orado. (Yes) Let it ring from the prodigious hill tops of New Hampshire. Let it ring from the mighty Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let it ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that. From every mountain side, let freedom ring. (Yes) Yes, let us go out and be determined that freedom will ring from every mole hill in Mississippi. (Yes) Let it ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. (Yes) Let it ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. (Yes) Let it ring from every mountain and hill of Alabama. (Yes) From every mountain side (Yes), let freedom ring. (Yes) And when that happens we will be able to go out and sing a new song (Yeah, Yes): "Free at last, free at last, great God almighty, I'm free at last." [applause]

At MLKFG.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

From Robert E. Hughes

12 April 1957
Birmingham, Ala.

Hughes, executive director of the interracial Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR), informs King that President Eisenhower is expected to send a message supporting law and order in the South to the upcoming Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations. King addressed the conference on 25 April. Hughes, who had helped arrange the initial negotiations between the MIA and local white officials during the bus boycott, also asks King to meet him in Montgomery to discuss future ACHR contributions to the civil rights struggle. King replied on 3 May.

1. In a 20 April telegram to Everett Tilson, Eisenhower expressed his support for the conference but did not mention race relations or the South: "Coming together united in one faith and seeking the common welfare, I am sure you will arrive at a constructive approach to the problems of our day. It is important that new plans and effective programs be considered if we are to make the service of God and neighbor meaningful in our generation." Conference organizers had initially invited Eisenhower to address the meeting, but were informed by his secretary that the president "will not have available to him the time he feels necessary for the preparation of an address such as he would want to give before this important group" (Tilson to Eisenhower, 2 February 1957; Bernard Shanley to Tilson, 11 February 1957). On 26 April Tilson thanked Eisenhower for his telegram, but relayed the disappointment of those in attendance that the president was "unable to address the conference in person."

12 Apr 1957
Rev. Martin Luther King
530 South Union Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Martin:

In the event that you have not heard this bit of information, I am passing on to you the following which I received in a confidential memorandum from the Southern Regional Council.

With reference to the Conference on Christian Faith and Human Relations to be held in Nashville April 23–25, President Eisenhower will be sending a message to be read to the Conference prepared specifically for this occasion. Apparently there is some concrete grounds that this is the long awaited statement on law and order to the Southland. Of course this might have implications for the Prayer Pilgrimage which is being planned for May.

At such time as would be convenient for you I would like very much for us to get together in Montgomery for a few minutes to discuss what you feel to be the most valuable contribution the Alabama Council can make at this and future times. On the personal side I am faced with the dilemma of just when I shall report to the Methodist Board of Missions for service in Africa and I feel that even though you were on the Continent for a short time that you might have gained some insight which would help me to determine the relative needs there in contrast to the South and Alabama.3 According to my schedule I shall be in Montgomery Thursday afternoon April 18, Friday morning April 19, Thursday afternoon May 2 and the earlier part of Friday morning May 3. If you could squeeze in twenty or thirty minutes at any of these times please ask your secretary to write me to this effect.4

May the Lord continue to richly bless the fine work in which you are involved.

Cordially,

[signed] Bob
Rev. Robert E. Hughes
Executive Director

REH:mk

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 13A.

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3. Hughes left ACHR in 1961 to work on human rights issues in Rhodesia.
4. In his 3 May reply, King indicated that he would be in Montgomery until 16 May; it is unclear whether the two men met.