

A PROPOSAL FOR
A SOUTHERN FIELD SERVICE
TO CHURCHES

Background.....	1
The Proposal and Goals.....	1
Underlying Assumptions.....	2
The Southern Field Service & ESCRU.	4
A Southern Field Service.....	5
The Director of the Project.....	5
Program Resources.....	6
Duration.....	7
Estimated Annual Cost.....	7
Comments on Cost.....	8
In Conclusion and Signature.....	8

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THE EPISCOPAL SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL AND RACIAL UNITY
5 Forsyth Street, N.W. Atlanta 3, Georgia

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BACKGROUND

This proposal has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and its Executive Director instructed to seek its implementation. ESCRU is a national organization working for integration within the Church and in the community. It has twelve local chapters presently at work in local situations in all regions of the country. Headquarters are in the South as an encouragement to its efforts there. Presently there is one professional staff worker with ESCRU, who is the one finally responsible for this prospectus. While it is focused within the Episcopal Church, ESCRU's influence has extended beyond, and at times it has been directly involved in the civil rights movement at the community level. Its printed materials are used by numerous religious and secular groups. As with its work in general, these materials reflect the primary concern of ESCRU with the Church and integration. As a comparatively unique effort within Protestantism, ESCRU has been regarded by social action leaders in other denominations as of a pilot nature for possible reproduction in other religious bodies. Being unofficial, it is more able to move quickly and without equivocation, whereas official social action units of churches generally must be somewhat cautious when it comes to action. By the same token, ESCRU does not receive financial support from the Episcopal Church officially, but only from the dues and contributions of its members who are Churchmen. While the proposed Southern Field Service anticipates an area of operations beyond denominational boundaries, it necessarily will have its greater and initial impact in and through the Episcopal Church. Even this, however, can be significant for the encouragement of other Churches which tend to pace one another in their advances.

The proposal set forth herein was conceived and originally drafted in consultation with personnel of the National Council of Churches' Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, the Southern Regional Council, and the Division of Christian Citizenship of the Episcopal Church's National Council. Over a year has passed since its original consideration with no action taken to seek its implementation because of the full-time absorption of ESCRU staff in matters pursuant to the Prayer Pilgrimage of the fall of 1961 which saw fifteen clergy arrested in Jackson, and the subsequent trials, as well as a suit now pending against police authorities. During the intervening time the proposal has been discussed with other intergroup relations workers in church and secular agencies, with renewed support and expressed hope for its implementation.

THE PROPOSAL AND GOALS - SUMMARIZED

Further description appears later in this document. Briefly, the Southern Field Service proposed here would be directed at key churchmen in the South, both lay and clerical, for the purpose of furthering their readiness and capacity for leadership in the integration of the Church, and a more sensitive understanding of its responsibilities for an integrated society. Its efforts would center around the talent and imagination of a program director and such resources as would be available to him as a part of the project. The process would involve the practical goal of bringing together Churchmen in leadership positions for consideration of their community situation and the role of the Church in it, as

well as of needs within the churches themselves. Such a dialogue might commence within the Episcopal Church of a community, but the ultimate goal would involve the religious power structure of the community with key leaders from all churches. Such a confrontation is considered in this proposal as prerequisite to any relevant positive effort in the churches of a community apart from what a handful can do when the crisis emerges. The Southern Field Service would seek voluntary efforts toward both the integration of the churches and their involvement in community integration matters, as well as previous contacts and discussion against the crisis period most communities will face. Whether before or after crisis, the Southern Field Service assumes the longer-range need for the recovery of integrity within the life of the Church itself as deed is conformed to pronouncement.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The following points are pertinent to the proposed program here and are offered as foundations upon which the need for this project is based. It is assumed - - -

1. That the time is especially ripe for concerted effort within churches in behalf of racial and cultural unity, building upon the frustration of many church leaders with the slowness with which the Church has moved in this area and the heightened awareness of need and dilemma produced by kneel-ins and related activities. Increasingly, it is believed, the need will be for direction as much as for stimulus, as the Church awakens to the changing times it has sought to overlook. The growing signs of concern show themselves primarily in frustration with more pronouncements which repeat previously asserted truisms when the implementation of any remains untouched. This may be discerned now in more advanced border areas of the South, as throughout the balance of the country, and will shortly be evident further South. The providing of direction where the need is felt and there is a desire to do something will increasingly accompany, if these observations are correct, the initial effort to stimulate concern. The first part of the present era saw the greater effort directed toward eliciting concern. Now as it emerges there is the opportunity for direction.

