

OUR MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

On many occasions I have asked Church leaders to help the farm workers' union; sometimes they respond: "We know it is a tough struggle but we cannot take sides; our role is to serve as reconcilers." The New Testament speaks of reconciliation in the sense of acceptance of God's authority over all of life. (11 Cor.5:19; Ro.5:10 11:15, Eph.2:16, Col.1:20) This is why Paul speaks of the obedience of faith (Ro.1:5). And this is also why the good news of the Gospel is bad news indeed for some. In God's economy the poor are favored; the rich have already received their consolation. (Luke 6:20-24)

We do have a ministry of reconciliation. But a studied effort to avoid conflict has no part in it. By standing with the farm workers against their powerful adversaries we may help to bring true reconciliation into being. Biblical reconciliation is a sign of God's dominion and one of the sweet fruits of justice. (This article by Richard Cook)

"Chris Hartmire Resigns—Will Stay With Farm Worker Movement"

NFWM Executive Director Wayne (Chris) Hartmire has resigned effective May 15, 1981. The NFWM Board plans to appoint an Interim Executive Director in May and will conduct a search for a new Executive Director. Chris and Pudge Hartmire will move to La Paz, UFW headquarters, and will continue working full-time with the farm workers' movement.

In 1961 Chris left the East Harlem Protestant Parish to become the Director of the Calif. Migrant Ministry. In 1971 the NFWM was organized and Chris became the first Director. Now he and Pudge will remain a part of the NFWM as they join other Ministry staff who are assigned to work within the UFW.

Why have the Hartmires taken this new step? We may get a clue from the words Chris has used to interpret the ministry: *"We have tried to understand and live out servanthood in relationship to seasonal farm workers. How can we be genuinely helpful to the people who harvest the crops? That is the servant question. It takes priority over all of the questions about institutional stability."* —Presbyterian Life, 1969

"The problem with Cesar and the farm workers is that they are just too much for us; they are too much of a challenge to the way we have organized our lives. They keep pulling us beyond what we thought we could give and into a whole new way of looking at love and sacrifice." —Servanthood Among the Poor, 1975



Chris Hartmire

Chris' move to La Paz will be felt by the NFWM in many ways. His skills as administrator, strategist, counselor, program director and interpreter of theological and farm worker issues — these skills will no longer be fully available to the NFWM. On the other hand, Chris will not actually be lost to any of us. He will be even closer to the farm workers and will be especially helpful to Cesar at La Paz. Since Chris intends to remain a part of the NFWM, his work continues to be the work of all of us. We have the opportunity now and in the days ahead to affirm Chris for what he has done and for what he will be able to do in this new assignment. (This article by Richard Cook)

LETTER FROM CHRIS

In May of this year I will move from L.A. to La Paz (UFW headquarters in the foothills between Bakersfield and Tehachapi). I will stop being director of the National Farm Worker Ministry and will take up some tasks within the farm workers' movement. This decision has been a long time in coming. I have prayed on it for many months and I think I have thought through all the consequences.

I want you to understand my reasons because I want you to stay close to the continuing National Farm Worker Ministry. For me the time is ripe in at least three ways: (1) I have now been with the California Migrant Ministry and the NFWM 19½ years. I need to take on a new challenge in a new place. (2) My wife ("Pudge") also wants a career change and is more than ready to move to La Paz. (The youngest of our 4 children will graduate from high school in June.) (3) For some time I have felt that I can serve the farm workers' movement best by sharing some of the workload inside. That is not true of everyone. I just believe that — because of who I am and where I've been — it is true for me.

I am not leaving the work of the NFWM. I believe that I am continuing our ministry in a different form and in a different place. The Board of the NFWM is going to find an excellent, new Director. The 23 full-time NFWM staff people will continue their work for farm workers across the country — in this transition time and after a new director is found I urge each of you to continue your prayers, your work and your financial support for the NFWM in this time of change. Ninety-percent of our nation's seasonal farm workers are still unorganized. We have a long way to go — together.

With love and thanks,
your friend, *Chris*

P.S. This is not good-bye but I have to express my thanks to each of you for your love and support these many years. We have been through some interesting, tough and thrilling times together. More than you know your prayers and your deeds have lifted my spirits and made persistence possible.

