.28 for blacks by 1935. This disparity in spending was not unlike the state's school budget five years earlier, which allocated \$35.42 for each white child, but only \$6.38 per colored student. Likewise, the Soil Conservation Act of 1937 offered little assistance to African-American farmers. In an effort to demonstrate terracing, contour plowing, and gully damning techniques, committee officials worked with elected local, white supervisors to organize "experiment stations" across Georgia. By January 1939, ten soil conservation districts covered more than 9,500,000 acres, one being in the Coastal Plain section of the state near Americus, the future site of Koinonia Farm.¹⁵

Jordan's future seemed predictable; he would return to Talbot County, buy a substantial plot of land, and begin preparing for the next year's harvest. By his junior year, Jordan was confident in his decision to become a farmer, but a year later, his passion for agriculture "seemed to have faded a little," as Dallas Lee remembers. Lee attributed this departure to an "inner urging" to become a preacher, but friend Claude Broach believed, "Clarence struggled with a sense of call to the ministry . . ." In Jordan's words, he was again "driven in desperation to search for spiritual resources. . . . I had thrown Jesus out because of Mr. Mac[Donald]. Maybe Mr. Mac did not represent Jesus."

It was not long before he would reconcile his yearning to farm with his new founded desire to preach the Gospel.¹⁶

At a Baptist Student Union retreat in North Carolina, the summer after graduating from the University of Georgia, Jordan committed himself to spreading the Good News. Before the Athenian congregation of the First Baptist Church, Jordan reflected: “I can still hear Him just as vividly: ‘My child, I want you to preach for me.’ ‘And lo, I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world.’ ‘Lead on, O Christ, I’ll follow.’ And that’s all there was to it.” During the fall of 1933, Jordan enrolled in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, having answered the summons that would provide a spiritual blueprint for the creation of Koinonia Farm.¹⁷

Jordan’s decision to attend divinity school resulted from his desire to seek a deeper ontological understanding of the Scriptures. Despite a conservative seminary atmosphere, professors like William Hershey Davis and J. B. Weatherspoon lectured on the relevance of Jesus’s teachings when practically applied through missionary service. Jordan’s mentor, Dr. Edward A McDowell Jr., urged him to confront the racial and the economic inequality in Louisville’s ghettos. McDowell, who took his student to a meeting of the Southern Interracial Commission in the mid-1930s, believed, “the Word must come alive in currents of history and social change.” Jordan recounted the experience writing, “This too was a turning point in my life for it seemed to bring into the open the deep feelings which had lain, like molten lava, within the inner recesses of my heart.”¹⁸

Jordan finished his master’s degree in May 1936 and married Florence Kroeger, a librarian’s assistant, two months later. She supported his decision to pursue a Ph.D. in the Greek New Testament at his alma mater. He chose to study the lingua franca of the

Greco-Roman world, “the contemporary language of everyone.” Jordan believed that this version of the New Testament was the most accurate and comprehensive account of God’s utterances, which the Apostles had transcribed in *koine* Greek. “Man does not live by bread alone, but by the word proceeding out of the mouth of God. . . . I just wanted the Bible to speak to me in the original language,” he explained. As Jordan immersed himself in the Scriptures, he came to a clearer understanding of what God demanded of all believers. Nothing took precedence over living the “Golden Rule”--treating others with dignity irrespective of their race, class, and gender.¹⁹

While continuing his studies at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Jordan taught at Simmons University, a black seminary in Louisville. He challenged his students to live the Scriptures by becoming modern disciples of Jesus, instructing them to develop steadfast faiths defined by a “personal trust” in the trinity: the Father (God), the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Ghost (the spirit of God). Jordan’s Savior was not the vindictive figure of his childhood that he had come to resent due to Warden MacDonald’s transgressions. “If sinful men will return unto Him,” he reconsidered, “God is ready to forgive.” Although Jordan rejoiced in a merciful Christ, he emphasized the need for sinners to undergo *metanoia*--a change of mind, heart, and will. This meant that before converts could dedicate themselves to living a life of active goodwill, they had to confess and reject their sins that kept them from achieving spiritual purity.²⁰

Defining Christianity as “a religion of principles rather than rules; that its emphasis is on the right heart from which right conduct springs,” Jordan sought fellowship with those committed to living God’s word. The Almighty did not discriminate by color, but rather action, meaning Jordan saw no wrong in inviting a small group of Simmons students to lead a weekly prayer meeting on seminary grounds. Not

wanting to jeopardize the possibility of other interracial university gatherings, Florence suggested that they eat dinner in their apartment. Jordan knew he would have to explain the decision to President J. R. Sampey, who disagreed with the event altogether. Demonstrating the Christ-like agency he advocated in his courses at Simmons, Jordan recalled, “We had invited the Negroes to eat with us, and the seminary could be making up its mind what it would do with us.” Sampey allowed the guests to take their meals in the refectory after twenty of Jordan’s friends protested his unchristian attitude. The president excused himself saying he thought the entire Simmons chorus was participating in the prayer service, and therefore, the seminary could not accommodate such a large number of visitors. This marked Jordan’s first stand against the institutional racism permeating throughout the Baptist networks of Louisville.²¹

In 1939, Jordan accepted a position running the Sunshine Center, which functioned under the direction of the Long Run Baptist Association (LRBA) in the predominately black West End section of the city. Troubled by the racist image of “hyper-jovial Sambos” conjured by the center’s name, he adopted a new title, the Fellowship Center, and insisted that the Long Run Association Committee on Negro Work govern the mission’s operations. Jordan immediately organized ministerial meetings with black and white pastors to discuss the problems facing inner-city congregants. He also attended African-American services and took a particular interest in the Virginia Avenue Church, where he considered himself a member. The LRBA recognized Jordan’s dedication to serving West End residents, and the committee quickly promoted him to superintendent for all associational missions.²²

Jordan accepted the position, but he thought that his new Broadway Baptist Church office should be near the Fellowship Center, “[W]here our [white] preachers will

have to wade through shipwrecks of humanity to get there.” Having finished his graduate studies in May, he concentrated on improving and expanding mission services. He proposed a West End project called “The Lord’s Storehouse,” which would provide food, clothing, and appliances to the impoverished, while giving the affluent a feasible way to share their wealth. Jordan envisioned “a place where, in the name of Christ, destitute people might find enough to hold body and soul together during an emergency [by providing] a centralized outlet for the charities of stronger Baptist churches which might not have cases of acute need in proportion to their ability to meet them.” The idea of material distribution according to individual need was an expression of Jordan’s understanding of Christian brotherhood, “a bond in which all God’s children share equally the fellowship with one another and with Him.” Although the LRBA rejected “The Lord’s Storehouse,” Jordan believed the proposal represented a pragmatic and possibly effective form of mission outreach.²³

Jordan thought that the Greek New Testament was the source of Christ’s teachings about true discipleship. The concept of *koinonia*, found in the book of Acts, was an example of how Christians, through fellowship, could become “of one heart and of one soul.” He continually referred to verse forty-four of the second chapter (2:44), which read: “And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Jordan interpreted these revelations literally, positing that followers were to live together and comprise a corpus from which they could promulgate biblical principals and teachings. Veritable disciples belonged to an extended family united by Jesus’s suffering on the cross, meaning that they, as Christian brothers and sisters, shared in His salvation together.²⁴

Jordan defined his spiritual witness through *koinonia*, or a fellowship community predicated on the tenets of racial and economic equality. The concept extended from his calling to work with the poor as Christ had through His ministry of preaching and healing. Jordan likened the obstacles impeding social justice in the South to the Pharisees' and Sadducees' (legal religious scholars) rejection of Jesus, because of His humble Jewish origin. After attacking their ritual observances and sacrilegious abuses of the Temple, He implored them to apply God's law to enact reconciliation between Jew and Gentile. But Jesus failed to fulfill their notion of a Savior figure by favoring the discipleship of pariahs. Christ fulfilled God's will of spreading the Gospel, despite the imminent threat of crucifixion, and Jordan concluded that this powerful example challenged all believers to "have convictions about what is right, and what God wants them to do, and [to] stick to that even in the face of death."²⁵

Early in his new assignment, Jordan attempted to create a *koinonia* by inviting seminary students to live at the Fellowship Center while participating in local mission programs. Living in an old brothel consisting of eight rooms and two bathrooms, twelve students taught in black churches. Even more important, they shared their monetary and material resources with each other. The utopian experiment failed because the group lacked the funds necessary to meet participants' basic living needs. Florence Jordan and Margaret Herndon were both pregnant at the time, but Margaret felt it necessary to have extra-prenatal care. Members discussed the issue and agreed to pay only the bill for the delivery of the two babies and not the additional fee of Margaret's request. The couple left, preferring to handle their own finances. Bob Herndon recalled, "We all had such small incomes. As in my case, my wife and I had but \$100 to put in and it took the whole

\$100 for us to live so we withdrew the full amount.” Their departure disappointed Jordan, who continued to look for new ways to implement *koinonia*.²⁶

As head of all LRBA missions in Louisville, Jordan kept contact with other Southern Baptists who espoused similar views about Christian living. Walt N. Johnson, secretary of the Steward League of Baptist Ministers in Mars Hill, North Carolina, impressed him with his notion of complete stewardship beyond the ten-percent tithe required of churchgoers. This resonated with Jordan’s belief in living all dimensions of the Gospel, those “essential to the building of strong character.” In the summer of 1941, an American Baptist missionary to Burma, Martin England, wrote Johnson:

If the barriers that divide man, and cause wars, race conflict, economic competition, class struggles, labor disputes are ever to be broken down, they must be broken down in small groups of people living side by side, who plan consciously and deliberately to find a way wherein they can all contribute to the Kingdom according to their respective abilities. Suppose there were some Christian employees and employers, white and Negroes, farmers and merchants, illiterate and school teachers, who were willing to enter into fellowship to make a test of the power of the spirit of God in eliminating the natural and artificial barriers that exist now--and let none deny that they do exist!

Jordan read the letter, astounded by England’s conviction that “the strong must bear the burden of the weak (mainly by helping, teaching, and inspiring him to bear his own burdens as his strength in this fellowship grows) . . . to each according to his need, from each according to his ability.” As historian Andrew Chancey has noted, Jordan had met a “kindred spirit” with whom he would confront the racial and economic injustices present in southwest Georgia.²⁷

England words had a profound impact on Jordan, who had come to similar conclusions on race and class issues. He too was his “brother’s keeper,” a bond not determined by color or national boundaries. Frustrated by professed Christians’ refusal to work for social and economic equality, Jordan asked, “[If] we want peace; will we

pluck out the eye of race prejudice?" He continued: "Why can't a world turn asunder by racial prejudice look upon men and women who have learned from Jesus the lesson of love so well that they dwell together as brethren?" He reasoned that followers had to live by God's law regardless of the racial dictates of southern society. Jordan explained, "To sincere Christians . . . any form of prejudice or snobbishness or segregation or exclusiveness will appear utterly abhorrent, alien to the mind of the Master and at cross purposes with his kingdom."²⁸

That fall, Jordan and England convened at a Fellowship of Reconciliation meeting in Louisville. The men discussed ways in which they could use their agricultural and missionary training to alleviate the economic burdens brought on by the Depression. Jordan knew of many families forced to migrate from Alabama and Georgia to Louisville ghettos in search of employment. These were the people dependent most upon LRBA missions. "The feeling was heavy on Clarence that if something were done to help these people find fruitful lives on the farms they would never have to come to the city," England recalled. Jordan, however, did not want to act as a county agent, seldom helping the small farmer, the most susceptible agriculturalist to face foreclosure. "In order to reach the masses," he wrote, "it is always necessary to speak from experience and teach by example, or demonstration. This has been the approach of scientific agriculture in reaching the multitudes with better farm methods." Both men agreed to begin an "agricultural missionary enterprise" in an impoverished county to help those neglected under Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. England remembered their resolve "to go into backward southern community, set up as farmers . . . and try to bring to bear, in the spirit of Christ, all the resources within and without the community to minister to the individuals and the groups we can reach." "We will call it Koinonia Farm," they

pronounced, “because we want to discover the community of spirit and life of the early Christians.” With this declaration, Georgia’s first interracial commune was born.²⁹

As they looked for a site, they considered black-white ratios, average incomes, soil types, and climates. Jordan’s brother Frank, a farm appraiser, showed them a 440-acre plot in Sumter County, eight miles outside of Americus in southwest Georgia. Jordan looked at the site and declared, “this is it,” but he and England had not yet secured financial backing. Their prospects looked grim--who would fund an interracial farming community in a rural southwestern part of Georgia? A wealthy executive on the board of the Union Gospel Mission (similar to the Fellowship Center but located in the white poverty district of Haymarket) answered the men’s prayers for funding. Struck by Jordan’s “utter sincerity and by his idealism,” Arthur Steilberg became interested after receiving one of 500 promotional brochures mailed to potential benefactors. The pamphlets stated the purpose of the farm was to spread “Jesus Christ and his teachings” and “to train Negro preachers in religion and agriculture.” Jordan proved his dedication to the project when he turned down an attractive offer to teach at Bessie Tift College, because he had to answer the “pleading voice of twelve million Negroes . . . under the yoke of oppression.” His paternalist outlook made the proposition more acceptable in the eyes of conservative Christians like Steilberg, who believed in the benefits of social welfare programs, but were less comfortable with the practice of interracialism. Despite Steilberg’s additional reservation over Jordan’s “economic philosophy,” he and England accepted his offer to fund the down payment on their mortgage.³⁰

Jordan and England moved south at a time when employment was rising due to wartime industry. Increased production meant job opportunities for blacks that sought work outside of an agrarian domain. The mechanization of farming posed an even

greater threat to farmers who lacked the capital to replace their mule drawn plows with electric harvesters. Jordan had attributed the increasing number of inner-city newcomers in the West End section of Louisville to these changes in labor methods. He found similar trends in Sumter County. The census recorded 24,502 residents in 1940, while Americus, the county-seat, had a population of 9,281. The same year, 13,347 people, including 9,349 blacks, lived on farms. By 1950, only 6,817 farmers toiled the land, 4,116 of which were black. The decline in the rural population continued throughout the decade as field laborers migrated to cities in search of better paying jobs. Jordan and England empathized with peripatetic workers, mostly African American, and knew “that the need of Negroes must be somehow met in the rural areas . . . if the problem of the Negro migration to the cities was to be solved.”³¹

Such statistics had a direct bearing on Jordan’s conception of *koinonia*. “The daily tasks of the individual are related to the welfare of the whole group,” he said.

Continuing, Jordan expressed the contemporary meaning of Acts 2:44:

What one does is determined by the needs of the community. Thus, both capital and labor are subordinated to the common good. The means of production, whether it be tools or time, money or might, is never used as a club of extortion but as an instrument of service for the betterment of the whole.

He and England intended to ease the burdens facing county agriculturalists by initiating a farming cooperative based on an “incarnation of faith,” where all participants would work together and share equally in the fruits of their labor.³²

Jordan and England arrived in Sumter County in November 1942. They began preparing for the next harvest by rejuvenating the eroded and rutted soil, as well as repairing an old four-room farmhouse, later converted into a chicken brooder. The Johnson family inhabited one of three tenant shacks across the street, and they, along with two other black men, Dempsey and G.D., agreed to help them. Socializing with

these men “grew out of the natural course of events,” meaning that racial discrimination was unacceptable within a collective work effort. Despite Jordan’s agricultural training, he remembered being “ready to spout information anytime” without being “prepared to cope with the actual problems of farming.” He anxiously watched his neighbors with a plan to plant and plow when they did. “The community seems rather amused at two preachers trying to farm. . . . We willingly and unashamedly confess our ignorance, and ask for their instruction and advice,” Jordan wrote to his wife. In December, Mabel and the three England children moved into the renovated farmhouse. Florence and the two Jordan children stayed in Talbotton until Clarence could build a second dwelling.³³

Jordan and England intended to “set up simply as farmers, trying to win the confidence of the people.” They attempted to do so by ingratiating the community with surplus milk, butter, and meat. The local Klan, however, took offense to the Johnsons, G. D., and Dempsey joining the men for meals. “[We] do not allow the sun to set on anybody who eats with niggers,” they warned. In a mordant tone, Jordan quipped: “We’ll, I’m just so happy to meet you. All my life I’ve wanted to meet some people who had power over the sun. We will be watching it with great interest tonight.” He was not afraid of confrontation, and he often expressed his discontent through unbridled cynicism, as if no explanation for his actions was necessary. “We knew their would be hostility,” England said. “I think what we hoped was that we could make a witness from the beginning and yet not completely alienate ourselves from our neighbors. . . . We knew that we couldn’t set the precedent of eating apart from our black friends and then hope to do otherwise later.” “It was not a question of whether or not we were to be scared,” Clarence reflected, “but whether or not we would be obedient.” Jordan’s and

England's belief in the value of all men made Koinonia Farm suspect from the beginning.³⁴

Jordan and England's racial beliefs concerned locals as did their anti-war convictions. At the University of Georgia, Jordan participated in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. After earning his degree in 1933, he spent the summer at a north Georgia boot camp commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. cavalry. During this time, he concluded that war perpetuated human hatred, causing the division of men according to nationality. Reflecting on chapters five, six, and seven of the Gospel of Matthew, commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jordan concluded that he could not love yet kill, work for peace yet wage war. God's commandment to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" resonated with Jordan and England as they anticipated the queries of curious neighbors.³⁵

Locals began to question the men's patriotism after learning that school officials had commandeered a stamp collection, which included Burmese and Japanese postage, from the England's oldest son, John, a third grader. School Superintendent E.L. Bridges concluded that subversive activity was taking place on the farm. A navy lieutenant visited Martin and listened to him recount his missionary work in the South Pacific. Convinced that he did not pose a threat, the officer left, leaving neighbors uneasy about England's and Jordan's intentions in Sumter County. Not long after, an old farmer confronted Clarence and described his disgust over his conscientious objection to the war. "I don't like it 'cause you won't fight. . . . That's what they're telling around here," the man said. Jordan responded didactically, "Well, you got us wrong mister. We'll fight. . . . We fight with love, and justice, and truth, and mercy, and prayer, and patience,

and forbearance.” This incident, along with both families refusal participate in the school’s drive to sell war bonds, created an atmosphere of distrust conducive to further alienation from their neighbors, especially as they began implementing their social outreach programs.³⁶

Jordan explained to Arthur Steilberg in 1943 that “quite a bit of opposition was aroused” due to accusations that England was a “foreigner.” Months after the stamp controversy, five African Americans enrolled in the first winter and spring literacy sessions held at the farm. The two Koinonians believed that education was necessary for social, economic, and political enfranchisement. Their efforts culminated with the transporting of black children to the separate, but far from equal, Seay Industrial School. When Superintendent Bridges found out that they had used extra wartime gas rations to do this, he remarked: “Niggers do our work for us around here and if we educate them they will all move away so I don’t intend seeing them educated.” Jordan concluded, “While there has been some thunder, the lightening hasn’t struck. When it will is not for me to say, yet I do hope and pray for more time.”³⁷

Despite mounting controversy, the men transformed Koinonia into an operating farm with relative ease. England and his family left for Burma in September 1944, but not before helping Jordan acquire a tractor, disc tiller, harrow, mowing machine, combine, wagon, saw mill, and livestock consisting of two mules, one horse, 40 head of cattle, 20 hogs, and 400 hens. The land consisted of 100 acres of pine, oak, and hickory, 140 acres of pasture, and 200 acres of cultivable land. That year they harvested 17 tons of peanuts, 500 bushels of corn, 2,100 bushels of oats, 500 bushels of wheat, and 10 tons of watermelons. Their poultry house, costing \$500, had an electric water system, 2,000-egg incubator, and three electric brooders purchased at a cost of \$335. The Jordans assets

totaled approximately \$19,000 with an indebtedness of \$4,000. The farm had indeed become an operational, profitable enterprise.³⁸

Two African-American families, the Joe Johnsons and the Jasper Johnsons, worked with Harry Atkinson, a dropout from Stetson University, who had heard Jordan speak on the campus during Religious Emphasis week. “Clarence came and I was really attracted to his brotherhood and peace themes,” he remembered. Harry stayed through the fall, but reenrolled for a quarter before returning in March 1945, and then left again three months later for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. In the winter of 1948, he returned from Texas convinced that he wanted to live and work at the farm, which had helped pay his tuition. Jordan welcomed his company, because Jasper Johnson made it clear that he and his family were not interested in practicing *koinonia*. Instead, they accepted Clarence’s offer to live across the street in the remaining tenant house, sharecropping under a fair arrangement that left them debt free with plenty of vegetables and meat in their storehouse. Joe Johnson chose to work his own land, but he did occasionally help Jordan and Atkinson.³⁹

Suspicious of Jordan’s intentions, these two families, with Dempsey and G. D., preferred the security afforded by the segregated African-American community of Sumter County. In a letter to his wife, Jordan said, “Yesterday G. D. (the Negro) came over and said his old lady told him they’d have to move, because that was too close to live to white folks. I realized his position, so I helped to move his scraps.” He did retain G. D.’s services, however. In addition to paying day laborers high wages, Jordan extended fellowship opportunities to blacks. By 1944, he had organized literacy courses, interracial Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs, the Seay carpool and bus fund, in addition to using his sawmill to help rebuild the black Baptist Church destroyed

by fire. Despite Jordan's goodwill, African-American interest in the farm remained limited throughout the decade. G. McCleod Bryan visited throughout the 1940s and offered a practical explanation for why the egalitarian enterprise did not attract more colored workers. He wrote:

Again, they were naturally suspicious of these white people moving into their territory acting so strangely. As they observed them living in houses not much better than their own, existing on a standard of living hardly superior to their plight, they might have thought, 'Who wants to live like that? Those Koinonians are living little better than white trash. Our ambition is not to go downwards, but to improve ourselves'!

