

MEMORANDUM

*yellow - breakfast*  
*blue - lunch*  
*red - dinner*

June 9, 1964

TO: Staff for Orientation Program, June 12-27

FROM: (Rev.) Bruce Hanson, Summer Projects Director,  
National Council of Churches, Commission on Religion & Race

RE: Plans for Orientation - for staff consideration

The major planning for this orientation program has been worked out by a Steering Committee composed of the following people: Bruce Hanson, Conference Coordinator (NCC), Bob Moses (SNCC), Ivanhoe Donaldson (SNCC), Norman Hill (CORE), David Dennis (CORE), Laplois Ashford (NAACP), Dorothy Cotton (SCLC), Bob Allen, Matt Miles, & David Johnson, and Margaret Lawson, Conference Manager (NCC). The planning was done in close consultation with the Mississippi Council of Federated Organizations (COFO).

The following pages include what it seems most appropriate for the total orientation staff to consider. The reason for writing down the results of planning sessions is simple. Most of the people serving on the staff have not been an integral part of the planning -- yet are here to take part in the plans that have resulted. There is a good deal more planning to be done, at the section level particularly, to get ready for the conference, and some of the plans already made may have to be changed, but it is important that everyone be brought up to date on what the Steering Committee has done. Here, then, are the working presuppositions and plans of the Steering Committee.

The general purpose of the orientation program is to help the participants prepare for the tasks they have volunteered to do in the field. This preparation includes giving the participants a full and accurate picture of the risks involved in their work, and helping each person develop the knowledge, working skills, and attitudes he needs to handle himself effectively during the summer, and make a solid contribution to the work of the project to which he is assigned.

The main working assumption behind the conference is that, beyond lectures, readings, "bull sessions," and informal contacts, the most effective way to teach and train the participants will come from a close collaboration between experienced field staff people and human relations people working in smaller groups. The key "teachers" will be the field staff people, who have the most important experience and knowledge to communicate to those who have volunteered to spend their summer in Mississippi. Field staff know the actual conditions of life in the state, the main problems volunteers are likely to cause and encounter, the necessary detailed information about the city or town where the volunteers will work, and matters of program and attitude the volunteers need to know in order to do an effective job. Working beside field staff, the human relations people, most of whom are associated with the National Training Laboratories, know how to help people learn a lot about their work and attitudes in a short time. These NTL trainers and graduate students are, for the most part, college and university teachers with much

practical experience in training methods. They have good understanding of group behavior and how the individual plays his part in a group, such as a voter registration group, or a freedom school staff. Some have experience with the civil rights movement; many do not, and while they are motivated to help, they will need the field staff to point the way. Besides these basic staff people for the conference, resource people representing many skills will have the opportunity to teach these skills within the context of small groups.

The conference has several different groupings:

- a. The general session of all people. These sessions will involve speakers, films, discussions, etc., as appropriate to the topic.
- b. The district section, usually including about 30-50 people all headed for the same district (COFO has planned the summer program according to the five political districts in Mississippi). In the first session (June 14-20) the majority of volunteers will be preparing for voter education-registration work. In the second session (June 21-27) the majority will be Freedom School teachers. Each district section will also include individuals preparing for special jobs within that district.

As plans now stand, this means that in the first session (June 14-20) a district section would include voter education-registration workers, white community team workers, researchers, Freedom School Coordinators, communications specialists, community center coordinators, and counselors. Also, as plans now stand, in the second session (June 21-27) the district sections would include Freedom School teachers, community center workers, voter education-registration workers, white community team workers, and counselors.

It is important that, where assignments can be made, all volunteers, whatever their assigned tasks, have their primary identification with a district section. All people and special jobs within a district need to be acquainted with each other. All people going to work in a particular district need to have common information about the specific characteristics of that district and the work planned there for the summer. All people headed for a district need to understand the importance of a unified approach to that district's problems, and the ways in which all work in that district will be coordinated through the summer. This becomes particularly crucial because the people going through the June orientation programs will form the backbone of the summer program, and others going into the state later will need to get "hooked in" to existing projects as effectively as possible.

- c. The district work group, usually including about 8-15 people. These work groups will be composed of people who will be working together in the field in a particular community. For example, if in the 3rd District COFO has decided to have projects in four communities, there would be a work group for each community. In the first session (June 14-20) this means that the section work groups would be composed mainly of people preparing for voter education-registration work.
- d. The special work groups. In the first session (June 14-20), the special work groups are for those not doing voter education-registration work who need to prepare for other jobs. As plans now stand, for the first session there would be special work groups for white community team workers, communications workers, Freedom School coordinators, community center coordinators, researchers, law students, counselors, etc. In the special work groups they will learn in depth what's required in their jobs. When it seems appropriate, people from the special work groups can sit in on section work groups.

