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Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Martin Luther King Jr., President
1957 - 1968

Ralph D. Abernathy, President

J.E. Lowery, Chairman of the Board

Andrew J. Young, Executive Vice President

NEWS RELEASE

For Release: Monday A.M. Newspapers, Feb. 10, 1969

STATEMENT BY SCLC BOARD CHAIRMAN

ON RAY TRIAL AND SCLC POLICY

Rev. Dr. J.E. Lowery, Chairman of the Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), today issued this statement:

"The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in session February 7 at the Interdenominational Theological Center at Atlanta, Georgia, unanimously adopted the following statement:

"The position of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference regarding the pending trial of James Earl Ray, who is accused of assassinating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and on other matters, is as follows.

"1. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference takes no position regarding the guilt or innocence of any specific person or persons charged or not charged with the crime. That is presently a matter for determination by the courts in accordance with the Constitution of the United States.

"2. As previously stated by Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, President, in accordance with the spirit of nonviolence embodied in the life and teachings of the late Martin Luther King Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference is opposed to the destruction of human life, including capital punishment.

"3. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has neither the desire nor intent to interfere with the trial or the testimony of any witness. But no witness, staff member, director or member of this organization has authority

(more)

2. J.E. Lowery Statement for Release Feb. 10, 1969

to speak for the organization on policy matters except as follows:

"4. The person authorized and empowered to speak for this organization regarding this case and on all policy matters is the Rev. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy; Dr. King's dear friend and the President of this organization. In his absence only the Rev. Andrew J. Young, Executive Vice President, and the Rev. Dr. J.E. Lowery, Chairman of the Board, are authorized to speak for the organization on policy matters.

"(Signed) J.E. Lowery,
Chairman of the Board of Directors
and Chairman, Executive Committee
of the Board."

Note to editors:

Dr. Lowery has been Chairman of the SCLC Board since August, 1967. He is Minister of the Central United Methodist Church in Atlanta.

The Executive Committee of the Board meets periodically between semi-annual meetings of the full Board, and is empowered to act for the Board. Members of this Committee are: Dr. Lowery, Chairman; Dr. Abernathy, President; Rev. Young, Executive Vice President; Rev. C.K. Steele, First Vice President; Rev. Curtis Harris, Third Vice President; Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, Secretary; Rev. Benjamin Hooks, Financial Secretary; Mr. Cirilo McSween, Treasurer; Rev. A.D. King; Attorney Charles Morgan; and Rev. Samuel Williams.

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