

The Civil Rights Movement in Alabama

Alabama A&M University

Trial by Fire and Water: Birmingham, 1963 (Part I)

Speaker: Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth

Introduction: Our speaker for tonight is the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth. You will hear more about him from the person who will introduce him. I want to make just a few comments about the way in which the programs have taken place up to this point. Last week we did not have a lecture. I am not sure if that was clearly stated at the program on week before last. There may have been some confusion. At least I heard some were a little bit confused. In fact we had a program at the State Black Archives last Thursday. Some of the people showed up at the State Black Archives. They said to me, "Is this where the symposium is going to be?" I told them there was no way we could accommodate the numbers that we have had at this symposium here at our place. We can only accommodate about fifty in there. I'm very sorry that there was some misunderstanding. I think there may have been at least a statement made but perhaps it was not emphasized as clearly as it should have been or perhaps the emphasis was not as great as it should have been. If you had looked at your schedule, you would have noticed that there was no notation for October 4th. That was because UAH had a small break last week. That is the reason why it is not scheduled for the brochure. We apologize for any inconvenience. We hope that you will forgive us for not making that clear. However, tonight I would like for you to be sure to note that next week's program will be at UAH. It will be at the same place and at the same time. However, the next two programs from the campus of Alabama A& M, that is October 25th. If you have your pencils and you want to make a note on your brochure, you can. October 25th and November 8th will be

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in this place, which is the West campus center and the Ernest L. Knight reception area. If you are coming from Meridian, come to the second light. Turn right or turn left. There is plenty of parking areas just across the street in the parking area where the post office is. There is some parking also on this side, if you turn left. All you have to do is remember to proceed to the second light after the Chase Road and then turn left or right. It will be the building across from the post office. Is that clear to everyone? The next two programs on the campus of Alabama A&M, October 11 and October 25 and November 8, there are three of these and John L. Lewis will be here. We hope that some of the matters that are keeping the conference occupied will not prevent him from coming. We hope that he will be able to be here. Keep that in mind. I would like to acknowledge the planning committee that has been responsible for each program. Dr. Mitch Berbrier, John Dimmock, Lee Williams and Dr. Jack Ellis from UAH; Professor Carolyn Parker, who is not able to be here tonight, she is out of town, and myself, from Alabama A&M, and of course crucial contributions are made by Joyce Maples and Mr. Charles Wood. We do want to acknowledge their contribution and the committee as a whole. I would like for Dr. Lee Williams to come forth and acknowledge the people who are responsible for this series. Pastor of St. John AME Church and a professor here at Alabama A&M University, will introduce Dr. Shuttlesworth. Thank you.

Introduction continued: Thank you very much Dr. Williams. To Dr. Johnson and to all of the committee of the Civil Rights Movements Symposium, and to all of the underwriters, distinguished guests, visitors and friends, the entire Alabama University family, it is a distinct honor and privilege to introduce the speaker this evening. He is

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one whom I can truthfully and sincerely state, his times are in God's hands. Paraphrased from Psalms 31:15, "My times are in thy hands." Circumstances and events in this life for eighty years, this March, I believe. He has had fifty-eight years of ministry and thirty-six years at Greater New Life Baptist Church in Cincinnati. He has been living eighty years on this planet earth. He will introduce himself through his testimony tonight; a testimony with heritage rich in the African-American experience; a heritage rich in his love for America; a heritage rich in its primary base, a spiritual base. We thank God for that rich heritage that is so needed for such a time as this. Yes, we could talk about his long devotion, his personal history, human rights, and justice ranging from Selma University and Alabama State with a Bachelor in Science Degree, but he does not want me to talk about that. Even about 1956 where Alabama politicians outlawed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In response to that act, a group of ministers under the leadership of Reverend Shuttlesworth came together to organize the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. He was a very close ally of Dr. King. With the personality of confrontation, he became known and honored as Birmingham's Civil Rights Leader. He was able to help and join together with Dr. Martin Luther King and others to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He was devoted to nonviolence. He conducted leadership training programs. We can read the whole history of this association with attorney general Kennedy along with his love for human rights and justice. He was beaten with clubs and chains when he tried to enroll his children in an all white high school and in 1961 he moved to Cincinnati. He founded the Greater New Life Baptist Church in 1966 where he continues to serve as pastor. It's no

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question that they honored him on March 10th through 17th of 2002, for thirty-six years of faithful service, fifty-eight years in the ministry. He does not even look like he is eighty years old. When I grow up I want to be like that. We look forward to a treat tonight and I am sure that when we have the impact, not only of what happened at the Unity Breakfast some years ago. He took us to the mountaintop. I am sure that by the grace of God he will carry us to another level tonight. He always says that he can't go any further than the people who are praying for him. I would like for you to greet him with attentive ears, open hearts and raised disposition for Birmingham's Civil Rights leader who comes to not only give us inspiration but also his dedication for years of fervent commitment, not only to human rights but social justice as a Christian creature who has not denied nor cut himself away from his ethnicity, spirituality and politics of confrontation. It is my privilege now to present to you the Reverend Doctor Fred Shuttlesworth, the Pastor of Greater New Life Baptist Church.

Fred Shuttlesworth: That is a great introduction son. Thank you very much. That was a great introduction Dr. Williams, Johnson, all the members of the faculties of these institutions. I assure you that after that beautiful introduction, I feel a little better than I did before. I was sitting there thinking about how this is my eighteenth hour. I had to get up at four o'clock this morning. I must commend the program. This is the first program in which I have ever been introduced as you get to the heart of the program this quickly. I don't know if you knew my sufferings or not, but I assure you I won't be all night. I am reminded of that young boy whose mother wanted him to go and hear a professor speak. This professor was noted for speaking a long time. In the audience, most people would

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go to sleep while he would be speaking. When any of us would talk, he would sleep. This young boy had to not only be pleaded with but she started patting him a little bit with a switch. He was burning and seething. The professor at the college would notice and just look over the audience, maybe forty-five seconds, or more than a minute and he couldn't come up with anything. After a while he would say, "I can't think of nothing to talk about." The little boy would say, "Talk for about a minute and sit down." I may take a little more than a minute since it would be unfair to you to have that great introduction and I don't say anything. This is a great time to be alive and I appreciate the instructional purpose of the programs that you are having, trying to get people to understand that we have a great heritage. We have a great opportunity to do something despite the uncertainty of the times in which we live and despite the fact many people don't appreciate many of the things that happened to make the change that we have had. This is a challenging time to be alive, both for people who are in college and out of college. I thought a little bit about the times in which we live. You all are interested in where I have been and what I have been doing. I admit I have been into some things and I can put that into one sentence to sort of put a critique on it. Paul the Apostle in writing to Timothy said some words that seem to fit for what I have tried to do and what I am doing. First Timothy Chapter 1 Verse 12 says, "Timothy, I thank God for putting me into this ministry and sustaining me." I may make that the core of what I want to speak about tonight.

I wish I could speak to your satisfaction on the Birmingham Movement. The Birmingham Movement should mean much more than it does to most people. If we

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could use that as a taking off point to something better. If we talk about the Birmingham movement and not be inspired from what happened then, not when I was in it but because of the sacrifice of the people even down to the children who made as great a sacrifice as if they were soldiers on a foreign battlefield. That ought to challenge us today to go ahead and finish up the work. It should challenge us to look at our country, love it, and make sure it moves forward with this business of brotherhood and justice. I wish I could just talk about some of the beautiful things that happened in the movement and some of the terrible things. I know that you have had Diane Nash, one of the stalwart young ladies. If not for her and the Nashville movement, the freedom riders would have died on the ground in Birmingham; that is, there would have been no progress.

I wish I could take time and tell you about Robert Kennedy, the president's brother and the many activities and many conversations that I had with him, especially as it related to continuing the freedom rides. Maybe we can cover some of that in the question and answer period, and in demonstrations, seven years before sixty-two, we suffered so much. We caught a lot of deprivation. I often think of the song that the people used to sing, *Way Down Yonder By Myself, I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray*. Before I say anything more, I would like to release what happened after 9/11. Everybody knows what that is, don't you? That was the day when everyone needed to not call on the police but call on the Lord.

I am a person who believes that you can't just let things roll on. Things change because people change things. I must say to you that the world, if it is to be changed, it will be changed by people whom the world itself cannot change, so I hope I can

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challenge you in this great city where the rocket center is your foundational basis here. Leading with outer space, where we haven't conquered inner space yet. I would like to read this release, then we will say some words and sit down. I was in California and of course none of us could fly back so I had to stay in California for three extra days. In all of what has happened to me, I don't think I have seen anything as tragic as those planes flying into those tall buildings that represented the greatness of America, the wishes of America, the center of trade in the world. I tried to get about five minutes of sleep by turning the television off but I couldn't go to sleep just thinking about it. No one could look at that with any sensibility and not have some sort of feeling. Many people had a wrong feeling about it. Let me just read this. This is the reason I wrote an article in California for the paper. "Under no circumstance could any American with any degree of loyalty to humanity or America condone the inhuman and dastardly destruction of buildings, lives and property in New York and Washington DC. Our nation has indeed been partially humiliated by this terrorist attack. We hope and pray that it has also become more humbled before God. America responded in military and diplomatic strengths to those who destroyed so much property and so very many innocent lives. America will also now move with the same degree of arousal and determination to attack racism and injustice within, with the same and truly beneficial results to all segments and levels of American life. We are all Americans, hopefully loyal and loving Americans. However much we question and disagree with the disputed election of President Bush, we do truly urge all Americans to join one thousand and one percent in prayer for support of his effort to secure, lift the spirits, and encourage the lives of all

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Americans in this critical hour. God help us to come together and totally sacrifice together when we are not in crisis as we are now doing always together the things in unity of spirit as we are doing in this crucial hour. We saw everybody digging and pulling and helping and suffering and bleeding, and dying together. That's what Americanism ought to be about. I say this from the bottom of my heart and in the spirit of God who loves his own. Yes, in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., whom God sent to speak the spirit of nonviolence and unity to America and to the world. In this our day of violence, hatred and meanness, only Satan is the enemy of all mankind. All men are brothers and should act brotherly despite racial and ethnic distinction. God is love and in His Spirit, someday we will soon overcome the evils of this perilous moment. God bless America and God bless each one of us." That was the statement.

I was getting ready to go somewhere. I was actually running out the door when I heard that the judge that dismissed the sentence against the policeman who would not have been given anything but nine months anyway, if he was given a sentence at all, after killing this man. It was a minor charge. I thought of how the system can be so light on certain people and so heavy on others. I thought I should have something to say. I have lived long enough to know that if you say nothing and do nothing the life will mean nothing. I was about to run out but my secretary happened to have the radio on. When I heard that I couldn't believe it. Serving nine months for killing a man is nothing. If this was a poor man or a black man, nine years wouldn't have been enough. The following is what I wrote. "The not guilty verdict of the court for Officer Steven Roach who wantonly shot and killed Timothy Thomas, is typical of Cincinnati justice. You know

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where Cincinnati is, don't you? It is as far South as you can get being in the North, where the treatment of blacks by policemen is concerned. It is very close to rulings by Southern segregation judges who felt blacks had no rights that policemen had to respect. I am a living witness to that. This verdict, following a series of unnecessary killings of several blacks by policeman and numerous investigations by officials, can only mean that Cincinnati had been and still is stuck in the mud of racism and injustice. Right is right and wrong is wrong no matter who does it. This city, its prosecutors and its courts can never find any punishable wrong done by its police department where blacks and minorities are concerned. As painful and as hurtful as the decision to the morale of the black and poor community, we must continue to give proper respect to officers of the law, in spite of this decision and the long unholy record of injustice in this city. Let us hope in faith and nonviolence that the national tragedy of September 11th will humble America and Cincinnati, to look within our souls and eliminate racism, injustice and mistreatment of minorities, even as America now arms itself to root out terrorism in the world and establish the rule of law. Anything short of equal and exact justice in the same circumstance done to any individual, regardless of color or status, is very close to terror itself. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. God bless America and God bless Cincinnati and may the day speedily come when all men, regardless of position, stand equally before the Lord. They can enjoy freedom, justice and fair play."

I thought I should read that as a sort of taking off point here tonight, as we think about one or two lessons from the Civil Rights Movement that can be good for today's affairs. My friends, I am convinced that this is God's world no matter what. I believe

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that from the bottom of my heart. In fact, when Bull Conner was talking about me I said, "Mr. Conner, this is not your world! This is God's world." I quoted to him that the deeds to this world is written in the twenty-fourth Psalm where it reads, "The earth is the Lord's." I said, "Your name is no where around it." This is God's world. God loves all of His people. At sunder times, periodically, God moves in human history to change conditions in human lives. I am also convinced that God is The God, not a God, but "The God". There is only one you all know. He is the God of love and mercy, as most people love to say. He is also the God of justice, which most people don't say. It is found in Psalms 88:14. You may read it when you go home. It talks about God's throne. Psalms ninety-seven talks about it also. They both speak of how God's throne sits on two pillars. One of the pillars is justice and the other is righteousness. You see, whoever speaks and does not talk about justice, is not talking too much or rightly about Mr. God. He is a God of justice. We need in this day like in old times, the preachers, the prophets, the church and the leaders to thunder out the words, "let justice roll down like water and righteousness. We need that to be emphasized today.

No one can preach or teach about God unless one talks of justice, even from the prophets who said let justice roll down etc. and the longstanding weakness of the church. I am not going to ask how many people here belong to a church because I don't want to hear any untruths in here. The tabernacle, the mosque, in other words organized religion because organized religion, based on the spirit of God, is God's army. God and an army is a fighting instrument. Am I right? An army is trained to fight. Folk in the church should be disciplined to fight. Most folks in the church think that we are in a picnic and

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not a fight. God's movement is to overcome injustice and unrighteousness, whether it is in the government or in the streets. We don't emphasize this. We are supposed to teach, preach and talk that. No wonder Dr. Martin Luther King said the church is much more like a taillight than a head light on a car.

I am going to tell the story about this man who was running late for an appointment. You all were on time. You are to be commended. This man was driving his car to an instructional convention. He was running late because he was doing something. The crowd he was supposed to lead just went on without him. There were several carloads that went ahead. He was trying to hurry up when he realized he didn't have much gas. He rushed to the filling station and said to the man, "Fill it up real quick. Put some gas in here real quick." At that time they had just got this thing where you could put the gas and let it be running while you do something else, so the man was very nice. He tried to do a little courtesy, you know, wipe his windshield off and checking the air in his tires. He was not concerned about that though. He wanted his gas so he could just go because he was already late. After awhile he told the guy, "Look fellow, I am late. Hurry up and put the gas in. Did you see some folks in about ten cars go along here a few minutes ago?" The man said, "Yes". He said, "Well hurry up because I am leading those folks.

In the affairs of the world, the church is leading those folks, but say nothing. Indeed the letter from the Birmingham jail was written in response to high officials, not just ordinary preachers, but bishops and rabbis who talked with the conscience of God. I guess that is what they thought. We were put in jail. Police began to beat us. They

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commended the police. They suggested that we should just be quiet. Isn't that the voice now of evil when people protest? Isn't it the same thing? The system has changed since the time when God said to Moses, go down and tell Pharaoh. You should read Genesis. The first Civil Rights Conference was called, not in Chicago, as people think, but in a midnight desert between God and Moses. There were only two of them there around the burning bush. It was right there where God said some things that I think we would refresh ourselves and remind ourselves and really do better as we listen again. Read it again when you go home. God did a strange thing on September 11th to get our attention. He just set a bush afire. Well maybe if we let him set bushes afire instead of setting buildings afire, we would do better. He said, "Moses I am the God". God always makes it plain that he is the only one. Whatever name you call him he is the God of your problem. You have to think of God with antiquity in your mind. Did I not say that right or what? I thought I was doing something wrong. God said, "I am the God". That's not my thought though. God said, "I have seen the afflictions of my people". That's where we get this thing from that we say in church "God sees". Let's believe that. I have heard their groans and I have come down to deliver them". Our God is a God of deliverance from whatever will hold us down or back. God says, "I see, I know and I am here". He said another word that too many preachers leave out. God did not come. He said to Moses, "I will send you to Pharaoh. I will tell you what to tell him". God is so big and powerful. He can tell you what he is going to do different from what he is sending you to do. He said, "I am going to harden Pharaoh's heart but you still do your job". I think that is where we miss the point. This is a sermon. I am a preacher and it may sound like

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I am preaching. The church and people always have excuses. They're always saying what they can't do. What can you do? God basically said to Moses, "Well who made your mouth since you think you can't talk. To help you out I will send your brother with you but Moses you are responsible." Our job is to go to Pharaoh. Pharaoh has a voice. This might be a good thought to remember. The voice of Pharaoh then, was not much different from the voice of Pharaoh now. Pharaoh is the system no matter who is in it, whether they are black or white.

Black folks have been in the system most times. We are a little involved in it now. If we aren't careful, we won't have to be in it long before we are like the system. When Moses went down to Pharaoh, he was nervous. "Mr. Pharaoh, ugh, I am here." Pharaoh said, "What's your name? God told Moses to say, "Tell him *I am*". Moses had never heard that. One preacher was philosophizing. This preacher felt Moses went down to Pharaoh and said, "Well God said let his people go. *I am* is my God." Some people call this spiritual imagination. He said Pharaoh said, "*I am*? Who is the Lord that I should obey? In allegiance, I am that I am." Moses went back and told God, "Well Pharaoh said he is down here." God said, "That's all right. Go back and tell him *I am that I am*...my last and first name is the same and my message is still let my people go."

This system has a nice way of doing it. We don't say we are not going to let them go. The system says we will let them go but we are always enslaving them and causing them to get behind even more. If you don't understand what I mean, Martin Luther King and I were struggling in the South. There are more poor people and they're poorer now than they were then and we have more money, more everything. We are wasting it up in

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this country. God is going to help us get rid of some of it because we have to buy some friends with free food to help us. You can be sure your sins will find you out. To show you that this hasn't changed, when Christ Jesus was risen, he called the disciples. Read the last chapter of John. Jesus told the disciples, "Peace be unto to you. As My father has sent me, even so, I send you." Our job is to still speak to Pharaoh, to the system and the injustices in the system. Do you all agree with that? If you don't, it is true. The church must speak out. If you could see the Civil Right film, I could have brought that film and wouldn't have to say anything. I have three copies.

We would have fighting and suffering and Howard K. Smith, this is in 1961, a long time ago. White people were saying what they wanted to say. The judges and the bishops were talking. The Martin Luther King letter from the Birmingham jail was responding and so forth. You would have been surprised. You would have almost thought it was slavery time. The blacks were discussing their suffering and sacrifices. We called ourselves Negroes then. Negroes have changed. We call ourselves some of everything now. King led us to the Birmingham jail with an answer to that defense. The church does not speak. We compromise on things. We accept things. The history of the church says that money has had a large effect on the church. Anything money can buy, someone else can sell for a little more money. People should speak the truth. The Lord told us to speak the truth. They tell me if we ever practice speaking the truth, you won't have to remember the last lie that you told. The truth is just the truth you know.

I have a little more written down here if you can take it. Without justice, there would be no brotherhood ever. There would be no beloved community. In the south,

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segregation at one time, you wouldn't believe this was more sacred than going to heaven. The Ku Klux Klan, the mob were allied with the rulers, the system. The system is amazing. It is just like *Old Man River*. Don't say nothing, just keep rolling along. I tell many black people it is our responsibility to challenge this system. We must remember, if we don't win the war and just win a battle and think you have won the war, then you have lost. We must come together and keep pushing for what is wrong. Injustice. I still say like I said fifty years ago, "Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide and ball teams don't strike themselves out. You have to put it out." If we are going to win the battle for justice, freedom, and righteousness in America, we will have to stand up for something or we will fall for everything. I ask the question, "Who is brave enough in the land of the free and the home of the brave to call for freedom or to stand up for freedom? I am speaking to the young people. What kind of world do you want? Do you want to continue to live in a world that was oppressive, where people say that they are praying? Even Abraham Lincoln said back then, "How can a man rest his living from the eyebrows and back of another person and call on a righteous God to sustain him". In the civil war you have to come to the conclusion that even if the war is terrible until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be replaced and drawn by the sword. Even so, it must be said as David said two thousand years ago, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous all together." I hope that the colleges are training young people. We have been training them to become a part of the system and become just like the system.

Some of my people were once slaves. Some people hate the word slavery because they don't like to think they have been in slavery, but they have. When you rise a little

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bit up to a certain point, you have to reach back and help those who are still behind. Justice calls for people who rise in it all, to remember where you came from. People that don't remember where they came from will not get too far ahead. Segregation was so important. I can just put this in here now so you won't forget. If Diane Nash had not been in Nashville encouraging the students, as I said earlier, the freedom rides would have died on the ground in Birmingham. That is, they could not have gotten out. But she called me and said, "Imagine this. After all of the violence and other things, the first time I saw a human skull, they hit him with an iron pipe and his skull was lying open. You would not believe it. Birmingham was terrible. They intended to give this man to the Klan that night. It is amazing how far some people will go, claiming righteousness. I better tell this. I have seen so many things. I thank God for this. I don't let anything I see or hear keep me from being what I think I ought to be and do. Ordered and directed from above before we got here. We should try to relate to that. On the day that the freedom riders were beaten up, here comes a young black boy, all beaten up. They came to get me. By the time I got out there, two or three more had come. Then here comes this white man with his skull out. It was a pitiful sight. It was as bad as it was on September the 11th, but in a small way because you had to have empathy.

You had to have evidence. It was around one thirty or two o'clock when we sent him to Jefferson Hospital. I told him not to try to catch a cab to come back. It was a dime then. I told him to call me when he was ready and we would come back to get him. I thank God for using me. We were afraid but so concerned to make sure of this. I had people around me that I could send to the hospital. That night something said to me,

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“Why don’t you go”. Two fellows said they would go”. I said, “I think I will go tonight. They told me to stay there and they would go but I told them I wanted to ride tonight. I was on the driver’s side. The people were still marching around the church as if they knew each other, so this man had this other fellow’s car. There were three wheelers and two squad cars. We came out and got in the car. We pulled off slowly. When we started off, they started off also. I said to the driver, “Be careful. Don’t drive over eleven miles per hour. Nobody is going to get arrested for speeding tonight”. We went from 20th Street going from South to North. There is a viaduct where you had to go about six blocks to get off, up and on to the North side. They followed us slowly until we got about a block on the viaduct where you could not turn off or get off. A policeman on a three-wheeler came right up to the driver’s side and said, “Where are you going boy?” The fellow said, “I am going back over to Reverend Shuttlesworth’s house”. The policeman said, “Yeah, let me see your license”. It was the usual. The police said, “Well let me see your registration?” The fellow said, “Well I am driving so and so’s car”. The police said, “Oh, a stolen car!” I knew right then it was going to be hell to pay. I was so glad I was there. I said to myself, “Thank you Jesus that I came”. Has there ever been a time when you just thanked God for who you are? I knew I had to say something. The police said to him, “You mean to tell me you have a stolen car?” I thought I had better say something then. I was sitting on the passenger side. I said, “Officer you have understanding enough to know that this man would not get a stolen car to come over to the hospital to get James Peck. He said, “Who in the hell are you?” I said, “You don’t like to know me but you have to know me. I am Fred Shuttlesworth and tonight you all

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will not do what you intend to do. We won't have that here tonight. He is going back over to my house". The policeman said, "Who the hell you say you was? I am saying this only because the policeman said this. I said, " I am Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and you know it". The policeman had this thing open and I was listening to the people down at the station and he was also. He said, "Oh, you are Shuttlesworth?" I said, "Yes I am". He said over the speaker, "Hey so and so, Shuttlesworth is with us. The person he was talking to said, "Who, you said?" The police officer repeated, "Shuttlesworth!" The man on the radio said, "Aww hell! Let him go!" I said, "Thank God!" I was in a place where I could speak out and say who I was. My "am-ness" helped that situation. I am going to make this part of a long story short if I can. I feel better now than I did when I began to talk. I thought it was all over. They finally left out from there. .

The very next morning when I was getting ready to go out of town, along came a nice lady's voice saying, "Brother Shuttlesworth, this is Diane Nash". She had not yet married as of then. She continued, "The students in Nashville have decided that we can no longer let violence stop the rights of people". I said, "Young lady, do you understand what is happening around here? Do you know someone may yet be killed here?" She said, "Oh yes, but I want to inform you that the students have made a decision". In my heart, while I was trying to talk nice to her, I am saying, "Thank God!" Have you ever been talking to someone and praying at the same time? I said, "Thank you God for courage". She said, "In fact a load are already on the way". I said call your governor and police and send them some telegrams". At that time, any way that they could get you for an infraction of the law they would do it. I told her we better develop a little signal

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because if you would call my house long distance, at that time, Bill Conner, and all of them would be listening to everything. When I would pick up the phone long distance, I could hear the police talking to each other. One time, I went to make a call and I heard someone say, "That's Shuttlesworth". Don't be so excited. You would be amazed what your country can do. I have gotten as many as fifty telephone calls in one night. Sometimes we would pick up the phone and no one would say anything. One time the telephone rang and I picked it up. I said, "Hello". No one said anything. I put it down and picked it back up again. I took it off the hook. Guess what? The phone rang off the hook. Another time I picked it up. Someone said, "Hello, Fire Department, Hello Police Department. Hello Hospital". Within ten minutes all of them ganged at my house. I have been through a storm, but thanks be to God.

The problem is not so much about what happens to you. I have discovered that this God we talk about has always been a God of deliverance. His automobile is the only automobile I know that does not have any reverse gears. God's car is not supposed to back up. He proved that at the Red Sea. Nothing but water on either side and yet God said, "Go ahead. Forward march" There is no mountain or no water that can stop God. Forward march. They walked across on dry land. It took faith to believe that. So they went on across. I believe the same about Pharaoh's army. They were drowned in the Red Sea. The world says, "If you can do it, then we can too", but you can't if God is in it. He does what he wants to do and nobody can stop him. How much more time do I have? I am just getting started.

The Civil Rights Movement in Alabama

Alabama A&M University

Let's do some things here. Thank God for the creative fifties and sixties. As Stevenson said when he was running against Eisenhower, he said, "America is great because America is good. I liked to hear him orate. He was the best speaker. Eisenhower couldn't talk but he could. He continued to say, "When America ceases to be good, it ceases to be great". It became me, Martin and others led by black folk to challenge this system. We had to ask America, "How good is God's goodness?" I love that song. I don't care what people say about me because I am an American. They used to call me communist, they'd call me black. I said, "Well no, I am too American black to be Russian Red." You can call me what you want but I am like Abraham Lincoln, calling a cow's tail a leg does not make it a leg. I like when we sing that song *America, America God shed his grace on you and crowned your good*. You need to question how good is his goodness. You must do it because that is a necessity. There are too many people that are terrorized. But I'll try to get to that a little more quicker so you can ask me some questions. We must live in a society that is affluent to decide whether you are going to pay your rent or doctor bill. This is my prayer for America. I hope you will pray for it too. Bush didn't win the election fully, that's all right, we didn't disagree and I can love you right on. Half of that stuff we can change. God bless you and God sanctify you and keep you strong and thank you for allowing me to come.

TAPE 5 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS INAUDIBLE