2. That where the Church seemingly is not concerned, it is due largely to the repression of free and frank dialogue produced by a combination of fear of reprisal and a concern for preserving the outward signs of success seen in impressive building programs and substantial budgets. Accompanying these less worthy motivations is a degree of guilt that basic moral and theological questions are being skirted which will operate to produce a sense of relief when the issues can be confronted amongst ones peers in like condition. Once the fear of reprisal is understood as being shared and the feeling that all will act together arises, new courage comes. All the clergy of a community cannot be run out of town, and there is great strength in moral issues being faced by all of the guardians of the Christian ethic, rather than by lonely prophets. Who then will be the catalyst for bringing together the chief religious leaders?

3. That there is often a reluctance to respond to overtures from a representative of an interdenominational agency in matters that are controversial. The maxim that everyone's business is no one's business seems to operate. A Methodist minister calling on the local Presbyterian pastor does not command his time so much as a fellow Presbyterian would. Effective contact with the religious leaders of a community can best be made by someone within the situation. It is more likely that the ministers of the average Southern town will gather at the behest of the

local Episcopal Rector than upon the invitation of someone from outside, if there is any kind of rapport at all among the town's clergy. The resource person from beyond may be introduced to the rest of a community's religious leaders by one of the leaders more effectively than if the visitor simply knocked on all the parsonage doors himself. The initial access, then, to the community's religious leadership will most likely be made through contact along denominational lines. Efforts which presume the prior necessity of being non-denominational will make only a superficial contact and will be met with courteous apathy. Where one local and respected leader takes initiative to gather the rest of his peers, there is much that can happen.

4. That Episcopal clergy are somewhat more able to take initiative in areas of controversy because of their more protected job status and because they speak from within the security of the Church that once was established and still carries a degree of influence out of proportion to its size. As the "mother church" of some other bodies, and for a host of reasons, the Episcopal Church is often looked to or at least followed by others more readily than this would be true of most other Protestant denominations. Note the role, for instance, of the Episcopal clergy in the recent Oxford, Miss., situation. Would that the initiative taken there in response to crisis could have been mobilized beforehand and had some effect in averting the crisis. No one from outside talked with the Oxford Episcopal clergy a year or two in advance of the crisis, presumably, about what they might do to mobilize the religious leaders of the community. Had this been done, the night of the riots might at least have seen other clergy than the Episcopalians on the scene, if other prior efforts could do no more. Who will bring the resources of experience and many contacts with previous situations to bear in alerting the Episcopal clergy in the other Oxfords of the South to the opportunity they have with their ministerial associates if they will but seize it?

5. That where corporate steps among religious leaders are ruled out by their intransigence - or seemingly ruled out at the present - but where there is a lonely cleric who is concerned and ready to do something, the need for an outside and re-appearing visitor with whom he can talk is all the more acute. To help some men retain sanity where it seems they are alone, the Church should have a corps of travelling chaplains-to-clergy, helping to sustain them by personal contact and opportunities for conference away from the scene. Their time for leadership locally will come, if only in response to crisis. Within the Episcopal Church there is nothing significant being done to support the committed clergy in little towns where they seem to be the only ones who think liberally on race. Eventually they will go North when the pressure becomes too great. Such instances will decrease, however, as the inescapability of the issue provides them with comrades from other churches in the community who would not have touched the issue beforehand.

6. That heretofore nearly all approaches to the racial issue within churches have been on minimal bases no different from the foundations a Council on Human Relations would be founded upon. The necessity of open schools, support for the law of the land, our image abroad, etc., have been offered to Churchmen as their reason to become concerned. While all of these are worthy concerns, they are not the ones most likely to move persons the farthest. The Church must face the theological and ethical demands of its own teaching if it is to do anything effective. Fresh efforts to communicate the particular teachings of the Church must be made and most likely will be more readily received in the present phase than when keeping schools open seemed paramount. In most places now the schools will remain open. Separation will remain after segregation is gone.

