

April 4, 1959

Southern Seminary Trustees Rescind
Dismissal Action; Request Resignation

By C. R. Daley

LOUISVILLE--(BP)--The Southern Seminary trustees, in an extraordinary session, Mar. 30-31, lasting 10½ hours, rescinded the dismissal action of June 12, 1958, against 12 professors and respectfully requested their resignation. The unprecedented meeting included in addition to the trustees, the Southern Baptist Convention committee which has been working since last December to heal the breach, the dismissed faculty, the present seminary faculty, staff, and administration.

Louie D. Newton, chairman of the SBC committee, presided at the meeting which opened with a dinner at 6 p.m. The purpose of the meeting according to Newton was, "to save the heart and ministry of Southern Seminary." The actual proceedings began about 7:30 p.m. and lasted until 4:30 the next morning.

Late in the meeting during a recess of the conference, the trustees met and passed the resolutions setting aside the dismissal action and requesting resignations. In the resolutions the trustees expressed the desire to repair the damage done to the former faculty members and the seminary, admitted errors in the procedures of last June, and expressed regret for these errors. They voiced appreciation for the SBC committee's help and the present faculty, and also assured former faculty members of their love of them.

Following the announcement to the reconvened conference, of the trustees' action, the former faculty members asked for time to study the resolution.

The dismissed professors met with the trustees again at 10 a.m. and discussed at length the wording of the trustees' resolutions. The 12 agreed to resign individually effective Mar. 31, 1958 but insisted that they did not consider this the problem of the seminary and were willing to follow the suggestion only for the sake of trying to help save the institution they loved.

President Duke K. McCall; Wade H. Bryant, chairman of the trustees; Heber F. Peacock, representative of the dismissed professors and Hugh R. Peterson, representative of the present faculty, answered questions on the late developments in a press conference following the meeting.

Peacock said the dismissed professors saw no essential difference in being dismissed and being asked to resign. He insisted that reconciliation was not the problem since they were already personally reconciled to all concerned. He also made it clear that none of the dismissed men could return because they considered the problem to be "abuse of administrative authority by President McCall" and "we feel that the problem has not been solved in any sense."

In a later statement issued by the 12 professors they explained their refusal to agree with the trustees and McCall as both "resistance to capitulation seeking to masquerade as reconciliation" and as rejection of "compromise with wrong doing." They said the rescission of the dismissal of June 12, 1958 appeared to them to be "an ostensible effort to escape criticism of the dismissal action."

McCall agreed with Peacock in the matter of personal reconciliation. He said, "We are not enemies fighting; we are brethren, we do not agree." The president did not agree, however, with Peacock on definition of the problem. To the president the problem has been the rebellion by the professors to the duly-constituted administrative structure and bloc action in resistance to efforts to settle the problems. In a later statement McCall said his hope for this meeting had been revived by the acceptance of individual professors to the invitation to attend the meeting but he became discouraged again when bloc action became evident in statements issued for the group by one spokesman.

McCall summed up the differences as those "between an administrator who has a responsibility he must discharge and faculty members who do not want to operate in a situation in which someone carries responsibility for decisions as an administrative officer.

"My problem is not one of personal differences but of bloc action which creates an intolerable pressure for any administrator. I can live with any one of the men but I can't live with the bloc."

Bryant, trustee chairman, said the meeting had finalized the trustees' position with the 12 professors. He said the majority of the trustees had not changed their minds on the rightness of their actions in releasing the faculty members but only on the matter of their procedure. The trustees admitted errors in their decision and rescinded their action in order to correct these errors, according to Bryant.

When asked about the next step to maintain accreditation with the American Association of Theological Schools, Bryant gave assurance of continuing effort in this direction. He said the trustees had a mind to restudy administration and the structure of the seminary for possible improvement as one of the several efforts to maintain a seminary meeting more than the minimum requirements for accreditation.

All parties concerned expressed the belief and hope that this was the end of the long-simmering controversy.