Jordan had a very similar outlook believing that "the Negroes have grown up with a suspicion of white people and it takes quite a long time to break down their fears and prejudices and for them to have the courage to come into an interracial community." He wanted to earn their trust through his devotion to Christ's teachings about brotherhood, but most blacks had little interest in the Koinonian concept of voluntary poverty.⁴⁰

The majority of African Americans were cautious about joining a white-run farm that disregarded the color barrier of Sumter County. They equated the venture with the system of sharecropping that kept them impoverished, but the real threat facing blacks came from local whites, like Superintendent E.L. Bridges, angered by Jordan's efforts to educate and employ them. The Joe Johnson family had received some "free advice" to discontinue their association with Koinonia. "The boiling point of some of those folks is about 35 degrees below zero," Jordan said referring to white intolerance. "I felt that the teachings of God in Christ," he remarked, "cut diametrically opposite of Southern conditions and so I had to choose to which I would give my loyalty." Knowing the dangers involved in practicing interracialism, he did not want to endanger blacks by ministering to their needs publicly. Instead, he opened the farm's resources to those interested, letting them dictate the terms of their relationship with Koinonia.⁴¹

Throughout the 1940s, Jordan lectured at universities and colleges throughout the South. He attracted students with similar views about war, pacifism, interracialism, and Christian community. In 1949, Howard Johnson and his wife, Marion Rutland, both Auburn alumni, moved to the farm after Jordan invited them saying, "The door is wide open to you here at Koinonia." Conrad and Ora Browne, like the Johnsons, heard Jordan speak several times throughout the decade. The Browne family would stay until 1963. A year earlier, three students joined the farm, two from Mercer University, Jack Singletary and Millard Hunt, and one from Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Gilbert Butler. All were World War II veterans, but they refused to register for the peace-time draft of 1948. Jordan, a ministerial deferrer, drove to Macon County to appear as a character witness for Singletary and Hunt after the FBI arrested them for not enlisting. The judge sentenced the men to a year and a day in prison; they served only five months. Butler served two. In January 1950, Norman Long came to the farm with training from Colgate Seminary in Virginia. By this time, a dozen white radicals prepared to spread their message of racial equality throughout Sumter County.⁴²

Between 1947 and 1950, two incidents, the exact timing of which are unknown, intensified locals' suspicions of Koinonia. Joining the farm in 1947, Willie Pugh, the only female member besides Florence, escorted two black girls into Americus to buy clothes. After shopping, Pugh and the girls stopped for ice cream, holding hands as they returned to the truck. A Rehoboth Baptist Church deacon saw what happened and believed that the congregation, of which six Koinonians were a part, should request that they withdraw membership. In a much more serious incident, Pugh attracted the attention of neighbor Robert Hamilton, who saw her talking to Bo Johnson in the fields late at night during a shift change. She explained to the meddlesome Hamilton that

Johnson had not assaulted her. The man did not believe that Koinonians were working into the evening to prepare their fields for the upcoming planting season. Any accusation of rape involving a white woman and a black man was a serious charge warranting death; broadcast throughout Sumter, the situation required that Johnson leave for West Palm Beach until tensions resided. These transgressions weighed heavily on the Rehoboth leadership, infuriated at Koinonians' interracial displays of brotherhood.⁴³

The Jordans had remained active members of Rehoboth Baptist Church since the founding of the farm. Recalling his early involvement, Clarence described the congregation as "exceptionally nice," but he noted that there was "a grape-vine somewhere." The church had found out about his ministerial status, which surprised him considering that he had told so few people in the county. He could not hide his talent for proselytizing, however. Clarence rejoiced in having led a 1943 revival meeting that resulted in six conversions. "Thru this church," he wrote, "we're trying to render whatever services we can." The Jordans maintained their relationship with Rehoboth by attending services, leading Sunday school classes, and participating in the choir. The pastor even allowed Clarence to marry the Atkinsons at the church in April 1946, but the farm's relationship with the congregation became increasingly strained after Harry invited a black chauffeur of one of the Rehoboth members to join his Sunday School class. Not unlike the Pugh controversy, Atkinson's disregard for local custom angered those in attendance. The church was successful in forcing the Atkinsons to withdraw their membership; the five other Koinonians refused to leave voluntarily. Consequently, the deacons denied them the right to hold office, making it clear that they were no longer welcome to worship at Rehoboth.⁴⁴

The spiritual conversion of non-Christians was an important part of the Southern Baptist tradition and Jordan welcomed the opportunity to escort a visiting Hindi Indian agricultural student from Florida State University to a Sunday service in the summer of 1950. “He was not a Christian, but he had become interested and he wanted to go to church,” Florence remembered. Because the congregation had taken offense to the farm’s interracial programs, members thought Jordan had brought R. C. Charma to worship as part of a calculated effort to undermine the county color barrier. Neither he nor his wife wanted to offend. Jordan taught that “if Christians make themselves disagreeable and objectionable by forcing their doctrines and beliefs . . . they hurt not only themselves but the cause they represent--the kingdom itself.” Florence defended their decision explaining, “The man was dark, but he did not look like an American Negro. Actually, we thought the people would be delighted to meet him.”⁴⁵

Within a week, Pastor Ira B. Faglier informed Koinonians that the deacons had scheduled a meeting to discuss their membership status. The letter cited “differences in opinion on the race issue, devotion to our government, and proper relationship to church” as the reasons for calling the upcoming hearing. Jordan and the other Koinonians received notice just two days before their requested presence at Rehoboth. The men had previous engagements to accompany Clarence to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama where Martin Luther King, Jr. was later reverend. The deacons passed a motion to proceed despite their absence.⁴⁶

On August 13, the board of deacons read their recommendation to remove Koinonians’ membership. Representing the farm, Florence Jordan and Gilbert Butler listened as Elder D. C. Sheppard charged that they had brought “people of other races into the services of the Rehoboth Baptist Church.” Jordan and Butler made a motion to

remove membership from the farm, not wanting to incite further action. With this, the congregation excommunicated Koinonians from future worship. In what seemed like a deliberate attempt to make a mockery of the hearing, several farm members came to services the following Sunday. Clarence explained that they had “decided to continue attendance at Rehoboth, both as evidence of our love for the church and to forestall any movement among other members to withdraw out of sympathy for us.” Reverend Faglier and deacons Finch and Harvey came to express their concern at what might happen to them “physically” if they did not honor the church’s decision. Jordan decided that he had made his amends with the congregation, and therefore, he agreed not to return to Rehoboth.⁴⁷

Before their expulsion, Jordan asked to read a statement to church members on behalf of the involved Koinonians. “If this is the will of Rehoboth Church, we feel that it is our Christian duty to comply with it.” They were not above casting blame. “It is our desire, however, that it be clearly understood that our absence would be due, not to any malice or lack of forgiveness or unwillingness to attend on our part, but to the will and action of the church itself.” They even went so far as to cite Luke 4:18 and Acts 11:17 to implicate the congregation’s lack of Christian brotherhood. Jordan concluded: “We are grieved that it has become impossible for us to walk together as brothers in the Lord Jesus. Truly both you and we have broken His heart, and we all should penitently seek His forgiveness.”⁴⁸

After the incident, Deacon Bowen visited Jordan and expressed his regret over the decision. “I forgave you before it ever happened,” Jordan assured him. The troubled man informed Clarence that he could no longer remain a member of Rehoboth. “No sir, I don’t want you to pull your letter out of that church,” replied his counterpart, “I want you

to go back up there and live so as to get kicked out.” Jordan remembered that he soon became a model “divine irritant.” This anecdote represents the importance of Clarence’s insistence on the congruency of faith and action. As with the deacon, repentance was necessary because Jesus commanded sinners “to change their way of thinking, abandon their false concepts, forsake their wrong methods, and enter upon a new way of life.” Jordan had a harsh word for “fake religionists,” who “cooled and diluted” Christ’s message to conform to prevailing social mores. “Those who are willing for the voice of custom always to prevail eliminate themselves as possible prophets or seers or saints,” he chided. Jordan surmised: “There is this struggle between an ideal and a tradition that exerts a tremendous pull in their lives; they want to do what they know Christ teaches; and yet, they are not strong enough to break with the traditions in which they find themselves.” Clarence realized that he had indeed selected the perfect county in which to begin a “God Movement.”⁴⁹

What began in 1942 as an atmosphere of distrust over Jordans and England’s pacifist views had evolved into a publicized concern about their efforts to bring African Americans into Christian fellowship. Jordan wrote to the liberal *Christian Century* explaining what had occurred at Rehoboth, the essence of which he deemed “a rather breath-taking, record-breaking thing for a Southern Baptist church,” given that those expelled were all white southerners. The farm also responded in their newsletter assuring that they remained “whole-heartedly committed to complete brotherhood across all barriers.” Due to the increased commune population and an estimated four hundred visitors a year, the incident caused members to reassess their relationship with one another in an effort to define their commitment to the collective *koinonia*. “Our struggle together to attain the spiritual unity and the clarity of purpose we so much desire in order

to be purer vessels of God's love," read the same newsletter, "have been momentarily frustrating and painful." This resulted from a need to "decide who we are and what we are," as dictated in a group meeting in January 1951.⁵⁰

A month later, Koinonians adopted a membership process consisting of three stages: novice, provisional, and full status. Persons of novice interest participated in the rhythm of communal living, but kept their possessions. Once having achieved provisional standing, these material goods became available to the group, distributed according to need. At any point in time before full membership, novices and provisionals could depart with their remaining belongings. The last stage, which took a year to complete, connoted Koinonians' complete commitment to the farm--spiritually and financially. Their status enabled them to hold the elected leadership positions of president, secretary, and treasurer. Non-senior members could hold lower-ranking titles. The organization of the farm helped provide the structure necessary to survive the current hardships without ignoring the needs of impoverished locals and the queries of curious outsiders.⁵¹

The membership process concluded with the signing of a pledge, which outlined the principles of *koinonia*, while reaffirming individuals' commitment to Christian living. Those involved in drafting the resolution--Clarence and Florence Jordan, Marion and Howard Johnson, Gilbert Butler, Norman Long, and Ora and Conrad Browne--signed the following statement:

We seek to make known our total, unconditional commitment to seek, express, and expand the Kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Being convinced that the community of believers who make a like commitment is the continuing body of Jesus on earth, I joyfully enter into a love union with the Koinonia and gladly submit myself to it, looking to it to guide me in the knowledge of God's will and to strengthen me in the pursuit of it."

Willie Pugh and husband C.Z. Ballard, the Eustices, the Cowles, the Wittkampers, and the Nelsons all joined by 1953, bringing the resident total to 19 adults and 22 children. An organizational hierarchy existed, and this troubled some Koinonians like the Ballards, who thought that the community was becoming “an end in itself.” Koinonia lacked, in their opinion, the missionary outreach, as defined by Jordan’s message of Christian service that had initially attracted them. In early 1951, she and her husband left to work on a farm bought by Gene and Jack Singletary and Allene and Harry Atkinson (who later returned in 1953) with the intention of living more fully “the social aspect of Christ’s teachings.” Despite the claim that Koinonia was too inwardly focused on the communitarian ideal outlined in the second chapter of Acts, the new pledge was necessary to affirm members’ dedication to the biblical principles of sharing, or the distribution of goods according to need; brotherhood, or the rejection of racial and national boundaries; and redemptive love, or the active good will towards others. More than this, it provided the structure necessary to withstand the local backlash incited by Koinonians’ increased presence throughout Sumter County.⁵²

Although the Ballards, Atkinsons, and Singletarys parted on amicable terms, the reason for their departure caused remaining members to question the efficacy of the farm’s outreach. To reaffirm their commitment to Koinonia’s “open door policy,” they organized an adult work camp. In July 1951, eight “city slickers” from across the country converged on Koinonia to spend a month working on the commune. They attended the two-day Baptist Ministers’ Conference at Morehouse College in Atlanta before returning to labor in the peanut fields. These honorary Koinonians spent their evenings discussing scripture and sharing in interracial fellowship with neighboring colored families. They also helped run the vacation bible school, where 60 to 80 black

youths spent nine days worshipping and recreating. Vacation bible school was one of the earliest and most successful goodwill gestures towards the African-American community, which led to active relationships with families like the Jacksons, the Johnsons, and the Angrys. Sue and Rufus Angry did begin the membership process, but they never became committed Koinonians, nor did any of the other blacks who worked at the farm during the 1940s and 1950s.⁵³

Even before the violence began in 1956, few neighboring blacks labored at Koinonia, despite the addition of 360 acres of land. Alma Jackson and his nephew Henry Polk, attracted by Jordan's daily wage of four dollars, started working at the farm in 1954. Clarence realized that fair pay was not enough to maintain African-American's interest in the membership process. This troubled Jordan because Koinonia was a corpus of believers, "a venture in Christian community," as their revised 1952 pamphlet professed. The group felt taken advantage of because, in the words of Alma, blacks expected "handouts." "We shouldn't be encouraging people to think we can help them with living arrangements if they aren't going to enter into the Koinonian relationship," Jordan explained. Alma eventually left in 1957 after he started living at the commune, meaning he could no longer take a wage. In order "to be more satisfied," he became a full-time welder in Albany. The Angrys left because of the increased reprisals against the farm the same year. Bo Johnson, whose father, Candy, was one of the first blacks to work for Jordan began as a novice before abandoning the process to move to Florida. He later returned and resumed his families working relationship with the farm. By 1954, members bore the frustration of trying to create interracial fellowship, while remaining dedicated to the tenets of *koinonia*. The last newsletter of the year read, "We feel a great need for a more adequate witness to the local community."⁵⁴

Fourteen years had passed since Jordan and England founded Koinonia. Local blacks and whites *still* did not understand Koinonia's radical theology, nor did they condone the application of their biblical principles. The farm population had increased, but few families had become committed members; most stayed an average of three to five years. Moreover, children comprised a substantial number of those living at Koinonia. Jordan's followers did not wish to alienate the very people they were trying to reach, forcing many to mediate their commitment to living the Gospel according to public approval. They did offer, however, an alternative model of southern morality, which the opposition condemned through the numerous acts of indirect and direct violence that tested Koinonian resolve during the most trying years of the commune's history.

