



Frats Dealt Coup de Grace; Convention Finds Right Key

Charter Change Ordered; Students Found 'Dazed'

After five years of maneuvering, opponents of fraternities in the South Carolina Baptist Convention finally found a winning combination and accomplished what has become almost a chronic cause with them: the forbidding of fraternities on the Furman campus.

The motion that finally unlocked the door for them—or locked the door on fraternities—was to amend the charter of Furman University to implicitly prohibit Greek letter social fraternities from the campus of not only Furman, but all of the Convention's educational institutions.

After close to an hour and forty-five minutes of discussion, the motion carried by 613-284 margin.

Later, Dean Francis W. Bonner said that he found students "dazed" more than anything else by the decision.

During the discussion, Cullen Crook of Greenville, most voluble spokesman of the antifraternity forces, had reported to the Convention there was a "threat (by students) to put on a demonstration here tonight if this Convention takes any action against fraternities."

Students Leave Quietly

However, as soon as the result of the voting was announced, the two-hundred-odd students who had come to witness the session from the balcony of MacAlister Auditorium merely filed out quickly and quietly.

In fact, the only incident of any nature came when a messenger in the balcony rose to challenge a student who was standing among those leaving,

claiming he was voting illegally.

After protests from fellow messengers around him, the messenger promptly withdrew his challenge.

Crook's motion, coming in the miscellaneous section of the agenda, was, in its entirety:

"I move that the trustees of each of our educational institutions, owned and operated by the South Carolina Baptist Convention, be directed to make application to the Secretary of State for the amending of their charter as follows:

"That Greek letter social fraternities or sororities are not allowed among the students of the institutions, either on or off the campus.

These institutions include Furman University, Greenville; Greenville Junior College, Tiger-ville; Anderson Junior College, Anderson, and the college now being proposed for the lower part of the state.

"I further move that this change be consummated by the beginning of the school year, 1962-63."

Furman is the only educational institution of those mentioned that has social fraternities on the campus.

Crook added that his motion was
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"in conformity with the constitution and practices of this Convention."

The Rev. Knox Lambert of Sumter, in offering a substitute motion, said, "It seems to me that we dealt with this problem . . . last year when we were in Charleston . . . It was well announced that we would deal with this matter last year; everybody came prepared to deal with the issue; and we dealt with the issue."

He continued, "It seems to me that it does no good in the matter of love, charity, brotherhood, and sisterhood in this Convention to keep bringing up from year to year a matter that everyone thought was settled the year before."

His substitute motion was "that we as a Convention make the same affirmation we made last year and that we commit the matter of fraternities of all our educational institutions to the hands of the duly-elected trustees."

The motion was defeated.

R. Boykin Curry of Greenville, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Furman University, told the Convention that "fraternities are not dens of iniquity."

He said, "We feel that fraternities as they are operated at Furman University now are a good thing . . . I know that; I'm positive about that. Are you?"

Curry explained the "simplest thing" to do would be "to say we've been told to abolish fraternities and that we have no responsibility in the matter." He said the trustees receive various suggestions on how to manage the University, and "we can't please them all."

"But most of all," he said, "we would like to please this Convention . . . if we could do so with a clear conscience."

He asserted, "The responsibility of discipline and of behavior and of conditions at this institution is not yours—it is the administration's."

Won't Solve Problem

He assured the Convention that "your trustees are not defiant. They are not arrogant". He then added "Not one of these men are carrying the torch for fraternities . . . (we) are perfectly willing to vote out fraternities if that would solve the problem. However, that won't solve the problem."

He warned that "something will move in to fill the void" and "our fear is that sub-rosa clubs somewhere out in town will rise up to take their place, because that has happened here many times before."

Finally, Curry appealed to the Convention, "I ask you not to compound the problems of this board."

Lusty applause broke out on several occasions, causing Convention President Murdoch to urge that messengers confine their expressions of sentiment to remarks from the podium.

The Rev. Carlos Hatcher, who said he was a 1958 graduate of Furman, advised that he would "like to be able to tell my church-family that this Convention does have a say-so . . . If there be indications that the wishes of this Convention are not carried out, it makes it difficult for us to promote (the Cooperative Program) in our churches."

