forefront, Dexter will rise to such heights as will stagger the imagination of
generations yet unborn, and which even God himself will smile upon. This is
our profound challenge. This is our overwhelming responsibility.

TD. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.

Notes on Speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.,
at Woman’s Auxiliary, National Baptist
Convention on 9 September 1954

On 9 September 1954, King delivered the noonday message to the Woman’s
Auxiliary, National Baptist Convention. The brief minutes of the convention show
that King, introduced as the “son of the organist of the Woman’s Convention,”
exhorted his audience to do more than simply pay lip service to the spiritual life. The
minutes included only these few lines from the speech.

We must rediscover that all reality has spiritual control. It is possible to af-
firm there is a God with our lips but deny it with our lives. Most of us uncon-
sciously leave God behind. He admonished us to pick up these values so we
can move forward to the New World.

Record of the 74th Annual Baptist Convention, 1954; copy in SBHL-TNSB.

From H. Edward Whitaker

15 September 1954
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Whitaker inquires about King’s assessment of the recently concluded National
Baptist Convention’s annual meeting.

Dear Mike,

For quite a little while I have been intending to write, but the work here has
been most confining and trying. I now know what it is to be put through the
mills. Things are, however working out to our favor after much effort. We
have finally arranged for the financing of our Church, and the building of
the same. Construction will begin in about another week. We had our ground-
breaking ceremony on the 1st Sunday. This will be the first real Negro Church
to be built in our city though attempts have been made since 1914. We feel very thankful to have a small part to do with the realization of this long delayed dream. The need for such facilities here are great and I am sure it will be well supported in years to come.

I regret so very much the fact that I was not home the other week when you called. It would have been a great joy to have talked with you.

You have my hearty congratulations for allowing yourself to be called to the Dexter Street Baptist Church. From what you say and from what some of my members here who know the Church, it is really a wonderful Church. I am sure you will do a good job. We are praying for your success. I am sure I need not say be careful, be watchful in all things.

Tell me about the National Baptist Convention. Has Dr. Jackson been able to get any progressive program in operation. How were the sessions this year? Were they orderly? What improvement has been made in the organizational structure? Perhaps it is too early to get very much started. It does take time to lift people out of a rut. I suppose every one was there, as usual. I really hated to miss the session, but my need here was greater than there, I am sure.

Have you seen McCall since going on your field there. I suppose he will go back to Fort Valley this year. Poor fellow he is still talking about getting married. One of these days he is going to fool himself and wake up married. But marriage is what he needs, and I hope he can find it convenient to do so before long.

How is your wife? Well I hope. How do you like your field of labor? I am sure it is a real challenge.

If I am fortunate in my plans, I expect to make a tour through the southland either this winter or late spring. My wife has never been south of Virginia and I would like for her to see the real Negro Cultural Centers before she is too old to enjoy & appreciate it. When we make the trip, you can be sure that we will let you know and plan to spend a day with you.

Well, ole timer, whatever you do, be sure to “preach the word,” in season and out of season.” Declare the “Thus saith the Lord.” With kind regards & best wishes, I remain

Sincerely

[signed] Whit

ALS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.

From Nannie H. Burroughs

21 September 1954
Washington, D.C.

Burroughs expresses appreciation for King’s 9 September speech at the annual meeting of the Woman’s Auxiliary, National Baptist Convention, in St. Louis.