Staff Changes In Florida

Fred Eyster, NFWM Florida Director for 5 years and NFWM staff person since 1972 has returned to No. Calif. (phone: 415/465-3264). Agribusiness' threat to cripple the ALRA requires a strong response from the churches, which Fred can help mobilize. Fred's successor in Fla. will be the Rev. Joseph Owens, S.J., who organized among Jamaican cane cutters for 8 years. Joe traveled to CA. with Fred in January and spent three weeks with the UFW at La Paz and other locations.

The Florida Working Group led by Methodist Dist. Supt. Lloyd Knox, affirmed Fred's departure from Fla. which was made at the request of the NFWM Mission Dept.

NFWM staff person Pat Drydyk and UFW staff and supporters in Florida continue to work hard on the "Red Coach" boycott and are making plans for statewide celebrations of Farm Worker Week in April and May. The Annual Meeting of the Florida Working Group will be at Camp Ithiel, Gotha, Florida on April 3-4, 1981.

CURRENT NFWM STAFF

NFWM OFFICES:

Los Angeles — Rev. Chris Hartmire, Sue Miner, Lucresia Beaver
St. Louis — Rev. Richard Cook, Sr. Loretto Maes
Oakland, CA — Rev. Fred Eyster
Florida — Fr. Joe Owens

UFW BOYCOTT:

Miami — Sr. Pat Drydyk
Tampa — Randy Cecil
Dallas — Esmeralda Perez
Los Angeles — Scott Templeton

UFW PROJECTS:

Texas — Sr. Tess Browne, Sr. Carol Ann Messina
La Paz — Lupe & Kathy Murguia, Gordon & Felicia Williamson
Gloria & Ken Doyle, Esther & Kent Winterrowd, Fr. Ken Irrgang
San Jose — Sylvia & Sal Alvarez
Los Angeles — Sr. Jean Eilers

AVAILABLE FROM NFWM (Please send a contribution, if possible.)

- The NAWR Probe, Jan.-Feb. 1981, entitled "Women in Farm Worker Ministry"
- "Sunday Visitor Interview with Cesar Chavez" 5 pp.
- Summary of UFW Project in Texas, 1 p.
- "Legal Pleas Seek to Assist Workers in Avocado Groves" (L.A. TIMES, 12/15/80) 4 pp.

NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY

(CONTINUING THE NATIONAL MIGRANT MINISTRY)



Related to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

January 1981

I wish I could have talked with you, personally, about the content of this letter — but there are just too many people to reach. I do hope that this will get to you ahead of any rumors (accurate or otherwise).

After a lot of prayer and soul searching I have decided to resign as Director of the National Farm Worker Ministry, effective at the May 1981 Board meeting. I have been wrestling for some time with the feeling that I can help the farm workers' movement most by moving to La Paz and working within the union. Frankly, I have resisted this pull to La Paz because I continue to find meaning and satisfaction in this ministry and because the Hartmires are content and, to some degree, set in our ways in Los Angeles.

But I have finally given in to the realization that I am doing no one any good by resisting a persistent internal call to go and do something new. Like all vocational decisions, this one was difficult; but now that it is done, I feel peaceful and "right" about it.

My decision does not have to do with the value and purpose of the NFWM. If I didn't feel this other pull, I could be happy in my present position for a long time to come. I sincerely hope that I will be able to stay close to the whole NFWM family in the years ahead.

"Pudge" is also ready and willing to leave Los Angeles and move to La Paz. Our four kids are not exactly happy about a change in the homestead, but the youngest will be graduating from High School in June (1981), so they are all pretty independent. I will probably move from L.A. sometime in the spring and Pudge will join me during the summer of 1981.

The National Farm Worker Ministry has already begun a process of future planning which will lead to a Search Committee and finally to a decision about a new director. You are among that core group of people who care deeply about the NFWM and who have sustained it through the years. I hope and pray that you will help keep this ministry strong and effective in the important years ahead.

With warm thanks and much love,
Your friend,

Wayne C. Hartmire, Jr.

WCH/sm

P.S. If you have thoughts you want to share with the NFWM Future Planning Committee, please write to: Sister Mary Catherine Rabbitt, Box 1113, 3001 S.Federal Blvd., Denver, CO 80236.