

Dear England -

Here is a letter I sent to the chairman of the Oklahoma Methodist Conference Board of Ministerial Training, reporting to him the telephone conversation I had with J. Richard Spann of Nashville. I thought you might wish to have it on file, or perhaps forward it to the curriculum committee.

September 16, 1960

- Sam

The Rev. Byron Gravens
Nichols Hills Methodist Church
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dear Byron:

After awaiting a reply for some weeks from the office of Dr. Spann, I finally decided to call him last night. The delay in his response had been due to the fact that he had referred the questions I had raised to Gerald McCulloh, and Jerry had not replied.

In any event, this is what we have come up with. We are going to offer a two hour course in Methodist Doctrine this fall. Another two hour course will be offered next year in Methodist Polity or Methodist Discipline, and two years from now, another two hour course will be offered in Methodist Church History. This would mean that in a three year sequence, the Methodist student at Phillips Seminary would get the full six hours of Methodist Doctrine, Discipline, and History, which are required by the discipline. Dr. Spann seemed eager to encourage the men to take these courses from a live instructor rather than through correspondence. I think Phillips Seminary has been very accomodating and helpful in working out this arrangement. I will look forward to any suggestions that you might have to improve the task that we have to do together.

I was very distressed that somehow, some of our Methodist students here got the impression that there had been some doubt cast on whether this course offered this fall would be accepted by the Nashville office, so I was very pleased to hear this word from Dr. Spann. The men who are seniors at Phillips and, therefore, who cannot take the full six hour sequence will, of course, have to take the rest of their work by correspondence.

Byron, I have a bright idea which I would like to pass along to you and get your reaction on. As I do work in the Phillips Seminary Library, I realize that the resources in Methodist discipline and polity and church history and theology are, as you might expect, somewhat inadequate. If I interpret the signs of the times properly, it seems apparent that there will be an increasing number of Methodist students attending Phillips Seminary. If this is the case, then it seems plausible to raise the suggestion that the Methodist Church in Oklahoma might think of contributing some funds to the library of the Seminary to beef up the resources in the Methodist heritage for Methodist students.

Faint, illegible handwriting at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

The Rev. Byron Cravens
Page 2
September 16, 1960

Frankly, I do not know which committee of the Oklahoma Conference should receive this suggestion, or whether others might think it plausible or feasible, but in my judgment, it is a suggestion well worthy of consideration. If you have any suggestions about what channel this proposal might go through, I would appreciate very much your dropping me a line. With all good wishes, I remain,

Yours cordially and sincerely,

Thomas C. Oden

TCO:ph

cc: Dean Stephen J. England
Dr. J. Richard Spann

