

SCLC LEADERS RETURN TO BERLIN THIS WEEK FOR HISTORIC VISIT

President Dr. Charles Steele Jr. to deliver 1964 speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on nonviolence

ATLANTA, GA – Fifty years after the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) President Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a speech before thousands in Germany inspiring unity and nonviolence in a divided nation, the current SCLC President, Dr. Charles Steele Jr., returns to Germany this week to give that same speech.

"Fifty years have brought about many changes in Germany, America and throughout the world," Dr. Steele said. "Today it is more important than ever that we come together in unity."

Dr. Steele and SCLC Board Chairman Dr. Bernard LaFayette will be in Germany September 11 – 15. (PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED SCHEULE). The highlight of the visit will be Saturday when Dr. Steele delivers the original speech by Dr. King at St. Sophie's Church in East Berlin.

Dr. LaFayette, a lieutenant to Dr. King at the height of the civil rights movement, will present a lecture on nonviolence while in Berlin, during this second visit to Germany this year for the two leaders. Dr. Steele and Dr. LaFayette have been working closely with businessman Michael Schulz, a native of Berlin whose parents were active members of the Baptist church and staunch supporters of Dr. King. "Many attribute the eventual tearing down of the Berlin Wall to the influence of Dr. King," Lafayette said.

For Schulz, the relationship with the SCLC is a reminder of change in his own country. "I have seen my country be transformed from one led by a dictator to one that is ruled by the people," Schulz said. "That was the philosophy in which King believed – that everyone should have the same rights."

The trip to Berlin for SCLC's current leaders is part of the dream so eloquently detailed by Dr. King, Steele said.

"We are spreading the spirit of Dr. King throughout the world," Steele said. "Now is the time for us to institutionalize and internationalize SCLC and the civil rights movement."

Steele, a veteran civil rights leader serving in his second term as leader of the SCLC, stressed that the organization's methods and the teachings of Dr. King can be applied around the world to bring an end to violence.

"People must understand that we can communicate and work harmoniously throughout the world if we understand that there is an alternative to violence," Steele said. "God has placed me in a position to represent the philosophy of the SCLC not only in Selma, Montgomery and Birmingham, but also throughout the world. You can't separate God's children just because of the Atlantic Ocean."

The connection between communities of faith in America and Berlin existed for many years, even prior to Dr. King's 1964 visit to Berlin.

Dr. King's father, referred to as "Daddy King," also visited this country with Baptist preachers from Atlanta in 1934 to support the 100th anniversary of the country's Baptist congregations," Steele said. It was during that historic 1934 trip that the elder King decided to change his name and his son's name from Michael to Martin after the 16th century German theologian Martin Luther, who initiated the Protestant Reformation.

ABOUT THE SCLC: Established in 1957, the SCLC, whose first president was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is a now a nationwide organization made up of chapters and affiliates with programs that affect the lives of all Americans: north, south, east and west. Its sphere of influence and interests has become international in scope because the human rights movement transcends national boundaries.

11.9. kick off and reading dr. lafayette from his book – peace and freedom- at baptist compound Elstal (OLYMPIC VILLAGE1936) NEAR berlin. www.baptisten.de

11.9. releasing MEMORIALPLATE MLK

12.9. visit townhall schöneberg (KENNEDYS Place & speech 1963)

12.9. pannel discussion at memorial BERLINER MAUER 8 BERNAUER STR and release draft of the MLKmemorials side to build till 2018.

13.9. 1. first SPEECH at St Sophie's Church: 16.00

2. second SPEECH at MARIENCHURCH: 19.00 original date and time