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Helms School Prayer Measure
Likely Dead for This Year

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Legislation denying federal courts jurisdiction in school prayer cases appears to be all but dead in the 96th Congress.

"I would say S. 450 is going nowhere," said Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier, D-Wis., chairman of the House Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice which recently concluded five days of hearings on the volatile school prayer issue.

Kastenmeier told Baptist Press the bulk of testimony was against the Helms proposal which was passed by the Senate in April 1979 as an amendment to S. 450.

Without a favorable report from Kastenmeier's panel and the full House Judiciary Committee, the only way for the Helms Amendment to reach the House floor is through a discharge petition initiated by Rep. Philip M. Crane, R-Ill., also an unlikely prospect.

"Right now the drive for signatures appears to have bogged down somewhat," said Gary Jarmin, legislative director for Christian Voice, one of the groups supporting the Helms measure.

The number of signatures on the discharge petition has leveled off since proponents pushed the figure to the 170-175 range with expanded efforts early this summer, well below the 218 required to bring the bill to the House floor for a vote.

"I would be less than honest to say I am very optimistic," said Jarmin, who called the chances of getting the necessary signatures "less than likely."

Still, the Christian Voice Moral Government Fund plans to push the petition and has hired William Chasey, former lobbyist with The Roundtable, an organization of political and religious conservatives, to augment its efforts.

Jarmin said their efforts will focus on Republican House members.

"We're going to drop any pretense of this being a bipartisan move," he said, noting that "the Republican Party in its platform has gone on record in favor of prayer in school."

Kastenmeier said there is a "possibility" his panel may consider a Sense of Congress Resolution advocating periods of silence in public schools, but quickly added "there are difficulties with that as well."

"There is a possibility for us to take action on a resolution of some kind and there is also a possibility that we will take no definitive action this year," Kastenmeier said. "In the waning weeks of this session, I'm quite doubtful we will act."

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During the hearings Kastenmeier stressed the fact that Sense of Congress Resolutions such as one introduced by Rep. Stephen L. Neal, D-N.C., simply restate what is already permissible under the Constitution.

Jarmin also questioned the value of such a resolution, saying it would be "meaningless" and would "take the heat off those who want to vote for school prayer without having to sign the discharge petition."

Though the Helms Amendment almost certainly will be rejected and support for a Sense of Congress Resolution remains doubtful, the controversy over school prayer will not end this year.

"If we don't get it through this Congress, we intend to come back next year and push for it again," Jarmin said.

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Hospital Staff Takes
Last Days One At a Time

By Anita Bowden

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BUKITTINGGI, Indonesia (BP)--Immanuel Hospital faces the main road into Bukittinggi, proof that those who predicted the hospital would never be built in the strong Moslem community underestimated the persistence and faith of Southern Baptist missionaries in Indonesia.

Now, with increasing opposition from Moslem leaders who have pressured the government to get rid of the Christian influence in Bukittinggi, they now face the difficult task of leaving Immanuel and relocating.

"We're just taking it one day at a time," says Win Applewhite, Southern Baptist missionary physician and hospital director. "We'll continue working here as long as we can, but make plans to move when we have to."

Applewhite says he and his wife, LaVerne, and nurse Everley Hayes knew it wouldn't be easy when they agreed to open the hospital in Bukittinggi. Moslem leaders had fought any kind of Christian medical work since 1962 when missionary Frank Owen moved there with the idea of opening a clinic and establishing a 50-bed hospital. He opened a clinic in 1965 and was instrumental in land negotiations, but died in 1970 before hospital construction was completed.

When the Applewhites arrived in 1972, the shell of the building was up, but the inside was incomplete. "We spent the next years trying to get everything finished up and then trying to get permission to open it," Applewhite says. "Every stage had to be approved by the governor's office and the same people who had objected originally made all kinds of efforts to block it."

Before they left on furlough in 1975 the Applewhites had gathered a group of medical and professional people ready to staff the hospital as soon as it opened. Then in December 1975, missionary Kathleen Jones and a nucleus of workers from Baptist Hospital in Kediri, Indonesia, arrived to open the outpatient clinic. Hospital wards opened the following year.

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The 50-bed hospital currently averages 40 resident patients and between 380 and 400 people receive care through the outpatient clinic each week. Most patients come from among the 80,000 residents in the Bukittinggi area, but some come from as far away as Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, some 600 miles away.

Although not everyone on staff is a Christian, Applewhite says most are and the others are chosen carefully with the hope they will fit in well.

"Because we have been told we cannot overtly witness, the pressure is on us to be Christians. We remind each other of it every day. This is the one chance that we've got—to really be a Christian in the way we do things—the way we deal with everybody. I think we have established a reputation for being kind to people," Applewhite says.

Although overt witnessing is not allowed, he says the staff has many opportunities to witness secondarily. An example of this occurred when a woman of the Batak tribe in North Sumatra was in the obstetrical ward. The Bataks baptize and name their babies soon after delivery. In this case someone on the staff began talking to the new mother about her baby's name and mentioned that Baptists don't baptize their babies. That prompted questions from the Batak woman and the staff member was able to explain the plan of salvation while the whole ward listened. Sometimes one of the Minang nurses will ask questions, too, Applewhite says.

Witnessing reaches out to the community through good medical care and especially after a spectacular operation. One poor family from an outlying community brought their little girl to the hospital. She had a harelip and her teeth had come in at odd positions along the deformity. Hers was the only Christian family in the village and Moslem leaders had told her parents her deformity was punishment for their Christian beliefs.

