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83-93

Senate Panel Approves Two School Prayer Amendments

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Yielding to White House pressure, a Senate Judiciary subcommittee has agreed to send to full committee President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer along with a "silent prayer" version favored by a majority of the subcommittee.

The Subcommittee on the Constitution had been set for more than two weeks to scuttle the Reagan proposal in favor of one pushed by Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, allowing "individual or group silent prayer and meditation in public schools" and providing "equal access to the use of public schools by all voluntary (including religious) student groups."

But previous efforts to conclude subcommittee action had stalled in the face of White House insistence on approval of its proposal which would allow state-written oral prayer in public schools. In an effort to resolve the dilemma, Hatch moved to send both proposals to full committee to let that panel "work its will."

Hatch emphasized he would have preferred to send only the "silent prayer" amendment to the Judiciary Committee but deferred to White House wishes because of President Reagan's commitment to the issue.

It may prove to be a short-lived victory for the White House. Judiciary Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., said he had "personally conducted a canvass" of his panel and was convinced the Reagan proposal as introduced "has no chance of being favorably reported."

Nonetheless, Thurmond said "sentiment could change" and supported the Hatch motion to send both versions to full committee.

Thurmond described the Hatch substitute as "the solution most likely to be passed by both Houses" and "a definite step in the right direction" despite the fact it is not strong enough for some supporters of the Reagan measure.

"We must not come away from this battle with no step forward having been taken," he said.

Preference for the Hatch version was also stated by the other subcommittee member present at the markup, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa.

Later, aides announced the full Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing June 27 before completing action on the proposals. Several religious, educational and civil liberties groups, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, had earlier urged Thurmond to hold hearings before full committee action on the Hatch language.

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Baylor University President
Recovering From Heart Attack

Baptist Press
6/21/83

WACO, Texas (BP)--Baylor University President Herbert H. Reynolds suffered a mild heart attack Sunday, June 19, at his home. Reynolds, 53, was listed in "serious but stable" condition at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center in Waco until mid-morning Monday, when his condition was upgraded to "stable."

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Doctors said Reynolds would remain in the hospital for approximately seven days and would then need "another four or five weeks of rest and rehabilitation" before returning to work as head of the largest Southern Baptist university in the country.

Reynolds succeeded Abner V. McCall as president in June 1981 when McCall was named university chancellor. Reynolds came to Baylor in 1969 as senior vice-president. He was named executive vice president and treasurer in 1970, executive vice president and provost in 1973, and executive vice president and chief operating officer in 1978.

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Egocentricity Infects Church,
Colson Tells SBC Session

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
6/21/83

PITTSBURGH (BP)--"Doing the gospel is not only our most powerful witness, it is the hope for bringing back a sense of community which 20th century technology has all but stripped away from us," Charles Colson told the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Colson, former Watergate conspirator and now president of Prison Fellowship Ministry (an interdenominational Christian ministry to inmates, ex-offenders and their families) said the power of God rests with the church and church members must exercise that power by forming personal relationships with people, including those--like inmates with whom Colson works--who are social outcasts.

Colson charged the basis for ministry begins with God's love for humanity. "We go because there are men and women who need to know Christ's love for them," he said. "But the only way they ever will know that love is if we demonstrate that love by going to them. We go because God commands us to, because we are God's people who care because God cares."

Colson said his own experiences in prison led him to realize "the object of life is not the pursuit of gain, the fulfillment of self, but the service of Christ."

Ten years ago, Colson made a profession of faith in Christ. He was later convicted of charges in the Watergate conspiracy and served more than seven months in two different penal institutions. He said he could not erase the memories of the empty, vacant stares on the faces of inmates. Incarceration "sucked the life" from individuals, leaving them with little joy and even less to look forward to, said Colson.

"But when men and women in prison come to Christ, there is joy in their faces," he said, "for they have been given their dignity and their self-respect and their personhood. That's what the gospel does."