CHAPTER 2

“God Knows We Treat the Niggers Right”

On May 19, 1957, Americus residents awoke to an early morning dynamite blast at a local feed store. Seven downtown establishments bore the scars of the powerful explosion. The event transpired in response to owner Herbert Birdsey's decision to break a ten-month boycott against the farm. The intrusive commune was to blame, because as local editor and staunch segregationist James R. Blair professed, “Violence is foreign to our way of life and thinking.” The bombing occurred in “a city of peace-loving, church-going, cultured people,” an image which further maligned the unwelcome agrarian venture. This “shocking episode” caused town leaders, those who had done little to prevent similar attacks from taking place against Koinonia a year before, to end the violence, in turn protecting their campaign to attract northern industry.⁵⁵

In July 1956, terrorists bombed Koinonia's roadside stand. Four months before the market's destruction, Jordan had assisted two qualified blacks seeking enrollment at the Georgia State College of Business in Atlanta. The subsequent headline of the *Americus Times-Recorder* heralded: “Negroes Fail in Attempt to Enroll at Ga. College; Endorsed by Americus Man.” Governor Marvin Griffin responded by calling Sheriff McArthur to investigate “this Jordan fellow.” White fears of losing an exploitable labor supply and the breaching of segregationist mores by Koinonians prompted the violent acts that followed, the culmination being the Birdsey bombing, which represented Sumter Countians' disapproval of the Supreme Court's order to integrate public facilities “with all deliberate speed.”⁵⁶

The *Americus Times-Recorder* described the July bombing as a “cowardly and regrettable affair.” Blair posited that the use of violence was not the “correct procedure” for combating integration, because such action undermined “support for the Southern cause.” Reporter Rudy Hayes agreed, believing that the incident would invariably invoke “criticism detrimental to the Southern viewpoint.” Like Blair, he advocated that the county take legal action against the alleged communist refuge. Both men equated the use of “force and coercion” to the Supreme Court’s ruling two years earlier in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Blair purported the use of “other means” to target farm members who were deemed “menaces to democracy.” Disparaging, yet paradoxical, was his accusation that Koinonians had bombed their market “to obtain [the] sympathy of the general public.”⁵⁷

Blair and Hayes’s call for the lawful combating of Koinonia failed to achieve their intended results--the relocation of the farm and an end to the extralegal reprisals. Close to a month before the roadside bombing, which was the second act of indirect violence against the farm, southwestern Superior Court Judge Cleveland Rees issued an injunction against Koinonia’s summer camp. Begun in 1955, a brochure described the interracial gathering as “a vital part of education,” a time for children to learn new crafts and to worship in a Christian environment. George Mathews, chairman of the Board of Commissioners and member of the county Board of Health, signed the measure with Hollis Fort, Jr., city attorney. While the suit alleged that farm facilities were “grossly inadequate” and posed a “danger of epidemic [disease],” it said nothing about Koinonia’s accreditation with the American Camping Association or the enrollment requirement that all children undergo a verified health check. Judge Rees postponed the hearing until July 19, one day after the intended camp opening, to allow Fort and Mathews additional time

to prepare their case against the farm, represented by lawyer Osgood Williams. This delay allowed four farmers, Wilson Finch, W. A. Helms, Sherrard Horne, A. H. Jennings, to take a secondary role in the proceedings by filing a companion suit against Koinonia. They claimed the camp was “immoral” because children might see the birthing of pigs. “We have been unable to guarantee absolute privacy to our 40-odd sows during farrowing season,” Jordan replied sarcastically. Judge Rees declared the case a “wrangle between the Gospel and the law” and best settled by brief and affidavit two weeks later. He purposely withheld the hearing to postpone the camp for the duration of the summer, but Jordan relocated the outing to the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, forcing Judge Rees to dissolve the moot injunction.⁵⁸

The public took interest in the case against Koinonia. Around 75 people attended the July 2 hearing; only six blacks came, although their children comprised a majority at farm events like VBS. These parents associated little with members, but they felt safe letting their children participate in their programs. Because it was legal for these interracial gatherings to occur, Fort, and his four friends who introduced the companion suit, chose to argue that Koinonia was an unsanitary and immoral environment for campers. Councilor Osgood Williams remembered that the farm “was as clean a place as you ever saw in your life.” He asked Mathews to identify the health threats and to draft a formal report of Koinonia’s condition, despite the chairman’s inability to “support his position.” The September farm newsletter reported, “At no point in all the proceedings did the real issue--the interracial feature of the camp--come out.” Like their expulsion from Rehoboth Church five years earlier, and caused by members’ efforts to earn the trust of local blacks, the case created a context conducive to the targeting of the farm.⁵⁹

Mathews did not care about the campers' safety. The hearing was an act of indirect violence aimed at prosecuting the farm on spurious charges. Jordan frustrated the opposition when he circumvented the proceedings by relocating the camp. The roadside bombing occurred days after, proving the ineffectiveness of the *Americus Times Recorder's* endorsement of using "legal means" to target Koinonia. The unidentified attackers used force not only to hurt their market business, but also to imply the threat of bodily harm against members. Koinonians assured locals that they "did not wish to stir up controversy." They did request the opportunity to explain the reasons for the farm's existence. "During these very critical times, we are trying to ease the tension in the local community by running ads in the local paper in order to keep the truth about Koinonia before the people," read their August newsletter. Jordan believed that "a calm and loving statement of who and why we are here is the best antidote." These conciliatory efforts failed as more Sumter Countians became aware of members' interracial agenda.⁶⁰

The newspaper ran Koinonians' response to the attack in what resembled the group's departing words to the Rehoboth congregation. Not seeking to alienate themselves further, they stated: "We want each of you to know that we are very sorry, that we in no way blame you, the people, for the unkind action of one or two." A week later, they submitted a carefully written open letter outlining their principles and motivations. Koinonians said that they were southerners, but did not adhere to the color line. It also informed that the non-profit farm paid a "sizeable sum" into the county treasury each year. Lastly, members were Christians, not Communists. A week later, "What is 'Koinonia'" graced the pages of the *Americus Times-Recorder*. The short piece described the farm as a church run by a number of trained ministers. In a request for good will, members added: "We pledge ourselves to respect the rights of those who

differ with us. We believe the citizens of this county will give us the same consideration.” Their white neighbors were deeply religious, but in a way that did not challenge the accepted mores of Dixie. By saying that the Koinonian majority was southern, Christian, and non-communist, they chose to minimize their differences. Few attitudes changed, however. Resident Bill Pittman, who “spoke for the masses,” concluded that Koinonia should move “well above the Mason-Dixon Line.”⁶¹

A close reading of the *Americus Times-Recorder* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* explains why Koinonia became a controversial community issue during the 1950s. Editor James R. Blair and reporter Rudy Hayes associated the farm with the *Brown* decision by presenting members’ interracial practices as an extension of the High Court’s order to desegregate. This assault on states’ rights caused concern that the justices had usurped the functions of Congress as county Judge James W. Smith believed. State Representative Sherrard Horne, who participated in the injunction against the farm, agreed saying, “I think the decision has upset everyone, but we must keep a level head and try to find some way to maintain separate schools.” “We should keep both feet on the ground and think through every phase of the subject; it is our best defense,” suggested Mayor Pro-Tem George Teaford. Sumter responded by becoming the seventh county to form a States’ Rights Council. One hundred and seventy-five locals watched as Horne nominated officers. Rudy Hayes accepted the position of secretary. Occurring during the height of the injunction controversy, 600 whites gathered at the local courthouse to see Governor Marvin Griffin and his predecessor, Herman Talmadge, open the first meeting of the States Rights Council of Georgia. Talmadge addressed the crowd, promising that “by the grace of God, Georgia will continue running its own affairs.” Three months later, the *Americus Times-Recorder* supported his Senate campaign.⁶²

Wanting to believe that the South would not resort to extralegal terror to prevent integration, a farm newsletter erroneously surmised that White Citizens and States' Rights Councils would maintain segregation "by any means short of violence." It did contend, however, that the *Brown* decision had created a "powder-keg situation." The *Americus Times Recorder* contributed to the increasing hysteria by running ominous headlines such as: "Court Rules Alabama's Segregation Laws Invalid"; "Guard Fights Back Mob in Kentucky School Flare-Up"; and "Federal Judge to Take Up Clinton Outbreak." These reports presented the issue as an imminent danger, perpetuating whites' fears over integration, in turn making acts of violence against Koinonia justifiable and therefore permissible.⁶³

Koinonia was an attractive target for politicians seeking to broaden their constituency by promising to defend segregation. During the Democratic primary, Judge Cleveland Rees secured reelection as did Solicitor General Charles Burgamy and State Representative Jack Murr. Newly minted Sheriff Fred Chappell and J. Frank Myers, president of the Chamber of Commerce, joined the men in actively opposing the farm. Although a single act of violence had not altered Koinonian liberalism, these community leaders helped business owners organize a boycott to undermine the financial stability of the commune. State Farm immediately cancelled Koinonia's car insurance. Agents informed members that their policy did not cover the \$3000 worth of damage incurred during the recent roadside attack. The Great American Insurance Company, the American Aviation & General Insurance Company, the Progressive Fire Insurance Company, the Pacific National Fire Insurance Company, and the Cotton States Mutual Insurance Company followed suit. Without coverage, Jordan thought it impossible to secure loans. Likened to the Berlin Blockade of 1949, the boycott required Koinonians to

“air-lift” produce and crops out of the county to companies willing to do business with them.⁶⁴

The boycott resulted from the populace’s indomitable stance against Koinonians’ efforts to bring blacks into their Christian fellowship. The de jure mandate for school desegregation heightened whites’ sense of an impending social crisis and tested Sumter officials’ promises to defend the color barrier. In early August, Solicitor General Burgamy spoke before the Dougherty County States’ Rights Chapter where he advocated resurgence in Klu Klux Klan activity. Seeing his plan as morally construed, he sought to replace the Klan publicized for “beating folks who didn’t deserve it” with “the kind of Klan . . . back in the old days.” In addition to supporting the use of “a buggy whip” on incorrigible race mixers, he added, “I had rather see my little boy dead than sit [*sic*] before a Negroe in the public schools.” Burgamy’s distinction between the two types of nightriders was tenuous; both preserved, by way of violence, what he called a “white man’s country.” The *Americus Times-Recorder* took an unfavorable stance against physical intimidation, but Burgamy’s acrimonious call for a united Ku Klux Klan meant that Koinonia Farm was now susceptible to new attacks against its property.⁶⁵

Three months later, on November 27, 1956, a shotgun blast destroyed a refrigerated meat case housed inside the newly renovated roadside market. Additional revocations of long time business relationships accompanied the shooting. The Citizens Bank of Americus refused to loan the farm money even though Jordan had borrowed and repaid over \$200,000 since 1942. The president of the bank and a prominent leader in the First Methodist Church, Evan Mathis, informed Clarence that the directors had asked him to discontinue their services. He later found out that Wingate Dykes, who represented the four farmers during the summer camp hearing, along with H. A. Smith, the Jordan’s

family doctor, had seconded the bank's decision to support the boycott. As the liaison, Mathis informed Clarence that the directors "would not be able to discuss the matter calmly." In accordance with the action of influential leaders like Mathis, Dykes, and Smith, business leaders supported the sanctions placed against the farm. The Still Gas Company was the next proprietorship to refuse service to the commune. When Jordan asked the owner why he would no longer deliver butane, Mr. Still admitted that he was afraid of not participating in the "voluntary" and "unorganized" boycott. Another dealer assured him that his decision was not personal, but rather the result of his fear of losing customers. A September farm newsletter described the intensified atmosphere reading, "The economic blockade is now virtually complete. How long it will stand, and how long we can stand, is in God's hand."⁶⁶

The holiday season did not ease community tensions. Much to the chagrin of the Sumter clergy, the celebrating of Christmas was only a one-day affair for some unknown locals. Farm members awoke on December 26 to find their electrical fuel pump damaged by multiple .44 caliber slugs, and a day later, their entrance sign riddled with bullets. Five months of attacks--in concert with the boycott--had proven the acceptability of forcibly targeting the farm, which continued to grow in membership despite the violence. Ten families, one of whom was black (the Angrys), resided on the commune, but scholarship on Koinonia has not answered why this number was formidable at a time of heightened opposition. The most compelling explanation is that the reprisals caused nationally circulated publications to take interest in reporting Koinonians' plight, thereby garnering the concerns of socially conscious Christians throughout the country. Not only was this coverage necessary to counter the prevailing characterization of them as communists, but it also helped amass moral and financial support for the venture.⁶⁷

There were three widely circulated stories covering Koinonia in 1956, and all presented workers as devout Christians struggling to survive against local backlash. The *Christian Century* reported that they “carried on a living witness to brotherhood in Georgia.” Just two months earlier, the magazine had adopted a more condemnatory tone when asking why incorrigible whites took offense to their “remarkable expression of the true Christian spirit.” The last chronicle of the farm’s commitment to righteous living came from members themselves, who submitted their embattled history to the *Nation*. In the last newsletter of the year, Jordan spoke for his extended family when he declared: “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.” Conrad Browne, head of public relations, estimated that the farm accommodated over 800 visitors in 1956. Koinonia was now “known far and wide” within the national Christian community, meaning the unsympathetic judgments of Sumter racists were no longer the sole opinions cast in the unfolding drama. The readers of these periodicals aligned themselves with the besieged stalwarts and helped to offset a net loss revenue of \$26,068 in 1956 by donating \$14,578; the next year unsolicited contributions totaling \$37,099 helped to dissolve \$46,440 worth of debt. The farm also turned to these benefactors to buy from their mail order catalog of pecans and peanuts. Without their support, Koinonians would not have survived the boycott.⁶⁸

The increasingly militant opposition continued to target the farm throughout 1957, the most violent year in Koinonia’s history. On January 14, Sheriff Chappell called Jordan to inform him that the twice-repaired roadside market had caught fire from an incendiary device. The damage ranged between \$5,000 and \$7,000. The blaze charred 125 smoked hams and over 100 pounds of shelled pecans and a large quantity of

peanuts, honey, kernels, syrup, and eggs. Although 40 local whites converged on the scene, not one attempted to put out the grass fire threatening a farm beehive nearby. “There was no word of greeting,” Jordan recalled. The market housed the mail order goods necessary to withstand the boycott. The catalog business was the most significant source of income for Koinonia, which made over \$7,000 in December alone. When members contacted Willis Shiver, owner of the Shiver Lumber Company, he told them that he could not sell the wood necessary to rebuild the market due to “pressure from level headed business men.” A frustrated Jordan decided to leave the destruction scattered along Albany Road “as a mute testimony to passerbys of the fruits of hate and prejudice in Sumter County.” Three days later, Ora Brown received an anonymous phone call informing her “to be on watch.” That night an additional housing unit valued at \$1500 burned in a second arson attack.⁶⁹

Not all Sumter residents agreed with the extralegal tactics employed against Koinonia. A newsletter stated that several individuals, whose names were withheld, had visited the farm to tell members that they did not agree with the violent methods being used against them. Most retail merchants who were friendly with Jordan, like Harold Still and Willis Shiver, informed him that the boycott was not due to any fault on his part, and they even admitted that the sanctions were “all wrong.” The men feared loss of business if they maintained their ties with the farm. Additional responses of encouragement came from a number of ministers who frequented the farm “by night.” Sympathizers feared potential reprisals for meeting with Jordan. Their concerns stemmed from several incidents involving friends of the farm. J. D. Clements, a sympathetic, neighboring white lost \$30,000 worth of heavy machinery, leaving him without the means to support his family. Jack Singletary, who had lived at the farm five years prior,

found his barn ablaze from a kerosene flair. It too stored his tractor, combine, fertilizer, feed, and seed. Tom Harrington could no longer use his corn-picker on Koinonian grounds without being intimidated as a result. These individual attacks would not end until the bombing of Birdsey's downtown feed store four months later.⁷⁰

The reprisals of 1956 had destroyed farm property, but a new wave of direct attacks, beginning on January 29, 1957, threatened bodily harm against Koinonians. Unknown vigilantes carried out frequent drive-by shootings under the cover of darkness. The news that Harry Atkinson, Lora Ruth, and Ross Anderson nearly died while inside farm gates prompted a number of Georgia editorials to call for peace. "VIOLENCE HAS NO PLACE IN SUMTER'S PROBLEMS," declared the *Atlanta Constitution*. The *Macon News* carried the instruction to "STOP VIOLENCE AT KOINONIA," as did the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*. Sheriff Chappell responded to the headlines admitting, "The people have had it up to here." After charging Koinonia with the bombing of its own roadside market, he contradicted himself, saying there was little he could do because members were not breaking any laws. The sheriff did associate their interracial practices with a breaching of southern custom embodied in an intractable color barrier. Their defiance, although not illegal, had caused the attacks in his opinion. Blair also believed that the farm was "a cancer on the community," but speaking on behalf of his subscribers, the editor affirmed, "We deplore the violence." Despite a consensus favoring order, the two men did not propose a formal plan to prevent future illegal outbreaks. As a result, local apathy continued to tarnish Sumter County's image as "the Garden Spot of Dixie."⁷¹

Even with a biblical sobriquet implying harmony and abundance, whites sensed no contradiction in upholding a segregated platform predicated upon black disfranchisement. This was the understood racial tradition of the area, and the

concomitant rules of social engagement required no enforcement. Those opposed to the commune viewed physical expressions of discontent through the lens of honorability, the idea that they were engaging in a justifiable fight to uphold their southern way of life. Most Jim Crow defenders thought that the region faced new threats distinctly different from a hundred years past. Whereas it was once “uppity” black Republicans like representative John T. Costin who sought to partake in the process of Reconstruction in southwest Georgia, now locals had to confront white integrationists like Clarence Jordan. The unmitigated violence against the farm revealed the attitudes of an indiscernible number of vigilantes unwilling to rely on politicians to fight a legal campaign against integration at the state and national levels. For them, the battlefield was not in the distant floors of the Capital and the Congress, but rather at the gates of Koinonia.⁷²

As Koinonians became targets of extralegal reprisals, so did neighboring blacks. Many could recall the abuses associated with slavery and early forms of sharecropping that emerged in Sumter County. Luedrell Pope recounted antebellum stories about “paddarows,” who enforced nightly curfews with bullwhips. Eugene Cooper’s great-grandfather used a similar pigeon, or possibly African term, “tan-baw,” to point out his master’s religious hypocrisy. During the post-Reconstruction period, blacks had little choice but to work for wealthy planters. “Everything that we didn’t grow we had to get from the whites. . . . It didn’t matter if it was fair or unfair,” remembered Ossie Little, describing why so few families broke even after they harvested their crops. A strict code of physical enforcement ensured black debt. Cooper explained: “If there was a crime committed in the area . . . and they couldn’t find the person who did it, they’d catch someone and make an example.” This was possible because blacks lacked legal representation and redress. Vigilante justice occurred frequently, according to Lorene

Floyd, who told the story of a family friend hanged for stealing a hog. These accounts are significant because they characterize the history of race relations in the county, while explaining why African Americans were suspicious of Koinonian interracialism.⁷³

It was unknown who had organized and carried out the attacks of 1956, but the Klan claimed responsibility for their upcoming acts of terror committed against blacks the next year. By the middle of February, the chapter known as “Unit 10” burned crosses at the homes of Top Wilson and Randolph Edwards. Lecturing before Howard University students, Jordan commented: “With memories of past experiences which flash through the minds of these people when a cross is burned, and the firm assurance that the law offers no protection for them, this is a most effective and heartless weapon.” Alma Jackson believed, “Once they burn a cross at your house, they were going to come back the next night and lynch you.” He and his wife, Mary Jackson, and Rufus and Sue Angry, the only blacks living at the farm at this time, responded differently to Klan intimidation. The Angrys accompanied the Atkinsons and John Gabor to “Koinonia Communities,” a second commune incorporated in Neshanic Station, New Jersey. The 120-acre farm provided a new market for farm products and relief for families suffering from “battle fatigue.” In an effort to make Alma leave, the Klan set his mother’s house on fire. She disapproved of his involvement with the farm and he eventually moved to Albany. Carranza Morgan countered Unit 10’s campaign of terror by buying supplies in Americus for Koinonia, as did Annie Bell Jackson, who also let Jordan borrow the family tractor. Despite these rare instances of black support, he understood why most “no longer dared to continue openly their previous friendship.”⁷⁴

The media capitalized on the opportunity to quote blacks suspicious of Koinonia. After the Klan burned a cross in his yard, Randolph Edwards commented that he no

longer had dealings with “that farm.” The *Americus Times-Recorder* covered his story under the headline, “Negro Denies Farm Association.” The interracial intentions of Koinonia put blacks at risk, causing some community leaders like Sam Weston, a former member of the Sumter County chapter of the NAACP, to dissociate with the commune. “Its none of our business,” he said, referring to his organization, which “wouldn’t lower its dignity” by associating with Koinonia. The Sumter County chapter had disbanded in 1951 due to white pressure. The unavailability of legal representation caused one African American identified by Jordan only as “Johnny” to seek recourse through the farm. He had worked for his planter harvesting cotton and peanuts for \$12 a week. His pregnant wife needed surgery to ensure the healthy delivery of their baby. Johnny committed himself to paying the \$167 hospital bill, but after his employer told him his “peanuts wasn’t much good and didn’t bring much,” he owed a new debt of \$54. The planter would not let him move to find additional work until he had paid his original balance. Koinonia paid Johnny’s debt so he could farm in a neighboring county. The October newsletter retold his story and concluded, “THIS IS NO ISOLATED CASE. SLAVERY HAS NOT BEEN ABOLISHED.”⁷⁵

In March, Klan intimidation intensified when Unit 10 organized a 70-car motorcade of 150 knight members from across southwest Georgia to try to force the relocation of Koinonia. When three out-of-county men approached Jordan and asked him to sell the farm, he replied sarcastically saying, “For a million dollars.” A rally had preceded the motorcade spectacle in which the birth of a “new Klan,” one seeking to “uplift mankind and the kingdom of heaven,” incited the cheers of over 100 spectators. A visiting Reverend Maples communicated an alternative, more insidious motive when he exhorted his fellow knights to fight against “the white men on the inside” who abetted

the “Negro’s cause for money.” “All red-blooded Americans . . . proud of their white race,” Maples shouted, were “to uphold the teachings of the bible” by ignoring the *Brown* decision. The Klan’s platform for action targeted “nigger lovers” like Jordan, and thereby reinforced the need for segregationists to wage a two-front war against officious blacks and vociferous whites.⁷⁶

