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Jehovah's Witness Loses Supreme Court Appeal

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court will not review the dismissal of a Chicago public school teacher who refused to teach her kindergarten class the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Joethella Palmer, a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect, defied the orders of her principal and the Chicago superintendent of schools to teach the pledge and certain patriotic songs, and to help her pupils observe a variety of patriotic holidays.

She complained that to do so would violate her religious freedom because Jehovah's Witnesses believe such patriotic exercises amount to idolatry. In addition, her suit claimed that the school system violated her due process of law as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution by denying her a formal hearing before the dismissal.

Palmer, who began teaching in her Chicago post in the fall of 1976, taught for three years while her case made its way through the courts. She was finally dismissed last year.

In legal documents filed with the Supreme Court, she argued that "the state does not have the right to require a teacher to advocate that which he or she cannot do in good conscience."

The brief was critical of two lower federal courts for ruling against Palmer, declaring that their decisions, if allowed to stand, "will have the unalterable effect of chilling the exercise of our most precious right--freedom of belief."

Attorneys for the Chicago Board of Education argued that Palmer's termination was based on "curricular non-conformity."

Their brief played down the free exercise of religion argument, stating that "curricular non-conformity in the classroom is not protected by the First Amendment."

Palmer's discharge, they contended, came "only after elaborate experiments to accommodate" her, although none of those efforts was specified.

Board To Study Streamlining;
Lay Involvement Up 24 Percent

By Robert Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--With a view to possible streamlining and cost-cutting, the 77-member Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board voted in January to take a close look at the frequency of its meetings and the amount of detail it handles.

Board President John W. Patterson of Richmond will appoint a special committee to work with the board's new executive director, R. Keith Parks, in the study.

William L. Self of Atlanta, Ga., immediate past president, brought the motion from a 10-person "sounding board" committee which worked with Parks in the four-month transition period following the new chief executive's election last August.

The new group will look at the board's monthly agenda, its relationships with the headquarters staff, and other matters related to work efficiency. The board currently meets 11 times a year, with the full membership encouraged to attend the main meetings in October, April, and a major summer meeting held at either Ridgecrest or Glorieta Baptist Conference Centers.

The board officers and 12 local members from Virginia carry a large share of responsibility for the smaller monthly meetings, but expenses still range from about \$6,500-\$7,000 for the monthly sessions and up to \$30,000 for the three main meetings. These figures include not only members' travel, housing, and eating expenses, but also rental of buses for local transportation and other items related to the meeting.

Should the board adopt a schedule of less frequent meetings, it probably would delegate more responsibility to the Richmond staff for making decisions between sessions.

The January meeting, which opened with simple ceremonies to install Parks as executive director, included time for special prayers for the future of Baptist work in Rhodesia, where there is "uneasy peace," and for Floyd H. North, retiring Jan. 31 after 23 years with the board. Since 1959 North has been editor of *The Commission*, the board's monthly magazine, and he was given special recognition at the meeting.

In a report time, the board was told that 3,793 short-term volunteers served overseas last year. This represents a 24 percent increase over 1978. The total included 201 who served a year or more, supplementing the work of about 3,000 missionaries.

Seventy-five of the volunteers were part of Mission Service Corps, the program under which Southern Baptist volunteers work one to two years beside career missionaries at home or abroad.

James W. Cecil, associate consultant for laymen overseas, said the board is moving along well toward its Bold Mission Thrust goal of having 10,000 volunteers serving annually by the year 2000. Predictions indicate the lay involvement will reach almost 6,000 in 1980 and that the goal will be reached in 1992 if the present growth continues.

The total for 1979 included 3,139 who went out under the laymen overseas office, 454 who took part in projects organized by the board's evangelism and church development office, and 200 in medical work. Evangelism volunteers are expected to top 2,100 this year as 46 different teams go to 13 countries. A large part of these will be involved in major campaigns in South Korea and Brazil.

The board authorized appointment of a task force of board and staff members to suggest ways it can utilize the expertise of outstanding lay people who want to assist in foreign missions. The group is expected to report back in February, and a report also will be given at the February meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

Board officials point out that the success of these short-term assignments is dependent upon the career missionaries, who originate the requests for volunteer help and work with them after they arrive overseas. The board had a total of 3,008 missionaries as of Dec. 31.

The latest list shows missionaries serving in 94 countries. The African country of Sudan was added Jan. 1, but Turkey and Iran were removed from the list because of little likelihood that missionaries will be able to return there this year.

Missionary Personnel Secretary Louis R. Cobbs said the 332 missionaries approved last year resulted in a net gain of 102 for the year. The 230 losses included 121 resignations, 15 retirements, one in-service death, and 93 auxiliary personnel (journeymen and special project workers) who completed their assignments. Twenty-seven career missionaries and two associates were reappointed during the year.

Cobbs said the resignation rate of about 4.5 percent is low compared with rates for most missionary enterprises. At the year's end the board had 2,552 career missionaries and 456 auxiliary personnel, including 226 associates, 215 journeymen, and 15 special project medical workers.

Optimistic reports were presented on both the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and special gifts for relief ministries. Although no totals are yet available, Parks said he is confident Southern Baptist giving will meet or exceed the \$40.5 million Lottie Moon goal, an annual offering that provides more than half the board's budget.

W. Eugene Grubbs, consultant for laymen overseas and relief ministries, said giving for hunger and relief totaled \$3,451,000 as of Dec. 8, with more than \$3 million of this money appropriated last year for relief work.

The board had approximately \$1 million on hand in this fund at the beginning of this year, Grubbs said, but he anticipates that more than half of this amount will be needed for work which missionaries and volunteers are doing with Cambodian refugees in Thailand. The board appropriated more than \$600,000 for this work in the last months of 1979.

