

To Richmond January 1

Dr. M. L. King Joins Pilgrimage Supporters



DR. E. C. SMITH
Backs Pilgrimage

PETERSBURG, Va. — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, has Christian leaders in Virginia and other localities in endorsing the Pilgrimage of Prayer to Richmond on Jan. 1 for public schools. In a letter sent from his office in Montgomery, Ala. to nearly 1,000 Virginia ministers, Dr. King urged the ministers to give their fullest cooperation with the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage, scheduled for Emancipation Day, Jan. 1, in Richmond, is part of the growing state-wide opposition to "massive resistance." With the end of the first semester drawing near, thousands of children are still locked out of their schools. The new semester brings the threat of closure to additional schools. This Pilgrimage of Prayer is a religious movement called by church and lay leaders (See DR. M. L., Page 2)

Plan Pilgrimage To Richmond



Members of the Pilgrimage of Prayer for Public Schools Committee met recently at Fourth Baptist Church in Richmond. Shown above are some of the leaders who are active in the non-violent movement to preserve free public school education in Virginia. This group along with others have been meeting to coordinate the pilgrimage plans throughout the state and to plan for the pilgrimage on Jan. 1.

Left to right, seated, are W. Lester Banks, executive secretary of the Virginia State Conference of NAACP Branches; Mrs. Sarah Patton Boyle of Charlottesville, author; the Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker of Petersburg, state director of the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Rev. Robert L. Taylor of Richmond, president of the Goodwill Baptist Convention.

Standing left to right, are: Mrs. Doris C. Ford, secretary of the Virginia State Beauticians Association and the Rev. William B. Abbott of Norfolk, pastor of Oakdale Presbyterian Church.

Prayer for Public Schools to be held at Richmond on Jan. 1, 1959. School-children locked out of their classrooms is contrary to all that the American way of life suggests."

DR. E. C. SMITH of Washington, D. C., president of the Virginia Baptist State Convention, has also endorsed the pilgrimage. In his letter of Dec. 9 Dr. Smith said:

"I have given my whole-hearted endorsement to this pilgrimage, and have rearranged a long standing commitment to meet you" in Richmond. He added:

"We must demonstrate to Virginia, America, and the world that it is un-Christian, immoral and undemocratic to close the doors of free public schools. Closing the doors of the school houses to white children is as evil as the segregation of Negro children."

The Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, pastor of Gillfield Baptist church, Petersburg, Va., is coordinator of the pilgrimage. He said this week additional contributions are needed for the mobilization of the pilgrimage. He asks that checks be made to Pilgrimage for Public Schools, and be sent to 312 S. Dunlop street, Petersburg, Va.

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across Virginia. These leaders have stated that it is their Christian duty to afford the people of Virginia this opportunity for the expression of their deep concern over the public school crisis.

DR. KING, in his letter to the ministers of Virginia, stated in part: "This is a time for action in Virginia. No person of color can afford the luxury of standing idly by with public education in such great jeopardy. Today is a day for great men, great ideas, great movements, a day of new self-esteem and dignity for Negro Americans; a day for all Virgians of good will to speak to our millions of disenfranchised brothers all over the world. Christian democracy is at stake ... Let us then, proclaim Emancipation Day, Jan. 1, as a day of prayer and sacrifices for the sufferings of all oppressed people."

The Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker, minister, Gillfield Baptist church, Petersburg, and state director of CORE, Congress of Racial Equality, met with Dr. King in Atlanta on Wednesday. With them were Dr. W. L. Hamilton and Robert D. Robertson, both of Norfolk. In conference with them, Dr. King gave his heartiest and most prayerful support to this non-violent demonstration. He said that were it not for a long-standing engagement in Alabama, he would join them in Richmond. He also stated that Virgians could be assured that they have the moral support and solidarity of the entire Southland.

IN NEW Orleans, La., Mrs. Katie E. Whickam, president of the Beauty Culturists League of America, representing over 50,000 beauticians, has issued a statement to the beauticians and barbers of Virginia. She pledges support of her organization and urges each member to cooperate by publicizing the pilgrimage and by attendance on Jan. 1. She said:

Because we are sincerely concerned with free public education generally, and particularly with the thousands who are being deprived of this privilege in Virginia, we heartily endorse the Pilgrimage of