George D. Kelsey to Charles E. Batten

12 March 1948
Atlanta, Ga.

As professor of religion and director of the Morehouse School of Religion, George D. Kelsey recommends King for admission to Crozer.¹ King had earned his only A as an undergraduate in the second semester of Kelsey's Introduction to the Bible, which focused on the "strenuous" ethical teachings of Jesus. Although Kelsey concedes shortcomings in King's academic record, years later he remembered that King "stood out in class not simply academically, but in the sense that he absorbed Jesus' teachings with his whole being."² Keeping in touch by letter and telephone over the years, King would seek Kelsey's advice on chapters of Stride Toward Freedom.

Mr. Charles E. Batten, Dean
Crozer Theological Seminary
Chester, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Batten:

The academic record of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Morehouse College is short of what may be called "good;" but I recommend that you give his application serious consideration. King is one of those boys who came to realize the value of scholarship late in his college career. His ability exceeds his record at Morehouse, and I believe his present attitude will lift his achievement to the level of his ability.

He impresses me as being quite serious about the ministry and as having a call rather than a professional urge. His record as a citizen in Morehouse is good. He gets along well with people, is friendly and courteous.

Yours sincerely,

[signed as below]
George D. Kelsey, Director
SCHOOL OF RELIGION

TLS. CRO-NRGR.

---

¹ George Dennis Sale Kelsey (1910–) received his A.B. from Morehouse College in 1934, his B.D. from Andover-Newton Theological School in 1937, and his Ph.D. in 1946 from Yale University. He taught religion and philosophy at Morehouse from 1938 to 1948 and served as a visiting professor at Gammon Theological Seminary. From 1945 to 1948, he was also director of the Morehouse School of Religion. After leaving Morehouse, Kelsey was employed by the National Council of Churches from 1948 to 1952 as associate director of the field department. In 1952 he joined the faculty at Drew University. Kelsey's books include Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man (1965).

² Renee D. Turner, "Remembering the Young King," Ebony 43 (January 1988): 44.