

Early in October, the ^{student} University Christian Association's Executive Committee decided to invite the Reverend Martin Luther King to participate in one of a series of Seminars in Religion during the 1961-62 school year. ~~These seminars~~ These seminars would attempt to relate Christianity and Christian principles to certain major issues of the day. The Executive Committee, acting in accordance with a general expression of opinion ^{of} ~~expressed in a~~ plenary session ~~general meeting~~ of the UCA, felt that Mr. King would be an appropriate spokesman in an investigation of Christian ^{theology's relationship to} ~~principles~~ ~~involved in~~ racial segregation.

Because ~~such~~ it is the policy of the ^{faculty} University Committee on Christian Work to approve all outside speakers for the UCA, the matter was referred to this group for its ~~advice~~ ~~consideration~~. ~~The committee~~ ~~examined~~ The committee studied the matter a great length, considered the various ^{questions} ~~aspects~~ ~~involved~~, and voted in favor of ^{ing} ~~approved~~ the students' request. The committee felt, however, that the matter was of sufficient importance to be called to the attention of the University's Board of Trustees.

At the suggestion of President Cole, a memorandum outlining the committee's views was prepared and submitted to the Board at its meeting of October 13. The ~~Board discussed~~ memorandum ~~asked the Board to~~ suggested that the Board concur in its approval of the student request. After ~~careful study~~ careful study, the Board declined to concur in this approval, and President Cole was asked to inform the Committee of its action. This he did.

On November 6, the University faculty, by majority vote, adopted a resolution which stated:

"The faculty of Washington and Lee University expresses its genuine regret at the decision of the Board of Trustees that prevents the Christian Association from extending to Dr. Martin Luther King an invitation to ~~such~~ speak at the University. This decision, in the opinion of the faculty, seriously limits the

freedom of inquiry that should prevail in an institution of higher learning, and denies to students the opportunity to learn and judge for themselves, even upon issues of controversy."

The nature of the faculty resolution was made public, at the faculty's request, on November 21, after the Board ~~members~~ had been informed through normal channels of its action. Mr. James R. Caskie, ~~rector~~ rector of the Board, in acknowledging the Board's receipt of the resolution, praised the faculty for its concern for "freedom of inquiry," and said:

"In every instance the Board of Trustees endeavors to ^{act} in what it considers the best interests of Washington and Lee University. In this case, there exists an honest difference of opinion as to what course of action best serves the interests of the University. It is good that such a difference of opinion can take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is wholesome that the ~~xxx~~ avenues of communication between the faculty and the board remain free and open."

Because the question of a violation of academic freedom has been raised by the ~~events surrounding the~~ King matter, it may be appropriate to add several comments relative to this question.

It can be argued that academic freedom at Washington and Lee was ~~not~~ not violated by the action of the Board of Trustees, nor was freedom of inquiry stifled. ~~In this instance~~ Not in this instance, nor in any instance, has the Board declared that this or that idea, belief, theory, or whatever cannot be discussed at Washington and Lee. The Board did not ^{say} ~~rule~~ that the University Christian Association ~~could not~~ could not investigate the relationship of Christian theology to ~~racial segregation and integration~~ racial segregation and integration. It ~~did~~ ^{did} decline ^{to} ~~the~~ endorse or approve the choice ^{by} of the UCA of Martin Luther King as the ^{most appropriate} ~~most appropriate~~ person who could present ~~the~~ material on the subject ~~in the~~

~~appropriate manner.~~ The question can be raised as to whether a person whose role in the segregation issue has been primarily a political one is the proper person to lead a discussion along ~~theological~~ theological lines, even when one considers that the person in question is a minister. Also, the question can be raised as to the motivation ~~behind~~ of some students who supported the choice of Mr. King for the program in ~~their~~ mind. Although the majority of students involved felt honestly that Mr. King would make a positive contribution to their seminar, there is evidence that some supported his choice largely because his appearance here or his proposed appearance here would result in controversy.

Washington and Lee is clear in its approach to academic freedom. There can be no legitimate question ~~as to~~ that it exists ~~is no question~~ ~~challenge to its existence~~ on this campus.

Washington and Lee is clear in its approach to academic freedom. There is no basis in fact to any challenge of its existence on this campus. No question ^{is raised} regarding the discussion of matters of controversy. But there can be ^{disagreement} ~~a question~~ regarding the qualifications and competency of individuals to deal with specific ~~particular~~ problems and subjects. The University's dedication to academic freedom does not require it to invite or approve the invitation of ever ~~or~~ anyone to appear before University-sponsored student organizations.