

# First Christian Church

(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
NORTH CLEVELAND AT SOCIETY AVE.  
ALBANY, GEORGIA

RALPH LYNWOOD SMITH, MINISTER  
CHURCH OFFICE: 436-1054  
PARSONAGE: 432-2108

September 12, 1966

Mr. Ivan Allen, Jr.  
City of Atlanta Court House  
68 Mitchell Street, S.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mayor Allen,

My wife and I were in your campaign headquarters on the night of your first election as mayor of Atlanta. We gave you our support. You have more than lived up to the expectations that we had in you as a person and your administration. As you can see by the address, we are now serving in Albany, Georgia. Our hearts remain in Atlanta and we hope some day to return to serve again.

Your recent heartache and frustration over the sudden outburst of violence is also ours. Your courage to enter the areas of trouble and attempt to minister to the people is most compassionate. We deeply appreciate your stand for law and order and at the same time justice for white and black. Please keep your faith and remember the poem by Kipling "If you can trust yourself when all men about you doubt you" (misquoted), "You will be a man my son." Mayor Allen you are indeed a man.

I wish that I had an easy answer. I wish that you did. You said that we needed to build better cities. I agree but even more basic we need to build better people. All of this is an indictment of the Church and our failure to become what God intended us to become. Parents, teachers, everyone of us is involved or should be and should have been.

My prayers are with you, your family, your administration, and with the friends as well as enemies of your basic principles of government. They are sound and only imperfect as each of us as human beings are imperfect. You have my respect and support.

Sincerely yours,

  
Ralph Lynwood Smith

(PS: Please pardon the appearance of this letter...today I am my own secretary.)