Colson started Prison Fellowship to respond to the needs he saw while in prison and the failure of penal institutions to remedy the problems or facilitate any real reforms in inmates. Using Bible studies and personal contact, Prison Fellowship works to instill a new sense of worth in inmates.

"I saw men who had been like corpses on their bunks, give their lives to Christ and the next day they would be walking around that compound, their heads up high, transformed by the power of the living God," Colson said.

"There in prison, the ultimate example of the failure of institutions to solve moral problems, where institutions have such a dismal record of expensive failure, I saw God's ways work, that God's ways succeed. And that's our hope today. That's what our hope must rest in, the power of the gospel to transform lives and to change the values by which we live in this society."

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But, Colson added, the only way for the power of God to have a lasting impact on society is for individual church members to go out and be with the people. Colson noted Jesus associated with people whose lives were changed, personally getting involved with them.

He said Ghandi of India illustrated the life of Christ when he took New Testament teachings, abandoned his affluent law practice, donned the traditional Indian dress of the poor and moved into the poorest of villages. Through his personal involvement, Colson noted, Ghandi motivated a whole nation without even holding political office.

Colson said a similar paradox of power in the powerless struck him during a recent Presidential breakfast for religious leaders. Though surrounded by images of power at the White House, President Reagan used the example of a group of volunteers in Missouri "working among the powerless" as an example of what this country needs.

"I couldn't help but be overwhelmed by the irony it took the president of the United States to be challenging the church to do what our Bible already commands us to do," he said.

Political power can't deal with the spiritual crisis in the nation, Colson insisted. Only God--working through the church--offers fresh alternatives to social ills. But the church must leave the sheltered security of the sanctuary and become intimately involved in its community to effect change, he added. Most churches focus on trying to draw people to the church building but God set the pattern by first coming to live among human beings, he said.

"Ours is a real and personal God who lives and has chosen to actually dwell in our midst," Colson explained. "The church today has to go to the people."

Colson noted several hindrances to effective ministry.

He claimed the church has become infected with egocentricity and materialism which has led to a weakening of the gospel message from the pulpits of the church. But a religion that's just a religious adaptation of the egocentric culture "is heresy," he charged.

Colson drew rounds of applause when he called on Baptists to stand on the Bible as "the holy, infallible, inerrant word of God." He also challenged pastors to teach and demand spiritual discipline from their congregations and to spend time equipping laity to "take the gospel out into the world."

"The church should not be a place where people come to be entertained twice a week by the efforts of the pastor," contended Colson. "It's a place where the pastor equips the saints to go out and make a difference in the world beyond the church."

Reaching society with the gospel calls for God's people to be holy. But holiness includes justice, he pointed out. "We must listen to the prophets when they tell us a nation that would sell the poor for a pair of shoes is under the judgement of God," warned Colson. "Biblical justice is caring for those who cannot help themselves."

"And it is having the courage to stand against society. We're not to take our place as an institution of society, but we are to disturb society," he contended.

"We are to be a whole new order, God's kingdom being made manifest," said Colson. "If we are obedient, we'll not only make a difference, but we'll heal the brokenness of our land."

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Ethnic Evangelism
Like Ice Cream Flavors

By Charlene Shucker

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6/21/83

ATLANTA (BP)--Participants in a two-day Congress on Ethnic Evangelism, heard Home Mission Board Language Mission director Oscar Romo warn them to "know your clientele," if you want to increase ethnic church growth.

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Representatives from 18 ethnic groups, including Hispanic, Jamaican, French Haitian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Japanese, Vietnamese, American Indian and the deaf listened as Romo compared ethnic church growth to the 31 flavors of a popular ice cream company.

There were also lectures on evangelizing singles, families, youth and urban America.

When marketing "a product known as the gospel" Southern Baptists should look in ice cream stores for some guidance, he said. Different ice cream flavors are kept in different containers in the same cooler--together but not mixed up," he said.

Like the ice cream, religious heritage is different for each ethnic group. Their history, process of life, location, environment, texture of life and value systems are different, he said. "We may preach all week long and never reach them for Jesus Christ. It is not the message we are changing but the context in which we do it," Romo said.