Most of the work of the conference will be done in sections and work groups, with occasional general sessions.

### Staffing

What we can actually do in the way of staffing depends finally on who is available at the time the conference begins, but certain general thoughts can be stated.

Each district section is staffed by two (or more) field staff, preferably the actual staff that the participants will be working with later, and two human relations staff.

Each district section staff has control over what goes on in its section, according to the special needs that may come up. This means they also have control over the work groups within their section. Within the general framework of the conference, and conference steering committee decisions, they plan and carry out whatever activities look best to them, for their section.

Each special work group has working with it one or more field staff persons, or the specialist who will be teaching the necessary skills, and a human relations person. The special work group staff has control over what takes place in their work group, including deciding when to meet separately from the district sections.

Within the basic framework of lectures, district sections, and work groups, additional resource people can easily move in and out after consultation with section or special work group staffs.

During the early part of the conference, the program is mainly pre-planned. There are certain facts which need to get into everyone's hands early. As the work continues, more and more of the time of sections and special work groups will be planning and carrying out the specific tasks which they need to do.

In many parts of the conference there is a blend of attention to specific work tasks and problems which people will be facing, and to problems of communication and human relations which will come up in their work. The early part of the conference has more emphasis on the types of work people will be doing; the later part continues to deal with work tasks with additional emphasis on human relations attitudes and skills.

Throughout the conference, through procedures decided at Staff Orientation, screening of volunteers will continue.

During the conference, decisions relating to schedule, content, and so forth will be made by a Steering Committee made up of the following people: Bruce Hanson, conference coordinator; COFO representative; Margaret Lawson, conference manager; NTL representative; Communications representative; general field staff representative from the Steering Committee which has worked on the present plans; person working on screening; a representative from each district section staff, preferably field staff; a representative from each special work group, preferably field staff, and others it seems appropriate to add.

Tentative Schedule - Staff Orientation, June 12-14

Friday, June 12

- 9:00 - 12:00    Staff Registration
- 12:00            Lunch
- 1:30             Staff Orientation

Staff orientation begins with a general session and continues through noon on Sunday, June 14th. The schedule for staff orientation will be worked out by the Conference Steering Committee. Some of the things that need to be covered are: introductions, basic facts about Western College, communications (security) considerations, overview of entire summer program given by field staff persons for benefit of those not now working in Mississippi, discussion of who will be at the first session, assignment of section staffs, discussion of the kinds of things that definitely need to be talked about and are not covered in the present schedule, selection of people for Steering Committee, field assignments for students, screening procedures, registration procedures, finding late-comers, deciding about research.

Proposed Session Descriptions

June 6th -- subject to revision at staff orientation. Written out in order to indicate what the Steering Committee thought should be included and what might be included. The numbers by each session refer to the numbers in the 5 1/2-day outline schedule.)

General Session. This session would serve to welcome the conference participants, to orient them to the over-all summer program, and review the plans and plans of the conference. It should serve to set a tone and atmosphere of serious work for the conference program and set the conference

"ground rules." Included in the session would be: (a) a brief word of welcome and summary of who is represented, including groups, volunteers, the types of work they will be doing and where they will be doing it. Here we establish the fact that most people will be working with COFO in Mississippi, and here, too, will be stated the fact that before the conference is over some participants may change their plans for the summer, either because they will realize more fully the risks involved, or because field staff may have to decide it's in their (the participant's) best interest or the program's best interest. (10 minutes). (b) a short word of welcome from a representative of Western College (3 minutes). (c) a short word from Julian Bond, before substantive issues are discussed, stressing the limits of security which must be observed by all participants (5 minutes). (d) a brief explanatory statement on COFO, including a quick inventory of past and present programs and background material for the summer project by representative of COFO (15 minutes). (e) the introduction of Bob Moses, the COFO Program Director, who would then introduce people like Dave Dennis, the Assistant Program Director, and various other people with state-wide responsibilities, who will be serving on the Coordinating Council for the summer (20 minutes). (f) additional introduction of conference staff, including the conference manager, members of Steering Committee, some resource people, etc. (g) comments on ground rules, schedule, places of meeting, etc. (Total time: 60 minutes)

(2) District Section Meetings. The first district section meetings would serve to (a) welcome and orient participants to the role of the section and work groups in the over-all conference plan, (b) discuss and clarify any immediate questions about the conference, identity of leaders, etc., (c) provide an opportunity for section and work group members to become acquainted with each other and the staff. The special work groups will not meet at this point. (Total time: 45 minutes)

(3) Second General Session. This session would deal with the State of Mississippi, the kind of state it is structurally, what it does to the people who live in it, and to the rest of the country. Here emphasis must be on concreteness, providing an over-all, up-to-the minute picture of the state where the participants will be living and working. Bob Moses, speaker.

