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84-72

Moon Faces Prison Term;  
High Court Rejects Appeal

By Stan Haste

BJC-N

WASHINGTON (BP)—Sun Myung Moon, founder and leader of the Unification Church, faces a jail sentence in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's rejection of the controversial South Korean's appeal for review of his conviction for tax evasion and conspiracy to file false income tax returns.

Moon, whose 18-month prison term could begin as early as next month, failed to convince the high court to review his conviction on grounds the funds at issue in the dispute with the Internal Revenue Service were held in trust for his church.

Although the court's refusal to review the matter was announced in a standard one-line notice along with many other cases similarly rejected, at least six of the nine justices are known to have voted against the review. No fewer than four justices must agree in order for any case appealed to the high court to receive a full review.

In papers filed with the court, a battery of prominent attorneys headed by Harvard law professor Laurence H. Tribe argued Moon's conviction should be examined because money deposited in New York's Chase Manhattan Bank and stock in an importing company called Tong II Enterprises belonged to the church, not to Moon personally.

By convicting Moon, the argument went, a New York jury infringed on the Unification Church's right to determine for itself how it handled its funds. "Reverend Moon's claim," Tribe wrote, "was that he had been given the assets as a religious leader, by his religious followers, for their religion."

Tribe also appealed the conviction on the basis Moon's request for a bench trial (trial before a judge) rather than a jury trial should have been granted. U.S. District Judge Gerard L. Goettel, who presided over last year's six-week trial, ordered a jury trial.

But the key argument by the 64-year-old Moon's lawyers was that he "personifies the church movement." That considered, "a jury would have been bound to defer to whatever decision had been made by church members as to where and how to repose property they intended for church benefit," Tribe maintained.

"No recent controversy," Tribe stated, has "so demonstrated the danger to religious liberty of a jury licensed to disregard the decisions of a church and the desires of that church's members in favor of its own lay instincts about how authority and property within a church should be allocated."

And, he continued, "If these petitioners go to jail, they will indeed be the first religious leaders since the ratification of the Constitution to be imprisoned because of the way they and their followers chose to organize their church's internal affairs."

Moon's conviction followed an IRS investigation of tax returns for 1973, 1974 and 1975 showing interest income on personal checking and savings accounts with Chase Manhattan exceeded \$100,000 for the three-year period. Those earnings were not reported on Moon's income tax returns those years.

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Besides the 18-month prison sentence, Moon was fined \$25,000. Another church official, Takeru Kamiyama, who was tried with Moon, received a six-month sentence and was fined \$5,000. Kamiyama was convicted of conspiring with Moon to file false returns.

For its part, the government argued against a Supreme Court review, declaring that "to look at the quality of a taxpayer's proof hardly violates the First Amendment." While "a church is free to organize itself as it sees fit," the government brief went on, "religious leaders, no less than the average taxpayer, must assume the risk when they engage in undocumented transactions that the jury may not believe their account of the events."

The government's successful prosecution of Moon has drawn expressions of concern from an unusually broad array of religious and civil liberties organizations because of fear IRS might target one of them next on similar charges. They ranged from the Marxist Spartacist League to the Christian Legal Society.

One group asking the court to hear the case was the Coalition for Religious Freedom, a newly-formed organization headed by Moral Majority's Jerry Falwell. Others in the coalition, consisting of well-known ministers, include Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr. and current SBC Pastors' Conference President Charles Stanley, pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church and a rumored candidate this year to succeed Draper.

Others in the coalition include pastors E.V. Hill and D. James Kennedy, television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, Campus Crusade for Christ's William R. Bright, Joshua O. Haberman of the Washington Hebrew Congregation and Bishop Thomas J. Welsh of the Catholic diocese of Allentown, Pa.

Other religious groups appealing on Moon's behalf were the National Council of Churches (representing 32 mainline Protestant and Orthodox communions), the Mormon Church, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the National Association of Evangelicals, American Baptist Churches, United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Also siding with Moon were the American Civil Liberties Union, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Conference of Black Mayors and U.S. Senator Orrin G. Hatch, R.-Utah, chairman of the Senate subcommittee on the Constitution, among others.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, which decided against asking the high court to review the Moon case, was nevertheless considering joining the case as a "friend of the court" along with others if the justices had decided to hear the case.

Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel John W. Baker, who expressed concern at the March annual meeting of the BJCPA over the possible implications if the Moon conviction were allowed to stand, reacted to the court's rejection by saying, "I remain concerned that Moon's conviction may encourage IRS to go after other churches and their leaders."

He added: "Governmental intrusion into church life in this country is accelerating and is particularly critical at the point of attempting to define for churches what their polity ought to be. It is not the role of government to make such definitions. Churches must be left alone to make such determinations for themselves or else the future of religious liberty in America will be jeopardized."

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Former FMB Staffer  
Named To Faculty

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MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—Stanley A. Nelson, a former staff member of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has been appointed associate professor of theology at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

Nelson, for the past two years, has been at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomoso where he taught Old Testament, theology and Baptist history. Previously, he was an associate in the personnel selection department of the FMB, where he served 12 years as director of the missionary journeyman program.

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In addition to his teaching experience and service in foreign missions, Nelson has been pastor of four Southern Baptist churches in Texas, Kansas and North Carolina.

Nelson holds a bachelor of arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., and master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He also has done advanced graduate study at Union Theological Seminary in New York and at Int rpreters House in North Carolina.

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Mrs. O'Hair: 'Southern  
Baptists Can't Stop Us'

By Laurie K. Taylor

*Western Recorder  
(C) N KY*  
Baptist Press  
5/15/84

LEXINGTON, Ky. (BP)—You could order an X-rated Bible for five dollars. Bumper stickers declaring "Religion Can Be Hazardous To Your Mental Health" and "Souls Fit Shoes—Not People" cost a dollar. The pen and ink poster of God engaging in the sex act with Uncle Sam wasn't available—it had already sold out.

All these items were available in the backroom of the 14th annual National American Atheist Convention held in Lexington, Ky., Easter weekend.

Over 300 atheists across the nation and as far away as England gathered for the three-day event. Of these, an estimated 100 were Kentuckians.

Herman Harris, a professional engineer and director of the Lexington chapter of American Atheists, was pleased with the turnout. According to Harris, a dozen families in the Bluegrass area are members of his four-year-old chapter and receive his monthly newsletter.

Bob Harrington, the renowned chaplain of Bourbon Street, was among the program personalities for the controversial meeting. He and his wife, Zonia, led a seminar on their concept of "balanced living."

Gerald Tholen, vice-president of the Board of American Atheists, clarified Harrington's relationship with the group in a private interview with the Western Recorder, newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Bob Harrington claims belief in a deity though doesn't say what," Tholen said. "I assume he believes in life after death, but he's predominately interested in life here and now."

When questioned about the debates between Harrington and Madelyn Murray-O'Hair, Thoren replied Harrington used to debate O'Hair five or six years ago when "he was more of an evangelical minister.

"He's really changed his philosophy since then and is now more concerned with each person getting the most out of life," Tholen continued. "He has become a humanist and is quite a humorous and entertaining speaker."

Bill Murray, O'Hair's son who converted to Christianity, also was in Lexington during the convention in an effort to counter some of his mother's support. He spoke in several churches in the area, including Lexington's Broadway Baptist Church.

Murray was to have led a group of Christian protestors outside the hotel, but driving rains and strong winds halted the effort. Instead, volunteers wearing baseball caps advertising Bill Murray's ministry stationed themselves at every entrance to the convention area and distributed gospel tracts.

Murray also took out quarter page ads in the Lexington Herald-Leader offering a hotline number for people to call to ask questions about faith in Christ.

Since becoming a Christian, Murray has had littl contact with his mother, who calls herself "the most hated woman in America."

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In an address O'Hair spoke of her son's decision to become a Christian: "The atheists of the nation have sat back and watched the spectacle of the abuse of the first family of atheism. One of my sons has cracked under the assault and in a classic psychological, almost textbook, reaction, joined his oppressors, with whom he now openly and willingly identifies."

