SOME SOBER REFLECTIONS

Upon The

PROPOSED DISSOLUTION

Of

Wofford, Columbia and Lander Colleges
WHEREAS, we, the citizens of Greenwood, in Mass Meeting assembled, completely recognize that it is the sole independent judgment of The South Carolina Conferences which should and will decide upon the Report of The Joint College Commission to dissolve Lander, Columbia and Wofford Colleges, yet we believe that our sincere appreciation and loyalty to Lander College warrants an expression from us concerning the Report which we herewith humbly submit:

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE CITIZENS OF GREENWOOD IN MASS MEETING ASSEMBLED that the following Reflections be offered to the South Carolina Conferences:

1. It is to be expected that residents of Greenwood would prefer that Lander remain in Greenwood and oppose its removal. That the record may be straight, let it be known that we consider this problem of Methodism's Mission in higher education in South Carolina to be a matter greater than any local prejudice. Greenwood, just as Methodism in South Carolina, does not want a Lander College which is not accredited or which is not creditable. If that were the choice, the answer is obvious.

2. Adverting to the Report, we find that the survey committee spent one day at each institution examining the physical plant and conferring with administrators and faculties. It is suggested that the entire report be studied with that fact in mind. Their recommendations are somewhat puzzling as to essential equipment when we read that "Wofford College must spend . . . no less than" $80,000 for a swimming pool, $30,000 for a Fraternity Hall, $50,000 for a campus fund, and that "the proposed developments are sound and must be carried through." Though these would appear desirable, we have some misgivings about a Report which catalogues these as "musts" to a Christian education. These are but random excerpts from the Report and could be enumerated at length, but the point is simply that, though additions and improvements are vitally necessary, the Report has seen fit to confuse adequate facilities with the cinema version of the ideal campus. Our confidence in the entire report is somewhat weakened by the confusion of ideas.

3. The Report states that its estimation of the proceeds from the sale of land and buildings will total $1,500,000. Of this Lander properties will realize $450,000. Such a figure confirms the brevity of their visit and the extent of the investigation. It is beyond the realm of overstatement—this is fantastic. A good sale would net $100,000 for Lander's realty. Let us assume that all three plants could net $750,000.

The Report advises that $3,000,000 will be necessary for a new plant to serve 800-900 students. It is doubtful if a genuinely first rate college of that size can be built for that amount. But even if it can, then $2,250,000 must first be raised, and then the
Report states at least $400,000 additional will be necessary for endowment. In order to effect the change recommended $2,650,000 is required and $150,000 per year contributed by the Conferences to operate it.

The Report admonishes, “But we must be willing to pay the price”. If the Conferences have only been able to average $6,379 per year to Lander ($37,000 to all three in 1945) is it not proper to ask “Can we pay the price of $2,650,000 for a new college plus $150,000 (the Committee’s figure) yearly for support?” Is it unreasonable to suggest that if half that amount could be raised and placed where needed at the three colleges, all would be creditable, half again as many students could be served and the substantial contribution afforded only by the small college would be preserved. If there were no Methodist Colleges within the State, the proposal might have some plausibility, but where three plants, each with its loyalties and traditions, presently exist in the State and can obtain its common sense needs with far less money, wherein lies the merit of the Dissolution?

4. “From whom will the necessary funds be raised?” Much of it from Methodists of the State, it will be presumed. But examine the endowment and building funds of each of the three and a substantial portion of such money will have to come from the residents of the city of its location. Those cities are now willing to assume their responsibility, but dissolve the three and erect a new one and one of the chief sources of funds, built up over many years of mutual advantages and contributions, will disappear over night. The Report recommends an immediate campaign for funds.

5. Let us face the issue. This Report is a complete capitulation of the Small Christian College and its many virtues to the large “name” school. The question is, “Has the value of the personalized character training offered in small Christian Colleges been outweighed by the publicity and superior mechanical facilities of the large school?” It is the fundamental premise of this Report that there is no longer any place in the southern educational scene for the small Christian College. We are not impressed. Bigness, though much admired, has its limitations.

6. We suggest earnestly that there remains a place for small, girls’ colleges and small, boys’ college. Coeducation frequently generates more problems than it solves. We believe this view is shared widely in South Carolina for boys and girls of 16-18 years of age.

7. A recent editorial in The State newspaper advises, “We would want to make certain we were keeping faith with those who have looked upon these institutions as something enduring upon which they could bestow their love and their means”. Purely for the record, Greenwood raised the money, bought the land, built the original buildings and has contributed a substan-
tial portion of Lander's endowment. It was gladly given with no conditions. Lander has been good to Greenwood and we love her. It would appear that Greenwood has reciprocated. We would not suggest that this is a compelling consideration—but we believe it will be given consideration.

But let it be perfectly clear that Greenwood is aroused to the critical status of Lander College and we are anxious that her reasonable needs be met that she might be accredited and creditable, and that her foreseeable future be assured. Let us reiterate that we thoroughly appreciate the fact that the decision to be made is solely one to be made by the South Carolina Conferences, based upon their own independent good judgment. It is not for Greenwood to decide or participate in such decision. We would never attempt to intrude upon the Conferences in this solemn responsibility. It is our sole purpose in this Resolution to suggest to the members of the Conferences some serious reflections which we have experienced and which we believe may assist each delegate in some small way, to arrive at the proper decision.

Speaking for Greenwood alone, if the Conferences see fit to reject the Proposal to Dissolve Lander, Wofford and Columbia, it would be helpful, if the Conferences deemed it advisable (1) to determine what the reasonable needs of Lander are in order to insure its welfare for the foreseeable future, (2) ascertain what share of such amount the Conferences will raise and, (3) what share of such amount Greenwood should raise in order to solve the problem. In raising any funds for Lander in the City of Greenwood, it will be necessary for obvious reasons, to limit the use of such funds to Lander in Greenwood. This suggestion is offered in order that Greenwood may know just what its immediate responsibility is and may make the necessary plans as soon as possible. We do pledge, and the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce has done so, our immediate and complete efforts to assume our share in this responsibility.

A copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to The Greenwood Index-Journal and a copy respectfully submitted to each delegate of The South Carolina Conferences.

BY THE CITIZENS OF GREENWOOD IN MASS
MEETING ASSEMBLED.

May 5, 1947.