

From Major J. Jones

[November 1954]
Boston, Mass.

Jones, King's classmate at Boston University, praises King's "Recommendations," commenting specifically on his explanation of pastoral authority and the plan to centralize Dexter's treasury.¹

1. Major J. Jones (1919-) received his A.B. from Atlanta's Clark College in 1941, his B.D. from Gammon Theological Seminary in 1944, his S.T.M. from Oberlin Theological Seminary in 1950, and his Th.D. from Boston University in 1957. An ordained minister in the Methodist church, Jones served as a pastor and a district superintendent in eastern Tennessee from 1956 to 1967. He served on the General Board of Education of the Methodist church; and the boards of directors of the Committee of Southern Churchmen and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From 1967 to 1985, Jones was president of Gammon Theological Seminary. Since then he has been chaplain of the Atlanta University Center. His publications include *Black Awareness: A Theology of Hope* (1971) and *Christian Ethics for Black Theology* (1974).

Dear Martin,

Nov
1954

Just a line to say how much I do appreciate your sending me your most interesting "Recommendations to the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church" which I read with much interest; as you had asked me, when I got the time, to say what I thought of them. After reading them over I do not feel that there anything I could say that you did not say in the act of speaking to the over all needs of the church. I feel that you did a very good job in pointing out the relationship which should exist between the pastor and the people of the church. Likewise I would have no questions to raise about methodology, which point you covered very well. I think some of the plans which you gave were very good, and I say some to speak of those which were new and which I am sure were new to the church. I put of this in the first section of the paper as it has to do with my reading and with what I thought after having read, with interest, the recommendations.

Now let me say this in the way of a suggestion which may or may not add anything to the overall recommendations of the church, but which would give more unity to the purpose for it all, and which will act as some sort of aims and objectives for the church at large. I find that when we organize any large group of people into many competing groups we have to be careful not to make each group the end unto itself; each forgetting the whole. I feel that you could have offset a lot of this by stating in the outset a gorup of aims and objective around which all of the other things which you said could have been integrated, not to say they are not implicit in each of the things which you mentioned. But this would have given a concept of the nature of the church as it becomes relative for this particular church. You can see that there are some people who want to know what the church's purpose is as it might be spelled out in concrete policy or aim. These aims and objective could have caught up in a collective statement what you said in each of the separate things which relate to each of the recommandations.

Now I was interested in another aspect of the recommendations, and that was the matter of the Unified Budget plan, and also the Central Treasury. In many cases the central treasury has made for less organizational ambition. I once tried a method like the bank, where each club or organization would hold its money in a central treasury, presenting a chech or draft as needed, and with the church unable to use the money only in a state of crises voted by the board. I feel that your way is better if it works with the people and will get activities desired without people, as groups having controll of Monies.

I am planning to come home for Xmas and will be staying at Ra. o668, or 1003 Palmetto, I do hope that I have the chance to see you before I come back here. There is no other news other than that Rev. Gibson's wife died.²

Very truly yours,

[signed]

Major

2. Jones refers to W. Marvin Gibson, pastor of Cambridge's Union Baptist Church, where King had preached the previous summer.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

1 Nov 1954 {Give my regards to the wife and I do hope I will be able to see the two of you when I come home to talk some more about this most interesting paper-}

TALS. MLKP-MBU: Box 117.