"Our greatest means of multiplying is through our own natural cultural systems," he said. Church growth is based on leadership, language usage and cultural uniqueness of the group. The program must be people oriented.

Romo divided ethnics into six distinct groups: the nuclear ethnic, American ethnic, ethnic American, marginal, alienated and amalgamated ethnic.

The nuclear ethnic migrated or was born in the United States yet lives in settings isolated from the mainstream of American life.

The American ethnic was born, raised and reared in the United States, while the ethnic American lives and works in the United States but identifies home as Cuba, Mexico, China, Hong Kong or from wherever his ancestors emigrated.

The marginal ethnic identifies with the language culture group when it is convenient and beneficial. As an example, Romo used the Indian who says, "I live with the white man, work with the white man," but asks, "where are my benefits from the Indian tribe?"

The alienated ethnic identifies with the race and yet his relationship with his ethnic heritage and language is non-existent as opposed to the amalgamated ethnic, who is in constant search of his heritage and is uncomfortable wherever he happens to be, he said.

"You cannot approach all of those with the same approach. We must learn how to weave the message of Jesus Christ to fit into these circumstances. What makes it difficult is that within an ethnic family you may find many of these categories," Romo explained.

"And what blows the mind of the typical bureaucrat is he has already programmed that everybody is going to like vanilla ice cream."

Romo said the tool for reaching ethnic groups is language and the leaders must come from the people. "We must affirm the legitimacy of the ethnic church...", he stressed. "The motivation for what we do is the spirit of God, the cohesive channels through which the gospel is sold to these people is language."

"In the south you speak Southern or you may talk all day and never communicate. We do not speak English, we speak American of which five percent is of German origin," Romo added. "I can take you to places where we have had one of the most educated, erudite, evangelists come in and after a week there have been no decisions.

"Six months later a man who murdered all languages he used came in and had over 100 people make a profession of faith and be baptized. The difference is not in the message, the difference is that he was able to communicate. Communication is using the language of the people; of putting it within the culture of the people," Romo said.

Brotherhood Lawsuit
Appeal Heard By Court

CINCINNATI (BP)--An appeal of a lower court decision in a \$3 million sexual harassment lawsuit against the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission has been taken under advisement by a three-judge panel of the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

A decision on the appeal is not expected for at least several months.

Barbara (Mrs. Robert) Minor, 45, a former secretary at the Memphis, Tenn.-based Brotherhood Commission appealed a June 18, 1982, decision by federal district judge Odell Horton of Memphis that "a complete and binding settlement agreement has been negotiated among the parties in this cause."

The appeal, filed by Mrs. Minor's Memphis attorney, Hite McLean, does not deal with the merits of the case, but only on whether a legitimate settlement was reached.

Mrs. Minor, a nine-year employee of the commission, filed suit April 9, 1981, against the commission, three of its executives and the Southern Baptist Convention, charging sexual harassment and defamation of reputation.

Named as defendants were James H. Smith, commission executive director; Norman Godfrey, associate executive director, and David Haney, director of the Baptist Men's division who since has left the commission.

In his ruling, Horton ordered that a settlement reached Aug. 4, 1981, be enforced. Mrs. Minor, however, contended that settlement had not been reached, although she admitted she signed a letter setting out terms of a settlement negotiated by her then attorney, Lillian Dykes, and Ernest G. Kelly Jr., the commission's attorney.

Kelly argued the case before the three-judge federal appeals panel on behalf of the defendants. R. Kreis White, a partner in the Nashville firm of Guenther, White and Jordan, appeared on behalf of the SBC, noting that on the settlement issue, the position of the Brotherhood Commission and the SBC "is the same."

James P. Guenther added the SBC has "from the very first, taken the position it should not be party to this suit."

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CORRECTION-----In (BP) story, "'83 Lottie Moon Offering Lowered," mailed 6/14/83, in sixth paragraph, please change "83.2 percent of the 1982 goal was reached" to "93.2 percent of the 1982 goal was reached."

Thanks,
Baptist Press