



NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY

(CONTINUING THE NATIONAL MIGRANT MINISTRY)

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

September 19, 1977

TO: NFWM BOARD MEMBERS & INVITEES

Dear Friends:

Many of you know that Cesar Chavez made a visit to the Philippines this past summer. He went because years ago he promised the Filipino strikers in Delano that he would visit their homeland. After a recent trip to Mexico the Filipino brothers reminded Cesar of his pledge and he made arrangements to go; the arrangements were made by Andy Imutan who was an original grape striker, a boycott director during the first grape boycott and for six (6) years a UFW Board member. Andy is now the leader of a Filipino organization in Stockton. Andy is a close, long-time friend.

Some of you have been frustrated because you wrote me or Cesar about the Philippines' trip and did not receive a reply. This is not such an unusual state of affairs, particularly during the summer when the Union's work pressure is multiplied several-fold. Cesar returned to the U.S. and immediately became absorbed in planning for the UFW Convention (see enclosure). He did not begin reading letters and materials carefully until early September. It was apparent from the feeling expressed that a written response would not be adequate. Cesar has, therefore, decided to set-up a meeting with some of the people and groups who have expressed concern about the trip to the Philippines. Some of you may have heard from him already about this meeting.

In closing I need to reaffirm two facts of life (about which I think we all agree): one, the farm workers now have their own Union and their own leadership. They are going to do what they see as necessary for the integrity and survival of their own struggle. We, as supporters, may not always agree and we are free to say so — but we are not in a position to dictate what the UFW and its leaders do and I hope we will not use our support to try to blackmail them into doing things our way. 2) The NFWM was not established to be a pressure group on the UFW. We have been helpful to the struggle because we have insisted on supporting the decisions of the movement. We have influence because of history and relationships, but we do not make decisions. I am vigorously opposed to playing the role that some want the NFWM to play at this time: that of being an available, close-at-hand, outside pressure force on Cesar Chavez and the UFW.

Cordially,

Chris Hartmire
Wayne C. Hartmire, Jr.

WCH/sm

enclosures:

- (1) UFW & the Calif. Labor Law
- (2) Report on Third Constitutional Convention, UFW
- (3) L.A.TIMES article, August 27, 1977
- (4) L.A.TIMES article, August 28, 1977
- (5) UFW Contracts