The direct violence, or the targeting of Koinonians by drive-by shootings, continued throughout April. Passengers shot at Chris Drescher nearly killing him. John Gabor had to dodge a volley of bullets from a suspicious car, which had stopped at the hog lot where locals had repeatedly cut the fence. On spring break from the University of Georgia, Eleanor Jordan almost lost her life when shots penetrated the sheetrock within inches of her. These attacks, including the roadside bombings, were the subject of an “exhaustive investigation” conducted by a 23-man grand jury throughout March and April. The *Columbus Ledger* reported the hearing was “solely for the purpose of determining what affiliation” members might have with “subversive activities.” The jury seized all financial records, newsletters, and lists of contributors as evidence grounding their claims that the alleged communist members had perpetuated acts of violence against themselves to foster national sympathy and financial support. Released in a 27-page report entitled “Koinonia Farm,” the formal presentment declared that the commune lacked “neighborly interest” and “Christian fellowship” in addition to using its religious charter to avoid paying taxes. Furthermore, Koinonia served as a “haven” for unlawful conscientious objectors. The most painful accusation, however, was that black employees were kept in a state of “brain-washed peonage” and exploited as “slave worker[s] without pay.” The malicious depth of the investigation rendered the hearing an undeniable public issue, inciting a surge in local enmity towards Koinonians. No

indictment resulted from the case, but the controversy created an atmosphere of hatred conducive to the Birdsey bombing in downtown Americus a month later.⁷⁷

The grand jury presentment revealed the complicity of the leadership in manufacturing lies about the farm. Active Klansman and Solicitor General Charles Burgamy conducted the hearing before the Honorable Cleveland Rees, who presided over the summer camp injunction of 1955. The judge commended the jury for an “outstanding job toward perhaps finding a rapid solution to this problem” and concluded that the report would be “well received by right-thinking citizens in this section and over the entire United States.” Koinonians cringed at Judge Rees’s conclusion that the jury had performed “an outstanding service in the interest of truth and justice.” J. Frank Myers, president of the Chamber of Commerce and close friend of court clerk Tommy Hooks III, would later describe the presentment as “presumptuous” and “illegal.” He admitted that the hearing was “Tommy’s war.” “What did they accomplish? The grand jury is supposed to do things for the community and all they were doing was a hatchet job,” he revealed in a recent interview.⁷⁸

The hearing was an attempt on behalf of the leadership to keep Koinonia a local issue. A month before the April presentment, state Attorney General Eugene Cook announced that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) had probed Koinonia for the past year. Chief Delmar Jones confirmed that there was a strong GBI presence in Americus. His detectives patrolled the area, picked up Koinonian visitors en route to the farm, and subjected them to “extensive and often abusive interrogation[s].” The GBI’s action reflected poorly on Sheriff Chappell’s reputation and indirectly confirmed Jordan’s charge that “nothing had been done” by him and his 16-man police force to stop the reprisals. The grand jury refuted this accusation saying, “The reported violence can and

will be stopped when Koinonia Farm Inc. sees it fit to stop such violence.” In late January, Jordan wrote President Eisenhower requesting federal intervention. The White House sent his letter to federal Attorney General Herbert Brownell, who told Jordan that he had informed Governor Marvin Griffin of the farm’s perilous situation. As one reporter put it, “In effect, Mr. Brownell implied Georgia ought to keep its citizens from dynamiting their neighbors.” Infuriated over Jordan’s letter, Chappell announced that he “shouldn’t be running to the federal people since they can’t do any more than we are doing.” The sheriff did not intend to arrest the perpetrators, but he, along with Sumter officials, organized the grand jury hearing in an attempt to legitimate their offices by showing they had the Koinonia controversy under control.⁷⁹

Koinonia responded to the presentment published in the *Americus Times-Recorder* after discovering that the jury had seized the farm mailing list and used it to circulate their findings. The seven-page statement accused those involved of showing “no concern whatever for a fair and balanced presentation of the facts.” It began by mentioning the “pre-judgement” of the farm by GBI agents, who claimed Koinonians had staged the violence to create sensationalized stories for northern journalists to cover. Additionally, the jury accused the farm of having a net worth of \$150,000. Koinonia’s statement pointed out that they had failed to subtract an indebtedness of almost \$60,000 from this amount, nor did the group reference the \$13,000 worth of damage incurred during the roadside attacks. The counter report also provided the opportunity for any impartial certified public account to reexamine farm financial records. Addressing the allegations of subversion, Koinonians clarified that they could not be a haven for conscientious objectors and at the same time perpetrate violent crimes against themselves and their property. A newsletter explained, “We further stated that those who use

violence are practicing one of Communism's primary tenets." Assuring the public of their resolve, Koinonians concluded: "We affirm our intention to continue our struggle here until our right to believe is upheld and freedom of religion confirmed. . . . If those who seek to drive us out are so determined that the choice is to live or to die, then we shall have to die."⁸⁰

The farm was not alone in its fight to withstand local pressure. Twenty-three prominent Georgia ministers, representing five Protestant denominations and seven different counties, issued an open letter to other religious leaders in the state. Their declaration stated that Koinonia was a Christian, non-communist, pacifist group. Although they extended a concern for members' safety, these leaders sought to redeem the tarnished image of Sumter County and southwest Georgia by demanding an end to the reprisals. Reverend Edward A. Driscoll, Executive Secretary of the Georgia Council of Churches, told the *Augusta Chronicle*: "If lawless people can take over in our community, they can take over in another community. The good name of our state is being held up to the nation as a place where violence is tolerated and apparently encouraged." For this issue alone, he implored Sheriff Chappell to uphold the law.⁸¹

The clergy had responded to the Koinonian crisis as early as January 1956, after the first attack against the farm's roadside market. The Americus and Sumter County Ministerial Association issued an immediate resolution stating, "We deplore and condemn the use violence in any form against property and/or persons because of their personal beliefs which do not endanger the rights of others." The Georgia Council of Churches, the United Church Women of Georgia, and the Macon Ministerial Association endorsed the resolution. The Americus and Sumter County Ministerial Association drafted its statement at the Lee Street Methodist Church, where Reverend Edward

Carruth, acting with the approval of his 350 members, had subsequently rejected the pro-integration stance introduced at the 1956 General Methodist Conference in Birmingham, Alabama. Carruth believed that the “present trends” in the church would lead to “mass withdrawals,” and therefore, he advocated that southern congregations “prepare literature commensurate with social customs of the area.” The local ministerial association also protected their right to resist integration policies concluding, “As Christians and citizens we hold the right to disagree with others concerning their beliefs without forcing their agreement or yielding ours.” In short, their public announcement demanded law and order, while condoning segregation. The resolution went too far in protecting Koinonia’s rights, according to the grand jury, and as a result, the presentment suggested that these men “should be mildly rebuked for taking ill-considered action.”⁸²

The local clergy did not address the interracial dimension of the farm in their statement. Most religious leaders, like Reverend A. V. Hendrick of the Assembly of God Church and owner of the town barbershop, told their congregants that they remained opposed to the violence, but were not “in sympathy with the teachings and practices of nearby Koinonia Farm.” These ministers knew their careers were in jeopardy if they did not openly support segregation. Because virulent racists like Fred Chappell and James Blair had no choice but to advocate public order, the local resolution focused on the need for peace in Sumter County. A disgusted Jordan recounted the situation to the Washington, D.C. based-Council of Churches where he implicated parishioners and their pastors. “I would rather face the frantic, childish mob, even with their shotguns and buggy whips, than the silent, insidious mob of good church people who give assent to boycott and subtle psychological warfare. What can I say for those who know the word of God and will not speak it?” Why was evidence of the true Christian spirit so scarce,

Jordan asked? “Fear,” he believed. His disapproval of such cowardice came in the form of didactic instruction: “Faith and fear, like light and darkness, are incompatible. Fear is the polio of the soul, which prevents our walking by faith.” In his view, both clergy and churchgoers had a moral obligation to abandon their racial prejudices even if it meant living “a life in scorn of the consequences.”⁸³

After the Birdseye bombing on May 19 proved the inefficacy of the state and local ministerial resolutions, the delegates to the annual June meeting of the Synod of Georgia, Presbyterian Church, U.S. debated whether to release a bolder statement mentioning Koinonia by name. The majority of opinions supported the drafting of a specific declaration condemning the violent acts committed against the farm, but a minority felt that a defense similar to the previous open letters might “embarrass” Presbyterian denominations in Americus. The national General Assembly took the lead by declaring Koinonians “the enemies of society because their experiment knows no barrier of color.” The Synod of Georgia opted for a less controversial stance by avoiding the issue of race in what became a nameless address and another generic plea for peace. Upon offering his blessing, one pastor from an affluent church received a harsh reply from a temperamental Jordan. “Don’t you sympathize with me,” he answered, “I sympathize with you, in all your wealth and with men speaking highly of you.” Frustrated and angry, Jordan regretfully misplaced his resentment in this reply, which resulted from the collective disavowal of Koinonia by the Americus and Sumter County Ministerial Association, the Georgia Council of Churches, and the Synod of Georgia, Presbyterian Church, U.S. The United Church Women of Georgia was the only organization that answered the question, “What is Koinonia?” The organization boldly conjectured, “Will death to a fellow citizen be necessary to stir the forces of law and order, the forces of thoughtful and decent

citizens, to see that Koinonia is protected from further unlawful acts?" Jordan felt compelled to copy their brochure and send it to those on the farm mailing list because it drew "the lines on some basic American and Christian principles."⁸⁴

The national media focused on Koinonia as it became a trans-regional issue. Coverage by "outside" journalists worried the editor of the *Americus Times-Recorder* as he tried to maintain a peaceful image of Sumter County. Blair knew his town could not be both God-fearing and gun-wielding in the eyes of intruding carpetbaggers and treasonous scalawags. The *Christian Century*'s Harold Fey captured the embittered dispositions of whites who refused to believe that Koinonians were anything other than defenders of "mixing the races." He cast the Deep South, as historian Frederick Jackson Turner had the West, as a frontier, and the farm as the last "outpost" of Christian testament. Dora Byron, writing for the *Nation*, added a human face to the hypocrisy by quoting County Commissioner George Mathews of camp injunction notoriety, who warned: "We got a good county here, and God knows we treat the niggers right. . . . We aren't going to have a gang down here stirring up our Americus niggers." Koinonia was "getting help from Washington," according to Mathews, because farm members "wanted a yellow race." Mathews's comments demonstrate a disdain for the northern media's defense of Koinonian interracialism as well as the economic opportunities provided to impoverished blacks by this commitment. This fiery rhetoric also evoked the aged myth that without segregation, black men's propensity to rape white women would lead to uncontrollable miscegenation.⁸⁵

The last widely circulated piece of the year was André Fontaine's "The Conflict of a Southern Town" in the October issue of *Redbook* magazine. Jordan emerged as a prophet, preaching social equality and orienting the race issue in "the hearts of men." He

captured the disposition of the local leadership by quoting Blair, the editor who had previously lived in Indiana but had resided in Americus long enough to fear “mongrelization.” One of Chappell’s policemen described the need to maintain inequality between the races by telling of the “nigger” he grew up with and loved, but would shoot dead if he did not take his hat off before entering the station. Mayor Fred Bowen and J. Frank Myers of the Chamber of Commerce were more cautious and less abrasive, but they thought the violence would continue until the farm left. “I’ve sold tractors and parts to Koinonia for ten years, but if I did it today, my shop would be bombed, sure,” explained Bowen. Myers agreed saying, “There’s going to be trouble here--bad trouble. Sometimes I get so sick I want to close up shop and go away--set up somewhere else. But that would be running away, and a man can’t run away. . . . This is my country.”⁸⁶

The national stories defending the farm angered the Georgia media. Area newspapers presented the Koinonia imbroglio in diplomatic terms by focusing less on the physical acts of violence carried out against the establishment and more on the attitudes of those within its ranks. These reports still condemned the bombings and shootings, but to a lesser degree than ten months earlier. The question that perplexed most southern journalists was why Jordan and his followers had not left Sumter. Seeking to place blame, reporters indicted Koinonians. The *Atlanta Journal* suggested that the farm consisted of “much theory but very little practice.” Why had they not founded “their own brave new worlds in [more] congenial climates?”, the column asked. “People living in a part of the country where their beliefs were unpopular were being inconsiderate to remain there,” added a Klan spokesperson. The *Macon Telegraph* summed up local opinion

best: “The wisdom of their decision to openly ignore racial conventions in a troubled time in the Southland is open to question.”⁸⁷

Koinonians responded as they had after the first roadside bombing. Their goal remained to bear religious witness within a context of social service. “We express this intention firmly,” they stated, “not in defiance or in stubborn lack of consideration for the feelings of our neighbors.” Most newspaper subscribers understood the conflict as a battle between two unbridled wills--one being for integration, the other against it. Even liberal clergy members, who believed in the principles of Koinonia, thought the farm had overstayed its welcome and as a result lost any opportunity to enact change in the county. Cut off from the larger community, the colony represented a secluded and secretive sect of radical Christians with the goal of fomenting racial upheaval. A recalcitrant media made this evident in their unfavorable depiction of the venture. “The awful responsibility the Koinonians assume in continuing their practice in the face of such overwhelming popular disapproval,” read the *Atlanta Journal*, was indeed the major cause in shifting a year’s worth of blame from the Sumter opposition to the farm and its members. This misplacing of culpability invited the bombing of Birdsey’s feed store by assuring the perpetrators that Koinonia would absorb the guilt of the attack.⁸⁸

The Americus and Sumter County Ministerial Association and the *Americus Times-Recorder*’s denouncement of the violence inadvertently implicated the city leadership as an incapable governing body. Had these men not expected the violence to spread beyond the rural confines of the farm? What made the reprisals of 1956 more acceptable was the fact that they occurred away from the county seat. The destruction of downtown immediately complicated the relationship between farm members and county representatives. Koinonians’ refusal to relocate was no longer a legitimate reason for

why the latter could not prevent the extralegal attacks against them. A week after the Birdsey incident, Chamber of Commerce President J. Frank Myers, Bank of Commerce President and States Rights' Council Secretary Charles F. Crisp, Mayor Fred Bowen, Sumter County Board of Commissioners Chairman George Mathews, and six other prominent leaders met in Jordan's living room on May 26 to discuss possible solutions to ending the violence. The group told Jordan that he had a moral responsibility to protect the welfare of the townsfolk by moving from Americus. When Jordan replied that their departure would be an admission to the country that the Sumter leadership refused to enforce the law, Crisp, the appointed spokesperson, answered, "We want the goodwill of the whole nation, but we want peace and love and goodwill in our own county before everything else." This came after he appealed to Jordan's religious sensibilities stating, "Now our philosophy is that the first duty of a Christian would be to--well, peace on earth, good will to men, to make brotherly love in the community. Unfortunately, your experiment has not done that. It has set brother against brother; it has created bitterness; it has created hatred; it has created every emotion that is contrary to my concept of Christianity." The representatives assured him that he would receive a fair price for the farm. Jordan listened as Mathews and Myers explained that they lacked the police protection to stop "folks slipping around at night." Jordan attributed the court injunction of 1955 as the primary reason for the violent atmosphere. Involved in the hearing, Mathews lied by saying that the injunction resulted from a concern to protect innocent camp children from the dangers of possible terrorist acts. An angry Jordan corrected him saying that the issue had been sanitation, not safety. He also decried the grand jury for making similar false allegations against Koinonia. Jordan lectured the group:

If that grand jury had gone into this thing and said: 'We're going to preserve law and order. Koinonia might be doing what we hate and we'd like to spit on them, but

America is that kind of nation, where we can live together, where we can tolerate those kinds of people, and we're going to put some law and order into this thing.' Some businessmen could have stood up and said: 'We'll not boycott. Blow up our businesses, but we're going to be free men in a free society'."

He then asked if the state would provide protection. Satisfied with the efforts of Sheriff Chappell and his deputies, the representatives commented that no other solutions existed other than the removal of the farm.⁸⁹

Jordan thought the local leadership *did* have the ability to stop the violence, but in a good faith gesture, he proposed the formation of a committee comprised of in-and out-of-state clergy, along with secular appointees to intercede on both parties' behalf. This three-man jury would hold public hearings and make thorough investigations before concluding whether Koinonians should relocate. The opposition objected due to "foreigners" not understanding their distinct social circumstances. Again, a guarantee of peace could come only from the farm's absence. The county representatives reminded Jordan that "when the mass of people in the U. S. want something, they get it [even] if they have to resort to force to do it." The very men with the power and resources available to stop the aggression felt they were unable to control this juggernaut of local dissent, meaning that any outside committee would also fail to achieve a peaceful solution. Not even Georgia organizations could act as an impartial third party, because they were not from Sumter County and therefore did not understand the area's history.⁹⁰

The Birdsey bombing was the last widely publicized act of indirect violence associated with Koinonia. The boycott continued, strengthened by the few black business owners in Sumter County, who began participating after the attack. The threat of violence towards Koinonians had not abated, however. In November, a man described as "powerfully built" beat Conrad Browne as he attempted to ship some pecan parcels. Sheriff Chappell charged the victim with a misdemeanor for disturbing the peace and

minutes later arrested Jordan for driving with a New Jersey tag from the second commune in Neshanic Station. A few weeks after the incident, the congregation of the Calvary Episcopal Church asked Reverend Paul Ritch to resign after they found out he had transported Browne to the hospital. Conrad and his wife, Ora, were friends with Ritch, and they had previously attended services at his request. Parishioners complained about worshipping with “nigger-lovers,” prompting the Brownes to stop coming in order to protect the reputation of the reverend. Disregarding this isolated event, the violence had suddenly stopped after the downtown explosion. An examination of the economic changes that occurred in Sumter County at this time explains why the local leadership feared a second Americus attack.⁹¹

CHAPTER 3

“Working Untiringly to Line Up Industrial Prospects”

J. Frank Myers of the Chamber of Commerce and H. Phil Jones of the Industrial Development Corporation (a subsidiary of the Americus and Sumter County Development Corporation) feared that business boards might no longer consider southwest Georgia a safe and profitable location for their companies. The bombing--with the media attention it had attracted--undermined the men’s plan to secure contracts with northern manufactures. The greatest repercussion of the downtown affair came when the Marlette Coach Company cancelled a tentative agreement to build a mobile home plant in Americus. The loss of over 100 potential jobs resulted from this revocation. The news was too embarrassing for James R. Blair to print. Myers and Jones worked to reopen negotiations with the Marlette board of directors. Their diplomacy paid off in early September when a headline of the *Americus Times-Recorder* read in enlarged bold print: “Mobile Homes Supply House Slated to Open in Americus.”⁹²

