

TOWARD THE BELOVED

C O M M U N I T Y



STORY OF THE

NASHVILLE

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

An affiliate of the
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Atlanta, Georgia

PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

Purpose -- The purpose of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council is to unite clergymen and laymen of all denominations in the common venture of spreading the ministry of reconciliation and love in a society of racial injustice. As such, our purpose seeks to fulfill the emergence of a community of love where all persons will have a similar opportunity to grow towards their God-given capacities. Christian reconciliation calls, essentially, for non-violent love which has the quality of overcoming hatred and evil with love and goodness.

Principles--

1. To discover ways of non-violent resistance in love to all forms of racial, social, economic or political injustice.
2. To explore opportunities for non-partisan service in labor, industry, voting, registration and civic life.
3. To co-ordinate those forces for good in the city which seek the growth of a genuine Christian movement towards the new community.

Comments -- The purpose of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council is to apply the central tenets of our faith to the problems of injustice and persecution and segregation. As such, there must be efforts to try to capture the loyalty of the many people of the city through initiatory Christian action which makes the Kingdom of God possible now rather than a future kind of hope. If we are to see the real downfall of segregation and discrimination it will be because of a disciplined Negro Christian movement which breaks the antiquated methods of resolving our fears and tensions and dramatically applies the gospel we profess.

HISTORICAL STATEMENT

Historical Statement -- The organization of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council followed a meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta, Georgia when a Nashville representative was in attendance. On the inspiration of the S C L C and its concern for Christian social action; letters were sent to all Negro ministers in Nashville urging them to attend a meeting to be held on January 18, 1958. On this date plans were made for a mass meeting on registration and voting to be held the following Lincoln's birthday. It was also at this time that a permanent organization was set up and plans were made for Christian social action in general.

Armed with a staff of officers representing several of the many religious denominations of the city, the newly formed Nashville Christian Leadership Council went forward with plans for attacking the various social problems while always operating within the context of the Christian faith. It was soon recognized that the organization could not remain all clergy and all Negro without handicapping the group in its possible effectiveness. Clergymen and lay people of all races, creeds and colors have, consequently, been welcomed and have participated fully.

It was through Glenn Smiley and James M. Lawson, Jr. that members of the organization came to realize that Christian social action would necessarily include the discipline of non-violence. It was agreed, therefore, that the first workshop on Christian non-violence would be held March 26-28, 1958 at the Bethel A. M. E. Church. The workshop was to seek "to establish a concept of Christian non-violence." It was planned to lay a foundation for the practical application of the technique of non-violence in

situations where racial discrimination or injustice prevailed. The workshop was attended by a number of persons who held significant positions in the community, many of whom were destined to play important roles in what came to be known as the "sit-in" movement.

A voter-registration campaign launched by the NCLC yielded in several hundred new registered voters in the Nashville area. It was early in 1959 when the organization adopted as its projects the desegregation of downtown eating and rest room facilities and instituting fair employment practices in the community. It was after extensive deliberations at several Sunday night coffee hours that it was decided that the desegregation of eating facilities would be the logical place to begin because it would lend itself best to non-violent demonstrations and could serve as an opening wedge for even more important projects.

As part of the non-violent procedure, the group attempted to begin negotiations with certain of the merchants early in 1959. When this did not accomplish the desired ends, another attempt was made later that year. This also failed to bring desirable results. It was at this time that the workshops were intensified. Students from various Nashville colleges accepted the invitation to attend the workshops. They became enthusiastic and were regular in their attendance.

In the meantime, a small group of NCLC members, students and international visitors went to two of the department stores and attempted to be served at the eating facilities, but were refused. This made it quite clear that the merchants were adhering to a firm policy of segregation and that non-violent direct action would be necessary to remedy it. The result of

this conclusion was that hundreds of persons, mainly students, instituted the well known "sit-ins". With this, negotiations were resumed and the lunch counters were opened.

In a similar manner all of the downtown theaters were desegregated in 1961 . After NCLC representatives conferred with the Mayor, two Negro policemen were upgraded. A committee from the organization conferred with County Judge Beverly Briley and Fair Park was desegregated. Through NCLC efforts several Negroes are now employed in "white collar" jobs formerly held only by white persons.

With these and other activities the Nashville Christian Leadership Council has assumed a place of real leadership in the entire area of human rights. Hundreds of persons have participated in projects initiated by the organization. NCLC oriented persons have gone to other communities to help initiate projects that would be carried out in the spirit of Christian non-violence.

