To H. Edward Whitaker

30 January 1956

The Reverend H. Edward Whittaker
1122 Buffalo Avenue
Niagara Falls, New York

Dear Horace:

This is just a note to say that I will be very happy to preach for you on the dates that you have designated. I have already placed this engagement on my calendar. Please feel free to contact me concerning necessary details. I am looking forward with great anticipation to a rich fellowship with you and your fine members. With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

M. L. King, Jr.

P.S. The bus situation here in Montgomery is keeping me so busy that I hardly have time to breathe.

TLC. DABCC.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Notes on MIA Mass Meeting at First Baptist Church, by Willie Mae Lee

30 January 1956

Montgomery, Ala.

In a stirring address to more than 2,000 boycotters at an MIA mass meeting at Rev. Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church, King links the city's "get-tough" policy with his recent arrest and imprisonment for speeding but insists that "we still hold steadfast." "I want you to know that if M. L. King had never been born this movement would have taken place. I just happened to be here." Lee, a member of the Fisk University research team, also took notes on speeches (omitted here) by Abernathy, Rufus Lewis, and S. S. Seay that evening. She did not record King's announcement during the meeting that his house had been bombed. According to another source, he told the gathering to "be calm and quiet. Don't do anything that will not be for justice, for God is with us."

1. See Complaint, City of Montgomery v. Martin L. King, 26 January 1956, p. 106 in this volume.
Some of our good white citizens told me today that the relationships between white and colored use to be good, that the whites have never let us down and that the outsiders came in and upset this relationship. But I want you to know that if M. L. King had never been born this movement would have taken place. I just happened to be here. You know there comes a time when time itself is ready for change. That time has come in Montgomery, and I had nothing to do with it.

"Our opponents, I hate to think of our governmental officials as opponents, but they are, have tried all sorts of things to break us, but we still hold steadfast. Their first strategy was to negotiate into a compromise and that failed. Secondly, they tried to conquer by dividing and that failed. And now they are trying to intimidate us by a get-tough-policy and that's going to fail too because a man's language is courage when his back is against the wall.

"We don't advocate violence. WE WILL STAY WITHIN THE LAW. When we are RIGHT, WE DON'T MIND GOING TO JAIL! (The applause rang out like a great clasp of thunder) If all I have to pay is going to jail a few times and getting about 20 threatening calls a day, I think that is a very small price to pay for what we are fighting for. (applause very loud and long).

"We are a chain. We are linked together, and I cannot be what I ought to unless you are what you ought to be.

"This good white citizen I was talking to said that I should devote more time to preaching the gospel and leave other things alone. I told him that it's not enough to stand in the pulpit on Sunday and preach about honesty, to tell people to be honest and don't think about their economic conditions which may be conducive to their being dishonest. It's not enough to tell them to be truthful and forget about the social environment which may necessitate their telling untruths. All of these are a minister's job. You see God didn't make us with just soul alone so we could float about in space without care or worry. He made a body to put around a soul. When the body was made in flesh, there became a material connection between man and his environment and this connection means a material well being of the body as well as the spiritual well being of the soul is to be sought. And it is my job as a minister to aid in both of these." (roaring applaud)

TD. PV-ARC-LNT.

"Blast Rocks Residence of Bus Boycott Leader," by Joe Azbell

31 January 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

At 9:30 p.m., 30 January, a single stick of dynamite exploded on the King family's porch; Coretta Scott King and a friend, Dexter member Mary Lucy Williams, had been in the living room when they heard an object land on the front porch. They bolted to the back room, where Yolanda was sleeping, just as the dynamite exploded, ripping a hole in the porch floor, shattering four windows, and damaging a porch column. King arrived home about fifteen minutes later to find a large and boisterous crowd—many