

Jan. 22, 1957

President Dwight Eisenhower,
Washington, D. C.

Dear President Eisenhower:

A community of nearly sixty men, women and children is facing annihilation unless quick, decisive action is taken by someone in authority. I am therefore appealing to you as a last resort, with the hope and prayer that you might find some course of action before it is too late.

Let me apprise you of the facts:

We are a religious group made up of citizens from various parts of the Union who have come together out of a desire to dedicate ourselves completely to the way of love as taught by Jesus Christ. Begun in 1942, the community now owns 1100 acres of land in Sumter County, Georgia. We make our living by farming, having no connection with any outside agency. We have sought to live simply and humbly, and in a law-abiding manner.

We welcome into our fellowship any person of any color or race. At present there are about 15 Negroes and 45 white people in the group.

Until the Supreme Court's decision on desegregation of schools, and the subsequent rise of the White Citizens' Councils, we were not molested. Since then our life together has become increasingly difficult and our very existence more precarious.

Every known measure of legal and economic pressure has been directed against us. Ginners would not gin our cotton; buyers would not buy our peanuts; all of our farm products have been boycotted and dealers will not sell us seed, feed and fertilizer. Today, the Sumner Livestock Sale Barn, which is owned and operated by the taxpayers of this county (and that includes us) notified us to neither buy nor sell there any more. Just to catalog the discriminations would require much time and space.

During the past six months, and particularly in the past few weeks, many acts of violence have taken place. In June a pistol was fired into our roadside market. In July, the market was dynamited. No one was injured, but the damage amounted to about \$3,000. In November it was fired into with several rounds of buckshot, which destroyed a refrigerated meat case valued at over \$300. On January 15 it was broken into and dynamited from within, this time the whole building and contents being destroyed by the explosion and resulting fire, with a loss of \$7,000. (Insurance companies had previously cancelled all insurance, and it has become impossible for us to obtain any.) Meanwhile shots have been fired into the community from cars passing on the highway. Four steel-jacketed bullets destroyed our electric gasoline pump, and others riddled the sign at the entrance to our driveway. A few nights ago one of our dwellings was burned, and on the same night a neighboring farmer, who has been friendly with us, found three kerosene flares under his barn in which were stored his heavy machinery, feed and fertilizer. They were discovered just in time to be extinguished before the barn went up in flames. Some time ago another friendly neighbor lost his barn, together with tractors, combines, etc. valued at \$30,000.

All of these things are public knowledge. They have been in newspapers and magazines. In every instance we have notified the local law enforcement officers. We have taken up with the Judge of the Southwest Georgia Judicial Circuit. The

Episcopal Bishop of the Georgia Diocese has approached Senator Talmadge. The local Ministerial Association has issued a public statement condemning these acts of violence and calling upon the authorities to end this lawlessness.

Nothing has been done. Groups of 10 to 12 cars are forming and riding at night. We have been told that the end is near.

We shall not run, for this is America. It is a land where free men have the right--and the duty--to walk erect and without fear in their pursuit of peace and happiness. Should this freedom perish from our land, we would prefer to be dead. We gladly offer our lives for its preservation.

Yours very sincerely,

Clarence L. Jordan

P. S. Should you wish more details, you may contact Dr. Clarence W. Cranford, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., who is well acquainted with the situation. We are also well known to Dr. Edward H. Pruden, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Washington.