

April, 1965

To: All students interested in civil rights work in the South in the summer of 1965.

From: Social Action and Summer Project sub-committee of the Spiritual Life Committee (Barbara Johnson, chairman, and John P. Crossley, jr.)

Concerning: The present status of civil rights projects

Introduction: Because of the spontaneous nature of civil rights work in the South, it is difficult for civil rights groups to lay plans very far in advance. Some plans are definite, however, and two of the groups have asked our sub-committee to receive applications from and screen applicants. These two groups are SCLC's SCOPE project and the Delta Ministry. Besides giving details on these programs in this paper we try also to spell out what other groups are planning to do this summer. For these latter, however, interested students should make application directly to the group in question.

The "Communism" Charge: Since the Selma March, the cry of "Communist infiltration" of all the civil rights groups has arisen across the Black Belt with new intensity. There are scores of billboards along Southern highways showing Martin Luther King at a "Communist training school." (Cf. the article by A. Kopkind in the April 19, 1965, "New Republic"). Several Southern politicians have recently read "Red" charges against Negro organizations into the Appendix of the "Congressional Record."

Concerning such charges, NCC-CORR (National Council of Churches Commission on Religion and Race) flatly states: "Our close acquaintance with the younger leadership in Mississippi movements convinces us there is no truth in the charges that they are Communist-infiltrated." The UPCORAR (United Presbyterian Commission on Religion and Race) makes exactly the same judgment. (Both reported in UPCORAR "Religion and Race Memo" No. 14). Dr. Crossley in his two trips to the South has seen no evidence of any Communist activity in the five or six civil rights groups with which he has had close contact. The fact seems to be that the volume of the "Communist!" cry is directly proportional to the effectiveness of civil rights work; lately it has been effective.

However, many news commentators believe that the day is not far off when the House Unamerican Activities Committee (Southern dominated) will finish its investigation of the KKK and turn its guns on the civil rights groups. Regardless of the outcome, the publicity will be messy, and it may be that you will have worked under the auspices of a group that is investigated. You will probably also be called a Communist by Southerners while you are in the South.

All this is said not as a deterrent, but is given as information you (and your parents) should consider before deciding to apply for civil rights work. In our judgment, justice and truth are on the side of the civil rights groups, not of their accusers.

## The Projects:-

1. The Delta Ministry is an eight month old permanent commission of the National Council of Churches, headquartered in Greenville in northwestern Mississippi, sweeping southward along the river through McComb and turning eastward where it has absorbed the former "Ministers Project" in Hattiesburg. The Delta Ministry is concerned with all phases of the struggle to create an integrated and open society in Mississippi. For example, it works closely with COFO and other civil rights groups in voter registration, it presses for an end to school segregation and job discrimination, it provides welfare service (mostly clothing and food), and it is doing everything possible to build good relations with Southern whites and help them to build a new and just society. It is with the Delta Ministry that Messrs. Alam, Crossley, and Leaming worked during spring vacation.

The Delta Ministry is fully supported by the United Presbyterian Church and is headed up by six ordained ministers of various denominations who live in Greenville, Hattiesburg or McComb. One of the ministers, the Reverend Larry Walker, has asked us to recruit college students who can work with the Ministry for a month or more this summer.

(For a full report on the Delta Ministry Cf. "The Christian Century" for March 17, 1965).

2. The SCOPE (Summer Community Organization and Political Education) project sponsored by Dr. Martin Luther King's SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) is soliciting 2000 college students for a massive voter registration drive in South Carolina, Virginia, Alabama, and Georgia. The project will last 10 weeks. No one can be considered who is unable to stay the full time. Dr. King has asked us to recruit and screen students for this project. The first week of the project will consist of a training and orientation period.

An erroneous radio report a few weeks ago announced that Hastings College was organizing a SCOPE group on campus. This is not true. The Social Action and Summer Project sub-committee is recruiting for the SCOPE project, just as it is for the Delta Ministry.

3. The YWCA is sponsoring a Voter Education and Registration Project in the South, the exact location of which is yet to be announced. It is assumed the YW will be cooperating with one of the Southern-based civil rights groups, and the the YW's plans will remain indefinite till the others (see 4, below) make their move. For information and application form write to: Patricia Brown, YWCA National Student Council, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York, 10022.

