and otherwise. And we are hopefully looking forward to your continued efforts along these lines.

We understand that the Supreme Court’s mandate concerning bus segregation has been mailed to the Federal District Court. As soon as the District Court issues the formal decree, we shall be returning to the busses.

Although we are hopeful that no violent incidents will occur, we must recognize that possibility. There is that element of violent-minded people, of both races, of which we must be mindful.

Past experience reveals that the only places where violence has occurred in connection with the busses has been at the end of lines and on very dark streets. And the hours after dark are potentially more dangerous than the daytime.

We, therefore, request that you use every precaution to prevent possible violence, and that you will insure that the above-mentioned danger zones will be patrolled with extra caution.

We reaffirm our basic conviction that violence is both impractical and immoral. We have been training our people to remain non-violent in word and deed, and not to return hate for hate. We believe that violence in our city will lead to a long and desolate night of bitterness, which will bring shame to generations yet unborn.

Thanking you for your cooperation, we remain

Yours truly,
The Executive Board of
The Montgomery Improvement
Association, by
(Rev.) Martin L. King, Jr.

MLK:mlb

THLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 22.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

From William Holmes Borders

19 December 1956

Pastor for two decades of Atlanta’s Wheat Street Baptist Church, Borders had known King since childhood. He spoke at the MIA’s Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change two weeks earlier.1

1. William Holmes Borders (1905–1993), born in Macon, Georgia, earned his B.A. (1929) from Morehouse College, his B.D. (1932) from Garrett Theological Seminary, and his M.A. (1936) from Northwestern University. The following year he became pastor of Atlanta’s Wheat Street Baptist Church, a few blocks from Ebenezer. Under his leadership, which lasted until his retirement in 1988, the church developed a complex of businesses, housing, and nonprofit organizations. Borders was a leader in many of Atlanta’s civil rights campaigns, including its bus desegregation protest in 1957.
Rev. M. L. King, Jr.
Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
454 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama

My dear Rev. King:

I received the annual report of your church. I read every line of the introductory expressions. I checked the outstanding events. I noted the number of outstanding speaking engagements. I scanned the financial record, the amount raised and spent. It is outstanding and wonderful.

It was kind of you to think of sending me a copy. May God continue to bless you that you may reach higher heights. Your future is unlimited. You have a Ph. D degree. You are beautifully married. You are humble. You are sweet. You have forty fruitful years before you. There is no position in any church, religious body, University and etc. which you could not fill. I have picked you for three outstanding positions in our race. I will be glad to risk my prophesy on that. May God bless you as you continue to grow.

Sincerely yours,

[signed]
William Holmes Borders

WHB: mw

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 14.

Statement on Ending the Bus Boycott

20 December 1956

[Montgomery, Ala.]

King reads a prepared statement to about 2,500 persons attending mass meetings at Holt Street and First Baptist Churches. He urges "the Negro citizens of Montgomery to return to the busses tomorrow morning on a non-segregated basis." An audience question about segregated benches downtown prompted King to acknowledge that the Supreme Court ruling applied only on city buses. A Birmingham News account of the meetings reported that he admitted "it is true we got more out of this (boycott) than we went in for. We started out to get modified segregation (on buses) but we got total integration." At six A.M. the following morning King joined E. D. Nixon, Ralph

1. King later remembered that he had "carefully prepared [the statement] in the afternoon" before the meeting. It is reprinted in its entirety in Stride Toward Freedom, pp. 170–172. See also Excerpt, Statement on End of Bus Boycott, 20 December 1956.