Truman Kerr, executive assistant to the executive director of Louisiana Baptists, told the board that Baptists in his state are praying for 200 persons to make life commitments to missions during the Foreign Mission Board's April 8 appointment service in Alexandria.

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Tanner Pleads Prayer
For Iranian Students

By Dan Martin

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ATLANTA (BP)--A plea to pray for and minister to the estimated 45,000 Iranian students in the United States has been made by William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

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"Many students are in difficult circumstances as funds have been cut off, jobs have been terminated and savings are rapidly being depleted," Tanner told directors at the board's January executive committee meeting.

Tanner said many of the students attend Southern Baptist related schools. "Many of these students are in desperate straits," he said. "They can't go home and they don't know if they will be expelled. They are feeling the crisis in very real ways."

That crisis, initiated Nov. 4 when students seized the American embassy in Tehran, has actually made victims of the Iranian students in America, Tanner claimed.

"I urge you to pray for these students, as well as for the hostages in the embassy," he said. "I also urge you to minister to them, to help them, to share Christian compassion and to share Jesus' love with them. Jesus came to touch the lives of people; here is an opportunity to do missions at home."

In other action, directors approved the appointment of Russell Begaye as national language consultant on Indian affairs, and approved 71 persons for missions service, including eight missionary associates, six mission pastor interns and 57 persons who were granted church pastoral assistance.

Begaye and his wife, Helen, have been directors of Santa Fe Indian Hall in Santa Fe, N.M., for the past three years. He replaces Frank Belvin of Okmulgee, Okla., who retired Dec. 31, after seven years as national consultant.

Begaye, who was featured in the December issue of Home Missions magazine, is a Navajo, and his wife is Choctaw. He is a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been a pastor in Fort Worth, Texas, and a summer missionary in New Mexico and Arizona.

As a national consultant, Begaye will seek to develop Indian work on the reservations and in metro areas. He and his family will live in Dallas, Texas.

Named missionary associates were John and Doris June Davis of Jeffersonton, Ky.; James and Karen Margaret Queen of Chicago, Ill.; John and Sandra Tatum of Fort Worth, Texas; and Carlos and Margaret Saye Vidal of Virginia Beach, Va.

The Davises will serve in Marnet-Clay City, W. Va., where he will be a church planter apprentice. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Queens will continue to live in Chicago, where he will be a Christian social ministries consultant. He has been pastor of churches in Indiana and Illinois and is a graduate of Missouri Valley College and Southern Seminary.

The Tatums will move to Girard, Ohio, where he will be a church planter apprentice. He has been associate pastor of churches in Arkansas and Texas. He's a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Vidals will live in Norfolk, Va., and he will be a catalytic language missionary. A graduate of Northwestern College in the Philippines and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, he has been a pastor in the Philippines.

Appointed mission pastor interns were Monte and Dixie Lea Jones of Colorado Springs, Colo.; Jeff and Cathy Ann Osgood of Clarksville, Ind.; and John and Kathryn Rish of Fort Worth, Texas.

Approved for church pastoral assistance were Maurice and Kitty Anderson of Redondo Beach, Calif.; Larry and Levonna Carte of Henderson, N.C.; Ronald and Roberta Chase of Gibsonia, Pa.; Ray and Tina Cooper of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Dennis and Louise Davis of Olathe, Kan.;

Bobby and Walsie Fitzgerald of Somerset, Pa.; Billy and Billie June Foster of Las Cruces, N.M.; James and Betty Fox of Reno, Nev.; Ronald and Judy Frank of Harlowton, Mont.; Emmett Hayslip of Grand Forks, N.D.; James and Rebecca Henderson of Estes Park, Colo.; Billy and Emery Hill of Lake Hamilton, Fla.;

Boyd Jr. and Elaine Huett of Quimby, Iowa; David and Judy Jackson of Greeley, Colo; Willis Jr. and Ruth Kimzey of Jackson, Tenn.; Bill and Grace Kunst of Danbury, Conn.; Harold and Sue Anne Lefler of Owego, N.Y.; Bob and Joy Lynn of Ripley, Miss.; Charles and Gladys McGuire of Bassett, Va.

Also: Norman Jr. and Karen Mitchell of Deal Island, Md.; James and Sherry Murphy of New Baltimore, Mich.; Arthur and Wendy Newsham of Surrey, British Columbia, Canada; Rick and Lyla Nichols of Lonedell, Mo.; Robert and Teresa Jo Norris of Denver, Colo; John and Patricia Ann Porter of Old Hickory, Tenn.; Bill and Sally Tober of Clarksville, Tenn.; Don and Carolyn Vardeman of Danville, Calif.; Huel and Daisy Waddell of Las Vegas, Nev.; and Eugene and Anne Williams of Waterloo, Iowa.

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Eight Agencies Share
Large Trust Income

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Four national Baptist agencies and three state Baptist agencies will share nearly \$8 million realized from the sale of stock from a trust established for them in 1944.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary received one-fourth of the money, or \$1,944,000, from the sale of timberland, on which oil was discovered, held through stock by the Ida Bottoms trust.

Three other national agencies, the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, all received one-eighth shares of nearly \$972,000.

The Buckner Baptist Children's Homes in Texas, the Arkansas Baptist State Hospital and the Bottoms Orphanage in Monticello, Ark., also received one-eighth shares.

The Foreign Mission Board's share will be invested for operating expenses of a proposed missionary orientation center. Everett Deane, board treasurer, anticipates annual income of around \$60,000 from investments made with the money.

The Bottoms family, known for their liberal gifts to Baptist work, provided \$100,000 in 1918 and 1919 for the purchase of the Foreign Mission Board's first headquarters building. They also gave money for church buildings in Nazareth, Palestine (now part of Israel) and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and have contributed generously to home missions work as well.

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