

AUG 18 1961

Attention: All Editors
The Oklahoma County Resolution
By H. H. Hobbs, President
Southern Baptist Convention

It is not my intention to be drawn into an extended discussion through the press regarding the Oklahoma County Pastors' Conference resolution. But I believe that the constituents of the Southern Baptist Convention are entitled to this one statement for clarification of certain elements of the situation.

I was in the Middle East when the Bible Conference was held in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Therefore, it follows that I did not hear the messages under dispute. Following the conference the disturbance became so widespread over the state that a meeting of the Oklahoma County Pastors' Conference was held in Oklahoma City, attended by a number of highly-regarded pastors from other parts of the state, and who were present at the Shawnee Bible Conference, along with a number of Oklahoma City pastors who were also present at the Bible conference. Out of this pastors conference came a committee appointed to draw up a resolution embodying the sense of the meeting.

Upon my return, the pastors conference at its regular meeting heard and adopted the resolution. It was adopted as a two-fold action. One was to be a general resolution to be sent to the various seminary presidents calling on the administrations of all of our seminaries to do certain things.

A copy was to be sent to the president of Oklahoma Baptist University. The other was to be a resolution presented to Dr. Duke K. McCall, and through him to the trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in which a specific name and case were to be cited. This was to be presented personally to Dr. McCall by a special committee appointed for this purpose. By common consent it was agreed that it would not be presented to him until the last day of his week of preaching at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly, lest it result in hindering his spiritual ministry at this Oklahoma Baptist encampment.

Unfortunately through a misunderstanding the story was released to the Baptist Press, not the copy of the resolution including the name of Dr. Dale Moody. My own name was included in the news release without my knowledge or consent.

As a local pastor I voted for the resolution. One report says that I was a "signer" of the resolution. I signed nothing. To my deep regret the title of the office to which you elected me was attached to my name as though I acted in that capacity. I did not so construe my action, or else I should have refrained from doing so.

Since I was not present at the Shawnee meetings I was not then, neither am I now, in position to bring personal charges against Dr. Moody. I did not then, nor do I now make such charges.

I voted to submit charges brought by reputable men, who did hear him, to the administration of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This is the proper channel through which such matters should go. I did not create the situation, nor did I have any part in developing it. I returned from the Middle East to find a situation. So widespread a disturbance should not be ignored.

It is only fair to Dr. Moody that the matter be cleared up through orderly procedure. He should be heard and judged, not in the light either of popular approval or condemnation, but in the light of the facts and of the abstract of principles of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a document which he signed upon becoming a professor in that institution. And this procedure should be set up by the board of trustees of that seminary.

Obviously certain elements in the resolution are not regarded as tests of fellowship within the broad reaches of the Southern Baptist Convention. These also should be weighed not on the basis of popular approval or disapproval, but in the scales of the abstract of principles.

If Dr. Moody is found guilty as charged on any or all of these matters, certainly this should be determined. If it was only a matter of improper communication of his ideas, that, too, should be known. If he is innocent, he should be exonerated. And he should be considered innocent unless and until proven otherwise.

(more)

This and other incidents of recent date only serve to point up the vital place of our seminaries in the life of our denomination. They are at its very heart. This is why our people should ever be sensitive about their work. If a man gets a cramp in his leg muscle, he may just go limping along until nature or a little liniment relieves the situation. If he gets a murmur in his heart, it is time for him and others to get concerned.

No "murmur" in the life of our seminaries should be ignored. But it should be treated by those who are charged with their welfare. And those who are responsible should ever be alert, whether it be professor, administrator, or trustee.

Our seminaries are second to none in their excellence and fidelity. They are not perfect, but they are pressing on toward the mark of the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, they are worthy of our confidence and support, prayerful, personal, and financial.

I leave it to Dr. Duke K. McCall to report on his personal survey made at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary following the Redbook report. It is most encouraging. But our seminaries must be kept pure and above suspicion. Any suspected deviation from their doctrinal moorings should through the proper channels be dealt with posthaste. I am sure that this shall be the case.

In the meantime let us get on with our God-given task of world missions and evangelism. No matter how sound our faith, it will have little meaning unless we share it with a lost world.