Marlette reconsidered after the Chamber of Commerce made a generous offer to finance the preliminary phase of the building project. The organization raised more than \$150,000 within three days to loan the corporation for the initial stages of construction. Financing proposals were a way to secure business interests, thereby strengthening the economy of the county. “Think of the jobs that will be made available for others, the increase in property values, and the growth in business for other residents of the community,” Blair explained. The optimistic editor believed that the chamber was “working untiringly to line up industrial prospects and [to] sell them on our community

as an ideal site for their plants.” Just several weeks after the downtown attack, the Industrial Development Corporation purchased a 368-acre tract of land to attract companies like Marlette. H. Phil Jones believed this was an essential measure to “offer prospective manufacturers the utilities and site locations they need.” The opportunity to house substantial corporations required that both organizations conceal the violence. The *Americus Times-Recorder* actively promoted an image of the town as peaceful and progressive. Implying the threat of violence no longer existed, the controversial reports on the Birdsey bombing and Koinonia Farm disappeared from the newspaper. In their place were columns emphasizing the “new industrial dawn” of Americus.⁹³

The county had not welcomed extensive expansion before mid-century. The urbanization of neighboring Albany served as a lasting example of what happened when an influx of business ventures invaded small agricultural communities. Local historian William Bailey Williford believed, “Americus had for too long been complacent about any type of social change. Indeed, it was a matter of local pride that the little city had discouraged new businesses from locating there; life had always been pleasant and rewarding enough without a lot of strangers around.” But after two years of severe drought in 1953 and 1954, the newly appointed president of the Chamber of Commerce, J. P. Luther, viewed the revitalization and market diversification of Albany as a similar possibility for Americus. On July 21, 1953, the county seat hosted some twenty-five thousand people for Manufacturers’ Day, an opportunity to display the local effort “to achieve a balance between agriculture and industry.” The *Atlanta Journal* reported: “Sumter County long has been famed as one of the nation’s finest agricultural centers. Manufacturers’ Day was designed to tell another story--the growing might of Americus as a city of industry.” The gala included a parade with floats displaying the names of

town businesses to impress potential investors. The largest corporations represented were the Manhattan Shirt Company, the Dayton Veneer and Lumber Company, and the Shiver Lumber Company; together they employed over 1,100 residents.⁹⁴

Myers worked with Luther to dispel Sumter County's reputation "of not wanting industries to locate here." The men sent hundreds of Manufacturers' Day invitations to state government officials like Ben T. Huiet, Commissioner of Labor; M. D. Collins, Superintendent of Schools; and Ernest Vandiver, Major General of the Department of Defense. They solicited companies ranging from the Atlanta branch of the John Deere Plow Company to the California-based Studebaker Corporation to the International Harvester Company in Chicago. As Meyers explained to the editors of *Time* and *Look* magazine, "Our organization, as well as many of the other citizens of the town, has become conscious of the need for manufacturing concerns to stabilize our economy. The idea of this day is to publicize this fact and to let the outside world know what industries we have here now, and what we have to offer new industries." The event represented a significant drive to alter the county's image as a rural, poor area.⁹⁵

The Americus Chamber of Commerce was similar to urban booster organizations located throughout the state, especially Atlanta, a center for companies seeking access to burgeoning consumer markets after World War II. With events like Manufacturers' Day, these development corporations or "committees of 100" courted industries by selling progressive images of their counties. According to historian James Cobb, "An aggressive, well-supported chamber often prepared descriptive booklets for each available site in the community. These pamphlets would give detailed information on size, topography, drainage, railroad and highway accessibility, zoning, and utility connections, as well as cost estimates for preparing the site." In addition to implementing

a letter writing campaign to attract potential investors, the Americus chamber evoked a civic consciousness by renovating the rustic face of the county seat. J. P. Luther oversaw the construction of an elaborate country club in 1946 and the remodeling and expansion of the city hall in 1949. In December 1952, he dedicated a new \$2,000,000 hospital. Two years later, the Georgia Southwestern College acquired a new \$220,000 natural science building. Student enrollment immediately increased after a sharp decline during the previous academic year. Myers continued Luther's commitment to improving local education when, in 1957, he secured 19.5 acres of land for the South Georgia Trade and Vocational School to "meet the demands of industry and provide better opportunities for its students." As chamber officials, both men knew the importance of having quality higher learning facilities near potential industrial sites.⁹⁶

Neither Myers, Jones, nor Luther had anticipated that the extralegal targeting of Koinonia Farm would attract national media coverage and jeopardize their public relations campaign. Underneath the controversy was a nascent relationship between the economics of Americus and the need to preserve the peace. The population numbered 11,389 citizens in 1950, a 22.7 percent increase over the previous decade, with blacks comprising roughly 50 percent. By 1960, 2,083 newcomers had moved into the small downtown area, resulting in a \$1220 increase in the median family income. Manufacturing dominated the city economy and remained the major occupation for working whites and blacks, but the latter made \$1,257 less than their laboring counterparts. Assured of this disparity in pay, the leadership focused on their industrial campaign without worrying about Koinonians' efforts to enact social change. The county seat had the financial resources available to carry out this plan of improvement by mid-century. The Bank of Commerce, the Citizens Bank of Americus, and the First Federal

Savings and Loan Association had assets totaling more than \$12,000,000. The state Revenue Department calculated the annual volume of retail business in Sumter at \$17,000,000 and building permits for the first nine months of 1955 at \$1,500,000.⁹⁷

The strength of the town banks ensured municipal improvements, which corresponded with the state's campaign to industrialize. Between 1946 and 1955, there was a 40 percent increase in the number of factories in Georgia. Even with the passing of Governor Arnall's amendment to end tax exemptions for market-oriented industries, believing that they attracted low wage firms, newly relocated manufacturers profited. Drawn by cheap labor, low taxes, and few unions, these corporations caused Georgia's real gross product to double between 1950 and 1964. This increase resulted from an occupational shift beginning with a 20 percent decline in farming and 41 percent jump in manufacturing from 1940 to 1950. By 1955, seven out of ten factory workers labored in textile, apparel, lumber, and furniture factories, a statistic that explained why the Manhattan Shirt Company, the Dayton Veneer and Lumber Company, and the Shiver Lumber Company were the largest businesses in Americus. There were more industry jobs in urban areas, which attracted a number of Georgia's 320,000 veterans, who took advantage of the G. I. Bill of Rights by attending night classes at state universities. Few rural counties, Sumter included, offered the same educational or employment opportunities. A local resident explained: "It was said that some young men found Americus too slow and provincial after the great cities they had visited during three or more years in uniform. . . . They concluded that Americus had little to offer ambitious young men and women who had no economic ties to the community or no interest in farming Sumter County's fertile fields."⁹⁸

The renovation of Americus corresponded with the Chamber of Commerce's drive to improve public relations in 1955, which Myers described as being at "an all time low because of customs, traditions, habits of conversation, methods of approach, lack of local pride and various characteristics peculiar to our own community." As head of the "Steering Committee," he recruited members possessing "a genuine enthusiasm to make Americus and Sumter County a better place in which to live." His plan consisted of attracting industry in 12 categories: automobile and tractor parts; agriculture, livestock, and oil mills; service stations, transportation, and taxis; construction and building; hotels, motels, and restaurants; manufacturers; professional; retail; real estate and insurance; government; education; finance, and utilities. Each category had a chairman and at least three prominent community leaders, like Tommy Hooks, III, clerk of the grand jury hearing, and George Mathews, Board of Health representative in the camp injunction, who headed the real estate and agriculture groups. Charles F. Crisp, who officiated over the meeting in Jordan's living room after the Birdsey bombing, was one of 17 appointed "speakers" for the public relations campaign. These men happened to be the most outspoken critics of Koinonia.⁹⁹

Local business leaders and storeowners worked together to attract industry. In October 1956, the board of directors of the Americus & Sumter County Development Corporation approved its first loan to the J & M Trucking Company to finance the construction of a plant on two acres of land within the city limits. The 12-year loan was for \$35,000. The board called on stockholders to provide \$200 pledges in exchange for three percent debentures to help offset the Chamber of Commerce's inadequate budget of \$11,000. Myers proposed the creation of an Industrial Fund Account to ease the burden placed on investors. He asked business owners to give from one to three percent of their

budgets in addition to paying their chamber membership dues. The campaign raised approximately \$10,000 by January 1957, which allowed the leadership to pay the J & M Trucking Company loan and to compete for additional contracts.¹⁰⁰

Over the next two months, the chamber bid on an AA-1- (assets over \$1,000,000) rated metal manufacturer requiring a 100,000 square foot building on 10 to 15 acres of land. T. D. Warren, chairman of the Government Committee, responded, “This is the type of industrial development our citizens are so anxious to secure and I am sure that with our willingness and financial resources to supply these good folks with the land, building, and facilities, we would be able to interest them.” This, however, was not the only issue concerning the board of directors, who, in late February, passed a resolution “to study the advisability of the Chamber making a public statement in regard to the current agitation concerning Koinonia Farm.” They agreed that “the general tenor of the statement would be along the line that our community is a law-biding one, and that the impression given by recent statements by Koinonia’s personal and some press and radio accounts relative to the community is a distorted and grossly unfair impression.” Their decision came after they discovered that various chapters of the “Friends of Koinonia,” based in Washington D. C., Cincinnati, Chicago, and Pennsylvania, had written letters to the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution* warning potential manufacturers of the risks associated with operating in Americus. In a memo titled “To Those Who Care about Brotherhood,” one chapter focused on the ethical as well as the commercial implications of the reprisals:

The position of the *Americus Times-Recorder* is that the violence and disregard for law and order are harmful to the coming of the tourists and new businesses to that section of Georgia, and for this reason the violence against Koinonia should be halted. A letter to the editor might agree with this position, and urge that in addition the newspaper place its editorial policy on a moral as well as business basis.

A farm Newsletter surmised, “Such strong-arm tactics merely weaken the state’s prestige at a time when it is trying to attract new industries.” In March, news came that the AA-1-rated metal company was no longer of “financial stability.”¹⁰¹

In a recent interview, J. Frank Myers speculated that the violence might have cost the city the bid. Chamber officials blamed Koinonia causing the board of directors responsible for the Steering Committee and its 12 categories of industrial interest to seek the relocation of the farm. Their efforts to buy the commune resulted from the Friends of Koinonia’s description of Americus as a violent county seat incapable of handling new business interests. “Any manufacturer contemplating a move down there ought to see the building scattered by a big charge of dynamite [roadside market],” read one address. Continuing, the statement advised: “A manufacturer should ask himself if he wants to establish a plant in that kind of atmosphere. Would he want to send northerners, who might not go along with southern ideas on racism, into an area like that?” Another unsigned letter showed the effectiveness of the media in reporting the extralegal reprisals against the farm. The penman explained, “I’ve been reading in various publications about the economic pressure put on Koinonia Farm near Americus and about the good arsonist Americus citizens [*sic*] spraying lead and tossing dynamite. If they do things like that to Southerners, what would they do to a Yankee like me?. . . . Georgia advertisers don’t need to waste their money on me.” Nearly a month later, in late March, the grand jury attempted to indict Koinonia; when their suit failed, the Birdseye attack occurred, which prompted J. Frank Myers, Fred Bowen, George Mathews, and Charles F. Crisp to ask Jordan to sell the farm. More insidious was the fact that these men--in collusion with James Blair, Tommy Hooks, III, Charles Burgamy, Fred Chappell, and Cleveland Rees--were county representatives: the Chamber of Commerce president, the

mayor, the Board of Commissioners chairman, the States' Rights Council secretary, the editor, the clerk to the grand jury, the solicitor general, the sheriff, and the superior court judge.¹⁰²

Other than these men's disdain for members' interracial practices, scholarship on Koinonia has not explained why the Americus leadership insisted on purchasing the farm. An examination of the Chamber of Commerce's agenda of expansion reveals a conspiratorial plan to use Koinonian land to house outside industry. The grand jury presentment occurred at a time when the chamber was buying land to build an "industrial subdivision" to locate potential manufacturing prospects. As historian James Cobb has noted, the most important question investors confronted was whether "industry-starved low-income communities possessed the resources to provide the expanded public services that industrial growth seemed to demand." Myers recalled, "If you bring in industry where are you going to put them? Where are you going to get water and sewage? Those were the really big issues." His long-term plan consisted of purchasing cheap farm acreage and placing it in the Soil Bank Program of 1956, a government subsidy that paid dividends on out-of-production land. In a letter to Phil Jones, Myers informed that he had five farms in the program, but that he was interested in acquiring the "Perry property," the "Dobbins property," and "the 16 acres on the highway which is owned by Mrs. Eva Pearlman." In late April, the Americus and Sumter County Development Corporation announced its campaign to use these residential lands to establish an "industrial district" near U. S. Highway 280. To finance the project, the chamber would issue new debentures in exchange for the ones given to pay for the J & M Trucking Manufacturing Company's expansion in December 1956. J & M had constructed a plant and leased it to the Mott Body Manufacturing Company, a business with an annual

payroll of \$150,000. Nearly a month later, Mayor Bowen approved a resolution to furnish water and sewage facilities to any industry requiring 40,000 square feet or more within the proposed district. He also assured something Jordan had requested for over a year--“adequate police and fire protection.” Only ten miles from Americus and seven miles from U. S. Highway 280, the farm would have assured the chamber over 1,000 acres for future commercial expansion in addition to earning a substantial income once placed in the Soil Bank Program, which earned Sumter farmers \$65,300 in 1957.¹⁰³

Unable to force Koinonia’s relocation, the chamber continued to renovate Americus by expanding the airport facilities at Souther Field. Willis Shiver, head of the Aviation Committee, had refused to sell Jordan lumber to rebuild the farm’s roadside market seven months earlier. He received a letter from engineer J. B. Lovell saying, “Let the facts be known that Souther Field has now reached the saturation point insofar as expansion. . . . The acquisition of land is a ‘Must’.” Both men intended to see the construction of a new paved runway measuring 3,600 feet long and 75 feet wide. The proposition was important because of Souther Field’s relationship to the North-South Airway between Albany and Atlanta, used by Delta Airway, which meant the possibility for increased traffic through the airport. “By having Souther Field connected to other cities by airlines of major size or intra-state size,” Shiver informed, “Americus and Sumter County residents would be privileged to travel by plane from Souther Field in addition to air express of merchandise.” To complete the plan, the chamber cleared 16 pecan trees from two and a half acres of resident Charlie Dover’s land. The aviation committee gave him \$4,000 for damages. When unknown locals sawed down 297 Koinonian trees, the farm, which lacked insurance, did not receive any compensation, nor

did members receive praise for their commitment to social justice as had Myers and Jones for their efforts to bring industry to Americus.¹⁰⁴

On March 21, 1958, Myers wrote Senator Richard B. Russell to inform him of the chamber's progress. He bragged about the area's natural gas, sewage, paved streets, electrical power, and railroad facilities. Myers also told him about the \$360,000 raised to finance the construction of buildings for three new manufacturers. He estimated that these businesses would provide jobs for approximately "400 *white* men." Because the city lacked the necessary living arrangements for "key personnel," Myers asked for assistance from the Federal Housing Administration to help build homes ranging from \$9,000 to \$14,000. He suggested the board buy the "Drew property," consisting of 60 acres, and designate it as a potential residential area. John Oxford, the new chamber president, explained the decision: "Unless the Development Corporation purchases these lands, it is quite likely that it [*sic*] will be purchased by some private individual and it may be difficult to get help from the State, County, and City Governments, if privately owned." This concern, once again, explains why the Americus leadership asked Jordan to sell Koinonia.¹⁰⁵

The Chamber of Commerce secured jobs and housing for white men only. Myers remembered that "the money folks in town," like the Crisp family, told northern manufacturers that they could not hire blacks. Even though the chamber was responsible for building 144 new homes in 1955, corresponding with a 16.7 percent increase over the decade, tenant shacks still dotted the landscape. Koinonia responded by helping the working poor secure affordable housing through the Fund for Humanity Program begun in 1968. Eight years later, Millard Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity, a housing project modeled on the farm's campaign to eradicate substandard housing throughout

Americus. On November 11, 1969, the Joseph “Bo” Johnson family, who were long-time acquaintances of Jordan, moved into the first of over 175 Fund homes constructed throughout the county by 1990. Although Jordan died at 57, just thirteen days before they moved into their new living quarters, the family made their last twenty-five dollar monthly payment in July 1989. Bo signed his mortgage with an “X.”¹⁰⁶

The transformation of Americus took place several years before the first attack on the farm. Attitudes towards Koinonians did not alter in accordance with the developing urban landscape. Jordan’s unwillingness to relocate provided the greatest impediments to the Chamber of Commerce’s plan to continue city expansion, because the farm incurred the blame for the violence threatening potential manufacturers. Jordan responded, “If we leave, you won’t even be able to get industries to come in here. Sumter County will go down in the nation’s book as a black spot.” The majority of locals failed to understand the importance behind Koinonians’ determination to instigate racial equality by working the land and living simple lives. Two incompatible methods of measuring social and economic advancement emerged in Sumter. The farm--sufficiently comfortable to members--seemed rustic in comparison to the new industrial face of Americus, while the racial prerogatives of most white citizens appeared equally antiquated by Koinonian standards. A stroke of great irony blurred an already mixed canvas of cotton and concrete. Commune residents defined economic empowerment as the opportunity for the poor to improve their lives through hard work and godly devotion. Conversely, county business leaders harbored an exclusive perspective pertaining solely to the sensibilities of white consumers and storeowners. It was within this context that the farm operated throughout the latter half of the 1950s. As long as locals felt safe walking the freshly paved sidewalks of Americus, Koinonia was an appropriate target for citizens to combat

interracialism. This changed once the attacks became a direct threat to downtown business and the chamber's plan to attract industry.