7. It is a final assumption of this prospectus for the proposed Southern Field Service that the fact that the project's director would go out into the field as one associated with the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (to the extent that he is identified at all) will ultimately serve to strengthen his impact and effectiveness. This presupposes that those he would call upon (and this would be so with most Episcopalians in leadership positions) look upon the Society as being "militant" and given to direct action, etc.. Some might claim this factor will be a deterrent to establishing relationships. It is granted that many persons would react initially with reservations or even hostility toward someone associated with the group responsible for fifteen Episcopal clergy going to jail in Jackson, sit-ins at Sevanee, etc.. Indeed, whereas someone without such an identification might be cordially received upon his first visit, the field worker in this project might have to visit once, correspond a bit, and return again for another visit before establishing a relationship. However, the initially cordial reception is not necessarily the best and in comparison to the other would probably be only superficial. If there is reserve or antagonism toward the emissary from ESCRU at the first meeting and the emissary is a person of strength, it should ultimately lead to dialogue of a more meaningful sort than might otherwise have transpired. The field worker does not have to challenge his host; it has been done for him and the host already has some opinion on the matter of ESCRU. The field worker has to be mature and gentle, while remaining firm in the defense of ESCRU's actions if asked. He has to have the capacity to absorb hostility and patiently persist in nurturing a relationship that might start with the host observing coldly: "Oh, so you're from ESCRU ... Well, let me tell you something ..." Where there is such a reception initially, it is believed that a creative use of conflict will carry the relationship to a deeper level than would otherwise have been possible. It is not anticipated that a high proportion of Episcopal clergy will react in such fashion to an emissary from ESCRU. Many will be glad to have him there so as to affirm their basic support for what has been done, albeit they didn't feel able to go so far out on the limb or join, etc.. When they see that the field worker hasn't come to encourage them to join up - but simply to get to know them as persons in particular situations, some sense of absolution for guilt feelings should strengthen the relationship still further. Whatever is operative, the assumption here is that the militancy of ESCRU will tend ultimately to enhance the work of the Southern Field Service - if the project is handled by a highly competent person.

THE SOUTHERN FIELD SERVICE AND THE EPISCOPAL SOCIETY

The staff person in the Southern Field Service would be employed by the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity and would have an office provided by and at the offices of the Society. He would have no administrative or organizational responsibilities, however, and, indeed, would be protected from them so as to permit his whole attention to be directed to the project. His travel would be confined to the Southern region in general and, in particular, to that portion of it where he was concentrating at any given time. He would be responsible to the Society's Board of Directors through an Advisory Committee of persons especially qualified to consult with him from the Atlanta area. Within the circumscribed limits of his responsibilities he would work under the Society's Executive Director theoretically. It is anticipated, however, that apart from a consultative relationship, he would be in charge of the work and planning that fell within the project's scope.

THE PROPOSAL: A SOUTHERN FIELD SERVICE

The proposal is that a clergyman of ability be enabled to devote his time to work amongst other clergy and key laity with an eye toward assisting them in their commitment and understanding of what the Church, and they as Churchmen, must be doing both to integrate the Church and all its agencies as well as to provide leadership in the movement toward integration within the community. The program is to be directed within the Southern region, meaning the area between Virginia down through east Texas. More practically speaking, the program would begin in deep South areas (Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) and might very well be confined therein if time permitted no more. The least, but not insignificant, attainment of the program would be a one-to-one counselling role for the program director in his contacts with clergy in lonely outposts in need of someone to talk to about their frustrations and fears.

The practical goal of the program is to help in putting local religious leaders from a given community into meaningful dialogue with one another of a sort that is sustained and broadened apart from the presence of the program director. Namely, the hope of the program is that the clergy and key lay leaders from all of the churches of a community will begin to meet together specifically to consider what they must do within their churches and within their community vis-a-vis integration. This must be sought on as broad an interdenominational basis as possible ideally.

Arrival at the above-mentioned goal may take numerous steps beforehand wherein the program director is in contact with a more limited segment of the community's religious leaders. His initial contact will be through one or more Episcopal clergy in the community. He may or may not be himself involved in the broadly based community meeting, but it will be his concern to encourage the Episcopal clergy and lay leaders to seek such a gathering. Initially, where there are two or more Episcopal churches, he may be in various conference situations within their ranks before broader participation is sought. It may be that the Episcopal clergy from a given section of a state will meet with him, and subsequently return for another conference bringing their key lay leaders, before they feel able to take initiative amongst their colleagues back home in other denominations. Each situation will be developed individually, but always the goal of ecumenical interaction at the community level will be held out and the opportunity and responsibility for seeking something effective accordingly.

