

August 9, 1961

Southern Trustees  
Make King Statement

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (BP)--In the opinion of a pastor here, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has apologized for permitting Martin Luther King to appear on the seminary lecture platform.

The statement from the seminary's trustee executive committee was one of several developments on the matter. Others were:

1. The president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention asked the affiliated churches not to withhold contributions from Southern Seminary as eight churches have already done.

2. The pastor of a Nashville, Tenn., church said a letter came to the church with information about the action to boycott Southern Seminary. The sender identified himself as a lay leader in one of these churches. He asked what action the Nashville church had taken on the matter.

The reply was to be sent to the sender or to Baptist Laymen of Alabama, a pro-segregation group having no tie with the Southern Baptist Convention or the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

3. A. Hamilton Reid, Montgomery, executive secretary of Alabama convention, said the seminary statement "will do much to relieve the resentment toward that seminary in many churches in Alabama."

Adopted by the executive committee of Southern trustees, the statement said:

"Realizing that the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention and that it must serve the entire denomination in which varying opinions exist, the executive committee of the board of trustees together with President Duke K. McCall wishes to express regret for any offense caused by the recent visit of The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to the campus of the seminary."

"We trust that you will agree with us that the bonds of Christian fellowship are deep enough and strong enough to endure the strain of pronounced differences of opinion. You may be assured of our primary desire to place the advancement of the cause of Christ through our beloved denomination above any force which might attempt to divide us," a companion letter from the chairman of the executive committee of trustees said. This letter came from Ernest L. Honts, Norfolk, Va.

King and several other persons prominent in national and Baptist life were invited to the Gay Lecture Series platform. Others were Howard E. Butt Jr., millionaire Baptist lay evangelist of Corpus Christi, Tex., and former SBC president and U. S. State Department official Brook Hays of Washington.

The seminary statement was termed "an apology" by J. R. White, pastor of Montgomery's First Baptist Church and a member of the trustee executive committee.

White said the statement "expresses the sincere regret of the trustees together with President Duke K. McCall. Unfortunately, history is irreversible. If we could change the past, we would, but that is impossible. We do regret the mistake that was made."

White went on: "Steps have been taken to help prevent the recurrence of this kind of error."

Howard M. Reaves of Mobile, pastor of its First Baptist Church, appealed for no other Baptist churches to boycott the seminary. Such action "is an extreme punitive action, ...equivalent to voting to kill the seminary, ... (which) may seriously weaken the Cooperative Program and thus endanger the entire educational, evangelistic and missionary program of our denomination."

He presides over the Alabama convention, with which the eight churches are affiliated.

In an editorial in the Alabama Baptist, Editor Leon Macon of Birmingham also appealed to churches not to withhold funds from the seminary. It was not known whether the eight churches would rescind their actions in light of the seminary statement and the appeals of Reaves and Macon.

Executive Secretary Reid had this comment on the Louisville statement:

"I think the resolution...in which they express regrets for the offense caused by the recent visit of The Rev. Martin Luther King to the campus will do much to relieve the resentment toward that seminary in many churches in Alabama.

"Dr. King began his crusade (over racial integration) in Alabama, and the people of this state feel they are quite well-acquainted with his motives and methods."

King, a Baptist minister, has lived in Montgomery and Atlanta.

Reid felt the statement from Southern Seminary "will satisfy our people."

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Call Informs Church  
Of Juvenile Work

(8-6-61)

ATLANTA (BP)--At 8:30 one Sunday evening, C. E. Scarborough of Atlanta picked up the telephone in his living room according to pre-arranged schedule.

At the other end of the line was the entire congregation of Kennett Baptist Church in Burlington, N. C.

Growing interest in juvenile rehabilitation had prompted the Burlington church to invite Scarborough, juvenile rehabilitation worker in Atlanta, to discuss his work with them.

"Just let us ask you questions," they said, and began to shoot questions at Scarborough across almost 400 miles. His answers were amplified so that all could hear.

"Our work is church-centered," said Scarborough. The program which he directs in Atlanta is one of 32 where juvenile rehabilitation workers are employed. In this way a relationship is established with the juvenile courts, and sponsors from Southern Baptist churches are secured for offending youths.

The group asked about the nature of Scarborough's work, his relationship to the courts, to the churches and to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

But the main thing the Kennett congregation wanted to know was, "What can the local church do to help deal with the juvenile problem; what can our church do to meet the need in Burlington?"

"Set up a rehabilitation committee in the church; be concerned," Scarborough told the Burlington congregation. "Try to rescue the youth before he gets involved with the courts, and have a system of voluntary Christian sponsorship by church members."

He indicated voluntary city programs are in progress in many cities where Southern Baptists do not employ juvenile workers.

The juvenile rehabilitation worker serves as liaison between the court, the child and the church. Working through the churches, the juvenile worker recruits and trains Christian sponsors to work with delinquents and their families, seeking to enlist them in church activities.

At the end of the question-and-answer session via 'phone, Charles McMillan, pastor of the Burlington church, said, "We hope to do more in this area than has been done before in Burlington."

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