city commissioner or official doesn’t please us, we can use our vote in a determi-
ning and decisive way.”

3. “Internal areas. We must work within our race to raise economic, health and intellec-
tual standings.”

4. “Education. Here, we are going to lose many of our white friends that helped us during the bus boycott. Even still we must have integrated schools as the Su-
preme Court in 1954 ruled we can. That is when our race will gain full equality. We cannot rest in Montgomery until every public school is integrated.”

The Negro minister urged that all Negroes return to riding the buses. “We must go back to the buses in big numbers. Then, perhaps, we might even be able to do something about the fares.”

He said several people had complained because the fare was now 15 cents instead of the 10 cents when the Negroes first began their boycott. “Let me say, however, I would rather pay $2 to ride an integrated bus than pay one cent to ride a segregated one.”

He cautioned bus riders to remain calm “in case there should be any violence. Get the facts, watch for people who look as if they might start trouble. If there are cars following the bus suspiciously, by all means, get the tag numbers.

“Without all of this, you don’t have a case. Even if the police, perhaps, won’t do anything there is always the FBI,” he said.

PD. Montgomery Advertiser, 24 December 1956.

To Fred L. Shuttlesworth

[26 December 1956]

[Montgomery, Ala.]

Following the court-ordered desegregation of Montgomery buses, activists in
Tallahassee, Birmingham, and other southern cities announced their intention to ride
desegregated buses. On 26 December Tallahassee leader C. K. Steele, along with sixteen
others, attempted to board city buses to test its segregation ordinance but called off the
protest after confronting a shouting mob. The day after the Christmas night bombing of
his parsonage, Fred Shuttlesworth and twenty-one others were arrested in Birmingham
for violating that city’s bus segregation law.1 Following a two-hour mass meeting,
Shuttlesworth decided to call off the protest, noting that “since the issue is properly one
for the court we now believe that all purposes can be settled in the courts.”2 Later that

1. Fred Lee Shuttlesworth (1922–), born in Montgomery, earned his B.A. (1951) from Selma Uni-
versity and his B.S. (1953) from Alabama State College. In 1956, while pastor of Birmingham’s Bethel
Baptist Church, he founded and led the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR),
which after the banning of the NAACP in Alabama engaged in direct-action protest against segrega-
tion. In early 1957 Shuttlesworth helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
(SCLC), in which the ACMHR became an important affiliate.

2. “Negroes at Tallahassee, Birmingham Halt Plans for Mass Demonstrations,” Montgomery Adver-
tiser, 28 December 1956.
night at a second mass meeting Shuttlesworth read a telegram (a draft of which appears below) from King asking the protesters to "keep riding" desegregated buses and to "fill up the jails of Birmingham" if necessary. The four hundred participants then voted unanimously to follow King's advice and continue the integration effort. Although King's letterhead is from a hotel in Detroit, he notes in the text that he can't get away from Montgomery, which suggests that the letter was written after he had returned home from Detroit.

Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights,
Rev. F. L. Shuttlesworth,
President

I had hoped to be with you in your meeting tonight, but important developments here in Montgomery made it impossible for me to get away. You are deeply in my prayers and thoughts as you confront arrests, threats, bombings and all types of humiliating experiences. Your wise restraint, calm dignity and unflinching courage will be an inspiration to generations yet unborn. History records nothing more majestic and sublime than the determined courage of a people willing to suffer and sacrifice for the cause of freedom. The days ahead may be difficult, but do not despair. Those of use who stand amid the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man must gain consolation from the fact that there is emerging a bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice. In closing I must say to you, keep moving toward the goal of justice. Keep riding the buses on a non-segregated basis. Keep living by the principle of non-violence. If necessary, fill up the jails of Birmingham. Remember, God lives! They that stand against him stand in a tragic and an already declared minority. They that stand with him stand in the glow of the world's bright tomorrows.

[signed]
M. L. King Jr.

ALS. MLKP-MBU: Box 71.

From Homer Alexander Jack

27 December 1956
Evanston, Ill.

Reporting that five Quakers met with Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on 21 December, Jack endorses their hope that the Kings would visit India and recommends as well a visit to the Gold Coast, which would become the independent nation of Ghana in March 1957. The Kings traveled to Ghana for the event and two years later toured India accompanied by James Bristol, one of the Quakers who had met with Nehru.