

CASA BAUTISTA DE PUBLICACIONES

800 MYRTLE AVENUE

P. O. BOX 211

EL PASO, TEXAS, E. U. M. A. 6/22/31

Dr. T. B. Ray,
Richmond, Va.

Dear Ray:

I am shocked by the news of the sudden death of the Home Secretary, Dr. Saltee. I am sure you feel this deeply, and I assure you of my sympathy, most especially in this serious crisis that seems to confront our Board as well as all of us who are trying to carry on the work of the Lord.

I have just written Mrs. Saltee and not knowing just where to address her, am sending it to your Box. I am sure it will get to her. Please see that it is forwarded to her if she is not there.

I did not answer your interesting letter of March 2nd, which I have here before me as I write. The main reason was that I was like the little boy the calf ran over--I had nothing to say. I was not at all convinced by your argument, yet I most certainly wish that conditions would change and that soon. I most assuredly am a friend of the Foreign Mission Board, and do not think I need to spend one moment's time in a defense of my conduct during the past almost 27 years that I have been a missionary of that Board. I think my conduct speaks for itself and I am still a defender of the work and the Board. There are many real friends everywhere of the organized work. I know that, and they could easily save the situation, if they could only understand the need of it.

I likely have some ideas that would not do for publication. One of them I passed on to you in for last letter. Your answer was just about what I naturally expected. Yet withal time will tell whether I am wrong in my judgment or not. I have no desire to renew the subject just now--and maybe never again. It has no bearing on the outcome of the whole matter, for what is my idea worth anyway? Most surely I am not the one that is dissatisfied with the personnel of our Boards, and their work, and the splendid spirit and all.

I wonder with all the load you are trying to carry, and the burdens that grow--and are likely to keep on growing as long as we shall live--if I should not just say no more about such a subject. I do want to assure you that I heartily sympathize with you and wish that in some way I might help you. Yet, I take it there is little or nothing I can do to lighten the burden. You would not think I was deeply enough interested in the work that I founded and carried on through one crisis after another--this Publishing House--if I should supinely sit down and say: "It's all right with me; let it go into the junk pile." That can not possibly be the attitude of one who has identified his whole life with an institution, as I have with this one.

I am really fearful about the final outcome of the present crisis.

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I refer to this publication work. We seem to be headed for rocks. I hope we may steer out of the breakers safely, and that all may yet be safe. I do not know what to do myself. I edit the literature, but know practically nothing about the financial condition of the plant, except that Bro. Benson says that it is precarious. Just what that means is for him to interpret, I suppose.

I have about half the lessons for the first quarter of next year prepared and am going right on with the work, but I do not know what changes we may have to make in order to keep the good work going on. Conditions all over our field are worse than in the U.S. Our people are in great need in many parts, as you yourself already know. The brethren seem to think that we are rich and can furnish them literature--and some seem to think we are under obligation to do it--whether they pay for it or not. The Argentine brethren receive a great deal of our literature, yet they seem to have declared a "moratorium" for some reason or other--and that without conferring with us. Just how far we can carry on with these conditions I do not know.

I suppose that we shall have to decide pretty soon. And that is one thing we need to know for the future good of our work. Just how we are to know, I fail to fathom. Unless you can throw some light on the subject. We understand that the Board is going to have to cut appropriations again. That is nothing more than I prophesied--whether I turn out to be a false prophet, or a mere calamity howler. If that cut falls on us we are ruined and you had just about as well appoint a "receiver" for the Publishing House--that is the way it appears to me. We are making right now a desperate effort to get the literature out for the last quarter of this year, and then, well then, I suppose we are going to have to let the few employees that remain go while we pay our debts. That is the way it looks now. I have no idea just how it is to all come out.

In short, it has all put me to thinking seriously again about resigning and drifting back to the old "Show-me" State and trying to find some way to make a living the rest of my brief allotted time on earth. There are reasons why I do not want to do that, and there are reasons why I do. No use burdening you with the pro nor with the con. I am undecided, but serious. I want to do His will, whatever that may be. Just how to KNOW what His will is, is sometimes a problem.

Well, to change the subject--I seem to be in better health than in former years. I am going to have to have an operation one of these days I suppose to relieve my liver from certain adhesions that have held over from my operation 22 years ago, but I think it is not at all serious. Otherwise I am enjoying good health.

Trust that you are well. May God richly bless you in these trying times, and make His Cause to prosper.

Most cordially yours in Him,

J. E. Davis