He concluded by saying "As a pastor of a church, if my church voted positively . . . that they wanted a definite step, and I did not take that step on the basis that it was against my personal wishes, they would get someone against whose wishes it was not against."

Referring to St. Paul in the matter, the Rev. Jerry Scott asked, "Would he put a minority seal on sin if he stood in our place today?"

. . . I believe he means for us to fight the devil and all the cohorts of the devil."

Dr. Graden Dukes of Edgefield claimed, "Dancing and drinking parties were spawned in hell by the sperm of the devil in the womb of a vicious, fiendish female creature from among the demons of hell."

He emphasized that the issue was not the authority of the Convention. "Nobody questions the authority of this Convention. It is big and powerful . . . enough to pinch the head off of Furman."

He indicated the need was for a closer relationship and better understanding between Furman and the Convention.

He said, "It is time we were crawling into bed with Furman and warming him up."

Will Frats Stay Good

Crook stressed that even if fraternities at Furman "have been purged of that which is questionable, how can this Convention be assured that they will remain that way?"

He cited an example of the mother disciplining her child by threatening, "The preacher will get you if you do that."

Said Crook, "The fact is, the child does not stay scared."

He gave as historical justification of his motion the fact that "this question was voted on in 1927. A majority carried to do away with fraternities in our educational institutions." He continues by saying "It was reiterated in 1955, the report was made in 1956 and 1957, saying that we're going to carry out the wishes of the Convention."

"In 1958 and 1959, no reports were made," he said. "I called for a report from the trustees in 1959, and that's the reason why it is before the house today."

He said tremendous pressure has been exerted through the years in behalf of fraternities, in-

cluding "such things as the threat to withhold gifts, an influential alumnus or a friend writing in behalf of a fraternity, or even the threat to put on a demonstration here tonight if this Convention takes any action against fraternities."

Attaching his motion to the coat-tails of a resolution made the day before, Crook said, "Yesterday we voted overwhelmingly against strong drink in any form. We were asked and did vote to try to close one of the faucets. Shall we not vote just as convincingly on this matter?"

Remarking on the division within the Convention on the fraternity issue, Crook made allusions to the fact that "(the Convention) was divided also when approximately 25 cents out of every Cooperative Program dollar was given to one certain educational institution, but they did not hesitate to take that money because the Convention was divided on it."

The suggestion was also made by a messenger that fraternities be abolished since a policy "opposed by 40 per cent or even 30 per cent of the convention . . . is not wise to promote."

Crook's motion was "heartily" seconded by retired State Evangelist James Howard, who characterized the motion as a "new approach . . . a wise approach . . . that will satisfy an overwhelming majority of this Convention."

The Rev. Howard commented, "I am confident it will solve our problems, and this great convention can get on its way to higher heights in our benevolent program of Christian education."

A professor at North Greenville Junior College also spoke out in support of Crook's motion, declaring he felt "as every instructor ought to feel, as you give your tithes . . . and entrust your children to us, you have a right . . . to make demands on us."

Fraternity Man Speaks

A messenger who identified himself as "a layman . . . a Christian . . . a deacon in my church . . . and a fraternity man" opposed Crook's motion, saying "When my boy's old enough to go to college, I'm going to encourage him to go to a college that has a well-rounded social life . . . where he can find a group of Christian young men whom he can work with, have fun with, and study with."

Explaining that he had "very sincere respect and admiration for our college on the other side of town," he never-the-less pointed out, "I would hate very much for Furman to try to copy . . . Bob Jones."

He stressed, "All organiza-

tions don't live up to the letter of the law. Indeed, I'm afraid many of our churches don't."

Following the vote on Crook's motion, Dr. David Wells of West Hartsville Baptist Church immediately took the floor and proposed, "Since this Convention seems to be setting the pattern that we become fully Christian and deeply spiritual and it seems as though we have eliminated that which has un-Christianized us so much in our institutions, I move that our institutions be instructed to begin to accept applications from all worthy students irrespective of race, creed, or color."

A few scattered "aye's" were cast for the motion, followed by a heavy thunder of "nay's."