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SBC Missionaries In Indonesia
Experience Spontaneous Revival

by William N. McElrath

BANDUNG, Indonesia (BP)--Spontaneous outbursts of testimonies, confessions, requests for prayer and songs of praise marked the annual prayer retreat of Southern Baptist missionaries in Central Java.

Program leaders say they "simply stood aside" and let the Holy Spirit guide the group, which met in Kaliurang.

During the meeting, one missionary veteran remarked: "When I was appointed, in my innocense, I thought this was how missionary life was supposed to be all the time. Aft r 13 years on the field, I had almost given up hope that it could really happen."

Among the unusual features of the prayer retreat that made the experience unique for him and almost all of the missionaries present, were such things as:

--A feeling of growing oneness as they shared concerns and prayed together, evident from the very outset of the retreat. Several missionaries who were forced to arrive late were immediately caught up in the spirit of the occasion.

--Frankness of confession, to one another and to God, characterized prayer retreat. Personal disagreements among missionaries, tension between those newly finishing language study and those long on the field, individual problems of body and spirit, conflicts with national Christians, hypocrisy, narrowness and prejudice were among the sins confessed.

Although the prepared agenda for the meeting was tossed aside, one of the few program features presented as scheduled was a book review of retired Missionary C. L. Culpepper's book, Shantung Revival, which chronicled a spiritual awakening in Shantung Province, China, two generations ago. Several missionaries pointed out that the Shantung revival began with the same kind of confession among missionaries experienced at the Indonesia missionaries' prayer retreat.

--Although there was no occurrence of the usually mentioned "charismatic gifts," such as speaking in tongues, participants, agreed that they had felt the Holy Spirit's nearness as never before. One missionary stated, "we were almost afraid to look up when prayer time ended, so real had the Lord's presence been in that room."

Again and again sessions ran far past alloted times. One lasted from 7:30 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. No one seemed worried about missed meals or lost sleep.

--The New Testament rite of laying on hands was used in two ways during the prayer retreat. Missionaries who had expressed need for restored health of body or spirit were asked to kneel. In accordance with James 5:14-15, other missionaries laid hands on their heads and prayed for them.

Later, a special commissioning service was held for missionaries due for furlough in 1971, also for a missionary journeyman whose two-year term ends in June. Members of the group explained, "We set them apart as our missionaries to America, to share as widely as possible why we are here and what God is doing in Indonesia."

--No sense of self-importance, self-consciousness or self-righteousness invated the prayer retreat. Periods of deep concern were punctuated by hearty bursts of laughter.

--Missionary Musician Bill O'Brien composed a new hymn, scribbled by firelight in the midst of one session.

His wife had just retold Bill's experience of taking a sick, destitute boy to a hospital for treatment. When Bill had returned to visit, at the place where the child's name should have been entered, there was written "No Name."

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Recalling the incident, O'Brien said, "I realize that we have the privilege and responsibility of giving a name, 'Christian,' to earth's nameless ones." Whereupon he wrote:

The world is so full of nameless ones,
Wand'ring and lost as Adam's Sons.

Is there no hope? And none to care?

No one to love them? No one to share?
Give them a name through me;
Give them a name through me.
Spirit above,
Reach out in your love;

Give them a name through me.

The entire group sang two stanzas and chorus to a tune Bill O'Brien also composed on the spot.

One missionary couple from Central Java were forced to miss the retreat. They were in Singapore with their high-school-age daughter, who was suffering deep depression.

For a week they had tried to minister to her there. Twice they had been ready to give up and pack their bags for emergency leave in the states.

But on Friday, the very day the prayer retreat started, the teenager's depression began to lift. By Monday, the day it ended, her parents felt they could safely leave her with friends in Singapore.

This spiritual revival does not seem to be a "flash in the pan," lasting only during the prayer retreat. Since that time, it has manifested itself in various ways, and similar experiences have spread into many areas of Indonesian Baptist life.

Missionaries in Central Java have shared their experiences. Some of them have taken initiative in confessing sins and asking forgiveness of co-workers in other areas, both missionaries and nationals.

By coincidence, Indonesian Baptists appointed their first home missionaries three days after the Central Java Prayer retreat. A commissioning service for this Indenesian couple was marked by unusual intensity of feeling and heartfelt group prayer.

A joint meeting of two important committees of the Indonesian Baptist mission was held 10 days after the retreat. It began with an unstructured prayer time that lasted two hours. Thereafter, necessary business was settled in record time.

A seminary choir tour and special speaking engagements in observance of seminary day further spread the impact of the revival. Many decisions were recorded in several churches.

Amid the same frustrations Christians face everywhere, plus others that peculiarly hamper witness in foreign countries, Indonesian Baptist missionaries are currently showing that God can still break through and strengthen his people in their hour of greatest need.

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William N. McElrath is a Southern Baptist missionary to Indonesia.

Two Baptists Win Top
Public Relations Awards

NEW YORK (BP)--Two Southern Baptist public relations women were among ten top winners in the Religious Public Relations Council's Creative Communications awards competition, each winning an engraved plaque and $50 in cash.

Miss Ione Gray, international editor and writer for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, won the top award in the news story category for her coverage of the cyclone which hit East Pakistan last year.

Miss Marjorie Saunders, public relations director for Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas, won in the public relations campaign category.

The internal-type awards given to members of the Council were presented during an Interfaith Workshop and Convention co-sponsored by the Religious Public Relations Council, the American Jewish Public Relations Society, and the National Catholic Office for Information.

Award winners included public relations workers for two Baptist, three Methodist, two Presbyterian, one Lutheran, and two interdenominational agencies.

