I come again to a question which frankly I can not answer, namely, how much does a leader owe his people? How much is he called on to suffer for them? How fair is it to his wife and family to continue them over-long in a situation fraught with constant danger, tension, and the possibility of future neuroses, especially for the children? Can a man, having given much in a local situation, serve it and the larger cause more effectively by changing location?

It is my own inclination, not certain answer, led by some spirit (whether it be of God, I know not), to say to you I believe you should leave Montgomery. I enclose copy of a letter which in strict confidence I am sending to Roy Wilkins. Please do not reply to this letter in haste. Think it over. Pray it over. Talk with Coretta and with your father.

Please convey our best love to Coretta, and blessings be on you and the children.

Fraternally,
[signed]
J. Raymond Henderson

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 28.

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a blackjack by a police officer who stopped him as he walked to a friend’s house (“Lawyer, NAACP Aid ‘Client’ Surrendered to Authorities”).

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

**From Dexter Avenue Baptist Church**

[21 September 1958]
[Montgomery, Ala.]

*As King signed copies of Stride Toward Freedom in the shoe department at Blumstein’s department store in Harlem on 20 September, Izola Curry, a forty-two-year-old black woman, approached him. After King identified himself, Curry stabbed him in the upper left side of his chest with a seven-inch steel letter opener.* Rushed to

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1. Izola Ware Curry (1916–), born in Adrian, Georgia, was arrested at the scene and later found to be carrying a loaded gun. During her questioning by police at New York’s 28th Precinct, Curry indicated that she believed the NAACP and King had been “boycotting” and “torturing” her. When asked why she stabbed King she replied, “if it wasn’t him it would have been me, he was going to kill me” (Curry, Statement to Howard Jones, 21 September 1958). She was committed to Bellevue Hospital for observation and soon found not competent to stand trial. On 20 October Curry was committed to Matteawan State Hospital for the criminally insane, where she was diagnosed a paranoid schizophrenic.
Harlem Hospital, King underwent a two-and-a-quarter-hour operation performed by Dr. Aubre' Maynard. A. Philip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and Governor Averell Harriman arrived at the hospital during the surgery while a large crowd gathered outside; forty people offered to donate blood. Maynard later announced that the operation was a success.

Early Sunday morning, 21 September, Coretta King touched down in New York with Ralph Abernathy; King, Sr. arrived that night to find his son asleep: "I welcomed the news that he was asleep. For I didn't trust myself to see him then. I was afraid of how he would look and my legs might have crumpled under me." In Montgomery, the local clergymen gathered at Mt. Zion AME Zion Church Saturday night, 20 September, in order to make plans for Sunday's church services. King's congregation at Dexter drafted the following telegram.

We, your beloved members of Dexter, are deeply shocked to learn of the unfortunate incident which you experienced on Saturday. We share your pain and the undeserved suffering which you are enduring. We want you to know that, although you are not able to be with us in person, you are present in spirit. Feel the presence of each of us as our hearts go out to you this morning, and our prayers ascend for your comfort and speedy recovery.

We believe that God has gloriously called you to lead and liberate his people and that he will strengthen, aid [strikeout illegible] and sustain you during these moments of physical discomfort.

May you find consolation in his words, "Blessed are they [strikeout illegible] which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
Deacon T. H. Randall, Chairman
Deacon Board
{Robert Nesbitt, Church Clerk}

THWd. DABCC.

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2. Aubre de Lambert Maynard (1901-1999), born in Georgetown, Guyana, earned his B.A. (1922) from the College of the City of New York and M.D. (1926) from New York University Medical College. That same year Maynard became one of the first black interns at Harlem Hospital, spurring the resignation of several white physicians. He served as president of the Harlem Surgical Society in 1951, and in 1954 Maynard became the second black person to be elected to the New York Surgical Society. When he operated on King in 1958, Maynard was director of surgery at Harlem Hospital.

3. One of King's physicians later explained the seriousness of the wound: "Had Dr. King sneezed or coughed the weapon would have penetrated the aorta. . . . He was just a sneeze away from death." Following the surgery, doctors found a small patch of pneumonia on King's right lung; he was pronounced well a few days later ("Wounded Rev. King Develops Pneumonia," Atlanta Daily World, 23 September 1958; "King 'Out of Danger,'" New York Times, 27 September 1958).