While the program is directed primarily toward white churches and leaders, the project director should use every opportunity to develop relationships with Negro leaders in the Church. This would be for the purpose of assisting the Negro and white leaders to meet, but also to encourage Negro churchmen to present themselves as applicants for the camps and conferences, schools and hospitals, etc., which their Church operates on a segregated basis, recognizing that a concerned white leadership can do little without such applicants to make the issue a live one.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PROJECT

The director of the program would be a white Episcopal clergyman who has had experience in the parochial ministry in the South, and preferably is now resident in the South. He should have demonstrated effectiveness in said ministry, so that presumably he can talk the language of the parish parson. If possible, he should be someone with a few grey hairs around, recognizing the tendency of some he will

visit to attribute concern in this area to youthfulness that will mature. However, the capacity for leadership is of paramount consideration ... how one relates to people upon first meeting and in sustained relationships ... how good a listener is he ... can he question creatively ... The characteristics needed may not be limited to any age bracket.

The program director should be prepared to move to Atlanta where the offices of the Episcopal Society will be available for his use. He must be prepared to spend much of his time away from home, using such time as he is in the office for the preparation of further travel plans, conferences, correspondence, preparation of useful materials, etc. This will probably mean that about half of the time is spent in travels. Depending on the area being covered, he can plan frequent returns home to family, but when in distant sections of the South he may be away for as long as two weeks at a time.

The program director's main tool is his own capacity to meet people. Initially this will be on an individual basis. He must seek to meet others through already established contacts ... perhaps a luncheon gathering of clergy in the city called by the one he's gotten to know. All such opportunities are to be followed up. But the following aspect of the program recognizes the desirability of providing the opportunity needed for people to get away from the home front and be out from under its pressures so as to really unburden and frankly face their situation.

PROGRAM RESOURCES WITHIN THE PROJECT

The program should be provided with two types of resources in addition to the talent of the director which is primary. These are:

1. Retreat or Conference Opportunities. The Southern Field Service must be able to invite clergy to take two or three days off and come - expenses paid while there - to small-group conferences designed on various bases. The primary one will be when they meet their peers from within the area and have the opportunity to unburden and share mutual concerns. The sequel to this will be when they return with hand-picked key laity who will then be in a position to interact with other laity in the parish and in the community. The clergy retreats may be of both a denominational and interdenominational sort, with the latter being sought and followed by gatherings of clergy from all the churches of a town together with their lay leaders. The program director would be moderator in most instances but would be prepared to stay behind the scenes if this seemed desirable.

Such occasions away from the front-lines have been proven to be vastly helpful for embattled clergy, providing a kind of group therapy experience. Unless the project is able to offer it with minimal expenses to the participants, however, it is unlikely they will come off. The help they can provide is often not recognized until the group has come together and begun to interact.

2. Printed Materials. The program director for the Southern Field Service will maintain his contacts between visits through correspondence, both personal and in group fashion. For the latter, he must be able to send helpful leaflets from time to time, utilizing materials from whatever source seems helpful. In the area of research and materials particularly related to the Church, there is a scarcity of data. Ideally, he will be in a position to commission certain studies and research projects and see that they are printed for distribution. In this connection the materials of the Episcopal Society will be available to him. This represents about the largest single source of Church and Race materials, but still there are areas not covered in its publications.

3. Research Projects. Pursuant to the above-mentioned lack of certain materials, the program director would see to the special study of subject matter having relationship to the work of the Church in the South in integration. An analysis of the extent and effect of kneel-ins is one case in point of an area needing research and publication, just as the original sit-ins were well covered in a fashion that reinforced what was worthwhile in them. Special projects covering preaching and integration, the pastoral ministry and crisis situations, how the minister effectively cooperates with other community agencies, etc., are awaiting treatment, and there are others.