(4) Lunch and Staff Meetings. It is suggested that a two-hour period (including lunch) be kept free for staff planning purposes each day. As now proposed, the program requires very close staff cooperation at the section level, so that what is planned will really meet the special needs of participants in each section. The extended lunch period will also give needed free time to the conference participants.

(5) District Section Meetings. Reactions to general session on Mississippi. (Total time: 60 minutes)

(6) Third General Session. This session stresses the COFO Summer Programs, such as Freedom Registration, convention challenges, Freedom Schools, etc. designed to bring about the changes needed in the state. Field staff and others responsible for various aspects of the program would present all the various programs in detail, with the emphasis on their purposes and coordination. In the June 14-20 orientation, the political programs would be stressed. (Total time: 75-90 minutes)

(7) District Section meetings, work groups, and special work group meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to go into great detail about COFO programs -- to discuss the role of COFO in the state and begin to see what section districts and special workshops need to do to get prepared. This includes understanding leadership structure for the summer on various projects and deciding what needs to be done to get ready.

(8) Social. The latter part of each evening should be kept free for social activity. Any planned activity should come from the volunteers themselves in view of the fact that, later on, during the summer, the lack of cultural activities in some communities, or curfews, etc., will make it necessary for them to supply their own recreation.

#### Day 2

(9) General Session, morning. This session would be aimed at giving the participants a good overview of the history of the Negro, the South and, by implication, the Movement necessary to understand the current situation in the South in its proper perspective. The session should be approximately 45 minutes long, with a resource person (or people) in charge. Dr. Charles Wesley, President of Central State University in Ohio, will make this address.

(10) District Section Meetings, work groups, special work group meetings. These meetings in smaller groups follow directly from the General Session and deal with some of its implications. There are many issues to be dealt with here and the problem for district section and work group leaders will be to work out the best ways to do the job. Included would be such issues as understanding one's own racial and class attitudes, facing the question of how volunteers can relate to a very different cultural situation, raising the issue of field staff attitude toward volunteers, particularly white ones, considering ways in which the summer project's presence will endanger local people. Whatever approach is used, the need is to get honest expression of feelings and attitudes into the open, rather than pious platitudes. Ways of doing this have been discussed by the Steering Committee. One way suggested would be through small groups, perhaps no more than four in each group, aided by "guidelines" encouraging directness and prohibiting criticism of others' expressions. Then each group of four could join the others in their work group for further sharing. The fours would meet again, if wished. Whatever way the section and work group staff work it out, the aims would be to help people acknowledge and accept the fact that everyone, white and Negro, volunteer or field staff, has some prejudiced attitudes which have effects that need to be examined for the summer's work. A resource sheet is available with possible procedures for staff use in this session.

(11) District Section Meetings, Work Groups and Special Work Groups. The purpose of these meetings is to work on typical problems that will be faced in the field in a concrete, direct way. Moving on from what has been discussed in the morning general session and smaller meetings, the aim would be to deal with the specific types of problems which people will be facing.

When possible, work should focus on the specific community where volunteers will be living, with emphasis on the particular problems of that community and the way an individual and groups can meet them. How do you go about making contacts? How do you canvass; what are the problems there? What are the voter registration procedures in that community?

How these matters are dealt with is up to section and work group staffs. Suggested approaches include role-playing of canvassing situations; discussion and role playing of "critical incidents" (problem situations requiring special skill and understanding, such as recruiting local community people for work on projects). Still another approach would have people work in groups of three to practice the skills of giving effective help to another person; one man presents a real problem he has in relation to the summer's work, one helps him, and one observes how the helping is going. (Resource sheet available)

The entire afternoon is available: there will probably be some mix of specific information about the problems to be faced, and the community, and specific skill practice (canvassing, how to give help, etc.).

(12) General Session, evening. This session would be aimed at giving the participants insights into the attitudes and feelings of the white community in the South towards the Negro, the Movement, and the presence of outsiders, especially white, living in Negro communities. Charles Morgan, a lawyer who lived until recently in Birmingham, will make this presentation. (Total time: 60 minutes)

(13) District Section Meetings, work groups, special work group meetings. These meetings would take a step further from the earlier meetings of the day, reacting to Chuck Morgan's talk, discussing sex and implications for the summer and COFO's work in the state, risks involved when whites live in Negro communities, and consideration of basic rules -- disciplines -- for the summer.

### Day 3

(14) General Session, morning. This session focuses on the recent history and philosophy of non-violence, and its implications for the summer's work ahead. Jim Bevel and Jim Lawson have worked out this presentation.

(15) District Section Meetings, work groups and special work groups. The purpose here would be to follow closely from the general session and work through the concrete implications of non-violent approaches. What happens here depends on the general session, and in district section staffs. Suggested approaches include exercises drawn from "critical incidents," so that people could have direct practice in behaving in a non-violent way under stress combined with discussion, drawing heavily on the experience of field staff.

