

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
PRESIDENT

WYATT TEE WALKER
DIRECTOR

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR TO THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD

OCTOBER 11, 1960

WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING, I BEGAN WORK AUGUST 3, AS DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. MY FEARS WERE BASED NOT ONLY IN THE IMMENSITY OF THE TASK, BUT ALSO IN A CLEAR RECOGNITION OF MY OWN PERSONAL LIMITATIONS. HOWEVER, THE GREATNESS OF THIS HOUR AS IT RELATES TO THE NEGRO COMMUNITY AND THE LARGER DESTINY OF AMERICA, AND PERHAPS THE WORLD, AND THE MANY DEVOTED MEN OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PROVIDED SUFFICIENT BALANCE TO WARRANT MY ACCEPTING THE TASK OF DEVELOPING AND EXECUTING THE PROGRAM OF SCLC.

THE LAST 60 DAYS HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL AND FRUSTRATING; FRUITFUL, IN THAT WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN GETTING BEHIND US SOME OF THE BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT SCLC HAS SO SORELY NEEDED, AND FRUSTRATING IN THAT THERE STILL REMAINS SO MUCH TO BE DONE.

THERE IS NO NEED TO BELABOR YOU WITH THE MINUTE DETAILS AS TO WHEN I REPORT TO WORK, AND HOW LONG I TAKE FOR LUNCH, OR HOW MANY MEMORANDA HAVE BEEN SENT OUT. RATHER, IT IS PERTINENT ONLY TO REVIEW WHAT HAS BEEN DONE THROUGH THE NATIONAL OFFICE IN THE AREAS OF OUR BROAD PROGRAM. LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION IN THIS REPORT THEN TO ACTION, EDUCATION, AND FUND RAISING WITH A WORD OF PREFACE CONCERNING THE STAFF AND NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS. THE AREA OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IS NOTICEABLY ABSENT FROM THIS REPORT SINCE MR. WOOD WILL ADEQUATELY COVER THIS PHASE OF SCLC'S PROGRAM.

THE STAFF AND HEADQUARTERS

THE STAFF OF SCLC HAS DOUBLED AND THERE ARE MANY NEW CONSIDERATIONS THAT ARISE WHEN YOU HAVE FIVE OR SIX PEOPLE WORKING OUT OF AN OFFICE AS OVER AGAINST TWO OR THREE. BECAUSE OF THIS, CLEAR-CUT LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY HAVE TO BE SPELLED OUT AND A DEFINITE CHAIN OF COMMAND ESTABLISHED. THIS HAS BEEN DONE WITH A SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENT OF PERSONNEL SUPERVISION AND A JOB DESCRIPTION RECORD IN WRITING IN ORDER THAT WE OPERATE EFFICIENTLY AND WITH FACILITY. THE PROGRAM OF SCLC WILL BE EXECUTED ONLY INSOFAR AS THE STAFF OPERATES IN A STRAIGHT LINE TOWARD THE GOALS OF OUR ORGANIZATION.

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS SEEN THE NEED OF CENTRALIZING OUR FINANCES IN THE HOME OFFICE, ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM OF BUDGET CONTROLS BECAUSE OF THE VERY CHARACTER OF OUR WORK, AND WEEKLY FINANCIAL REPORTS OF ALL MONIES RECEIVED AND DISBURSED. MANY OTHER SMALL DETAILS OF GOOD OFFICE ROUTINE HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BUT ARE NOT OF SUFFICIENT IMPORT TO BE MENTIONED HERE. IN RESUME, WE WOULD SAY, THAT THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IS BEING ORGANIZED ON A SOUND BUSINESS BASIS.

OUR STAFF IS SMALL BUT WHAT IT LACKS IN QUANTITY, IT MORE THAN MAKES UP FOR IN VERSATILITY. MR. JAMES R. WOOD IS A MAN OF BROAD EXPERIENCE, WIDE VERSATILITY, APTLY SUITED TO FUNCTION AS OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR, AN AREA THAT WE HAVE LONG NEGLECTED. MRS. COTTON, TALENTED AND PERCEPTIVE OF THOUGHT, NOT ONLY AFFORDS OUR OFFICE COMPETENCE AND KNOW-HOW, BUT CAN REPRESENT SCLC EQUALLY AS WELL ON THE PUBLIC PLATFORM. MRS. BROWN'S AND MRS. HUNTER'S RECORD WITH SCLC SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. MR. HARRY BLAKE DESERVES ESPECIAL MENTION FOR HIS KEY ROLE IN BRINGING THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION TO LOUISIANA. TOO MUCH CANNOT BE SAID ABOUT OUR PRESIDENT WHO WORKS TIRELESSLY TO EXTEND AND SUPPORT THE

