

Memo from CMM to Action Mailing List: Delano Food Caravan. 1966

November 16, 1966

TO: Action Mailing List

SUBJECT: Delano Food Caravan and Other Matters

ENCLOSURE: Worker-Priest Summary (1)

Saturday, December 17, 1966 has been set aside as the date for the next food caravan to Delano. Put this date in your calendar and pass the word to your friends, church groups, denominational publications, etc. The major items of need are food, Christmas gifts and money. The Christmas gifts can be toys for all ages plus other kinds of gifts for teenagers and adults. The food items most needed are: pinto beans, lard, flour, macaroni, canned meat, potatoes, sugar, salt, canned milk, baby food, cereals and soup. Checks can be made payable to the Farm Workers Defense Fund, P.O. Box 130, Delano, California.

The November 12th caravan was a smashing success. More than 200 churchmen gathered in Delano and heard Cesar Chavez describe the current status of the strike. The Teatro Campesino led songs and performed a skit. The visiting churchmen met the strikers and in other ways solidified their relationship to the farm workers' struggle.

The strike against thirty-four (34) Delano grape growers continues. Unless there is collective bargaining legislation this primitive and costly struggle will go on for many months. A brief summary of recent events follows:

- 1) August 30, 1966: UFWOC union representation victory at Di Giorgio's Delano and Borrego Springs ranches. UFWOC won right to represent nearly 1,000 field workers. Teamsters won right to represent shed workers.
- 2) September 8, 1966: 100% successful strike called against Perelli-Minetti by UFWOC. Teamsters later recruited strikebreakers and signed a back-door agreement with Perelli-Minetti. UFWOC is continuing the strike and has developed a powerful boycott against this grower. It is important that growers and the Teamsters learn they cannot enter into agreements that ignore the expressed wishes of farm worker. (Some have claimed that the Schenley agreement ignores the wishes of farm workers. As a matter of fact Schenley's workers met after the recognition agreement was announced and elected their own negotiating team which then negotiated the terms of the Schenley contract.)

- 3) November 4, 1966: UFWOC union representation victory at Di Giorgio's Arvin ranch. Teamsters chose not to be involved in this election.
- 4) November 9, 1966: UFWOC union representation victory at NLRB election at Di Giorgio peanut shed.
- 5) November 9, 1966: growing tension in Rio Grande City area of Texas. Eleven (11) farm worker leaders arrested on a vague charge. Police harassment is on the increase (see action request below).
- 6) November 15, 1966: UFWOC union representation victory at Goldberg's ranch in Delano.
- 7) November 1966: contract negotiations underway with wages and working conditions for field workers employed at Borrego Springs, Delano and Arvin ranches (Di Giorgio owned). In each case the field workers have elected their own negotiating team and have been kept informed of the progress of negotiations.

Ways you can help:

1. Wire President Johnson with copies to the Attorney General, Senators John Tower, Ralph Yarborough, Robert Kennedy and Harrison Williams. The telegram should demand a major investigation of police practices in Rio Grande City, Texas (Starr County) as they affect the striking farm workers.
2. Keep sending food and money to Delano.
3. Support the California Migrant Ministry – especially the new worker-priest program (see enclosure).
4. Use Christmas correspondence to communicate to your friends the reality and promise of this major power struggle in California. Suggest ways they can help prepare the churches in their state for the crisis that is to come.
5. Get into communication with your representatives (state and national) on the subject of extending the NLRA to farm workers. Unless collective bargaining laws are enacted, farm workers will have to apply the same kinds of pressures to each grower that have resulted in agreements with Schenley and Di Giorgio. And, at the same time, they will have to fight off the Teamsters' efforts to sign sweetheart contracts with hard-pressed growers. This kind of jungle warfare can be avoided by legislation that will provide for union representation elections when 30% of a grower's work force request such an election.
6. subscribe to "El Malcriado" (Farm Workers Press, Post Office Box 130, Delano, California) in order to stay in touch with the day-to-day happenings of the strike.

Many people have deserted the “Huelga” on the assumption that the struggle is over and that now other “causes” are more important. I hope that you will keep the farm workers’ struggle in the center of your thoughts, prayers and actions.

Godspeed.

Your brother,

Wayne C. Hartmire, Jr.

WCH/sm
enc. (1)

Worker-Priest Program With Farm Workers In California

Administered by the California Migrant Ministry

Description

Worker-priest (or worker-minister) teams will live and work with seasonal farm workers. A worker-priest team will consist of two persons: a clergyman (or theologically trained layman) and a farm worker. The team’s daily life will be in the fields as they do farm labor and in the farm worker community as they befriend and serve their fellow farm workers. They will help the workers with all the kinds of problems they confront. This will involve them in individual and collective action. The team will maintain relationship to the Church through the Migrant Ministry and, where possible, a local congregation or parish.

Financial Support

Agricultural labor will be the main source of income for the worker-priests. In addition the California Migrant Ministry will provide \$2,000 per year for each person, plus hospitalization and social security. Support for a team (two (2) persons) will therefore come to approximately \$4,500 per year.

Length of Program & Qualifications

Each person is asked to commit two (2) years to the program. Age is not a factor in choosing team members. The non-farm worker member of the team needs to be the kind of person who can get down to the grass roots and establish strong relationships. Ordination is desirable but not required. Spanish skill is desirable but not essential.

Supervision

The associate director of the California Migrant Ministry (the Rev. Phil Farnham) will have primary responsibility for this program. He will be assisted by other members of the staff (e.g., Chris Hartmire, Jim Drake, Dick Sample). Regular supervision will be provided.

Training

The first training period for four (4) teams will begin in mid-November 1966. If funds are available a second training period for four (4) more teams will begin in June or July 1967. Training will include: field work, Spanish study, theological reflection, community organization, farm worker problems, church relationships, etc. The teams will meet regularly during the two (2) year period with other California Migrant Ministry staff for fellowship, study, re-creation.

Location

The exact communities or counties where teams will be placed has not been decided. It is likely that the teams will be scattered throughout the agricultural areas of California.

Goals

First and foremost, effective services to farm workers; valid Christian presence with farm workers and their developing organizations; continuing connection between the world of the workers and the community of faith.

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