When the CORE sponsored freedom rides had been thwarted and abandoned, students affiliated with the NCLC asked the organization's backing to resume the rides and complete the planned tour of testing terminal facilities. The NCLC board agreed and the rides were on again. It was this last effort that aroused the interest and participation of persons from all across the Nation and that finally brought about a firm ruling by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

During the summer of 1961 the Nashville Christian Leadership Council began conversations with other Nashville groups working in the area of human relations with the view of uniting these groups on a project called

"Operation Open City!" The object here is to erase the color line in all of Nashville's facilities and activities as completely as possible. The project is currently under way and already significant breakthroughs have been experienced.

The NCLC calls upon the entire community to join in the effort to help the city of Nashville and Davidson County to become "the beloved community."

SOME NCLC LANDMARKS

Organized-----	January 18, 1958
First Workshop on non-violence-----	March, 1958
Added hundreds of names to registration books -----	1958
Began plans and workshops for lunch counter desegregation -----	1959
Held first negotiations session on lunch counters -----	1959
First sit-ins -----	February. 1960
More than 20 lunch counters and restaurants desegregated -----	1960
Conferred with Mayor on upgrading Negro policemen -----	1960
Two Negro policemen promoted -----	1960
Held demonstration at grocery stores -----	1960-1961
Held conferences on Negro checkers at grocery stores -----	1960
Stand-ins at downtown theaters -----	1961
Negotiations held with theater managers -----	1961
All downtown theaters desegregate -----	1961
Conferred with merchants on hiring of white collar workers -----	1961
Some Negro white collar jobs opened in downtown area -----	1961
NCLC persons resume abandoned Freedom Rides -----	1961
NCLC spends more than \$10,000 on Freedom Rides -----	1961
NCLC confers with Judge Briley on Fair Park segregation -----	1961
Fair Park desegregated -----	1961
Work begun on "Open City" project -----	1961

OFFICIAL DIRECTORY *

PRESIDENT ----- Kelly Miller Smith
1229 Caldwell Ave.
Res. CY 8-3771
Off. AL 5-8757

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT----- H. E. Braden
916-21st Ave. North
AL 6-0412

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT ----- James M. Lawson, Jr.
998-39th Ave. North
CY 1-1841

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT ----- J. Metz Rollins
1710 Villa Place
Res. AL 4-7078
Off. CY 2-2509

SECRETARY ----- Andrew White
1621 Haynes Meade Cir.
Res. CA 7-5426
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY ----- Mrs. Edith Allen
1601-18th Ave. North
AL 5-3850

TREASURER ----- G. W. Parker
1011 Argyle
CY 8-2591

CHAPLAIN ----- Grady H. Donald
1423 Edgehill Avenue
CY 1-1536

TELEPHONE CHAIRMAN ----- Mrs. Maeola Darden
340-22nd Avenue N.
CY 1-3547

* For 1961-1962

BOARD MEMBERS
(1961-1962)

Kelly Miller Smith *
H. E. Braden *
James M. Lawson, Jr. *
J. Metz Rollins *
Andrew White *
Mrs. Edith Allen *
G. W. Parker *
Grady H. Donald *
Mrs. Maeola Darden *

Alexander Anderson----- 1220 Phillips Street ----- AL 6-5201
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Res. AL 6-7907

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John Lewis -----Dubois Hall-Fisk ----- AL 5-9772

Kenneth Frazier -----

Mrs. C. M. Hayes ----- 2519 Heiman Street ----- CH 2-7976

Will Campbell ----- P. O. Box 1083 ----- CY 1-7850

McCoy Ransom ----- 1806-15th Ave. So. ----- AL 5-7479
Res. AL 6-0598

Mrs. Hellyn B. Johns---917-15th Avenue So. ----- AL 6-0272

* Numbers listed on Directory Sheet

*** NCLC MEETING DATES ***

MASS MEETINGS -----	Each Monday Night, 7:30p. m. (At different churches)
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS -----	Each Third Saturday, 10:00 A. M. Clark Memorial Methodist Church 14th and Phillips Street
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS -----	Each Second Wednesday 4:00 P. M. First Baptist Church 319-8th Avenue No.

*** FINANCES ***

The Nashville Christian Leadership Council is financed solely by the contributions made by interested individuals and organizations. Receipts are promptly sent to those who send contributions through the mail or otherwise. Regular financial reports are made at regular business meetings of the organization. Mimeographed copies are distributed to those in attendance and are mailed to others on request.

Individuals or organizations willing to support this most worthy work should make checks or money orders payable to The Nashville Christian Leadership Council. The complete address is:

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