

To Ebenezer Baptist Church Members

6 November 1954
[Montgomery, Ala.]

Members of Ebenezer Baptist Church participated extensively in King's installation as pastor at Dexter: King, Sr., gave the sermon, Alberta King played the organ, and the Ebenezer choir sang. "As I have said to you before," King tells the church members, "you can never know what your presence in such large numbers meant to me at the beginning of my pastorate."

The Ebenezer Baptist Church
The Rev. M. L. King, Sr., Pastor
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Members:

I would like to take this way to express our deepest appreciation to you for the "big way" in which you helped to make our recent installation a great success. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude, and I assure you that your tremendous response to this occasion shall be remembered so long as the cords of memory shall linger. Both your presence and your financial con-

over Montgomery's First Baptist Church in 1952. A student activist during his undergraduate years at Alabama State, Abernathy shared Martin Luther King, Jr.'s social gospel outlook, and the two became close friends after King arrived in Montgomery in 1954. For biographical information on Abernathy, see note 142 in Introduction and Abernathy's autobiography, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989). Marshall Cleophus Cleveland, Sr. (1882–1978), was the pastor of Day Street Baptist Church and chair of the board of trustees of Selma University.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

18 Nov 1954 tributions were appreciated beyond expression. All of this continues to prove to me that there is but one Ebenezer. Your generosity and big heartedness will always keep you in the forefront, and you will always stand as a symbol of what other churches ought to be.

As I have said to you before, your prayers and words of encouragement have meant a great deal to me in my ministry; and you can never know what your presence in such large numbers meant to me at the beginning of my pastorate. I want you to know Ebenezer, that I feel greatly indebted to you; and that whatever success I might achieve in my life's work you will have helped to make it possible.

Mrs. King joins me in this expression of our appreciation to you. We pray God's blessings upon all of you as you go forward in trying to bring His Kingdom on earth.

With sincere affection,
M. L. King, Jr.

TLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 116.