In another external-type presentation to the secular media, the Council honored three daily newspapers, one news magazine, three broadcasting stations and one network for outstanding religious news coverage and programming during 1970.

The awards went to the Minneapolis Star, Minneapolis, Minn.; the Providence Journal and Bulletin, Providence, R. I.; the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; U. S. News and World Report; the National Broadcasting Co. (NBC-TV and radio); stations KOLN-TV/KGIN-TV, Lincoln, Neb.; WLOL, Minneapolis; and WKYC-TV, Cleveland, Ohio.

During business sessions, the Religious Public Relations Council elected its first Roman Catholic as a national officer. Edward J. Gorry, public relations director for the Paulist Fathers, New York, was elected national treasurer, succeeding a Southern Baptist, Jim Newton, assistant director of Baptist Press, Nashville.

New president is Howard E. Royer, editor-elect of the Bretheren Magazine, national magazine of the Church of the Bretheren, and named vice president was Miss Paula Becker, public relations director for the Seventh Day Adventist's Southern Publishing Association, Nashville.

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Draft Status of Seminarians
Still Uncertain in Congress

WASHINGTON (BP)--Divinity students who do not go into the ministry following seminary study will be eligible for the military draft until they are 35, if a proposal from the Senate Armed Services Committee is enacted into law.

No opportunity was given to religious leaders and seminary representatives to appear before the committee before the decisions on the new bill were made by the committee.

Recently, the House of Representatives voted that students preparing for the ministry would continue to be exempt from the military draft.

The House action over-rode a recommendation from the House Committee on Armed Services which would have made divinity students subject to the Selective Service draft by repealing their former exemption.

The Senate probably will begin debate soon on the committee's bill to extend the draft for two years, give the President the authority to end all college student deferments at the time the law is enacted, and change the possible status of divinity students, Washington sources indicated.

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A spokesman for the Senate committee said that under the committee's proposals, divinity students will be deferred as long as they are in school, and if they pursue the ministry they will continue to be exempt. If someone goes into the ministry but quits, he will be eligible for the draft until age 35.

Further, the Senate Armed Services Committee would keep the law concerning conscientious objectors as it is, requiring two years of alternate serviceto the country for conscientious objectors. The House voted to require three years.

After Senate action, the two houses of Congress will go to conference to work out differences on the legislation.

The draft provisions face a major fight when they reach the Senate floor where Sen. Mark Hatfield (R., Oreg.) and others backing an all volunteer army have promised an all-out effort to kill the two-year extension and let the draft expire June 30 of this year.

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Opponents Attack Proposed
School Voucher Experiments 4/28/71

WASHINGTON (BP)--Religious, civil liberties and educational agencies have attacked proposed experiments involving tuition vouchers for schools as initiated by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

A one-day hearing was held by the Senate subcommittee on employment,manpower and poverty, of which Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D., Wis.) is chairman.

Similar hearings were recently held by the House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee headed by Rep. Carl Perkins (D., Ky.).

Appearing in favor of the proposed voucher experiments were Frank Carlucci, director, and John Wilson, assistant director, of the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Under an educational voucher system a "ticket" or voucher for tuition would be given a parent for his child or children in school. This voucher would then be used as tuition payment in any school of the choice of the parent--public, private or parochial school.

According to Carlucci and Wilson, the proposed experiments seek to answer two major questions:

1. Is the education of children, particularly poor children, improved under this system?

2. Are parents and the community as a whole more satisfied with the educational opportunities and outcomes afforded under the voucher system?

Educational organizations opposing the voucher experiments at the Senate hearing included the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the National School Boards Association.

The civil liberties organizations opposing vouchers included the American Civil Liberties union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Religious bodies offering testimony included the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Jewish Congress, and the Joint Washington Office for Social Concern representing the American Ethical Union, the American Humanist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Opponents of the voucher experiments agreed that the plan violates the constitutional principle of religious liberty and separation of church and stated. They further argued that such a system would spell the demise of the public school system as basic in American democracy, and that there is no prospect that the new system would produce better education for children.

In a statement prepared for the hearing, John W. Baker, acting director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said:

"We view legislation that provides tax funds for pupils in religious schools, through either direct or indirect channels, as an unwarranted and unconstitutional attack by the state on the religious liberty of its people."

Baker further criticized the voucher plan as leading to "further polarization and fragmentation in the nation." He also protested that the plan would be poor public policy by dividing limited resources between competing school systems, one responsible to the public and the other accountable only to private interests.

The American Civil Liberties Union opposed the OEO experiment for three reasons:

1. "Vouchers will tend to reestablish racially segregated schools in the south, encourage the flight of middle-class children in the north, and jeopardize the survival of public schools in large sections of the country.

2. "Voucher schools may not be bound by rules of academic freedom or student rights.

3. "Vouchers would violate the principle of separation of church and state and subsidize proliferation of parochial schools."

Most of the opposing groups appealed to the Senate, and previously to the House, not to authorize funds for OEO voucher experiments until lengthy, extensive and comprehensive hearings are held. The brief hearings in both Houses of Congress were held in connection with bills to extend the Economic Opportunity Act.

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CORRECTION

On BP story mailed 4/26/71, headlined, White House Conference Reaffirms National Priorities, please change line 2 of graph 20 (10th graph on page 6) to read: "Legalize marijuana." (rather than "equalize marijuana).

On story headlined "Youth Conference Group Asks for Renewal in Religion," 4/26/71, add words "of life" to begin line 2, graph 6, to read: "...and the way of life stemming from faith and belief...." Thanks

--Baptist Press

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