DURATION OF THE PROJECT

Such a program should not be undertaken for less than two years and, ideally, should be projected initially on a three-year basis with the possibility thereafter, pending evaluation, of its continuation for another period. Obtaining the services of the right man as program director would require the minimum two years and would suggest the three year period at the outset. It will take nearly a year before the program begins to take effect as relationships and contacts are developed. Certainly by the end of a second year, it would be subject to critical evaluation however. This might suggest an initial two-year period with the possibility of renewal for another two years.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST.

<u>Program Director</u>	
Salary (1)	\$ 8,000.00
Housing (2)	1,500.00
Pension Fund (3)	1,500.00
Travel Expenses	2,000.00
Secretary's Salary	3,800.00
Telephone	1,200.00
Postage	800.00
Supplies	500.00
Printing and Mimeograph	1,500.00
Conferences (4)	4,000.00
Research Projects	2,000.00

TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST \$26,800.00

- (1) Salary would be subject to adjustment in terms of the age and previous earning power of the desired candidate. It might be adjusted down to \$6,000 or upwards to \$9,500.
- (2) Housing is ordinarily provided clergy and, therefore, even in non-parochial positions it is well that it be treated as a separate part of their remuneration. Where a rental is involved the agency may handle the payments as a tax advantage to the employee.
- (3) All Episcopal clergy are included in the CHURCH PENSION FUND into which the employer (whether parish or organization) pays monthly.
- (4) It is anticipated that 20 small-group conferences can be financed annually at \$200 each. The first year these would be at a minimum, with each year placing a heavier demand on this resource.

It is also estimated that an initial outlay of approximately \$1000 will be needed for furnishings and equipment in the ESCRU office.

COMMENTS ON COST

To effectively carry out the program projected in this document, it is estimated that \$26,800 is needed annually. This could be reduced to an annual sum of \$25,000 without significantly altering the program, undoubtedly. For a two or three year program the cost would be, then, \$50,000 or \$75,000. It is possible that one year's trial would warrant some adjustment in the budget. This could be downward, although the possibility of full support should be available at the outset if it is begun.

It is also obvious that the success of the program will depend on the ability of its director. An extremely capable person could do much good even without the program resources included in this proposal merely in the contacts and relationships with key churchmen which he developed and maintained in his travels. At a minimum, then, a pilot and pioneering work could be done through only the services of the field worker which would require the items noted for his own direct or indirect compensation as well as travel funds. At a minimum, also, part-time secretarial service should be available to him and certain amounts for postage and telephone. In short, the budget could be reduced without destroying the key ingredient of the program. The danger would be in so curtailing it as to not be in a position to interest the most effective man for the direction of the program and in simply not equipping him as adequately as can be estimated.

Rather than curtailment, the expansion of the program can easily be projected. It is apparent that one man giving full time to this kind of work in all of Protestantism in the South is only beginning to scratch the total surface. Other field workers could be added without overcrowding. Indeed, they might well be considered along denominational lines, endeavoring to put some one in the field for each major church in the South. They could be attached to comparable organizations within other churches if such are created as has been considered, or they could work out of this office. The ideal plan will see in the future the establishment of a Church and Community Center in the South (probably at Atlanta University) where such a program can be coordinated, research conducted, and a place provided for conferences of clergy who would find an experienced staff knowledgeable about the role of the church and its pastor in a changing South.

IN CONCLUSION

While there are some Church and Race workers in the South, most are allied with official structures which necessarily inhibit their operations. None are free to go where they want and to take a completely open approach to the matter. All are encumbered with countless responsibilities administratively and find themselves, in effect, with a national scope in travels and speaking. One or two began with an eye to doing something of the sort projected here, but have had to simply give up knocking on parsonage doors for lack of time. Because of these factors and because of the established position of ESCRU as a militant organization in the Church, together with the thesis that work begun initially through denominational contacts will more nearly succeed, it is believed that this program would be both pioneering and pilot: pioneering, because it isn't being done; and pilot because it would set a pace for others and tend to be copied. Although initiated within a denomination, it would clearly set itself toward community and ecumenical goals. Most creative things happen this way anyway.

For unnecessary verbiage in this prospectus and for any obtuseness in expression, I offer my apologies. For the substance and possible significance of the projected program, there are no apologies. I commend it to your consideration.
The Rev. John B. Morris, Executive Director
Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity