

November 13, 1964

Miss Edith Black  
109 Lorraine Ave.  
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Dear Edie:

Sorry to be answering this so late, but the Educational Institute and the Freedom Vote intervened and my correspondence piled up hugely. I hope this reaches you in ~~xxxx~~ time to be of some use.

One of the reasons I didn't answer right away is that I wanted to be fair and to find out from impartial sources about a local group formed in the aftermath of the church burnings called the Committee on Concern. It is a group of Miss. Baptists, Methodists and Catholics, and what have you, although there is some indication that there may be some Northern Quakers at the root of it. I'M sorry, but I really couldn't find anyone who had any real knowledge about the group and a detached perspective, i.e. either they were the idiots themselves or they didn't know anything. Please take my advice in that light, because I have to judge the thing upon my superficial impressions, their public utterances, and some pretty vitriolic opinions of Ed King, who does know quite a bit about the churches in Miss.

I would say please don't give to the Committee on Concern. They published a brochure which, sadly, stank. It is full of hypocrisy, lovely pictures, vague references to "brotherhood", and nothing specific about their plans. (also Bible quotations which are great, but whose explaining commentary show that the brochure-makers didn't interpret the passages the same way I would). Furthermore, I learned second-hand that their application blank has nothing on it which indicates that the group intends to BUILD churches. The references are strictly to altar furnishings, robes, candles, hymnbooks, etc. This would indicate that not only is the intent limited to the Old South ~~at~~ conception of helping out our niggers, but that it is limited in scope. In addition I have heard some grumbling from Negro ministers who were involved in the planning (but weren't), that the money is to be allocated strictly in their terms, in their good time, and to their people. As I say, I was afraid to make that judgement on little bits and pieces of information and hearsay, and then to write and tell it to you, but that was the best I could do. If your people don't want to give to us, encourage them to give to the National Council of Churches. I don't know that they have a regular program, but they have been talking of one—held up while they looked over the Committee on Concern—and they have extensive contacts with the Negro churches of this state, and they could put it to good use. Also, it is possible that in their opinion the Committee on Concern is a good outfit—they have better information than I, and I think we can trust them to sort out the master-slave implications from the gush—and they might tell you to give to the Committee. For whatever reason, I think they could help you more than I. Again, I'm sorry I delayed writing to you so long.