16 June 1958

To Ralph Abernathy

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[Montgomery, Ala.]

King calls a meeting of the SCLC administrative committee for 2 July at Ebenezer
Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Dear Ralph:

For several months now the Southern Christian Leadership Conference has run without a clearly defined structural set up.1 It is amazing that the Organization has done so well without this much needed structure. It is now imperative that we assemble and work out a clearly defined program, a precise set of by-laws and a method for future financial expansion.

Toward this end, I am calling a meeting of the Administrative Committee for July 2nd and 3rd in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Ebenezer Baptist Church.2 The meeting will open at 11:00 A.M. Wednesday and we should be ready to adjourn at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday.

I feel that this amount of time will be needed to do this tremendous task and since we have such a competent staff, now is the time to do it. I call this meeting at this time, fully aware of the busy schedule I know you have, but I think the benefits to be derived from such a meeting, not only for ourselves, but for the whole South and nation—will more than compensate for the time sacrificed.

I sincerely hope that you will consider this the most vitally important meeting I have ever called and that you will feel compelled to lay aside everything to be present.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference has tremendous possibilities. Our meeting in Mississippi recently, proved this. We can transform this vast potential into actuality by getting ourselves organized on a sound working basis.

Please use the enclosed card to indicate whether or not you will be present. All expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLKp

Tlc. MLKP-MBU: Box 72.

1. On 5 June SCLC formally incorporated in the state of Georgia, the location of its headquarters.
2. On 22 July King sent SCLC executive board members a summary of the proceedings of the administrative committee meeting. He explained that a writing committee had been selected to draft organizational by-laws and a constitution and invited members to send suggestions "without delay so that the committee may have them before" their August meeting. The constitution and by-laws were adopted at the October SCLC meeting in Norfolk (SCLC, Minutes, Executive board meeting, 2 October 1958; SCLC, Constitution and Bylaws, November 1958).