Mr. Earl Kennedy, Chairman
First Congressional District
Michigan Citizens for Eisenhower
400 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Thanks for your very kind letter of October 18, making inquiry concerning my political position. Actually, I am not taking any public position in this election. In private opinion I find something to be desired from both parties. The Negro has been betrayed by both the Democratic and Republican Party. The Democrats have betrayed us by capitulating to the whims and caprices of the southern dixiecrats. The Republicans have betrayed us by capitulating to the blatant hypocrisy of conservative right wing northerners. This coalition of southern dixiecrats and right wing northern Republicans defeats every move toward liberal legislation in Congress. So we confront the problem of choosing the lesser of two evils. At this point I might say however, that I feel that the Negro must remain an independent voter, not becoming unduly tied to either party. He should seek to vote for the party which is more concerned with the welfare of all the people.

I was more than happy to hear from you, and of course I was very happy to know that you are an alumnus of Morehouse College. I hope it will be possible to meet you personally sometime in the near future.

Sincerely yours,

M. L. King, Jr.,
President
MLKb
(Dictated by Rev. King but signed in his absence)

MLC. MLK-MBU: Box 61.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

Annual Report, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

1 November 1955—31 October 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

In this introduction to his forty-page annual report King summarizes the church's accomplishments and thanks the congregation for supporting his leadership of the bus boycott. As leader of a movement with "international" dimensions, King notes that he has "often lagged behind in my pastoral duties" because demands on his time had "tripled." He therefore recommends that the church hire him an assistant. King's list of pastoral chores, which are not transcribed below, included 36 sermons preached at Dexter, 110 community and civic meetings attended, and 21 books and 96 periodicals read. King proposed a budget of $18,502 for the 1956-1957 fiscal year, considerably less than the $25,445 the church had spent the previous year. King presented this report at Dexter's annual meeting on 24 October, where it was received, according to one account, as "factual, informative, sincere, inspiring, and permeated with workable..."
Introductory Expressions

We come again to the end of an old church year and the beginning of a new church year. As we stand at the point where the old and the new intersect, we are inevitably driven to think of past achievements and future challenges.

The 1955–56 church year has been a year of concrete spiritual advances in the life of Dexter. More than forty new members have joined the fellowship of Dexter this year. Fortunately, most of these new members are active participants in the life of the church, and have joined other members in inspiring worship services each Lord’s Day.

Financially, we have done amazingly well. We have exceeded the high peak which was reached in the 1954–55 church year. Receipts from all sources have exceeded twenty-four thousand ($24,000.00). Of this amount we have given generously for benevolent purposes, missions, and education. Our building fund has now passed the twenty-five hundred dollar mark ($25,000.00).

Toward the end of the church year we undertook a renovation program which exceeded six thousand dollars ($6,000.00). Through this renovation program several improvements were made in the parsonage and the church structure. The first unit of the church has taken a totally new face, with new rubber tile on the floor, new cellotex for the ceiling, new fluorescent lights, new venetian blinds, new tables, and new gas heaters.* In the vestibule of the church a new water fountain has been installed.† In the main sanctuary a new Grand Kimbell Piano has been added to beautify the worship services.

Many other wonderful things have taken place in the life of the church this year. Mention can only be made of a few. The church can now boast of the publication of a church paper. This church paper, known as the Dexter Echo, has served to meet a real need in the life of the church. Under the skilled and competent editorship of Mr. George Jones, the Dexter Echo serves to keep members and friends of Dexter abreast with all of the pertinent information concerning the church and its membership. Under the direction of the Scholarship Fund Committee, two scholarships of Seventy-five dollars each were given to two fine young

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2. The financial report indicated that the building fund contained $2,495.11.

