In one of his first speeches in the North since the beginning of the boycott, King addressed an enthusiastic capacity crowd of 2,500 at Concord Baptist Church in Brooklyn. Sponsored by the Brooklyn chapter of the National Association of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the 25 March mass meeting featured brief remarks by a Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi, and the president of the city council. In his speech King noted his long friendship with a leader of Brooklyn's religious community: "I'm glad to see Rev. Sandy Ray out there," he said. "You know, for years he was 'Uncle Sandy' to me. In fact, I did not know he was not related to me by blood until I was 12 years old." (Ray was a college friend of King, Sr.'s, and pastor of Bedford-Stuyvesant's Cornerstone Baptist Church.) King also argued against William Faulkner's admonition that integrationists "stop now for a moment." "We can't slow up," he declared, "and have our dignity and self-respect." At the end of the meeting Rev. Gardner Taylor, pastor of the church, asked for the collection, which "was taken up in waste baskets, cake boxes, cartons, cooking utensils, and other containers," yielding more than $4,000 for the MIA.

Here are some quotable quotes from the address delivered by Rev. Martin Luther King in Brooklyn Sunday:

"I do not come here with a message of bitterness, hate or despair." "I come with a message of love and a message of hope."  

"Press on and keep pressing. If you can't fly, run; if you can't run, walk; if you can't walk—"CRAWL."  

"We can't slow up." "We can't slow up and have our dignity and self respect. We can't slow up because of our love for democracy and our love for America. Someone should tell Faulkner that the vast majority of the people on this globe are colored."

"In our generation something has happened to the Negro. He has decided to reevaluate himself and he is coming to see that he is somebody."

"He has come to realize that every man, from a bass black to a treble white is significant on God's keyboard."

"There comes a time when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of frustration. Today's expression in Montgomery is the expression of 50,000 people who are tired of being pushed around."

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4. Another reporter noted that King quoted Jesus, "I come not to bring peace but a sword," explaining that "the sword was one of nonviolent revolt against 'narrow and oppressive traditions.' . . . We will not resort to violence, we will not degrade ourselves with hatred. We will return good for evil, we will love our enemies—not the way you love your wife, but the mighty, transcendent, God-given love for our brother men, white and dark. Christ showed us the way and Gandhi in India showed it could work." (Ibid.).
2 Apr
1956

“Yes, there are tensions in the South. But the tension we experience there is
due to the revolutionary reevaluation of the Negro by himself.

“You can't understand the Montgomery situation unless you understand that
the Negro has a new sense of dignity, a new realization of his own worth.” 5

“Dixie has a heart all right. But it's having a little heart trouble right now.”

“Montgomery is known as the Cradle of the Confederacy. It has been a quiet
cradle for a long, long time, but now the cradle is rocking.”


5. King continued: “We in Montgomery have discovered a method that can be used by the Negroes
in their fight for political and economical equality. . . . We fight injustice with passive resistance. And
it works. . . . The little brown man in India—Mohandas Gandhi—used it to topple the British military
machine. Gandhi was able to break loose from the political and economical domination by the British
and brought the British Empire to its knees. Let's now use this method in the United States” (“King
Speaks at Big Rally in Brooklyn,” Montgomery Advertiser, 26 March 1956).

From Worth Littlejohn Barbour

2 April 1956
Minneapolis, Minn.

In 1950 King had recommended Barbour, pastor of Minneapolis's Bethesda Baptist
Church and the son of J. Pius Barbour, for admission to Crozer.1 Barbour forwards
several hundred dollars to the MIA from his church and congregation; his handwritten
list of donors is not reprinted here.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
309 South Jackson Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Mike:

Man never knows his destiny. It was almost inconceivable a few years ago that
you, “Mike” King, would have been the chosen one to lead the redemption of
the Southland. The Un-finished Task is your lot.

1. King to Charles E. Batten, 30 October 1950, in Papers 1:333. Worth Littlejohn Barbour (1929–),
born in Spartanburg, South Carolina, received his B.A. (1951) from Shaw University and his B.D.
(1954) from Crozer Theological Seminary. Barbour later worked as a lecturer, social worker, and
NAACP field representative before pursuing a career as an equal employment opportunity specialist
in Colorado.