After leaving Louisville, the Southern Baptist Convention committee headed by Newton issued a statement. It contained an expression of appreciation to the present faculty members. This statement presented to the conference expressed a warm spirit of conciliation on the part of the present faculty toward all parties concerned in the serious situation and a belief that the problem could be solved and the damage repaired.

The SBC committee also thanked the trustees for following their request that the dismissal action be rescinded. The SBC committee earlier had asked the trustees to rescind the action of June 12.

The trustees were further urged by the SBC group to restudy the present structure of faculty-administration-trustee relations in view of improvement and better relations in the future and to work for the securing of a dean for the theological faculty. The SBC committee also revealed plans for a final meeting on Apr. 20, to prepare a report to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE
TO ADVISE WITH SOUTHERN SEMINARY BOARD

In estimating the joint conference of our committee with the trustees, the present faculty, and the twelve dismissed professors of Southern Seminary, March 30-31, we would:

First express our appreciation for the discerning and deeply Christian statement, unanimously adopted as presented by the present faculty. This statement deserves continuing study and action by the trustees.

Second, we would express appreciation for the action of the trustees, in an interval during the joint conference, adopting our suggestions in conference with them on March 5, to rescind their action of June 12, 1958, dismissing the thirteen professors -- an action which the trustees admit violated their own rule of procedure.

Third, we would express the earnest hope that the trustees will immediately restudy and revise the structure of trustee---administration---faculty relationships, including clearly defined provisions for a Dean of the School of Theology, who would also serve as Dean of the combined faculty. This revision of procedures, we believe, will contribute to the solution of present difficulty and open the way to sound and effective relationships in the future.

Fourth, we repeat our concern that everything be done by the trustees, short of compromising our Christian and Baptist convictions, to maintain accreditation of the seminary.

Fifth, our committee will meet April 20 to prepare our final report to the trustees and the Executive Committee of the convention.

Atlanta
April 1, 1959

Louie D. Newton, Chairman
J. D. Grey
J. W. Storer
C. C. Warren

Robert G. Lee, a member of the committee, was in Europe and couldn't be present. Brooks Hays, also a member was in South America.

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STATEMENT OF THE JOINT FACULTY SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The following statement was unanimously approved by the Joint Faculty at a call d meeting March 19, 1959.

The Faculty expresses its gratitude for this the first opportunity that all of the members of all of the groups involved in the present Seminary controversy have had to meet together in discussion. It is the earnest prayer and heart-felt desire of each member of the Faculty that something decisive and constructive may be done in the joint meeting of the several groups on March 30, 1959, to effect a genuine reconciliation between all the parties concerned.

We are deeply conscious of the wide-spread damage to the twelve dismissed professors, to the remaining members of the Faculty, to the president of the Seminary, to the Board of Trustees, to the institution itself, to the denomination, and to the cause of Christ around the world that has stemmed from the present controversy. At the same time, we are genuinely grateful for the decisive progress that has been made by the Faculty during the present session in such matters as: agreement as to candidates for addition to the Faculty, the reorganization of the graduate program of the School of Theology in line with the recommendations of the American Association of Theological Schools, and the whole-hearted approval of possibilities for the deanship of the School of Theology.

A genuine contribution has already been made to the Seminary by the newly added Faculty members and a real advantage has been achieved by the transfer of several faculty members to new responsibilities. We feel that cognizance must

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be taken of these facts in the consideration of any future additions to the Faculty.

There are areas of diversity among the members of the Faculty in our interpretation of the events that led to the crisis of June 12, 1958, and succeeding events, even as there is a wide difference of opinions as to the proper procedures for the resolution of the situation that has ensued. There are some matters, however, on which the members of the Faculty are fairly well agreed, namely:

