off from the whites and associate only with Negroes. Which direction do you think is right?

Answer: This is a problem that usually arises in the transition from segregated to integrated living. You must face this problem by dealing with your fellow students as human beings rather than members of particular racial groups. The whiteness and blackness of the skin should in no way determine the relationship. Properly speaking, a Negro should never have a "white friend"; he should have a friend who happens to be white. A white person should never have a "colored friend"; he should have a friend who happens to be colored. So you should seek to freely associate with white and Negro students, realizing that the relationship is determined by the common humanity of all rather than by race.

PD. Ebony, November 1957, p. 106.

Press Release, Announcement of the Crusade for Citizenship

[5 November 1957]
Memphis, Tenn.

SCLC members met at Mount Olive CME Cathedral in Memphis on 5 November to set plans for the Crusade for Citizenship. This statement, released during a press conference at the conclusion of the one-day meeting, reiterates their conviction that "until the Negro possesses the right to vote, America's economic, social and political institutions cannot be free to meet the full needs of the American people."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

In the struggle for civil rights Negroes for many decades have relied in a large part on appeals for justice to public officials. Today, the letters and telegrams we have sent to the Executive Branch of Government will be effective according to the political activity of the masses of Negroes at the local level. As I pointed out at the Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington, there cannot be citizenship without the right to vote. A voteless citizen is no citizen. Men and women who can not vote are forcibly exiled from their national heritage. That the Negro remains a patriotic American while deprived of this sacred right is a tribute to his deep allegiance to his nation, its ideals and its promise of Democracy.

1. During the press conference, King was asked to clarify the relationship between SCLC and the NAACP. He refuted allegations that there was conflict between the two organizations, stating: "The NAACP needs the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the [SCLC] needs the NAACP. . . . We're trying to implement the decisions won by the NAACP on local levels" (Ernestine Cofield, "King Outlines Crusade for Citizenship Plans," Tri-State Defender, 16 November 1957). The following week King attended an NAACP meeting in Atlanta to discuss that organization's southern voter registration goals (see Wilkins to King, 14 January 1958, pp. 350-351 in this volume).
We are now embarking upon an historic campaign—The Crusade for Citizenship. We intend to encourage every Negro in the South to register and to vote. We intend to make the citizenship of Negroes a living reality.

There is no problem the Negro now faces which is not closely related to the fact that he does not or cannot vote. Once he has seen this relationship and has begun to vote, he will not only insure his own rights but also will enrich our nation as a whole.

We are realistic. We do not expect all those who have denied the Negro his right to vote to welcome this Crusade for Citizenship without some resistance. However, we are determined as never before to pursue our objective with firm, unyielding and non-violent action. Beyond this we know that millions of white Southerns recognize the justice of our cause, appreciate the spirit of our method and stand four-square that the time has come when all Americans should exercise the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

This effort is not for Negroes alone. It serves to restore the honor and integrity of our nation as a whole. For until the Negro possesses the right to vote, America’s economic, social, and political institutions cannot be free to meet the full needs of the American people.

(Statement Dr. Martin Luther King)

To Dwight D. Eisenhower

5 November 1957
Montgomery, Ala.

SCLC praises Eisenhower’s stance on the Little Rock desegregation situation and requests that he move quickly to appoint the new Civil Rights Commission. On 7 November Eisenhower designated the six-member committee, naming retired Supreme Court justice Stanley Reed as chair.¹

Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower
White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr President:

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference in session at Memphis, in the state of Tennessee, extends its warmest commendation for the positive and forthright stand that you have taken in the Little Rock school situation. You have shown

¹. In mid-December Reed resigned and Eisenhower elevated vice-chair John Alfred Hannah to the post.