Abating the violence related not only to the city's expansion but also to the media's coverage of the integration controversy caused by the *Brown* ruling. The downtown attack on May 22, 1957 embodied the culmination of a year's worth of violence. Georgia newspapers had never condoned the use of extralegal force against Koinonia, but they took a more vociferous, unequivocal stance against the reprisals after the Birdsey bombing. Extending beyond a demand for peace, these mediums contextualized the violence within a framework of "massive resistance." The *Macon Telegraph* believed the Birdsey attack had undermined southern opposition to integration. "At a time such as the present, when the South needs understanding of its views by public opinion in other sections of the country it is unfortunate that such incidents as this most recent bombing weaken our prestige and alienate potential support." Three months earlier the newspaper reported, "There is danger that the tragic harassment of [farm] members . . . will become symbolic of the South's resistance to desegregation." In bold print, the article concluded: "It may interest non-Southerners to know that tactics of violence used against Koinonia have been just as sincerely condemned by responsible white Southerners." These accounts not only supported a national political campaign against integration, but they also exculpated Dixiecrats by characterizing them as law biding and peaceful.¹⁰⁷

No other regional event affected Sumter residents more than the Little Rock, Arkansas controversy in September 1957, when the federal government ordered the desegregation of Central High School. The Birdsey attack, which occurred nearly three months earlier, implied that Koinonia, as a symbol of interracialism, was no longer solely

a county problem. The tensions surrounding the commune had become representative of the larger fight to preserve the racial mores of the region. The local leadership supported Governor Faubus's use of the National Guard to "prevent violence," while condemning President Eisenhower's adoption of "bayonet rule." Whereas the use of force was once a viable tactic to threaten the farm, it had now become a political argument to indict Eisenhower's abuse of executive power and the High Court's usurpation of states' rights. "If and when some innocent child is seriously wounded and perhaps slain in violence over integration, there should be and perhaps will be some sleepless nights for members of the Supreme Court," declared a vindictive James Blair. Unlike the *Brown* decision, which prompted the initial attack on the farm, the Little Rock imbroglio helped secure local peace due to the editor's ability to highlight federal aggression in contrast to his description of Americus residents as "peace-loving, church-going, and cultured." In doing so, the newspaper protected the Chamber of Commerce's bids for industry by mandating law and order to substantiate their attack on the government's "call to arms."¹⁰⁸

The *Americus Times-Recorder* adopted the aged stance that school segregation violated states' rights. Eisenhower's decision to employ what Blair called "the ultimate weapon--the army--to uphold this decision" only exacerbated his claim of despotism. The likely result, the editor speculated, was "an uneasy armistice but not peace." Lawfulness would prevail only by letting "those who must live with this problem settle it voluntarily, in their own time, and in their own way." An article reprinted from the *Christian Science Monitor* reinforced the argument that southerners had a right to defend segregation through legal measures within jurisdictional state bounds. Addressing the Americus Rotary Club, a Griffin County editor suggested that residents abolish the

“federally controlled” National Guard in Georgia, while creating a “private school plan” to maintain segregated education. Speaking for the majority, Blair concluded: “We deplore the violence, as much as we dislike the un-Constitutional and unrealistic Supreme Court decision on segregation, but violence cannot be condoned. There are legal ways to fight integration and these must be pursued vigorously.” Convinced that arbitration was in the best interest of the South, the editor ended his harangue saying, “But hate solves nothing. And resort to lawlessness is a detour from the road to just settlements.” These settlements--like the terms mandating the removal of Koinonia Farm--were only acceptable if they bolstered white beliefs on race.¹⁰⁹

The official county corollary mandating lawfulness did not interfere with the boycott, even though Koinonia had been a valuable source of income for many storeowners. A July farm newsletter reported that the violence subsided after the Birdsey bombing, but it voiced members’ anxiety over the intensified sanctions. “While it is impossible to make any predictions in a situation as volatile as this, it is probable that the violent stage is pretty well over and we are in for a long, drawn-out struggle for economic survival.” Black businessmen in Americus, under pressure from Sheriff Chappell, no longer sold to the farm. The local Sears and Roebuck store refused to serve Koinonia, while the Citizens Bank of Americus cancelled its checking account. The boycott forced the farm to reduce crop cultivation, which now consisted of 93 acres of peanuts and 45 acres of corn. As a result, Koinonia entered into the pecan processing industry, because markets were outside of Georgia, meaning members could bypass the sanctions against them.¹¹⁰

The sheller machines and storage equipment needed to begin the project cost \$50,000. Jordan felt that commercial credit sources remained unreliable; they offered

nothing other than “cold business transactions” without the mutual partnership indicative of Christian fellowship. He preferred to raise the amount by securing 2,000 pledges of \$25 each. The farm would issue annual notes, yielding four percent interest, and reimburse benefactors by paying off 200 pledges a year for ten years. This plan was not unlike Koinonia’s “insurance card” drive where members received 2000 pledges of \$50 over a period of four months. The farm raised the \$50,000 necessary to begin their pecan venture before the season began. After nineteen months of boycott, such an “avalanche of kindness” was necessary for Koinonia’s survival.¹¹¹

The threat of violence had ended without jeopardizing the sanctions that “contained” Koinonia. To the dismay of Chamber of Commerce officials, Sumter representative Jack Murr introduced a bill to create an interim legislative committee to reinvestigate the farm in early 1958. The proposal cited the same unsubstantiated claims as those presented to the grand jury. James Mackay of Decatur recommended a delay while committee members studied the bill’s wording. He also voiced concern over the media attention Koinonia would receive with its passing. Paul J. Jones, Jr. of Dublin supported the investigation because the farm “seems to weaken our whole stand on segregation. Something out to be done about it.” The future floor leader in the House under Governor Ernest Vandiver, Frank Twitty, believed, “A little spotlighting of this problem won’t do any harm.” The previous grand jury had incited the Birdsey bombing and undermined the chamber’s goal of securing manufacturing bids. To Murr’s chagrin, the bill, which he thought would secure his reelection, cost him his office.¹¹²

Governor Griffin initially supported the bill, but in early March, he said he would pocket veto the proposal. His aides told reporters that the grand jury had already made a complete investigation into the farm. At the end of the month, however, an *American*

Times Recorder headline read: “Griffin Changes Mind and Signs Koinonia Bill.” But the legislature was not willing to allocate the requested \$50,000 for expenses, and because Murr was not re-elected, the house committee abandoned the bill. The doomed representative had calculated his attack on Koinonia to coincide with the state elections that summer, expecting Sumter citizens to support the bill and his campaign. Murr’s constituents did not welcome the resolution, because they feared the violence that might result from a second investigation. The proposal *did* break ten months of peace. On April 5, shots rang out as Koinonians unloaded farm material inside their gates. No more attacks occurred after this isolated incident.¹¹³

Murr’s bill increased Koinonia’s political notoriety, which Tift County legislator William T. Bodenhamer focused on as part of his gubernatorial platform in the Democratic primary of 1958. A Baptist pastor and Executive Director of the States Rights’ Council for Georgia, he claimed his opponent, Ernest Vandiver, was a “weakling” on segregation. Bodenhamer linked the lieutenant governor to the farm, because Robert Jordan, Clarence’s brother, was his chief aide for the past three years. Bodenhamer published the “Georgia Progress” and the July issue attacked the farm under the caption: “Vandiver Forces Bring Race-Mixing Farm to Georgia.” Subheadings included: “Koinonia Children Attend Integrated Summer Camp”; “Sumter County Grand Jury Charges Koinonia Farm-Communist Ties”; and “Bill Bodenhamer Pledges to Close Koinonia by Eminent Domain Law.” With his famous “No Not One!” promise to keep black students out of Georgia’s schools, Vandiver won 156 counties to Bodenhamer’s three. He received 2,337 Sumter County votes to his opponent’s 604, a four to one majority. Robert Jordan also secured the honored office of President Pro-Tem of the State Senate. A year had passed since the Birdsey bombing and no blacks were living at

Koinonia. The community was aware of the boycott's palpable effect on the farm. The real issues confronting the county were school desegregation and the need to protect the Chamber of Commerce's progress. Myers described Bodenhamer as "cuckoo" for thinking Koinonia was still an important political issue.¹¹⁴

Sumter locals rejected the Koinonian publicity that Bodenhamer's campaign promised. The newspapers attacked him for conducting a "smear campaign" with the intention of resurrecting the "vulture of race-baiting" in Georgia politics. Vandiver never responded to his opponent's accusation that his chief aide was a farm member, which left Robert Jordan to defend himself against Bodenhamer's charge. "I have had no contact, no dealings as an attorney or in any other way with that farm or any of its officials during the time I served as aide to the lieutenant governor," he assured his constituency.

Vandiver admitted that it "was extremely difficult not to reply to that sort of demagoguery," because he knew how much the claim hurt the Jordan family, especially Robert. Misinformed, chief-of-staff Griffin Bell admired the way that Vandiver's chief aide "stuck" with Clarence, which, in his opinion, cost him the governorship in 1962. (Robert would eventually become the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia.) His disassociation hurt Clarence. "Well I think that sometimes you will have to choose as to whether or not you want to give your loyalty to Jesus Christ or whether you want some office," Clarence advised. Robert always chose the latter.¹¹⁵

The Georgia media did not respond favorably to Bodenhamer's Koinonia-Vandiver accusation. The *Banks County Journal* commented, "Many veteran observers were surprised, even shocked, at the low blows thrown in the round of the main event--the Gubernatorial contest." The *Marietta Daily Journal* read: "Bodenhamer shocked many by stooping so low. . . . This effort on the part of the man from Ty Ty is a drastic

maneuver calculated to stir up the racial issue for the purpose of acquiring votes.” The editorial described the farm as a “subterfuge issue” that would inevitably disturb otherwise harmonious race relations throughout the state. Bodenhamer distrusted the “pro-integrationist” media and brought about his own *coup de grâce* by claiming the lieutenant governor was “dominated and controlled by the big Atlanta newspapers.” The *Macon News* responded with the headline, “Vandiver Sticks to the Issues while Bodenhamer Attacks.” Most daily publications targeted Bodenhamer by mentioning his failure to sign the private school amendment as a representative to the General Assembly in 1953, which proposed to use state funding for the creation of all-white academies. The desegregation of Georgia’s public schools transcended any concern over his resurrection of Koinonia as a looming threat to the color line. Farm members, however, were not passive political spectators. The Sumter County Board of Education faced its first challenge, not from an NAACP test case, but from three Koinonian parents seeking the enrollment of their sons and daughters in Americus High School for the 1960 academic year.¹¹⁶

On September 12, William R. Harrell and Noah Shelley, two American Civil Liberties Union lawyers, filed a federal motion for a preliminary injunction against the Americus School Board on behalf of the Jordans, the Brownes, and the Wittkampers and their children, Jan, 13, Lora Ruth, 13, and William, 15. The suit claimed that the board rejected the children because of their parents’ religious and social beliefs. Officials contended that the decision resulted “from the best interest of all concerned.” The Koinonians did not want to take legal action, fearing that the case might disrupt the city’s peaceful atmosphere. They filed suit only after the board, consisting of Mrs. Tommy Hooks III, Mayor Fred Bowen, and eleven other familiar participants in the Koinonian

drama, admitted 27 white students, but not Jan, Lora Ruth, and William. On September 28, U. S. District Judge W. A. Bootle heard the case and sided with the plaintiffs. He believed the board had focused “solely on the grounds of religious and social practices and beliefs” of the parents and not the constitutional rights of the children. After missing two months of school, the students entered Americus High School without incident according to the local newspaper.¹¹⁷

Jan Jordan told a different story. Clarence warned his daughter of the attitudes she would likely encounter, but Jan paid little attention, finding comfort in the fact that her friends from Thalean Elementary School attended Americus High. He recounted his words to her in a lecture to students of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary two years later: “Now, Jan, honey, we won the case in the court, but there isn’t a court in all the land that can make these folks love you. Now they are going to be unkind and I am just wondering if you really want to go to school here. If you don’t, well, we’ll send you somewhere else.” His admonition bore truth before her first day when she received a phone call from an old acquaintance who told her not to talk to her in class. Because Lora Ruth and William had a different lunch period, Jan ate alone. She quickly became the target of Bob Speck’s verbal attacks. The boy’s father was a known Klan leader. Jordan was a pacifist but no longer could he watch his daughter cry herself to sleep. After discussing Jan’s troubles with an unconcerned principal, he concluded: “I’ve tried to be a follower of Jesus and He taught me to love my enemies . . . but I am going to ask Jesus to excuse me for fifteen minutes while I beat the hell out of Bob Speck.” Instead, he told Jan to grow her fingernails out and scratch the bully’s face the next time he abused her. Wanting to solve her dilemma without employing violence, she pretended to have a crush on Bob, which embarrassed him in front of his friends, rendering her a less

attractive target. Jordan commended his daughter's resourcefulness and used the anecdote to instruct seminary students to abandon "this old-slug-them-beat-up-and-destroy-them idea." Although William chose to transfer, Jan and Lora Ruth graduated in 1964, but not before the administration refused to call their names at commencement because they had invited black friends to the ceremony.¹¹⁸

Judge Bootle's decision did not incite any reprisals against the farm, and four months later, he ordered the University of Georgia to admit two black students, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes. According to the school board's brief, their only concern regarding the children's transfer to Americus High was the potential for violence. In an April newsletter, Koinonians retold the episode:

We had feared that the ruling might fan the smouldering coals of prejudice into flames of violence, but the opposite has been true. In some strange way the winning of the case seems to have brought us good will. . . . Perhaps it was due in part to the fact that the testimony in court dispelled many false impressions. Perhaps it was due to the fact the Board at heart wanted to admit the children but were afraid of local pressure and reprisals, and we were therefore glad to be ordered to do what they already wanted to do. At any rate, both sides are pleased with the outcome. We are particularly thankful that it led to no bitterness or ill-will.

There was a mixed response to Bootle's ruling. School Board member Mrs. Helen Davis admitted, "I feel like we are doing these children a favor by sending them back." One, Warren Fortson, thought the case had created "a potential power keg" situation. Third District Congressman E. L. Forrester decried the ACLU's defense of the Koinonian children believing the "left wing organization" had sent their lawyers, not to represent the farm, but to disturb Americus's harmonious race relations. An editorial in the *Macon Telegraph and News* concluded that Forrester's assessment "was made because he thought it would be good politics, not because he thought it would shed any light on the situation." The editor had reached a similar conclusion regarding Jack Murr and William Bodenhamer's attempts to close Koinonia months earlier. No longer was the farm the

most important American issue. But had the leadership undergone *metanoia*--the change of heart and mind--necessary for the full county acceptance of the commune?

Koinonians' racial transgressions were not as controversial as they once had been, when blacks lived on and frequented the farm. The opposition's charges leveled in 1960, unlike those of 1956 and 1957, were neither as condemnatory nor as clear. School board Chairman J. H. Harvey commented, "I don't know that I could point out exactly what the resentment (against Koinonians) is. But it exists."¹¹⁹

Harvey's attitude resulted from Koinonians' refusal to compromise their constitutional rights within a spiritual context. The October 1961 newsletter instructed Christians to "lay claim to His power over death, so that you may have the courage to live in the perspective of eternity. For he whose life is dominated by fear of suffering, persecution or death is but a spiritual runt, unable to reach the higher nature of the mature man in Christ." They were also concerned about the "moral implications" for those proprietors who continued to support the boycott. By frequenting shops that refused to do business with them, Koinonians thought they were offering "continued goodwill." Farm members did not make a scene when told to leave, but they returned to these establishments frequently. Jordan thought Koinonians were doing nothing other than living "as normal people in a normal society." Koinonians might have described their actions as "a genuine desire for the redemption and reconciliation of all concerned," but underneath this facade of Christian love lay members' demand to exercise their constitutional rights. Harvey's comment captures an ambiguous disdain for the perceived mockery Koinonia had made of the school board, as well as the boycott that had failed to force the farm's relocation.¹²⁰

Koinonia celebrated its first political victory in eighteen years. Five additional white farm children enrolled at Americus High School in the summer of 1961. The sanctions against the farm persisted until the end of the decade, but they remained of “little economic consequence” due to members’ ability to secure supplies in Albany. Just a year before his death, Jordan committed himself to keeping the farm active in Sumter County despite debt totaling more than \$10,000. With the help of Millard Fuller, Koinonia would begin the first affordable housing program in the country. Jordan’s had long turned “dreams into deeds,” but the founding of Habitat for Humanity in 1976 served as a fitting legacy for a man who once said, “If you don’t ever want to get hurt, don’t ever love.”¹²¹

CONCLUSION

After the Birdsey bombing, the Chamber of Commerce offered a \$1,000 reward to catch the elusive perpetrators, but the police made no arrests. Since July 1956, Sheriff Chappell had blamed Koinonia for the destruction of its property. When these indirect acts of terror escalated into direct threats on members' lives in January 1957, he said the drive-by shootings were the work of out-of-county agitators. Jordan had repeatedly told him about the machine-gun fire incurred by Koinonians after monthly meetings held at the National Guard armory. How else would Americus citizens have access to automatic weaponry with tracer ammunition, he asked? Whereas the need to protect segregation had legitimated the *isolated* attacks against the commune, the downtown explosion concerned J. Frank Myers and H. Phil Jones because the violence had spread outside the rural confines of the farm, jeopardizing the industrial growth of the county. Even before the Birdsey explosion, proprietors felt pressured to comply with the "voluntary" boycott that cost them \$150,000 annually.¹²²

The Chamber of Commerce's methods and motives for attracting industry were not unlike those of other booster organizations throughout the state during the 1950s. After the Marlette Coach Company revocation, Myers and Jones knew firsthand the impact that negative media publicity could have on prospective manufacturers' decision to relocate. Atlanta Mayor William B. Hartsfield promoted economic expansion, but he worried about a closed public school system and popular perceptions of the city. "It will do little good to bring about more brick, stone, and concrete," he posited, "while a shocked and amazed world looks at a hundred thousand innocent children running the

streets.” Because professional, educational, and ministerial organizations lobbied to keep Atlanta’s schools open by challenging the massive resistance movement, the mayor, a racial moderate, declared that the city was “too busy to hate.”¹²³

Before the *Brown* decision, Georgia boosters preached that industrial development should not interfere with the existing social order. Chamber leaders instructed incoming plants not hire blacks, as was the case in Americus, unless the job was menial and low-paying. With the imminence of school desegregation at the end of the decade, commerce boards began rethinking their views on race and expansion. “In the interest of continued growth,” Jim Cobb writes, “many of those responsible for recruiting new industry became the reluctant advocates of a peaceful transition to token desegregation.” Two of the most influential organizations to advocate the end of segregation were Help Our Public Education (HOPE) and the Southern Regional Council (SRC). Both groups highlighted the damaging impact of racial disturbances on the advancement of corporate capitalist interests. The *Americus Times-Recorder* followed a similar course when it refrained from covering the violence surrounding Koinonia Farm. By creating the illusion of progressivism, Blair aided the Chamber of Commerce’s efforts to attract northern industry.¹²⁴

Notwithstanding efforts to urbanize the state, the massive resistance movement remained a ubiquitous response to the Supreme Court’s order to desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” Historian Pete Daniel has noted that Georgia was not unlike the rest of the South where “lost opportunities” for social change dissipated as whites’ defended Jim Crow in the post-*Brown* period. “One can only imagine how different southern history might have been,” he conjectured, “if politicians, the press, the clergy, and local leaders had supported democratic reforms that bestowed full citizenship on African Americans.”

