Rev. M. L. King, Jr.

Dear Young Brother:

Do you plan to attend the Congress in Atlantic City? If so, let me know at once and I'll try to arrange a preaching engagement for you. I have had you much in my thoughts and prayers from time to time. You have a great heritage in your grandfather and father. I understand you are developing into a good preacher in your own right.

Remain careful of your conduct. Steer away from "trashy" preachers. Be worthy of the best. It may come to you some day. Write to me, and send me one of your bulletins. Best wishes.

Yours fraternally,

[signed]
J. Raymond Henderson

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Martin Luther King, Sr., to J. Raymond Henderson

16 May 1955

Dr. J. Raymond Henderson
Second Baptist Church
Griffith Ave at 24th Street
Los Angeles 11, California

My dear Brother Henderson:

You have every right to believe me to be an ingrate. I received your church calendar back in January which I thought was very uniquely planned. It was my fullest intention to write you at that particular time, but somehow I mislaid the letter, thus the delay.

I am now in receipt of your letter, both to M. L. Jr and me. Thanks so much for your fine encouraging words concerning my son. He is very fond of you and speaks often of you and your work. He has completed all requirement for his Ph.D which is to be conferred the First Sunday June 5th. The information you received is correct, he can preach rings around me any day. But being a father yourself you know how happy this makes me feel. Frankly Joe, he is somebody's preacher, and yet he is but a lad. He delivered
Dear Mike:

April 28th is my Women’s Day and I am in the midst of a building program and I have to stick around on these financial days. I can come of the Third Sunday in April . . . if you can arrange it. Then too I wonder if I am your man. I am distinctly a “preacher’s preacher” and a college lecture man. I can preach bot-sessions but I can’t lecture to mobs. I am filled up with three lectures:

(1) Should we open the Canon? this deals with adding to the Bible and Revelation.

(2) Has Marx outmodeled The Christian Ethic? this deals with the historical process.

(3) Is the Baptist Church Doomed? this deals with the New concept of the Church.

Now I can’t make any more preparation as I am filled with the above and I have always stuck to one rule: Fill yourself up with some deep stuff and stick to it until it is out of your system. I heard Proctor on “success.” “Trite, trite, trite!” for a Th. D.” (See my article on the New England Convention in the Voice I am sending you.) Now think on these things and write me your conclusions.

My annex is finished... the hottest thing on the Eastern seaboard. Paid sixty-two thousand CASH, have’t borrowed one penny. Now I will turn the Church into a Catholic Sanctuary. This will cost forty five thousand and the furnishings twenty five thousand. I will sweat the Spooks and then BORROW to finish. I have it all planned and it is working as a clock.
I put a colonial front on and the white folks are eating me as you know the Church is on the highway and they see it. The Banks are calling me to HEND me money. How is that? I raised $4,024.00 Sunday July 17th, the hottest day of the year and the "Spooks" were standing around the wall. Besides I have taken in 114 members since December and raised $10,000 in special efforts in FIVE MONTHS. PREACHED IT UP. Yet all of this leaves me cold as I am no Galaphas. I am a Paul. Buildings don't impress me. I went to sleep in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Not impressed. Darkness is right. Emphasis on buildings and ritual is a sign of religious and spiritual decadence. Nobody said much when I baptized NINETY TWO at one time EASTER, but everybody is talking about the building. BAD! SAD! SAD! Although I am the deepest theologian in the Baptist Church nobody paid me any attention. Even you had it in the back of your head that I was a loafer. Now that I have turned "My Father's House into a den of thieves" even you say: "Do I didn't know it was in you." SAD! SAD! SAD!

Littlejohn is Pastor of the Bethsaida Baptist Church Minneapolis, Minn. I just got a letter from him and he wants to leave because the "Figgers" have up hell about the Choir and Gospel chorus singing. Poor boy he does not know that Hell is the natural habitat of the average Baptist member.

Copy this article and send me your pit AIR MAIL SPECIAL and I will put you in the Convention issue of the VOICE. I warn you, Don't get stuck there. Move on to a big metropolitan center in THE NORTH, or some town as ATLANTA. You will dry rot there. I feel sorry for
you with all that learning. I wrote a two hundred page thesis on RELIGION AND PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY and with the exception of lectures to colleges have been unable to use ONE SINGLE IDEA in the Baptist Church. The country Negroes have swept into town and REDUCED the intellectual level of RELIGION. This is the day of Mass preachers except in certain spots. Hurry and get one. Curry is trying to put the heat on me to come to Bishop but I am satisfied where I am. I have my house air-conditioned and I have not been out of this whole up on the second floor in a month. I just read and sleep and look out the window at these men working on my Church. All this and Heaven too. Hurry up and reply. You and Coretta are going to rue the day you have children. The Catholics are right. Preachers should be celibates.

Your Old Friend,

P.S. Be sure and show Coretta the article in the Voice. I like her and this is a compliment as I do not like preachers wives...most of them are empty headed and butt in their husbands business too much.

Fulcher is the real "being still" is to be doing nothing. Delays, delays, Delays. Some day I want to be somewhere as my brother. In yesterday's column, I was asked to let the State Department know that I was interested in the situation. Today they are taking it up. This is the news.
I am killing the church on "Job." Eliphaz made 3 indictments
against Job.
1) You have no right to complain
2) You have a secret sin
3) You question the justice of God

Job: Answers

Implication: Freedom implies freedom to question God. Subject: "Respectless Freedom"

Results: "Hari-Hari"

"172. Worried minds" - Test: "The Almighty troubles me - Job 23:16"

- Thesis: Unexplained suffering worries us.
- Appeal to Norman Vincent Peale
- I have no sin, said Job - you're deceiving
- I was not real
- Can Christianity handle worried minds?
- (Double "Hari-Kari")

July 24 (3) "The Justice of God"

Working on this now.

All of these deep! Deep! Deep!

The old approach has failed! So what?

\[560-1\]
the Baccalaurate yesterday at Alabama State. They tell me he swept. He is already in great demand. Continue to pray for us for there is always a need. As you know the devil can clip one so easily. I am forwarding the letter on to M. L. that you sent. I am sure you will hear from him in a few days.

I keep hearing that oldest son of yours is a genius in music. Certainly that makes parents proud when their children do well. Many congratulations and good luck.

Whenever you are coming this way drop me a line, we shall be happy to have you preach at Ebenezer. Glad to know that the work is moving on in a fine way at Second Baptist. We are just about to get underway with the erection of our Christian Education Bldg. It is a job I dread for I had hope to have gotten through with this ten years ago. As you know we were held up because of land. We were finally able to purchase the Big Bethel AM.E. Church parsonage, immediately next door to our church building.

It is always good to hear from you and to know your whereabouts. My entire family joins me in sending warmest regards to you, Mrs. Henderson and the children.

With every great wish,
Most cordially yours,
M. L. King Sr.

TLS. EBCR.

From L. Harold DeWolf

28 May 1955
Boston, Mass.

Dear Martin:

This is terribly late to be writing this letter, but perhaps you will forgive me in view of the fact that my daughter is to be married on June 23rd, we leave the next day for fourteen months abroad and we have been passing through an unusually crowded finishing of the University year.

Madeleine and I hope that we are not too late to find you able to accept an invitation for supper with us on the evening of Commencement Day, June 5th. We mean, of course, to invite both you and your wife. I hope she can be with you for the big day.

I have just recommended you for a college teaching position in a western school. You may not feel free to leave your church so soon, you might not want the place if offered and different officials of the college already have other candidates in mind. However, it would be a good place to break into the college field if it should open and you were free to take it.

Most cordially yours,
[signed] Harold.

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.