WORK OF SCLC. THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT OF THE STAFF, THE COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE, THE SUSTAINED SUPPORT OF THE BOARD AND OUR MANY SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE NATION MAKE THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WITH THE HELP OF ALMIGHTY GOD, A REAL FORCE IN DETERMINING THE DESTINY OF AMERICA.

E D U C A T I O N A L P R O G R A M

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED BY THREE INSTITUTES ON NONVIOLENCE HELD IN PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, ATLANTA, GEORGIA AND BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA. OUR INTENT WAS, WITH THE COOPERATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE TRAINING IN THE PHILOSOPHY AS WELL AS THE TECHNIQUES OF NONVIOLENCE IN ACCORD WITH THE HIGHLY ACCELERATED PACE OF THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE IN 1960. WE ARE PERSUADED, THAT CERTAINLY, TO A DEGREE, WE FILLED THIS NEED. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IN THE TRAILWAY BUS PROTEST THAT FOLLOWED ON THE HEELS OF SCLC'S INSTITUTE, THAT OF THE FIRST 12 PERSONS JAILED, SEVEN HAD ATTENDED OUR INSTITUTE. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT FROM THIS PROTEST, THE LUNCH COUNTERS OF TRAILWAY BUS TERMINALS IN SIX STATES WERE DESEGREGATED. THUS SCLC PLAYED ITS ROLE OF AUGMENTING LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRESS IN CHANGING THE SOCIAL ORDER. IN ATLANTA AND BIRMINGHAM, THE TASK OF PROMOTING THE INSTITUTE WAS GREATLY LIGHTENED BY OUR FAITHFUL BOARD MEMBERS, DR. SAM WILLIAMS AND THE REVEREND FRED SHUTTLESWORTH. MR. SHUTTLESWORTH'S AID WAS MADE DESPITE THE GREAT DURESS OF HIS OWN PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE TO WHICH I SHALL ALLUDE LATER IN THIS REPORT.

ONE SIGNIFICANT MEETING IN WHICH THE DIRECTOR OFFICIALLY REPRESENTED SCLC BEARS MENTIONING HERE PERHAPS BETTER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, FOR BY NOT TOO LABORIOUS A DEVICE, IT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED 'EDUCATIONAL.'

THE PHELPS-STOKES FUND, OF WHICH DR. FRED PATTERSON IS DIRECTOR, INVITED SCLC ALONG WITH THE OTHER MAJOR ACTION ORGANIZATIONS (NAACP, LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND, CORE) TO MEET WITH A COMMITTEE OF THE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS, BOTH STATE AND PRIVATE. I LEARNED IN THE MEETING THAT THE COLLEGE PRESIDENTS HAD PREVIOUSLY MET WITH NAACP AND CORE AND 'HAD PLANNED' TO MEET WITH SCLC. THE MEETING HAD BEEN ARRANGED SPECIFICALLY WITH THE IMMINENT RE-OPENING OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN MIND, TO DETERMINE JUST WHAT THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT IS AS IT RELATES TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENT, AND HOW THE ROLE, ONCE DETERMINED, COULD BE BEST PLAYED. THE DEVICE BY WHICH THE ROLE WAS TO BE DETERMINED, OBSTENSIBLY WAS, TO LEARN FROM US OUR PLANS FOR THE FALL IN REGARDS TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENT. I MAY BE IN GRAVE ERROR, BUT I SENSE THAT THIS WAS AN EFFORT TO CONTAIN THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND BY ADMISSION IN THE MEETING 'KEEP THE DEMONSTRATIONS SMALL'. SCLC'S POSITION WAS MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR: WE MAKE NO APOLOGY FOR BEING A NONVIOLENT, MASS, DIRECT-ACTION ORGANIZATION, AND THAT WE GIVE ABSOLUTE SUPPORT TO THE STUDENT MOVEMENT. OUR PHILOSOPHY TURNS ON 400 PERSONS BEING ARRESTED AND REMAINING IN JAIL RATHER THAN TO BE COSTLY BY REQUIRING 400 BAIL BOND FEES. AS FAR AS THE DILEMMA OF THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED, WE QUOTED OUR ILLUSTRIOUS PRESIDENT BY STATING THAT "THERE IS NO PAINLESS WAY TO HAVE A REVOLUTION." IT IS THE CANDID OPINION OF THE DIRECTOR THAT THE COMMITTEE OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS HAVE NOW A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE STUDENT MOVEMENT REALLY IS AFTER THIS FRONTAL APPROACH AND ENTERTAINING FRANK CONVERSATION WITH THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE MOST INTIMATELY INVOLVED.