Clarence Jordan had asked this question as early as the 1930s. After 1954, Sumter redeemers viewed his liberalism as an extension of the controversial ruling, warranting the violence that erupted two years later. The Klan took a vocal and visible role in fostering a climate of fear by carrying out multiple cross burnings. Sympathetic blacks and whites paid greatly for their association with farm members, but to a lesser degree than did local pastors, who chose to condemn the reprisals without condoning integration. This repressive atmosphere resulted from terrorist acts like the roadside market bombings and drive-by shootings. The indirect legal reprisals like the boycott and grand jury hearing legitimated the targeting of the commune through “lawful means.” These campaigns of organized violence culminated with the destruction of downtown Americus, which forced the Chamber of Commerce to adopt a plan of subterfuge to convince outside manufacturers that Sumter was a safe, peaceful county. Even after the May 1957 attack, the farm attracted the attention of race-baiting politicians Jack Murr and William Bodenhamer. Daniel is right to ask what possibilities for social change might have emerged had these various leaders complied with the High Court’s order, while protecting Koinonians’ religious freedom.¹²⁵

Described as a “cancer on the community,” Koinonia no longer served as a viable answer for why the violence continued. The *Americus Times-Recorder* believed a lasting peace cast against the federal government’s use of force throughout the South would discredit Attorney General Herbert Brownell’s charge that Sheriff Chappell had failed to uphold the law. Throughout the latter half of the 1950s, Koinonia served as a test case from which the leadership learned the ineffectiveness of bellicose responses to members’ interracialism. In 1963, an emerging civil rights movement posed an even greater challenge to the color barrier throughout southwest Georgia, once again challenging these

men's commitment to peace. J. Frank Myers, Fred Bowen, George Mathews, Charles F. Crisp, James R. Blair, Rudy Hayes, Tommy Hooks, III, Charles Burgamy, Fred Chappell, and Cleveland Rees refused to protect Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), and Southern Conference Leadership Conference (SCLC) protestors from the very tactics employed against Koinonians. Had they extended basic constitutional rights to African Americans, Jordan believed that "Sumter County could have gone down as the most glorious little county in all the world. It could have stood out as a shining light to the rest of the nation--for freedom, for truth, for justice." Koinonia Farm in the 1950s is indeed a rural Georgia tragedy, a "lost opportunity" to usher in a new era of civil equality.¹²⁶

Such a description of the decade does little to detract from the importance of Koinonia Farm as a remarkable example of alternative Christian brotherhood and fellowship. When asked why he had not accepted the Klan's offer to buy the farm, Jordan answered: "To move away would be to deny the redemptive processes of God. . . . As long as the Master wishes Koinonia to be a little tiny light shining in the darkness, then the darkness will not be able to put it out." Koinonians had willed their life to proclaiming the Gospel, professing God's love for all people, irrespective of race and class. To succumb to the pressure meant abandoning their calling to live the Word through deed. The seasonal rhythms of the farm required members to live simple, humble lives--acts that were tangible expressions of their practical Christianity. Although Jordan said his interest was more in the "soul of Georgia rather than the soil," he took pride in healing the "sick," "sore," and "bleeding" land he had spent over a decade rejuvenating. Reflecting on his decision to stay in Sumter County, he commented: "I don't know if you have ever walked across a piece of ground and it could

almost cry out to you ‘heal me, heal me, heal me’. I don’t know if you feel the closeness of the soil that I do. . . . Somehow God has made us out of this old soil and we go back to it and we never lose its claim on us, it isn’t a simple matter to leave it.”¹²⁷

There were significant consequences to the leadership’s efforts to force the farm’s relocation. The boycott continued throughout the 1960s, even though Jordan assured that the sanctions were of “little economic consequence” due to his ability to secure supplies in nearby Albany. After three years of lost revenue, the farm recorded a profit of \$1,732 along with additional gifts totaling \$14,541 in 1959. Despite this overwhelming show of support, Koinonia had incurred a debt of \$30,215 “over and above” the donations given during the extended boycott. An overwhelmed Jordan thought of closing the venture just shy of its twentieth birthday, believing the pecan and fruitcake mail-order business could not dissolve such a massive amount of debt. The threat of foreclosure prompted him to evaluate the effectiveness of the utopian structure that had defined the farm since 1942. With only one family (the Wittkampers) living at the commune in 1962, Jordan discontinued the practice of holding all things in common and adopted a corporate ordering where the farm, as a business, would hold title to all land and equipment. Workers would receive a need-based salary eliminating competition and jealousy arising from the distribution of the once collectively held funds. Jordan justified the transition declaring, “We do not consider [a] community of goods an absolute essential to the Christian life.” With the threat of violence over, he thought this change would foster a new relationship with blacks by offering them steady employment and pay. Membership numbers remained low until 1968, but the plan of 1962 revitalized their work ethic, helping them sell an impressive 40,000 pounds of pecans and 20,000 pounds of fruitcake during the 1965 season.¹²⁸

Annual sales improved throughout the 1960s, but the financial enervation of Koinonia had caused a significant decrease in membership due to five years of outstanding debt. Dallas Lee, an acquaintance of Jordan, commented that this instability hindered their active, public ministry at a time when the SCLC, SNCC, CORE were leading a crusade for social justice throughout the country. He remembered that the farm “sputtered to a standstill just as the civil rights movement was beginning to roll. . . . What a time for Koinonia, which had seen so much action in its day, to be dissipated and too weak to respond.” Such a maudlin account fails to explain why Jordan’s pacifist views complicated his perceptions of organized demonstrations and protests. Confidant G. McLeod Bryan recalled that his friend tried “to march everyday for Jesus.” Sustaining an interracial Christian community was in Jordan’s opinion, “as great as pressing for legal redress.” He believed that civil disobedience resulted in the beating and jailing of civil rights workers. Resistance that caused physical retaliation undermined his biblical interpretation of pacifism. Preventing violence--as Jordan did in Albany when he convinced Police Chief Laurie Pritchett to move Dr. Martin Luther King to an undisclosed jail--was part of this commitment to living the Gospel as a lifestyle. Jordan did not believe, however, that his “experiment” had incited the many violent episodes of the late 1950s. He was unwilling to concede that the farm was anything other than a “demonstration plot for the kingdom of God.” In his opinion, the farm, unlike the civil rights movement, was a peaceful, consistent challenge to the racial and economic injustices present in Sumter County. Jordan’s assessment is problematic considering so few African Americans participated in the venture. He empathized with the goals of SCLC, CORE, and SNCC, but he did not agree with their tactics. As Lee and Bryan have

noted, his concern was on revitalizing the commune, not justifying his theology relative to the nascent civil rights movement in southwest Georgia.¹²⁹

Mid-century violence limited the outreach initiatives of Koinonia and caused what one scholar has called “a blueprint for the rebuilding of the 1960s.” Members had always shared their monetary and material resources, but the principle of collective ownership impeded black interest and participation. Even the most dedicated whites felt the strain of the “total community” concept that Jordan’s wife, Florence, described years later as a “welfare state atmosphere.” Blacks proved unwilling to abandon their personal possessions to the common purse, forcing the emergence of the 1962 plan and another in 1968 called “Koinonia Partners.” Similar to the changes made six years earlier, participants worked for a “reasonable living standard” in either the fields or the pecan processing plant. These “partnership industries,” initially financed through donations, provided jobs with dependable pay for a number of blacks who began to take interest in the project. Profits remaining after the paying of employees’ salaries went directly into the “Fund for Humanity.” This extra collection financed the construction of affordable on-site housing requiring low no-interest payments over twenty years.¹³⁰

The attacks of 1950s caused Jordan to examine the economic direction of the farm by considering “new directions, goals, and approaches” to address the needs of his poor neighbors. Whereas biracial mingling threatened the social prerogatives of intolerant locals, he thought a fresh approach was necessary to “reconcile the differences and breakdown barriers between people of different race, class, and economic opportunity.” Koinonian adaptability and an end to the violence prompted a structural transformation within the scarred yet resilient Christian stronghold. The most important dimension of the farm was the Fund for Humanity, which aided the Chamber of Commerce’s drive to

renovate the county by providing affordable housing for blacks. Although perceptions of the farm had changed, Florence Jordan characterized white attitudes in the early 1970s as a “reluctant tolerance.” In 1972, Sheriff Arthur M. Gurr concluded, “Eighty-five to 90 percent of the people in the county have accepted the fact that they’re [Koinonians] people just like anyone else.” Relations had improved, but the social climate of Americus was still fragile according to Mayor J. W. Sheffield Jr., who warned a nousey *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* reporter not to “stir anything up.”¹³¹

On March 15, 2003, J. Frank Myers sat in his living room talking about events some forty-five years old. When asked about his involvement with Koinonia, he replied, “I got into a deal I couldn’t get out of when I was with the Chamber of Commerce.” Myers regretted having asked Jordan to sell the farm, a decision he said he had to make as president. Regarding those involved in planning and carrying out the violence against the farm, he explained that Charles F. Crisp was “one of the leading people behind this thing,” along with his “stooge,” Tommy Hooks, III. In Myers’ words, Crisp was “a staunch supporter of this crowd of thugs,” as was Governor Griffin who was his “henchman.” Hooks, Chappell, Crisp and Burgamy openly defended the multiple crimes committed against Koinonia. They were all longtime friends of Myers. “It was a community thing; all of us were guilty,” he confessed. But assured that his name would not surface in the conspiracy, he stated with a slight smile, “You won’t find anywhere in my record where I was prejudiced or bigoted about Clarence Jordan.”¹³²

NOTES

¹ Andrew S. Chancey, "Race, Religion, and Reform: Koinonia's Challenge to Southern Society, 1942-1992" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1998), ix; Tracy Elaine K'Meyer, *Interracialism in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1997), 5.

² Transcript of "The Koinonia Story" given by Clarence Jordan at Saint Barnabas Community Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, fall 1956, Clarence Leonard Jordan Manuscript Collection, hereafter marked CLJ MC, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, collection 756, box 10, folder 9.

³ K'Meyer, *Interracialism in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 51; interview with Alma Jackson, 13 February 2003, tape in possession of author; Robert Lee, "The Crisis at Koinonia," *Christian Century* 73 (November 7, 1956): 1290; Carranza Morgan quoted in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, Kay Weiner, ed., (Americus, Georgia: Koinonia Partners Inc.), 43.

⁴ K'Meyer, *Interracialism in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 51; interview with Alma Jackson, 13 March 2003; Robert Lee, "The Crisis at Koinonia," *Christian Century* 73 (November 7, 1956): 1290.

⁵ Notebook signed "Grump Jordan," CLJ MC 756: 17:4; Dallas Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence* (New York: Association Press, 1971), 6. Jordan was an "A" student throughout his middle-school years, CLJ MC 756:17:2; 756:17:5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷ Arthur F. Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), 291-297; Jesse Crawford, "Cheating the Georgia Chain Gang," *Nation* 45 (June 1938): 168; Numan V. Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 155; Donald L. Grant, *The Way it Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1993), 155-159; *Voice of the Negro* 1 (August 1904): 300-310; *Crisis* 9 (February 1915): 168. In 1909, three years before Jordan's birth, two mob murders occurred in Talbot County. William Carreker, a wealthy local black, invited Joseph Hardy, a blind clergyman, to stay with his family. During his visit Hardy encouraged poor sharecroppers to find alternative employment, angering white planters. A mob came to the Carreker home demanding that Hardy to turn himself over to them. The frightened preacher accidentally shot a member of the group. The mob tortured and killed both men, leaving Carreker's body hanging from a telephone pole near the courthouse square. See "Negro Lynched at Talbotton," *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 June 1909, 25 June 1909; Robert H. Jordan, *There was a Land: A History of Talbot County, Georgia, and its People* (Columbus, Ga: Columbus Office Supply Co., 1971), 180-183.

⁸ Dallas Lee, lecture delivered to Valdosta State College, 29 June 1971, CLJ MC 756:18:5; Edith T. Medley, "Clarence's Vision or a Place Called Koinonia," unpublished manuscript, Koinonia Archives, Americus, Georgia; Bruce Larson, "Signals for Underground Christians, A Here and Now Jesus: The Legacy of Clarence Jordan, His Final Interview," *Faith at Work*, April 1970, 16, Koinonia archives. See also, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 9-10. Many of the farming techniques employed by Georgia's farmers in the first half of the twentieth century were "inefficient, labor-intensive methods" that further damaged the soil. For this reason, sharecropper and tenant farmers were "the symbols of the starving South . . ." See Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 172; Anthony P. Dunbar, *Against the Grain: Southern Radicals and Prophets, 1929-1959* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), vii.

⁹ Bruce Larson, "Signals for Underground Christians, A Here and Now Jesus: The Legacy of Clarence Jordan, His Final Interview," 16. See also, K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 27.

¹⁰ Jordan to Glenn T. Settle, 29 August 1942, CLJ MC 756:2:2.

¹¹ *Georgia Agriculturalist (GA)*, 9 (April, 1931): 10; *GA* 7 (January 1930): 12; *GA* 7 (February 1929): 4; *GA* 12 (November 1933): 10. No scholarship on has examined Jordan's essay submissions and editorial comments within the monthly newsletter.

¹² Clarence L. Jordan, "Should College Graduates Return to the Farm?," *GA* 9 (March 1931): 12; "What Price Should We Pay for a College Education?" *GA* 9 (November 1930): 5. The other essays that Jordan wrote are about a poor farming boy who saved his money for a college education, a dog's devotion to his master, and the meaning of nature. See "Earnestly Bent," *GA* 11 (March 1933): 4; "Dan's Death: A True Story of a Georgia Dog's Devotion to His Master," *GA* 11 (October, 1932): 6; "A Stroll with Mother Nature"; "When Night Meets Day," CLJ MC 756:29:13.

¹³ Byron Dyer, "Why Study Agriculture," *GA* 7 (January 1929): 4; J. P. Baker, "What is the Extent of Erosion Losses," *GA* 9 (January 1931): 7; J.W. Firor, "The Agricultural College and Farm Relief," *GA* 8 (October 1929): 10; Harry Edge, "Rural Education: A Means of Farm Relief," *GA* 8 (November, 1929): 2. See also, Jack Brown, "Reconstruction of the South," *GA* 32 (December 1939): 4, 15.

¹⁴ Raper, *Preface to Peasantry*, 225-226, 243-245. See also, Michael S. Holmes, *The New Deal in Georgia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975); Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 256, 264; Edge, "Rural Education," 2; Mills Lane, *The People of Georgia: An Illustrated Social History* (Savannah, GA: The Beehive Press, 1975), 313; T.L. Asbury, "Soil Conservation Districts in Georgia," *GA* 4 (January 1939): 4, 16; Frary Elrod, "Why Have We Begun Controlling Soil Erosion," *GA* 10 (May 1935): 18.

¹⁶ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 13; K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 28; Bruce Larson, "Signals for Underground Christians, A Here and Now Jesus: The Legacy of Clarence Jordan, His Final Interview," 16.

¹⁷ Undated, unmarked document, CLJ MC 756:1:7. See also, Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 14; "Former Editor Jordan Attends Seminary," *GA* 12 (November 1933): 10.

¹⁸ Context and McDowell quote in K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 29; Jordan to Edward A. McDowell Jr., 29 May 1964, CLJ MC 756:6:9.

¹⁹ Interview with Clarence Jordan, 1968, tape in possession of author; Bruce Larson, "Signals for Underground Christians, A Here and Now Jesus: The Legacy of Clarence Jordan, His Final Interview," 16; Edward A. McDowell, Jr. in preface of Jordan's *The Cotton Patch Version of Hebrews and the General Epistles* (Clinton, N.J.: New Win Publishing, Inc., 1973), 9-13.

²⁰ *Courier Journal*, 8 February 1936, CLJ MC 756:28:5; Note card, "Faith," CLJ MC 756:14:5; Note card, "Sin," CLJ MC 756:14:3; Note card, "Repentance," CLJ MC 756:14:4. See also, "Have faith in God," Mark 11:22; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit," Matthew 7:18; "But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3. All scriptural verses hereafter are taken from the *New International Textbook Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1984).

²¹ Note card, "The Law," CLJ MC 756:14:2; Lesson, "The Relation to the New Society to the Old Laws," CLJ MC 756:13:7; Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 19; See also, "The Sabbath was made for men, and not man for the Sabbath," Mark 2:27.

²² Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 21-23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23, 24; Jordan, “What is the Kingdom of God?,” CLJ MC 756:13:25; Letters from Jordan to local churches, [?] March 1939, CLJ MC 756:11:1.

²⁴ Quotes taken from the book of Acts 4:32, 2:44; Henlee H. Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds* (New York: Smyth & Helwys, 1992), 92. Like Bryan, Barnette was a close confidant of Jordan until his death in 1969. He spends only twenty-four pages chronicling the life of Jordan. The remainder of his book contains Jordan’s Gheens Lectures (October 1962) given at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where Barnette taught. There are also two appendices: “Correspondence with Clarence” and “Reflections by Some Whose Lives Were Enriched Because They Knew Him.”

²⁵ Lesson, “Life of Jesus: 1,” “Life of Jesus: 2,” CLJ MC 756:14:6; Note card, “Jesus Launches His Program,” CLJ MC 756:14:9. See also, “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people,” Matthew 9:3. Jordan described the Saducees as colluding with Roman officials for their personal benefit, while he characterized the Pharisees by their obedience to Jewish law. He concluded: “The Saducees bargained with Rome; the Pharisees bargained with God.” See Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount* (Valley Forge, PA: Judkin Press, 1993, originally publ. 1952), 2.

²⁶ “Reflections . . .” in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 92, 93, 98, 99; Howard G. McClain quoted in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, 5.

²⁷ Andrew S. Chancey, “Restructuring Southern Society: The Radical Vision of Koinonia Farm,” (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1990), 15; Lesson, “The Measure of Motives,” CLJ MC 756: 13:10; England quoted in Lee, *The Cotton Evidence*, 27, 28. See also, “Be careful not to do your righteousness in front of men with the idea of being seen by them, for if you do, you get no reward from your spiritual Father,” Matthew 6:1. Jordan preached: “‘To do your righteousness’ means in this case to live the Christian life, that covers every area of action. So no matter what you do as a Christian, the motive must be to please the Father and not men,” CLJ MC 756:13:10.

²⁸ Notebook entry, “Am I my Brothers Keeper?,” 16 May 1939; Notebook entry, “The Cost,” undated, CLJ MC 756:17:5; Lesson, “Discipleship,” 756: 14:12; Lesson, “Man and His Neighbors,” CLJ MC 756:13:31. See also, “Our brother is our neighbor,” Matthew 5:21.

²⁹ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 29; Lesson, “Discipleship,” CLJ MC: 756:14:12; England to Mack Gross, 15 July 1942, CLJ MC 2340:1; Letterhead, “An Agricultural Missionary Enterprise,” 756:2:2; England to [?] Howard, CLJ MC 756:2:1. See also, Notebook entry, “The City and the Farm,” 9 February 1937, CLJ MC: 756:17:5. The Louisville chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation functioned under the direction of the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen. Founded in 1936, the organization addressed labor and racial issues. See Robert F. Martin, *Howard Kester and the Struggle for Social Justice in the South: 1904-1977* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 35.

³⁰ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 331-34; Promotional brochure, “Koinonia Farm,” CLJ MC 2341:4:9; Letter from Jordan to Steilberg, 1943, Appendix 1 “Correspondence with Clarence,” in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 64. See also, “The Articles of Incorporation of Koinonia Farm, CLJ MC 2340:29.

³¹ United States Census, Sixteenth Census, 1940, Population, Vol. II, Part 2, Table 21, 21; Table 26, 296; Table 27, 306, Table 30, 358. United States Census, Seventeenth Census, 1950, Population, Vol. II, Part 11; Table 33, 58, Table 42, 172, Table 49, 192; Jordan, *There was a Land: A History of Talbot County, Georgia, and its People*, 29; England to Dr. Howard, 17 May 1942, CLJ MC 756:2:2; See also, *Directory of Community Services, Vol. I, Southwestern Georgia* (Atlanta: The Georgia Historical Record Survey, December 1941) 23; John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

³² Lesson, "The Kingdom on Earth," CLJ MC 756:13:25; Dallas Lee, Valdosta State College, 29 June 1971, CLJ MC 756:18:5; Bruce Larson, "Signals for Underground Christians, A Here and Now Jesus: The Legacy of Clarence Jordan, His Final Interview," 16.

³³ Notebook, 13 November 1942, CLJ MC 756:17:7; Howard McClain to Arthur Barton, 11 April 1941, CLJ MC 756:1:12; Jordan, "The Koinonia Story," CLJ MC 756:10:9; Jordan to unnamed friend, December 1942, Koinonia archives; Clarence to Florence, 21 February 1943, Koinonia archives. See also, K'Meyer, *Interracial and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 43.

³⁴ *Washington Post Magazine* (December 1977) CLJ MC 2340:29; Jordan, "Koinonia Story," CLJ MC 756:10:9; Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 37-39.

³⁵ Lee, *Cotton Patch*, 11-13; Jordan, "The Christian, War, Violence, and Nonviolence," Gheens Lectures, October 1962, transcribed in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 27; quote taken from Matthew 5:44-45. See also, "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you," Matthew 5:38-42 and Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 45-50.