4. Four civil rights groups are planning to coordinate their activities this summer, and the plans for recruiting summer volunteers are not yet firmed up. These are SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), COFO (Council of Federated Organizations), MFDP (Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party), and CORE (Congress on Racial Equality).

SNCC is working to register and organize rural Mississippi Negroes this summer, but does not want to overpower the nearly all-Negro MFDP, and is waiting to see how the MFDP finalizes its summer plans. It is very likely that volunteers will be recruited beginning in May. CORE will also be involved in these plans (as well as in Louisiana) as will COFO, which, for all practical purposes, is simply the name for the joint SNCC-CORE work in Mississippi. For further information and application forms write to:

SNCC  
6 Raymond St., N.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

CORE  
38 Park Row  
New York 38, New York

The Presbyterian Position: During the Selma March the United Presbyterian Church USA issued the following statement which reiterates the Presbyterian position on civil rights and which we quote in full because of its bearing on the whole civil rights movement:

"It has come to our attention that some United Presbyterian congregations are disturbed because their pastors are participating in the current voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama.

We would remind our members, through you, that these men are doing their Christian duty as they see it, and are carrying out the obligation that falls on all of us to be supportive of the efforts on Negro American citizens who are seeking to gain, by non-violent means, their full constitutional rights.

The attached resolution was adopted by the General Council on March 10, 1965. Copies were sent to the President and Attorney General and the statement released immediately to the press. We request that you do everything you can to call this resolution to the attention of your constituency."

RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

The issues in Selma, Alabama, are clear.

Shall qualified American citizens be denied the right to register to vote?

Shall American citizens be denied the right peaceably to assemble to petition for the redress of their grievances?

Shall any state or local government be allowed to continue to use its forces of law and order against Negro citizens in the exercise of their constitutional rights?

Shall any state be allowed to treat citizens of other states as outsiders, denying them adequate police protection when they stand with Negroes in their just protests?

Have not recent events in Alabama proved that the local forces of law and order are either unwilling or unable to keep the peace?

The General Council of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. believes that the members of our church ought now and requests them to petition the President of the United States, the Attorney General, and their representatives in the Congress to act promptly under the powers of the Federal Government to establish law and order in Alabama and in any other state where local government fails to protect the exercise of the constitutional rights of all U.S. citizens, to these ends:

1. That all qualified citizens may be enabled to register to vote not later than November, 1965, and;

2. That local government shall be prevented from aiding and abetting the violent denial of full constitutional rights of Negro and white citizens.

The General Council commends those white citizens of Alabama who have demonstrated their concern for racial justice by publicly supporting the struggles of their Negro brethren.

The General Council equally commends those clergy and members of our church and of our sister denominations who have responded to the call of Dr. Martin Luther King to support with their physical presence in Selma the efforts to secure full constitutional rights for all citizens.

The General Council asks the members of our church and all other citizens of good will to act and to use their full influence to eliminate injustice to racial minorities in our land, both as free citizens of a free nation and as those whose faith in God requires at the very least this minimum duty to fellow human beings.

The Church should now as always seek reconciliation. It must continue its efforts to be an agent of reconciliation but reminds all that true reconciliation is never possible when injustice is condoned.

The General Council of the General Assembly  
of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Ester G. Hawkins, Chairman

Theophilus M. Taylor, Secretary

APPLICATION FORM  
Civil Rights, Summer, 1965

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

College Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Next of kin (Name, address, phone) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Applying for what project? \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Available? (4 week minimum) \_\_\_\_\_

Special skills \_\_\_\_\_

College major and minor \_\_\_\_\_

State in 200 words or less why you wish to participate in the project you have chosen. (Use back if desired).

Read carefully and sign the following: I understand that the sponsor of the civil rights project I have chosen is not responsible for my welfare in any way beyond housing me. I am responsible for my own transportation to and from the project, meals (may be provided in the Delta Ministry), personal safety, laundry, bail money in case of arrest (almost always provided by the project), and medical attention if necessary (medical insurance is a wise precaution).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Return form and 200 word statement to Barbara Johnson or Dr. Crossley as soon as possible and by May 15 at the latest.