

Central Methodist Church
YALE, MICHIGAN
Rev. Athanasius P. Rickard, Minister

April 5, 1941

Reverend Owen A. Knox, Minister,
Bethlehem Methodist Church,
Mack and Lemay Avenue,
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Brother Knox:

Recently I have been receiving communications, some by special delivery, from the CIVIL RIGHTS FEDERATION, of which you are named as President. I do not know enough about the Federation to comment upon its purpose other than what one can generally suppose or conclude from the list of Organizations given on the left of the stationery on which the communications are written and from what I have heard or observed in other ways. I have found, upon enquiry, that not all of the ministers of the Detroit Conference receive these communications, and I fail to understand why a few should be selected, unless it be that you understand these are vitally interested in the Federation.

As a minister of the Christian Church, I am vitally interested in Civil Rights, and seek to practice that in my daily living. I am in agreement with Mr. Wesley who states that Methodists should "think and let think."

Recently we had a visit to our city of a certain man named Reverend Janis Laupmanis - who, I am sure you must know something because of the action of our bishop in having him appear in our churches - and I have concluded from what he said in our pulpit and from my conversation with him in my house that the COMMUNIST PARTY has a philosophy which is definitely anti-Christian. I notice the COMMUNIST PARTY is listed among those Organizations in Michigan.

I do not know you personally. I did hear you make a speech over the radio some time ago in which you made a reply to Mr. Gerald K. Smith who had accused you of something or other, and I noted that your argument was Christian and convincing, and I agreed with your viewpoint. However, I cannot give my consent to cooperate in any Federation which has as one of its members a Party which is anti-Christian, and, until such time as this party is removed from its membership, I do not wish to cause you to feel by my acceptance of those communications that I am in any way working for it, because I am not. I believe the other organizations named are all, at least, nominally Christian. Please do not think of me as being unkind or uncharitable in this matter; I have every respect for you, personally, and pray with you, that the labor and manufacturer alike will find somewhere Christian leaders.

Sincerely,

Athanasius P. Rickard,

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