Among the ways the group can help itself toward the goals of first-class citizenship he said was by getting the ballot. "A voteless people is a powerless people." A second method is to joining the NAACP and put some big money into the freedom fight. Thirdly, he recommended using the courts more to obtain unjustly denied rights. He called for an immediate start toward the implementation of the May 17 U.S. Supreme Court decision banning the segregated school system.

“You must do more than pray and read the Bible” to destroy segregation and second-class citizenship—“you must do something about it,” the speaker counselled. He related how at fashionable Dexter Avenue Baptist Church he had set up a social and political action committee whose job it was to assist persons in the church in becoming qualified voters and in enrolling in the NAACP. He said that he wanted all of his members to be voters and members of the NAACP. He also told how from his pulpit he had denounced the “Negro Inaugural Ball” as a venture to extend dying segregation to an area where it could draw new breath.3

The Atlanta-born, Morehouse-trained, Ph.D.-level minister was introduced by the Rev. W. P. Vaughn, host pastor. The Rev. J. L. Ware, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, who also said he had expressed disapproval of Dr. Clay’s views during his services, introduced the Rev. Vaughn.

Music for the installation program was furnished by First Baptist Church of Ensley. The statement of occasion by Mrs. Osie Ware Mitchell, the appeal by Emory O. Jackson, solo by Miss Savannah Crews, and the installation of officers by the Rev. R. L. Alford, minister of the Sardis Baptist Church, rounded out the program.

W. C. Patton, retiring branch president who presided, offered a resolution which was unanimously adopted, rejecting the reported racial views of Dr. Clay as unrepresented and contrary to the position and sentiment of the recognized and authentic leadership of the Negro group. […]4


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3. The inaugural committee for newly elected governor James Folsom planned a segregated inaugural ball for African Americans. See “God and Supreme Court Against P. S. Segregation, Says Jemison,” Alabama Tribune, 7 January 1955.

4. The remainder of the article, which lists those involved in the installation ceremony and those installed as officers, is omitted.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

From William J. Cole

5 February 1955
Chicago, Ill.

A former member of Dexter, Cole donated a Communion table to the church in memory of his mother.
Rev. M. L. King Jr.

Dear Sir:-

Your kind letter received today and very glad to hear from you. I am happy to know the Communion Table is in the process of making and will be delivered soon.

I am more than happy to know Dexter has a leader now and a good Pastor. I pray for your continued success. I shall do all I can to help my church. I still consider Dexter my church as I can never forget my church. I believe the people of the South are beginning to be like the Northern people. No night service. We can hardly get enough people out in some churches to have a prayer meeting.

I have often wondered what could be done to stimulate the evening services. I hope to visit Montgomery this Spring & I hope to see the table.

May God's blessings be upon you and family.

Sincerely Yours

ALS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.

From Roland Smith

24 February 1955
Nashville, Tenn.

Smith writes concerning King's attendance at a meeting of the advisory council on literature and curriculum of the National Baptist Training Union Board.

Rev. M. L. King, Jr.
Pastor, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Rev. King:

I shall expect you to attend the meeting of the Advisory Council on literature and curriculum at the Sunday School Publishing Board Fourth Avenue and Charlotte on March 23rd and 24th, 1955. If you have written me that you cannot attend both days, then attend the day that's best for you.

Your expenses will be paid in the attendance of this meeting.

I should like for you to come prepared with ideas and plans as to the quality and critical analysis of our literature and plans as to our curriculum and leadership training.

Very truly yours,
[signed]
Roland Smith, Secretary
National Baptist Training Union Board

RS:e

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.