In addition, it is suggested that each section spend some time in raising unanswered questions, to be fed to Jim Lawson and Jim Bevel for the afternoon general session.

(16) General Session, afternoon. This session would serve as a continuation of the morning's work on non-violence, and as a wrap-up and summary of what had been done in the sections and work groups. Jim Bevel and Jim Lawson would also have responsibility for this.

(17) District Section Meetings, Work Groups, and Special Work Groups. The aim here is to get work done on some real problem situation (such as the sudden need to change plans for a scheduled mass meeting) that members of the work group will actually be facing -- and to learn more about methods of effective group problem-solving. A suggested approach is: one work group could work on a problem situation, which should be one drawn from the real experience of field staff. Members of the other work group would sit around them, acting as "coaches." From time to time, the group in the center would stop work, and the coaches would give help on how the process is going. Then the groups could change places and repeat the procedure. The aim here is to understand how the group is working, as well as what it is working on. (Resource sheet available)

(18) District Sections, Work Groups, and Special Work Group Meetings. This session is aimed at developing the skills and procedures necessary to resolve problems and difficulties within the group which might arise in the field. These might include personality conflicts, boredom, disruptive behavior, tensions, and leadership difficulties. The procedure might begin with discussion of typical within-group problems faced in the field, then move to role-playing of critical incidents to look at the problems in more detail. The importance of being able to spot, discuss openly, and correct the behavior of self and others in the field group would be stressed. (Resource sheet available)

#### Day 4

(19) General Session, morning. This general session would serve to present the legal situation as it exists in the areas in which summer programs are to be carried out. Included would be (a) the role of law and respect for law as it relates to the whole struggle, (b) the reality of the legal and law enforcement system in Mississippi, (c) what the Justice Department can and cannot

do, and what new powers it will have with the passage of the civil rights legislation, (d) how people can respond under the present situation in the state, (e) legal resources available, (f) what to do and how to handle self when confronted by local law enforcement officers and extra-legal "authorities," what to do when arrested, how to prepare affidavits, what to do about "vigilantes." Special resources include lawyers from Mississippi, lawyers who will be working in the state this summer, and representatives from the Justice Department.

(20) District Section Meetings, Work Groups and Special Work Groups. These section and work group meetings would provide an opportunity to follow up on the legal material presented in the general session and to make specific application to the local situation and to work assignments represented in the section and work groups. Critical incidents and role playing techniques may be utilized where appropriate to give a feeling of how to handle oneself appropriately under stress when legal matters are at issue. Communications people should stress the importance of keeping affidavits regularly. Questions should be raised to be presented in the general session after lunch.

(21) General Session, afternoon. Follow-up and summary on legal picture: mainly a question-answer period.

(22) District Section Meetings, Work Groups and Special Work Group Meetings. These section and work group meetings would be designed to permit the work groups and sections to develop a census of the problems which have not yet been dealt with adequately in the conference program. Time for the treatment and discussion of such problems can be arranged in the later section and work group meetings. Each section and work groups would set up a tentative time plan for their meetings for the remainder of the conference.

This session serves as a kickoff for the major emphasis for the remainder of the conference: focused work on tasks which must be accomplished if the field work groups are to do an effective job. Work groups and sections will essentially be planning and managing their own work together. Whenever it seems appropriate and helpful, time should be taken to evaluate the group's working methods, to see whether it is reaching its goals effectively. The skill of being able to evaluate how things are going in the group, and make corrections when work is breaking down or not going well, is an important one for the groups' later work in the field.

(23) District Section Meetings, Work Groups and Special Work Group Meetings. This activity will depend on the decisions made during the afternoon of Day 4.

(24) General session: Overview of summer plans. This should be a fairly detailed account of the purpose and significance of the participants' work during the summer, and might summarize the types of problems and situations they will be faced with (including those specifically worked on during the conference). This session should focus the attention of each participant on the coming summer's work, not only his own type of work, but that of everyone else.

Day 5

(25) Lunch and Staff Meetings. At this time new staff members who will be working at the next week's program are expected to arrive. They will need briefing by the existing staff. During the afternoon and evening, they could sit in on section and work group meetings to get the feel of what is going on, without necessarily taking part.

(26) District Section Meetings, Work Groups, and Special Work Groups. It is suggested that this period be used for wrapping up and concluding work at the section and work group level, and for the outgoing and incoming staff people to get together to check signals and make suggestions for next week's training.

(27) Closing General Session. This should provide a feeling of wind-up to the conference, and serve as an effective springboard to the summer's work. It should be planned in close conjunction with the staff of sections, to reflect accurately the concerns that they feel the participants have. Outside resource people would not necessarily be appropriate.