A C T I O N

YOU WILL AGREE THAT SIXTY DAYS IS NOT VERY MUCH TIME TO GET AN ACTION PROGRAM OFF THE GROUND, YET SCLC WAS ABLE TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT ATTEMPT IN THIS AREA ALSO. SOME OF YOU ARE AS FAMILIAR WITH THIS PROJECT AS I FOR WITHOUT YOUR

COOPERATION IT WAS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE. LET US RECOUNT FIRST THE CIRCUMSTANCES EXISTING IN ORDER THAT A FAIR EVALUATION MIGHT BE MADE ON THE RESULT. FIRST, ONLY SIX WEEKS SEPARATED THE INITIAL CONTACT MADE WITH THE PARTICIPATING CITIES AND D-DAY, OCTOBER 3RD. SECOND, THERE WAS NO FIELD SERVICE; IT WAS A MAIL ORDER JOB ALL THE WAY. THIRD, IT WAS IN THE AREA WHERE THERE IS THE LEAST DRAMA AND ATTRACTION AND PERHAPS THE GREATEST APATHY, VOTER REGISTRATION. NEVERTHELESS WITH THAT STRANGE AMBITION PECULIAR TO BABIES AND FOOLS, WE BEGAN TO TRY TO EXECUTE FOR THE FIRST TIME, A COORDINATED AND SIMULTANEOUS APPLICATION OF THE NONVIOLENT PHILOSOPHY TO VOTER REGISTRATION. YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH OUR STATED PURPOSE CONTAINED IN THE OCTOBER 3RD. MEMORANDUM FORWARDED TO YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

WE HAD AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PREVIOUS ALERT TO THE PRESS, NO BUILD-UP, SINCE WE HAD MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE AFORE-MENTIONED CIRCUMSTANCES. WE ORGANIZED THE TECHNIQUE AND METHODOLOGY OF ARRANGING THE DEMONSTRATION, FORWARDED TO THEM ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS AND A TIME-TABLE FOR CULMINATING THE DEMONSTRATION. TWENTY-TWO CITIES WERE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE, FOURTEEN INDICATED THEIR PARTICIPATION AND THERE WAS A DEFINITE RESPONSE OF SOME SORT IN TWELVE. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE SKILLFUL PUBLIC RELATIONS JOB EXECUTED THROUGH OUR NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, THE RESULTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN MISINTERPRETED. HOWEVER, THE IMPACT, FROM WHERE THE DIRECTOR SITS, WAS MORE THAN HE HAD HOPED FOR.

WE INSTRUCTED THE LOCAL CHAIRMAN TO GIVE A 12 HOUR ALERT TO THE LOCAL PRESS THAT THEY MIGHT BE ON HAND AT THE PLACE OF REGISTRATION - 8:00 A.M. CST AND 9:00 A.M. EST ON OCTOBER 3RD. IN ATLANTA, OUR OFFICE ALERTED THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WIRE SERVICES AND PROVIDED THEM WITH THE BACKGROUND OF THIS EFFORT SUNDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 2ND. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE GENIUS OF OUR APPARENT SUCCESS. PRESS-WISE, OUR EXPOSURE RAN MONDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY. I ILLUSTRATE HERE WITH THE CLIPPINGS FROM THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION AND JOURNAL.....

FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON (WITH MY TONGUE IN CHEEK) BIRMINGHAM AND SHREVEPORT WERE BLACKED OUT. THIS RESULT PERSUADES US TO BELIEVE THAT A PROGRAM SUCH AS THIS, WITH PROPER TIME-SPAN, FIELD SERVICE AND LOCAL INTEREST, HAS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL.

FUND - R A I S I N G

THAT WHICH HAS BEEN DONE IN THE AREA OF FUND-RAISING HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED TOTALLY BY THE DIRECTOR OF FUND-RAISING, THE INIMITABLE RALPH D. ABERNATHY IN COOPERATION WITH THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN TWO-FOLD: THE SETTING UP OF 'CRUSADES' WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES FROM WHICH THE MOST SIZABLE RESPONSES HAVE COME; THE OTHER HAS BEEN AN APPEAL LETTER, SOME 10,000 WHICH NETTED PERHAPS A 5% RESPONSE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME LARGE INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS THAT HAVE CERTAINLY HELP TO SUPPLEMENT OUR NEEDS. I SAY AGAIN, THAT ALL OF THIS IS DUE TO EFFORT PREVIOUS TO OUR COMING.

UNDER THIS GENERAL HEADING WE MIGHT MENTION THE ORGANIZATION OF OUR FIRST STATE CONFERENCE OF AFFILIATES, THE TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. THE NATIONAL OFFICE AIDED AND ABETTED THE WORK OF KELLY MILLER SMITH, OUR NASHVILLE BOARD MEMBER AND SOME OF HIS MORE DEDICATED ASSOCIATES TO CONSUMMATE THIS MILESTONE IN SCLC HISTORY ON SEPTEMBER 1ST. I INCLUDE THIS HERE BECAUSE IN OUR GENERAL PROGRAM THE AFFILIATE PROGRAM IS GEARED TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FINANCIALLY AS WELL AS PROGRAM-WISE.

FOOTNOTE

OUR CONSTITUTION READS THAT WE ARE A 'SERVICE AGENCY' AND THIS PRECLUDES THAT THE KIND OF SERVICE WE RENDER MIGHT NOT ALWAYS FIT NEATLY INTO SOME CATEGORY SPECIFICALLY NAMED. THUS, WE MAKE MENTION OF THE SHUTTLESWORTH CASE CREATED AT GADSDEN ALABAMA. THE DETAILS HAVE BEEN REVIEWED MANY TIMES IN THE PRESS SO THERE IS NO NEED TO REVIEW THEM HERE. SUFFICE IT SAY, THE SCLC DID EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO GIVE THIS CIRCUMSTANCE EVERY POSSIBLE EXPOSURE. AN INVESTIGATION WAS INITIATED ON APPEAL FROM MR. SHUTTLESWORTH, THAT EMBRACED TELEGRAMS OF PROTEST TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE U. S., THE INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION, AND THE NATIONAL OFFICES OF GREYHOUND LINES. IT WAS OUR THOUGHT THAT NATIONAL PRESSURE COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR BY INVITING THE NAACP, CORE, AND OTHER INTERESTED ORGANIZATIONS TO CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF A NATION-WIDE BOYCOTT IN LIGHT OF THE CLEAR-CUT VIOLATION OF THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF THE SHUTTLESWORTH CHILDREN AND THE MALTREATMENT THEY SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE GADSDEN POLICE. I AM SURE THAT MR. SHUTTLESWORTH WILL AGREE THAT CERTAINLY, SCLC WAS OF SOME ASSISTANCE IN HELPING THE RESOLUTION OF THIS MATTER TO BE HEADED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

PROGNOSIS

I AM VERY MUCH ENCOURAGED BY THE TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL OF SCLC AND THE POSSIBILITY OF GREAT GROWTH IN THE COMING YEAR. IT CANNOT COME HOWEVER, ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE STAFF ALONE, IT MUST INVOLVE EVERY MEMBER OF THIS BOARD AND OUR RENEWED EFFORTS AND DEDICATION IF THE CITADELS OF SEGREGATION IN OUR SOUTHLAND ARE TO BE DESTROYED AND THE REDEEMED COMMUNITY ESTABLISHED.

I EARNESTLY INVITE YOUR COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE, AND YOUR HONEST CRITICISMS AS WELL, BUT MORE ESPECIALLY, YOUR PRAYERS, THAT THE GOOD LORD MAY USE ME TO DO HIS WILL.