1. It is generally agreed by the members of the Faculty that all of us who are involved in this dispute have sinned against God and, in some measure, against each other and against the cause of Jesus Christ our Lord. No distribution of individual guilt and responsibility can nullify our corporate sin. It is the feeling of the Faculty that only as the several groups and parties involved begin any discussion of our problem with a sincere acknowledgment of our individual guilt and responsibility can there be any hope for the resolution of our difficulties.
2. It is generally agreed by the members of the Faculty that there is prospect for a resolution of this dispute only as each individual involved sees the present situation, not as a cause that has to be defended, not a crusade that has to be waged and won, but as a spiritual crisis in the life of the Seminary that has to be resolved with the help of God, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and in the true spirit of brotherly love and mutual concern. The Faculty would unitedly express the sincere hope that all of those who are involved in the present Seminary crisis may be able to come to a place of common understanding, mutual respect, and genuine forgiveness one of another, in the discovery of God's solution for our difficulties and our differences. Only when this attitude generally prevails can there be any prospect of genuine spiritual reconciliation.
3. It is also the judgment of the Faculty that reconciliation in its fullest sense, if it is to be permanent and effective, must issue in the establishment of mutual confidence, respect, and dedication to a common task. The Faculty looks to the Board of Trustees to help us define clearly the basic objectives of our institution. Within the framework of these objectives, the Faculty does not expect nor desire uniformity of thought and emphasis, nor can we countenance those who require this of us. What the Faculty does desire is to achieve harmony in the midst of diversity. We would express the hope that members of this Faculty may be so open to each other that each may be willing to learn from the other as all of us work together in a common cause.
4. The Faculty agrees that the ultimate decision in this crisis lies with the Board of Trustees and expresses the hope that, after this conference, the Board will act immediately and decisively to repair, in as much as is possible, whatever damage has been done by this controversy. Continued suspense from meeting to meeting has resulted in confusion for all concerned, especially for the students. Great caution must be taken, however, lest decisions be made out of desperation. Nevertheless, as December 1959 draws closer, the importance of maintaining our accreditation becomes an increasing concern to the Faculty.

In the task that lies before us the Faculty stands alongside the Board of Trustees and covets, in the future, a more intimate relationship between the Trustees and the Faculty.

Calendar Adjustment
For 1960 Proposed

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.--(BP)--The Committee on Denominational Calendar recommends that the Southern Baptist Convention add another meeting to its official calendar during 1960.

The meeting is the Sunday School Convention, scheduled in Fort Worth, Tex., Mar. 29-31, 1960, Miss Alma Hunt, Birmingham, calendar committee chairman, said.

It also recommends adoption of a calendar for 1961, to be used as a "suggested guide for co-ordinated denominational activities and emphases." The calendar would carry the Baptist Jubilee Advance theme for that year, "Stewardship and Enlistment."

Special emphases month by month for 1961 are:

January---30,000 movement; televangelism series.

February---Baptist colleges, seminaries, and schools.

March---Home missions.

April---Life commitment.

May---Hospital ministry and nurse recruitment.

June---Relief and Annuity ministries; vacation Bible schools; assemblies.

July---Assemblies at Ridgecrest and Glorieta.

August---Schools of missions; assemblies at Ridgecrest and Glorieta.

September---Church music; Southern Baptist and state foundations.

October---Co-operative Program; Forward Program of Church Finance.

November---Christian literature: state papers, denominational publications, missionary magazines, church libraries.

December---Foreign missions.

In addition to these monthly topical emphases, special dates are indicated in each month for study courses, special offerings, conferences and conventions, and commitment Sundays.

Special events of 1961 include continuation of the Convention's effort to establish 30,000 new churches or missions between 1958 and 1964 and another series of 13 special evangelistic television programs prepared by the Radio and Television Commission.

The Southern Baptist Convention is scheduled May 23-26, 1961, at St. Louis, Mo., and the National Conference of Southern Baptist Men at Memphis, Tenn., Sept. 13-15, 1961.

The calendar committee includes representatives from SBC agencies and from state Baptist groups.

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Biblical Recorder
Opposes New Press

RALEIGH, N. C.--(BP)--In an editorial Mar. 28, the Biblical Recorder formally opposed a survey committee recommendation to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina which would move printing operations outside this city.

Editor L. L. Carpenter of Raleigh announced five reasons why he believed the Biblical Recorder, a weekly journal for the convention, ought to remain here.

The state convention will vote on the survey committee's report at a

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