³⁶ Jordan, "Peace and Brotherhood," annual meeting of the Baptist Peace Fellowship, 19 May 1963, CLJ MC 756:10:12, "The Christian, War, Violence, and Nonviolence," Gheens Lectures, October 1962, transcribed in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 27. See also, Jordan, "Can Politics Be Christian?," Twin City Pilgrim Fellowship Rally, 9 November 1958, CLJ MC 756:10:8; Lesson, "Man and his Neighbors," CLJ MC 756:13:3.

³⁷ Jordan to Steilberg, 1943, in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 64-66; Clarence to Florence, 7 December 1942, Koinonia archives; Jordan, "Christian Community in the South," *Journal of Religious Thought* 14 (1957): 32. For more on Superintendent E.L. Bridges see, "East Side," *Petal Paper*, 14 May 1959, Koinonia Scrapbook, hereafter marked KS, Hargrett Library, University of Georgia, Vertical Files.

³⁸ Jordan to Barnette, 1 November 1944, *Ibid.*, 67-69; Koinonia Farm pamphlet, 1944, Koinonia archives; For more on the growth of the farm see, Clarence to Florence, 15 November 1942, 18 November 1942, 7 December 1942, 21 February 1943; Jordan to Friend, December 1942; Koinonia archives; S.R. Winters, "Parson-Poultryman," *Progressive Farmer* (January 1951), CLJ MC 756:29:13.

³⁹ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 46-48; Koinonia Farm pamphlet, 1944, Koinonia archives.

⁴⁰ Clarence to Florence, 15 November 1942, Koinonia archives; G. McLeod Bryan, *Voices in the Wilderness: Twentieth-Century Prophets Speak to the New Millennium* (Mercer, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999), 73; Jordan, "Report to the People," 13 May 1956, tape in possession of author. See also, Bryan quoted in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, 13-16.

⁴¹ "The Christian, War, Violence, and Nonviolence," Gheens Lectures, October 1962, transcribed in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 39.

⁴² Jordan to Howard Johnson, June 1948, CLJ MC 756:2:11; Johnson to Jordan, 11 August 1942, CLJ MC 756:2:3; Willie Pugh to Johnson, 16 February 1948, CLJ MC 756:2:11; T. Gilbert Butler to Lee County Registration Officials, 30 August 1948, CLJ MC 756:2:1; Harry Atkinson to Johnson, January 1949, CLJ MC 756:2:12; Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 45-46, 50, 61-65.

⁴³ Chancey, "Race, Religion, and Reform: Koinonia's Challenge to Southern Society, 1942-1992," 75-77.

⁴⁴ Jordan to Steilberg, 1943, in Barnette, *Clarence Jordan: Turning Dreams into Deeds*, 64-66; Clarence to Florence, 7 December 1942, Koinonia archives; Harry and Allene Atkinson in *Koinonia Remembered: The*

First Fifty Years, 19; K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 59.

⁴⁵ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 75; Jordan, "The Koinonia Story," CLJ MC 756:10:9; Jordan, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 40; James C. Thomson in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, 29.

⁴⁶ Ira B. Faglier to Jordan, 9 August 1950, Koinonia archives; "Relationship with Community Churches," CLJ MC 2340:31.

⁴⁷ Recommendation of the Board of Deacons of the Rehoboth Baptist Church, Koinonia archives. See also, Proclamation of the Rehoboth Baptist Church, CLJ MC 2340:29.

⁴⁸ "To the Members of Rehoboth Baptist Church," signed "Members of Koinonia," Koinonia archives.

⁴⁹ Jordan, "Koinonia Story," CLJ MC 756:10:9; Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount*, 4; Lesson, "The Clean Call to Action," CLJ MC 756:13:15; Lesson, "Arrest and Trial," CLJ MC 756:14:14; Lesson, "Jesus's Closing Days," CLJ MC 756:14:13; "Race Relations: A Charter of Principles," issued by the Southern Baptist Convention, May 1947, CLJ MC 756:13:31.

⁵⁰ *The Christian Century* 67 (6 September 1950): 1053; 67 (11 October 1950): 1204; Koinonia Farm Newsletter, 12 January 1951, hereafter marked KFN; Minutes, 9 January 1951.

⁵¹ Juanita Deatrick, "Koinonia: A Twentieth Century Experiment in Communal Living," (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1968), 20, 29-32; Florence Jordan, "The Witness Was What Counted," *Round Table* (Summer 1984), CLJ MC 2341:4:5.

⁵² Koinonian commitment, CLJ MC 2341:4:11; Chancey, "Race, Religion, and Reform: Koinonia's Challenge to Southern Society, 1942-1992," 83-86; Koinonia Farm Pamphlet, 1952, Koinonia archives; Claude Nelson, Jr., "Why We Are 'Withdrawing from the World'," reprint from *Motive* (March 1953), Koinonia archives.

⁵³ "Koinonia Kronicle: Log of the Koinonia Farm Work Camp," July 1951, Koinonia archives; K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 72-73.

⁵⁴ Interview with Alma Jackson, 13 March 2003; Koinonia pamphlet, December 1952, KFN, [?] December 1954, Koinonia archives.

⁵⁵ KFN No. 14, 29 May 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 20 May 1957; *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 May 1957; "Argument Returns to Dynamite," *The Christian Century* 74 (26 June 1957): 780.

⁵⁶ Jordan to the Nelsons and Johnsons, 1 April 1956, CLJ MC 756:3:6; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 24 March 1956; KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956. See also, Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 105, 106. Built in 1955, the roadside market was a 20ft. by 30ft. structure located on a four-acre plot off the main highway.

⁵⁷ *Americus Times-Recorder* 24 July 1956, KS, 25 July 1956, KS; unmarked clipping, July 1956, CLJ MC 756:28:17; KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956; KFN No. 1 26 July 1956; "A Letter to the Editor," *Americus Times-Recorder*, [?] July 1956, CLJ MC 2340:29:9; KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956.

⁵⁸ *Americus Times-Recorder* 9 June 1956, 2 July 1956, 19 July 1956, 9 September 1956, 18 September 1956; "Koinonia Farm Camp: An Adventure in Community Living-Sharing," brochure, 1955, Koinonia archives; KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956; KFN No. 6, 24 September 1956. See also, Sumter County Health Department v. Koinonia Farm Inc., CLJ MC 756:20:3; *Macon Telegraph* 20 July 1956, KS, Religious News Release, 3 October 1956, KS.

⁵⁹ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 2 July 1956; interview with Osgood Williams, 2 June 1988, by Cliff Kuhn as part the Georgia Government Documentation Project, hereafter marked GGDP, Box B-9, Folder 6, Georgia State University.

⁶⁰ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 31 July 1956; KFN No. 2, 10 August 1956.

⁶¹ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 24 July 1956, 31 July 1956, 8 August 1956, Pittman quote taken from “What is ‘Koinonia’,” located between KFN nos. 5 & 6.

⁶² *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 May 1954; *Americus Times-Recorder* 6 June 1956, 4 February 1956, 26 June 1956; *Atlanta Journal*, 13 June 1956.

⁶³ KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956; *Americus Times-Recorder* 5 June 1956, 6 September 1956, 5 December 1956.

⁶⁴ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 8 June 1956, 9 June 1956, 6 September 1956, 10 September 1956, 11 September 1957, 24 July 1956, KS, 25 July 1956, KS; KFN No. 3, 18 August 1956; KFN No. 1, 26 July 1956; Notice of Cancellation from Cotton States Insurance Company, 4 June 1956, CLJ MC 2341:4:13; KFN No. 6, 24 September 1956.

⁶⁵ *Albany Journal*, 3 August 1956, KS; KFN No. 5, 27 August 1956; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 8 August 1956.

⁶⁶ KFN No. 8, 23 November 1956, No. 4, 24 August 1956, No. 6, 24 September 1956.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 9, 21 December 1956, No. 10, 18 January 1957; Lee, “The Crisis at Koinonia,” 1290.

⁶⁸ “Other Cheek is Turned in Georgia Bombing,” *The Christian Century* 73 (August 22, 1956); Lee, “The Crisis at Koinonia,” 1291. There were two additional newspaper articles published in 1956. See, *Washington Post*, 25 July 1956, KS; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 4 August 1956, KS; “Courage in Action: A Farm in Georgia,” *Nation* 183 (September 22, 1956): 237-238; KFN No. 9, 21 December 1956; Dora Byron, “Courage in Action: Koinonia Revisited,” *Nation* 84 (March 16, 1957): 22; KFN No. 23, 20 September 1960.

⁶⁹ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 15 January 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal*, 15 January 1957; Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 116; KFN No. 10, 18 January 1957.

⁷⁰ KFN No. 8, 23 November 1956, No. 3, 18 August 1956; KFN No. 10, 18 January 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 17 January 1957. See also, *Atlanta Journal*, 15 January 1957, KS, 19 January 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 30 January 1957.

⁷¹ Newspaper headlines found in KFN No. 11, 10 February 1957; “The Spirit of Koinonia,” *Christian Century* 74 (February 13, 1957): 187; “Koinonia Farm Under Siege,” *Christian Century* 74 (February 20, 1957): 219; *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 February 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 20 February 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 February 1957, KS; *Macon Telegraph*, 17 February 1957, KS; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 27 February 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal*, 28 February 1957, KS.

⁷² Information on Costin taken from Jordan, *There Was a Land: A Story of Talbot County, Georgia and its People*, 52-57.

⁷³ Luedrell Pope, Eugene Cooper, Ossie Little, Lorene Floyd quotes taken from “The African-American Struggle in Sumter County, 1800-1970,” Koinonia museum, hereafter marked AAS.

⁷⁴ KFN No. 12, 9 March 1957; Jordan, “Christian Community in the South,” 8; Interview with Alma Jackson, 13 February 2003; KFN No. 14, 29 May 1957; Carranza Morgan and Annie Bell Jackson quoted in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, 43-46, 51-53.

⁷⁵ “Negro Denies Farm Association,” unmarked clipping, Koinonia archives; *Macon Telegraph*, 17 February 1957, KS; KFN No. 7, 18 October 1956.

⁷⁶ KFN No. 12; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 25 February 1957.

⁷⁷ KFN No. 13, 24 April 1957; Subpoena to Jordan, 26 March 1957, CLJ MC 2341:4:15; Jordan to T. Howard and Marion Johnson, 29 March 1957, CLJ MC 756:4:5; *Columbus Ledger*, 8 April 1957, KS; *Macon Telegraph*, 29 March 1957, KS; “Koinonia Farm,” 8 July 1957, CLJ MC 2340:29:9. See also, *Macon News*, 28 March 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 5 April 1957, KS; “Sumter County Grand Jury Presentments on Koinonia,” CLJ MC 756:19:1.

⁷⁸ “Judge Commends Body for Work,” unmarked clipping, Koinonia archives; interview with J. Frank Myers, 15 March 2003, tape in possession of author; *Newsweek* 49 (February 25, 1957): 37.

⁷⁹ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 27 February 1957; *Atlanta Journal*, 28 February 1957, KS; Vera Levette Timm to Governor Griffin, 18 March 1957, Koinonia archives; Jordan to President Eisenhower, 22 January 1957, CLJ MC 2341:4:14; “Sumter County Grand Jury Presentments on Koinonia,” CLJ MC 756:19:1; “Integrated Georgia Farm Torn by Violence,” unmarked document, CLJ MC 756: 28:18.

⁸⁰ “Statement of Koinonia Farm: In Response to Sumter County Grand Jury Presentments,” CLJ MC 2340:21; KFN No. 12, 9 March 1957; interview with Jordan, “Report to the People,” 13 May 1956, tape in possession of author; Jordan, “Ordeal by Bullets,” *Liberation* (May 1957), Koinonia archives.

⁸¹ KFN No. 13, 24 April 1957; “Statement of Koinonia Farm: In Response to Sumter County Grand Jury Presentments,” CLJ MC 2340:21; Press Statement, 7 April 1957, CLJ MC 2341:5:1; *Augusta Chronicle*, 29 April 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal*, 8 April 1957, KS; *Cordele Dispatch*, 9 April 1957; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 17 January 1957, *Americus Times-Recorder*, 2 February 1957; *New York Times*, 1 March 1957, KS.

⁸² KFN No. 10, 18 January 1957, No. 11, 10 February 1957, “Dare They Witness: The Story of Koinonia Farm, Executive Committee United Churchwomen of Georgia, Emory F. Via Papers, Box 3378, Folder 6, Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 23 February 1957; “Sumter County Grand Jury Presentments on Koinonia,” CLJ MC 756:19:1.

⁸³ Unidentified, undated clipping, Koinonia archives; Jordan quoted in Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 143-144; Jordan also quoted in an untitled, unidentified newspaper clipping, 25 September 1957, KS.

⁸⁴ *Columbus Ledger*, 6 June 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal*, 6 June 1957, KS; *Presbyterian Outlook*, 8 July 1957, KS; *New York Times*, 12 May 1957, CLJ MC 756:28:18; Jordan quoted in Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 143; “Dare They Witness: The Story of Koinonia Farm, Executive Committee United Churchwomen of Georgia, 3378:6; KFN No. 13, 24 April 1957.

⁸⁵ Harold Fey, “Creative Church in Georgia,” *Christian Century* 74 (March 6, 1957): 285-287; Dora Byron, “Courage in Action: Koinonia Revisited,” *Nation* 184 (March 16, 1957): 226-228.

⁸⁶ André Fontaine, “The Conflict of a Southern Town,” *Redbook* 109 (October, 1957): 50. *Newsweek* (February 25, 1957) and *Time* (April 29, 1957) provide less-detailed accounts of the farm.

⁸⁷ *Atlanta Journal*, 1 March 1957, KS; *Atlanta Journal*, 2 March 1957, KS; *Macon Telegraph*, 3 March 1957, KS; *Macon Telegraph*, 7 March 1957, KS; *Cordele Dispatch*, 22 March 1957, KS.

⁸⁸ *Atlanta Journal* quoted in KFN No. 14, 29 May 1957.

⁸⁹ Transcription of meeting with concerned citizens, 25 May 1957, Koinonia archives.

- ⁹⁰ KFN, No. 15, 24 July 1957; KFN, No. 14, 29 May 1957; Transcription of meeting with concerned citizens, 25 May 1957, Koinonia archives.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., No. 15, 24 July 1957; No. 17, 10 November 1957; Helen G. Bradley (wife of Reverend Paul Ritch) quoted in *Koinonia Remembered: The First Fifty Years*, 40-42.
- ⁹² Fontaine, "The Conflict of a Southern Town," 101, 19, 50, 51, 100, 101; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 6 August 1957, 22 May 1957, 4 September 1957, 5 September 1957.
- ⁹³ *Americus Times-Recorder*, 5 July 1957; 6 August 1957; interview with J. Frank Myers, 15 March 2003.
- ⁹⁴ William Bailey Williford, *Americus through the Years: The Story of a Georgia Town and its People* (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1975), 326, 328; *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 July 1953; *Atlanta Journal*, 22 July 1953.
- ⁹⁵ Myers to *Life* magazine, *Look* magazine, 22 June 1953, 23 June 1953; Manufacturers, Day invitations, J. Frank Myers Collection, hereafter marked JFM, Richard B. Russell Library, University of Georgia, Box 1, Folder 10.
- ⁹⁶ James Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 85, 161; *Americus Times-Recorder*, 19 March 1957; Williford, *Americus Through the Years: The Story of A Georgia Town and Its People*, 331-344; *Americus Times Recorder*, 19 March 1957; "Public Relations Campaign to Sell Americus," 1956, JFM 1:6.
- ⁹⁷ United States Census, Seventeenth Census, 1950, Population, v. II, part 11; table 4, p. 11-8; table 37, p. 11-74; table 35, p. 11-67. United States Census, Eighteenth Census, 1960, Population, v. I, part 12; table 76, p. 12-242; table 75, p. 12-237; table 78, p. 12-251; table 76, p. 12-242; Williford, *Americus Through the Years: The Story of A Georgia Town and Its People*, 343-344; "Public Relations Campaign to Sell Americus," 1956, JFM 1:6.
- ⁹⁸ Bartley, *Creation of Modern Georgia*, 188, 197, 180; John P. Gill, "Industrial Progress," *Georgia Today: Facts and Trends*, eds. John C. Blecher and K. Imogene Dene (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 309; Williford, *Americus Through the Years: The Story of A Georgia Town and Its People*, 325.
- ⁹⁹ JFM to Louis T. Griffity, 3 December 1955; "All of Us for Americus!"; Public Relations Meeting, 10 November 1955; JFM to Dick Stevens, 19 November 1955; "Steering Committee List"; "Speakers for Public Relations Campaign," JFM 1:2.
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- ¹⁰³ Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990*, 40; Unsigned letter to H. Phil Jones, JFM to Jones, 5 April 1957; Jones to debenture holders, 27 April 1957, JFM 1:6; Fred Bowen to JFM, 17 June 1957, JFM 1: 3; "Nineteen Fifty-Seven Soil Bank Program in

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¹¹³ *Ibid.*, No. 18, 30 May 1958; No. 9 October 1957; *New York Times*, 26 May 1958, CLJ MC 756:28:19.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 19, 15 September 1958; "Georgia Progress," (July 1958), "Petal Power," 6 November 1958, CLJ MC 756:28:19; interview with J. Frank Myers, 15 March 2003; *Macon Telegraph*, 7 September 1958.

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¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 22, 1 November 1959.

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¹²² Ibid., No. 19, 15 September 1958; Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990*, 82.

¹²³ Bartley, *The Creation of Modern Georgia*, 214.

¹²⁴ Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990*, 3, 116, 122, 129.

¹²⁵ Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*, 3.

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¹²⁷ Interview with Clarence Jordan, undated, "Man of Faith: Selections from Jordan's Sermons & Lectures," tape in possession of author.

¹²⁸ KFN No. 23, 20 September 1959; Jordan to Will Powers Jr., 19 April 1967, CLJ MC 756:7:3; KFN No. 30, [?] April 1965; information on the plan of 1962 taken from Chancey, "Restructuring Southern Society: The Radical Vision of Koinonia Farm," M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1990, 77. See also, K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 166.

¹²⁹ Lee, *The Cotton Patch Evidence*, 180; Bryan, *Voices in the Wilderness*, 55. For a more detailed account of the civil rights movement in Sumter County, see Tracy E. K'Meyer, "Building the Beloved Community: Koinonia Farm and the Civil Rights Movement in Southwest Georgia," *The Journal of Southwest Georgia History* 10 (fall 1995): 23-47.

¹³⁰ K'Meyer, *Interracialism and Christian Community in the Postwar South: The Story of Koinonia Farm*, 184; "Integrated Utopian Farm Thrives in Rural Sumter County," unmarked newspaper clipping, KS; Chancey, "Restructuring Southern Society: The Radical Vision of Koinonia Farm," 106, 123, 130.

¹³¹ Jordan to friend, 27 February 1966, CLJ MC 756:7:1; Martin England to Mack Gross, 15 July 1942, CLJ MC 2340:1; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 21 May 1972, KS; *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* 30 May 1976, KS. Millard Fuller, who left Koinonia in 1976 to found Habitat for Humanity, was instrumental in creating the Fund for Humanity. Fuller left the farm to implement a larger scale housing campaign throughout the world, but he continues to work closely with Koinonia Partners. See Jerome P. Baggett, *Habitat for Humanity: Building Private Homes, Building Public Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001); Millard Fuller, *A Simple, Decent Place to Live: The Building Realization of Habitat for Humanity* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishers, 1995).

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