To M. C. Ballenger

15 December 1955
[Montgomery, Ala.]

King declines a position at Shurtleff College, a coeducational Baptist liberal arts college in southern Illinois.

Dean M. C. Ballenger
Shurtleff College
Alton, Illinois

Dear Dean Ballenger:

Thanks for your very kind letter of December 6. I am quite interested in the work that is being done at Shurtleff College, but at present my pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church is of such a nature that I would not like to consider moving. I feel that the job that I am attempting to do here will take a few more years to be completed. I am deeply grateful to you and the institution for being willing to consider me for this very significant position.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

M. L. King, Jr.

MLKJr

1. Milton Cornelius Ballenger (1918–) was a Baptist minister with a Ph.D. (1954) from Yale. He served as an educator and administrator at Shurtleff College from 1952 until 1970. Ballenger’s letter to King has not been located.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

To Ralph W. Riley

21 December 1955
[Montgomery, Ala.]

Riley, president of the American Baptist Theological Seminary and a former pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, spoke at Dexter’s seventy-eighth anniversary program on 21 December. On 22 December Riley thanked King “for the pleasure of having been with you at Dexter.”
21 December 1955

Dr. Ralph W. Riley, President
American Baptist Theological Seminary
Nashville 7, Tennessee

Dear Dr. Riley:

This is just a note to again express my appreciation to you for your rich contribution in making our Anniversary occasion a successful one. Your presence as well as your message meant so much to the people of Dexter. Remember you have a standing invitation to come to Dexter.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,
M. L. King, Jr.
MLK:jnt
TLc. DABCC.

From Walter C. Carrington

21 December 1955

After reading about King in Jet magazine, a fraternity brother applauds the use of Gandhian methods, asserting that "the possibilities of large scale, well disciplined, non-violent civil disobedience to segregation laws are enormous."1

Dear Martin,

I've just finished reading with a great deal of fascination and admiration about the clear headed and in many respects, unique type of fight you've been leading in Montgomery against bus Jim Crow. May I extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes for success in your endeavor.

When I first saw the quotes in "Jet" of one Rev. M. L. King Jr. the name failed to ring a bell. Then when I saw your picture I exclaimed, "why there's my good Alpha brother, Martin King!"

1. "Negroes Stop Riding Montgomery Buses in Protest over Jim Crow," Jet, 22 December 1955, pp. 12–15. Walter C. Carrington (1930–), born in New York City, earned his B.A. (1952) and J.D. (1955) from Harvard University. Carrington was the founding president of the college's NAACP branch, and in 1952 he became the first student and the youngest person elected to the NAACP National Board of Directors. After graduation, Carrington served with the U.S. Army for two years. He was named to the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination in 1957 but resigned in 1961 to serve in Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Senegal as a Peace Corps administrator, becoming director of the Peace Corps in Africa in 1969. Two years later Carrington joined the African American Institute as executive vice president and publisher of its magazine, Africa Report. After serving in a variety of political, academic, and consulting positions, Carrington was appointed ambassador to Nigeria in 1993.