

August 23, 1965

Mr. A. T. Spaulding, President
North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
Durham, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Spaulding:

Since it appears there may be some delay in my getting over to see you, I wonder if you will not help me consider an idea which--unless you think it unworthy--I think that I shall institute almost immediately.

I think it likely that, behind all of the conflict and disagreement and unrest today, there is actually a general agreement among people of all races about the errors of the past and the proper goals of the present and future. There is a difference among reasonable men as to the approach. I happen to believe, as you undoubtedly have noted from our editorials, that many of the present approaches are wrong and are likely eventually to do more harm than good for the very people supposedly to be helped.

In any case, I want to do something to help the Negro race to recognize the opportunity that awaits it. It is not enough for me to hire a few qualified Negroes for good jobs in our own company. To tell you the truth, we would like to have more than we presently have. But there is great difficulty in finding qualified people--not merely in terms of training and experience, but in attitude and potential as well.

We now have Negroes operating our film center, for example, and our very best film editor is a Negro. You know about J. D. Lewis, who worked with us for so long--until he got an excellent opportunity elsewhere. So far, so good. But where do all of ~~go~~ go from here?

Continued

Mr. A. T. Spaulding, President
August 23, 1965
Page 2

I propose to set up at our station a separate department which, for want of a better name, I think we shall call our "Department of Racial Development". A very competent man will be given the full-time assignment of operating this department. We plan to budget it as necessity and opportunity indicate.

I would like to schedule a regular program, perhaps daily, and certainly once or twice a week, when job opportunities for Negroes can be discussed on the air. Specific job opportunities, that is. I hope we can persuade Mr. Coltrane to be a regular participant. Further, I want to have qualified Negroes to appear on this program to say: "My qualifications are thus and so, my educational background is such."

Our department head and Mr. Coltrane would then work to find places for these people in business and industry. We would make constructive examples of them. We would have personnel people of the various companies appear and give testimony as to the productivity of the Negroes whom they have hired.

A step further: The Negroes who have obtained jobs would then be the best possible spokesmen to urge others to prepare themselves, to stay in school, to apply themselves.

I think I need not go on with the details of what might be done. What I want, simply said, is to create a climate of acceptance among the races--both ways. As it now stands, a lot of people are doing a lot of talking, and are making whatever token effort might be necessary to "get along". That is not enough.

Forgive this lengthy letter. I earnestly seek your advice. I do not wish to undertake a project which may be misunderstood, and which may be offensive to the people whom I would like to see benefit from our efforts and expense. It is not always easy to be certain that one's own good faith will be accepted as such by someone else.

Will you think about this, and perhaps discuss it with some of your associates? If it's a bad idea, don't hesitate

Continued

Mr. A. T. Spaulding, President
August 23, 1965
Page 3

to say so, Or, if you have another approach, I would be glad
to have it from a man whom I respect very much.

Cordially,

Vice President

JESSE HELMS: sb