* These new gas heaters and their installation were made possible by a gift of $100.00 from the pastor’s wife Mrs. Coretta S. King.
† This much needed water fountain was given as a gift to the church by Mr. John Brown and Mrs. Caressa Williams in memory of their father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John Brown.
members of our church who are now freshmen in college. Under the joint sponsorship of the Young Matrons Circle and the Ushers of the church Mrs. Coretta King was presented in a concert. This event proved to be one of the high points of the church year. It was both culturally and spiritually stimulating. The work of the Social and Political Action Committee continues to be superb. The entire membership has profited from the work of this committee. It has kept us informed on the major social and political issues of our time. The “special days” through the church year have again been tremendously successful. Through these special occasions we were fortunate enough to bring to Dexter some of the outstanding preachers and personalities of our nation. The various auxiliaries of the church are still active and working to further the total program of the church. All of these things represent the marvelous achievements of a church year that is now passing into history. New levels of spiritual development were reached in the 1955–56 church year that will remain in our thoughts so long as the chords of memory shall lengthen.

Certainly a personal word of thanks is in order at this point. As pastor, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to every member of Dexter for the cooperation given to my program and the personal courtesies extended to me and my family. Almost eleven months ago, through the force of circumstance, I was catapulted into the leadership position of a movement that has now risen to international proportions. Because of this new role, demands upon my time have tripled. The world-wide interest in the Montgomery Movement has made it necessary for me to do an extensive amount of traveling. Due to the multiplicity of duties that have come to me as a result of my involvement in the protest, I have often lagged behind in my pastoral duties. Yet, with a real sense of dedication to the cause, you have expressed a deep sympathetic understanding. You have carried on in my absence. You have given words of encouragement when I needed them most. Even when my life and the life of my family were in personal jeopardy, you were at my side. When we stood amid the bleak and desolate night of agony, you were always present with the bright morning of hope. For all of these things, I can not begin to thank you with words. I can only say that there are strong torrents of gratitude flowing from the depths of my heart which can never be captured by the thin vessels of words.

3. Teresa Anderson and Carolyn Motley received the scholarships.
As I bring this message to a close I must mention the job that lies ahead. As stated above, we reached new heights in the 1955–56 church year, but we must reach even greater heights in 1956–57. We have come a long, long way, but we have a long, long way to go. There are still gigantic spiritual mountains that we have not climbed. There are still uncharted continents of religious education that we have not explored. There are still unchurched persons in the community who are desperately in need of Christ. Let us rise up with bold determination to lift our church to new levels of spiritual achievement, and thereby bring the Kingdom of God nearer to our community. If we are to remain a great church we must never become a stagnant pool. Rather, we must be an ever flowing river.

M.L.K., Jr.

[List of outstanding events, pastoral chores, sermons and lectures away from home, and new members omitted.]

Recommendations

The following are recommendations submitted by the pastor for the 1956–57 church year:

1. In order to increase the membership of the church as well as extend the spiritual influence of the church throughout the community, a serious evangelistic campaign shall be continued, extending throughout the church year. This campaign shall be carried out by twenty-five evangelistic teams, each consisting of a captain and at least three other members. Each team shall be urged to bring in at least five new members within the church year. The team that brings in the highest number of members shall be duly recognized at the end of the church year. Each captain shall call his team together at least once a month to discuss findings and possibilities. [List of team members is omitted.]

2. In order to give the pastor some assistance in the multiplicity of duties that have accumulated as a result of his larger ministry to the community and the expanding program of the church, an assistant to the pastor shall be employed. The duties of this office shall be outlined by the pastor.

3. In order to meet the growing economic issues of our community and realize our great economic potential, a committee shall be appointed to pursue the idea of establishing a Credit Union in this church. This committee shall be requested to look into this matter immediately, and bring back concrete recommendations to the Official Board within the next month. The committee shall consist of the following persons: Mr. C. L. Dennard, Chairman; John Cannon, J. H. Gilchrist, C. Earl Anderson, P. M. Blair, F. W. Taylor, Sr., C. C. Beverly, Robert Nesbitt, Sr.

[List of church members and officers is omitted, as is the detailed financial report.]