Applewhite and the operating staff "took out a chunk of her upper jaw, bone, teeth and everything, turned it down and wired her teeth in place until it healed." Then they repaired the harelip. Her father took pictures back to the village to show how the repair was progressing and "now several want to come down" for repair jobs themselves, he says.

Most of the bed patients and the people who come to the clinic would be unable to pay major medical bills from large city hospitals. Realizing this, the staff at Immanuel charges a minimal fee for services but still manages to run an economical hospital.

Five years ago the Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$20,000 for the first year's operations, Applewhite says. By 1979 the figure had reached \$39,000. But even with inflation running between 10 and 20 percent yearly, Applewhite says \$4,000 was left at the end of 1979 and no increase was requested for 1980. Surgery prices have increased only once in five years and clinic charges haven't changed.

The staff also has been successful in a major community goal.

"When we first came here we decided on a goal of changing the atmosphere in the community in 15 years so people could become Christian without being ostracized," LaVerne says. "When we came, Christians here were completely ostracized. Their children couldn't go to school, they lost inheritance...."

Now, Applewhite says: "We can look out front and see those Moslem people who have made pilgrimages sitting outside the clinic doors, waiting to be seen. They know us and they like us and laugh and talk to us and they accept us. They invite us to their homes and we go.

"There are a number of Minangs in the area who are underground Christians now. They've been to our house at night to tell us they believe in Jesus."

These underground Christians haven't come to worship services at the Baptist church in Bukittinggi yet. The Applewhites feel when a larger group becomes established they will come out and publicly announce their Christian faith.

But the Applewhites and the other Southern Baptist missionaries at Immanuel probably won't be there to see that happen. Even though the hospital's ministry is making friends in the community, even though they've reached more than half of their 15-year goal in four years, the Moslem religious leaders who opposed the hospital from the beginning are pushing ever harder to remove that Christian witness.

It appears the days are numbered for Christian witness and health care at Immanuel Hospital. Perhaps even the hospital's success has helped seal its fate as Moslem leaders have seen the community choose medical care at Immanuel over that available at a government-operated facility.

At its September meeting, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board gave the Indonesian missionaries authority to work with Indonesian Baptist leaders to negotiate with the Indonesian government on relocation of the hospital. A less-hostile site in a resettlement area 500 miles to the south is being considered.

The missionaries don't want to leave. But even though their stay has been short, they are glad they came. They think the ministry of Immanuel Hospital will long be remembered in Bukittinggi.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

American Jewry Ired
Over Smith's Remarks

Baptist Press
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NEW YORK (BP)--American Jewish leaders are angry and upset over remarks made by Bailey Smith, president of the 13.4 million-member Southern Baptist Convention, during a religious-political gathering last month.

The remarks, transcribed from a tape of Smith's address to the National Affairs Briefing, were circulated in a letter by Rabbi Solomon S. Bernards, co-director of Interfaith Affairs of the Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Bernard's letter quotes Smith: "I'm telling you all other gods besides Jehovah and his son Jesus Christ are strange gods. It's interesting to me at great political battles how you have a Protestant to pray and a Catholic to pray and then you have a Jew to pray.

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"With all due respect to those dear people, my friend, God Almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew. For how in the world can God hear the prayer of a man who says that Jesus Christ is not the true Messiah? It is blasphemous. It may be politically expedient, but no one can pray unless he prays through the name of Jesus Christ."

Smith, who also is president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, said he made the statement and "it is true."

"I was emphasizing the distinctive nature of Jesus Christ," Smith said. "I still believe it is blasphemous to say that Jesus Christ is not the Messiah or Savior. As a Christian minister I must proclaim what the Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:5: 'For there is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus.'"

He added: "The only prayer I believe God hears from anybody who has been denying Jesus is, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner and save me for Christ's sake,'" Smith added.

Smith said he is aware of his role as president of the SBC, but added: "We make a mistake when we try so hard at public relations we lose our missions thrust."

Marc Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, took exception with Smith's remarks, calling them "morally offensive, really a defamation of 4,000 years of loyalty" and adding they are "an act of presumption and arrogance suggesting that this one person knows the mind of God...and is placing himself in the place of God."

Tanenbaum added: "We are struggling to understand each other, not through caricatures and stereotypes. His (Smith's) remarks seem an example of that sort of thing, a mindless departure from the understanding that has developed."

Tanenbaum charged Smith with having "invincible ignorance" and with being insensitive to his position as spokesman for the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

"The fact he used the occasion of this kind of forum (NAB) to make that kind of declaration is very upsetting to many of us. There is concern—and not just among the Jewish community—about the secularizing of evangelization and the politicizing of evangelical churches," he said.

Glenn Igleheart, director of interfaith witness at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, said Smith's remarks, "instead of furthering understanding, actually impedes it."

He noted Baptists should affirm "the uniqueness of God's act in Jesus of Nazareth for the redemption of all people, Jews as well as Gentiles...But to state that God only hears the prayers of Christians is another matter...I feel we must be wary of placing restrictions on who God will listen to lest we make the same claims of groups like Jehovah's Witnesses do of having the sole franchise of God."

Theologian Edward Humphrey, a professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, commented he believes "salvation is only in Christ, but I feel he (Smith) is going too far. Who is he to say what God hears or doesn't hear?"

"I feel God loves all of his people, and listens to all, even when they are limited by knowledge or willingness. God is working with man, and we should not measure his listening by the measure of understanding or obedience. That is for God to do," said Humphreys, who taught in the Baptist seminary in Nigeria for 15 years before becoming a professor at Golden Gate 15 years ago.