

Salisbury Clergy Ignores Criticism Of City Made By Federal Council Of Churches

Ministers Of City Decline To
Make Public Comment Upon Re-
port Published Today

BASED ON VISIT BY

HOPKINS PROFESSOR

Declares City Lacks Public Spirit,
Civic Morality And Practical
Religious Application

The clergy of Salisbury and leaders in business and professional circles showed a disposition to ignore the sharp criticism directed at the people of Salisbury and the Eastern Shore by Dr. Broadus Mitchell in a report of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America published in The Baltimore Sun today.

Dr. Mitchell, of the Department of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University, came to Salisbury two weeks after the hanging of Mathew Williams on December 4 and interviewed 12 people. His conclusions from these interviews obtained in a three day visit formed the report of the church federation.

Local ministers declined to comment for publication, but privately expressed views ranging from astonishment and indignation to absolute silence upon the subject.

"The most sorrowful reflection" the report as published by The Baltimore Sun said, "is not that some ignorant countrymen and townsmen gave way to violence but that no one from among the intelligent fair-minded citizens exerted the intelligent fair-minded citizens exerted himself with spirit to stop the lynching."

"Credit should be given to two citizens who opposed the mob; one who tried to stop the lynching and one who attempted to prevent the barbarism of the burning." Professor Mitchell refused to reveal the names of the persons to whom he referred.

"The Chesapeake bay in a sense contributed to the lynching in Salisbury. That is, the Eastern Shore is isolated geographically and has become backward in its spiritual and mental development," Professor Mitchell asserted.

Again attacking the attitude of the citizens of Salisbury he said: "Two weeks after the lynching the place was rife with excuses for the hanging, if not, indeed, full of justification of it."

"This attitude of self-defense was stimulated by the criticism of Salisbury that came from other parts of the state. The sectional feeling was increased when a local newspaper stated that the Eastern Shore, on which Salisbury is located, feels 'that the greater part of the responsibility for it (the lynching) results from the interference of Baltimore City in the affairs of the shore.' The sectional feeling ran so high that several merchants in Salisbury even cancelled orders with Baltimore firms.' "

Continuing with the events leading up to the lynching the report of the Johns Hopkins professor said "if it be said that it occurred too quickly, it is to be answered that there probably knowledge in the town an hour or more beforehand that trouble was brewing. And if private citizens are to be excused the officers of the law have no excuse. It may fairly be concluded that the chief of police, his three patrolmen who were on duty and the sheriff and his deputies offered no resistance to the lynching.

"The impression was received by the inquirer that the public spirit of Salisbury is far below what is desirable.

"Those whom one would expect to be leaders in a crisis decided to fall in with the ignorant, the prejudiced, the frightened, the sullenly boastful.

"Salisbury has given proof of its lacy of civic morality—not only in the lynching and burning and even more pointedly in the childish defenses offered for the lynching afterward. One feels that the business organizations stand for nothing better than for mere town boosting, the churches have neglected the application of religion to life."

"The town of Salisbury needs an active local interracial committee," the report concluded.

EDITORIAL

This editorial is published today in several metropolitan newspapers in the east as a reprint from The Time.

NO COMMENT NECESSARY

So much unfairness and untruth is recognized in the published report of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America castigating the entire populace of Salisbury and the Eastern Shore for the lynching here on December 4 that the best reply is to completely ignore it.

Dr. Broadus Mitchell, whose socialistic teachings afford him what little claim to fame he may enjoy, based his conclusions upon a three-day visit to Salisbury. He proceeds to set up a straw man and then attempts to tear it to bits. The whole thing is based upon a false premise and has no truth in fact.

If the Federal Council of Churches would devote the same energies to the suppression of Communism in Baltimore and other metropolitan centers and to elimination of loopholes in the American legal system the organization would go far toward abolishing the causes of lynching throughout the nation.

Dr. Mitchell, like many others, has missed the major point at issue, for he fails to differentiate between justice and law and order.