

Oslo, March 4, 1948.

Dr. George Sadler,
2037 Monument Avenue,
Richmond 20, Virginia.

Dear Dr. Sadler:

You will no doubt by this time have received word concerning time and place for the European conference: London, second week of August.

On Feb. 27 a conference was held here in Oslo of the following members of the BWA. Exec. Com.: Dr. W. O. Lewis, Secretary Erik Rudén of Sweden, President Johs. Nørgaard of Denmark. Dr. Edwin A. Bell of the ABFMS. was also present. During the three preceding days a meeting of the Scandinavian Baptist Com. of Co-operation had been held, at which many questions connected with the European conference were discussed.

The group of five had to make quite a number of tentative decisions or recommendations, owing to the fact that so much time has been wasted. It is hoped that these recommendations may be adopted by the interested parties. I shall try to give you a summary.

In the first place the coming conference was scheduled for the three days August 10, 11 and 12. As Dr. Lewis thought it likely that this year's meeting of the Exec. Com. of the BWA would be held in connection with the London conf. Friday Aug. 13 was set aside for this purpose. This leaves Monday the 9th and Saturday the 14th open for preliminary conferences and subsequent committee meetings. Sundays the 8th and 15th Mr. Henry Cook of London will try to fill Baptist pulpits in London and vicinity with visiting preachers.

In the second place we discussed the question of who should take part from the European continent.

As to the Unions of Sweden, Denmark and Norway they will pay the travelling expenses of their own delegations. Probably something like eight may be expected from these three countries. Furthermore we found that two delegates from each of the other countries on the continent would about fit the bill. Germany ought to have about three or four. There ought to be three D.P.s (Estonian, Latvian, Slavic). The countries expected to send delegates are: Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium and Holland, besides Germany (and the Scand. countries). The other countries will be invited, but will most likely not be allowed to send any one. It was estimated that between 20 and 25 delegates would have to have their expenses paid for them.

In the third place it was thought that all European delegates should be afforded hospitality in London during the conference. If the entire body of delegates, as is hoped, is housed and fed under one roof at some such place as "High Leigh" the entire expense of this ought to be covered out of conference funds.

In the fourth place it was decided that a common fund, out of which the expenses mentioned above (for travelling, board and lodging, pocket money to a few delegates) was the most practical way of solving the financial problem. We all agreed that Dr. Lewis should approach the co-operating boards and ask Richmond for \$1800, New York for \$1200 and the Canadians, British and Swedes for the remaining \$500. The total expenses were estimated at approximately \$3500. - I hope this recommendation will reach you soon, but at any rate you now know of it unofficially and can take steps accordingly.

In the fifth place a certain mode of procedure was decided upon to make the conference work effectively. Questionnaires are to be sent at once from London to each continental country. We agreed upon the main questions to be asked. It was also thought that the co-operating boards would be glad to send in beforehand written reports, showing the sums expended and the projects entertained etc. within the areas of Europe assigned to them in 1920. All the collected material is to be summarized and - together with the minutes of the 1920 conference - mimeographed, so that all necessary information can be in the hands of the delegates from the start. As it takes several weeks to get documents duplicated in London at present, the information ought to reach the London office in June at latest.

In the sixth place the group of five adopted the suggestion of Dr. Lewis that at least three committees be appointed to work between sessions and bring in recommendations concerning the future policy to be followed ("mandate system" or otherwise), concerning the educational program on the continent, and concerning relief (and possibly: reconstruction).

So much about the London conference. We shall certainly have enough to occupy us, but with proper preparation - and with Dr. Johnson in the chair! - we ought to get through.

I am writing this to make sure that the information reaches you as soon as possible. I shall not become Gen. Sec. of the BWA. until after July 1st but then it is too late for me to do anything in

order to ensure the success of the conference.

The itinerary of Dr. Johnson and myself for the summer was also discussed. As from July 1st we have recommended the following route: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria (Switzerland), Italy, Switzerland, Germany, London conference, France, Belgium, Holland, Amsterdam meeting. We expected that it might be possible to reach Italy around July 20. The German conference is fixed for Aug. 4-5 (place undecided). We would be grateful to you for suggestions. It would be fine if you could accompany us, the whole way or part of it. Especially it is desirable that as many as possible go to Germany. If we are to influence developments among the Baptists there, we ought to go in strength and throw our combined weight into the scales.

I would be grateful if you would keep me posted concerning your plans in the South. Who is coming to Europe? What is your reaction to our recommendations? And when do you personally expect to arrive?

Official communications on the matters I have written about, will of course come to you from Dr. Lewis.

Looking forward to seeing you again soon and renewing our fellowship, I am

Yours most cordially
Armed T. O'Brien.

Oslo, March 9, 1948.

Rev. Marlin D. Farnum,
Rev. George Sadler, D.D.

My dear Friends:

To-day I received the following telegram from Dr. Lewis in London, dated March 8:

"American leaders North and South have cabled they much prefer third week of August difficult change date as Aubrey and others leaving early for Amsterdam suggest beginning middle second week continuing into third week till Americans arrive please wire reactions".

I immediately cabled the following answer:

"Leave it to you choose dates accommodating as far as possible both American and British leaders. Please telegraph result".

As I do not know when the Americans are expected (except Mr. Farnum) or on what day Dr. Aubrey leaves for Amsterdam, I was unable to make definite suggestions.

I wrote to Dr. Lewis to-day:

"I can see serious objections to a conference sprawling out indefinitely, some people going and some people coming. Every effort should be made to secure at least two days when all leaders, both British and American, can take part in the discussions and concur in the findings. Preliminary conferences can of course be held before all of the Americans arrive and subsequent committee meetings be held after some of the British have left (for instance Relief Com? Youth Com? etc.) The meeting of the Executive should be given the right of way also while the British are still in London".

This for your information. I sincerely hope that it may be possible to fix definite dates for the opening and the closing of the main conference, and for the BWA. Exec. Com. meeting.

Of course changes in the proposed dates for the London meeting will necessitate other changes in the itinerary of Dr. Johnson and such others as may accompany him.

Yours most sincerely

Arnold T. Olsen

March 10, 1948.

After writing the above, I have to-day received a new telegram from Dr. Lewis:

"What do you think of abandoning the idea of a European conference holding a good two day meeting of Executive Committee beginning of third week in August in addition to continental members might bring over few others as proxies visits to Continent will accomplish much delay caused by American protest against dates fixed and European tension make successful conference doubtful reasonably sure of good committee meeting am delaying trip to Germany where I am needed until question of dates is settled".

I am sending him at once the following reply:
"I agree to abandoning European conference provided British members concur and provided this does not clash with previous decisions of Executive or Administrative committees. What about having Executive meet in Holland?"

To-day I have also received a letter from Dr. Lewis, dated March 3, in which he says that the only time he could secure High Leigh for the European conference was August 7-11.

Of course these dates clash with the change suggested in his telegram of March 8.

Cordially Yours,

Arnold T. Olsen