

To Walter R. Chivers

5 November 1960
[Atlanta, Ga.]

In a 4 October letter, King's Morehouse sociology professor recommended that he co-sponsor a Planned Parenthood study on contraception. Chivers, who had volunteered with the organization for sixteen years, vouched "for it's integrity, honesty, and complete lack of racial prejudice." In the letter below, King agrees to become a member of the sponsoring committee.¹

1. The study was published several years later (Lee Rainwater, *Family Design: Marital Sexuality, Family Size, and Contraception* [Chicago: Aldine, 1965]). The birth control pill was introduced in the United States in 1960.

5 Nov Mr. Walter R. Chivers
1960 Morehouse College
 Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Professor Chivers:

Please forgive me for being so tardy in my reply to your letter of October 4.² Several unforeseen circumstances, including an eight-day sojourn in Georgia jails, account for the delay.

After giving the matter serious consideration, I am happy to say that it will be possible for me to serve on the sponsoring committee of the new study being made by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. I must say that the decision was based on your high recommendation of this agency. Of course, I have always been deeply interested in and sympathetic with the total work of the Planned Parenthood Federation so you may feel free to write Miss Snyder concerning my acceptance.³

I will look forward to receiving additional information as time goes on.

Very sincerely yours,
Martin Luther King, Jr.

MLK.m

TLc. MLKP-MBU: Box 34.

2. After receiving no response to his initial letter, Chivers sent King a reminder on 2 November.

3. After receiving a copy of this letter from Chivers, Margaret Snyder of Planned Parenthood expressed her appreciation for King's support (Snyder to King, 14 November 1960). In a 1957 advice column in *Ebony*, King wrote that he did "not think it is correct to argue that birth control is sinful" and called "birth control rationally and morally justifiable" (King, "Advice for Living," December 1957, in *Papers* 4:326).