O'Hair's other son, Jon, the director of the American Atheist center, presented several awards during the convention. The American Atheist of the Year Award was given to a Georgia atheist who won a court battle to prevent a statue of Jesus from being erected on public property.

Keynote address was delivered by O'Hair, the founder and current matriarch of the American Atheist Center in Dallas. In it she blasted the Reagan administration for its involvement with the "Falwellians."

"Theirs is not just religious rhetoric," she warned convention goers. "Reagan and the Falwellians are going to seize the nation for Christ in 1984."

"Reagan declared 1983 the Year of the Bible," she said with disgust. "And 1984 is the year he's going to 'put the Bible's great truths in action.'"

Referring to the recent Senate vote on the school prayer issue she claimed, "The religious community cannot muster the support they say they can muster."

She cited the fact that 10,000 Christians were expected to attend a prayer vigil during the debate on the prayer issue and only "one to three thousand showed up to pressure the U.S. Senate to support the issue."

However, O'Hair later reprimanded her fellow atheists for not being vocal enough on the prayer issue.

"How many letters did you write?" she asked with obvious disappointment. "The religious community wrote and they won."

O'Hair commissioned her listeners to rally together and carry out their motto, "Unity today—Power tomorrow."

"We need to educate the American public. That's our job," she advised.

"We need more emphasis on television outreach where we can have control of the media."

She expressed delight that 2,000 of America's 9,000 libraries now receive "American Atheist," her monthly magazine.

Pleading with her followers to become more active, O'Hair suggested, "We must stand up in our communities. We are probably the finest citizens America has."

In a private conversation with Western Recorder O'Hair was asked what her message to Southern Baptists would be if she were given the opportunity to address them.

She hesitated for a moment and then responded, "Southern Baptists must accept the fact that we are here to stay. There's no way they can stop the growth or spread of atheism."

"It's in their best interest to dialogue and to stop discrimination against us."

O'Hair elaborated on the fact that in seven states atheists still can't hold public office, testify in a court of law or adopt children.

"The religious community still launches continuing attacks on us through radio, television and the press. We, on the other hand, have to pay to use the media."

Then she paused and sneered with fiery determination, "One day atheists will wrest (the media) from them. We will get power and the religious community will not get one line."

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Church Incorporates BIN  
Into New Adult Building

By Charles Willis

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)—Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock, Ark., has incorporated BIN (Baptist Telecommunication Network) into an adult education building, currently under construction.

According to Bob Pruett, minister of adult education, committee planning for the facility began in 1979, prior to the Baptist Sunday School Board's announcement of the network to Southern Baptist churches.

While many churches plan education space specifically for children or youth, Park Hill members wanted "uniquely adult education space, specialized to adult needs," said Pruett.

The building committee went to colleges, conference centers and other churches to study concepts and trends in adult education, he explained. Their conclusion was that video "is the coming thing." When plans for BIN were announced in January 1981, the greatly expanded potential for video in adult education prompted the church to incorporate the network into plans for the building.

Originally, plans called for three of the four floors of the 28,000-square-foot building to be used when the building was completed in late 1984. But with adult Sunday school departments meeting in four houses and a theater building and with a 1983 growth rate of eight percent, the fourth floor also will be used in opening day. Current adult Sunday school enrollment is 1,250 with an average attendance of 600.

Each of the 12 assembly rooms will feature a 25-inch screen color monitor for viewing of BIN messages, ACTS (American Christian Television System) broadcasts by the SEC Radio and Television Commission and locally produced presentations. Additional monitors will be located in the fellowship hall. Presently, Pruett envisions BIN use in weekly workers meetings, choir previews and other church organization-related training opportunities. He said he anticipates the church having its own printed schedule, indicating broadcast staff announcements and local promotion of events.

Announcements would be available on Sunday mornings for department leaders who chose to incorporate them into Sunday school department activities. His hope is that video will aid the church in its efforts to limit announcements in worship services.

Pruett said the church staff will look at BIN previews to see what should be recorded for short-term and for long-term use through the media library.

"BIN will never take the place of personal contact," Pruett observed, "but it will supplement what we do in person." Interaction through a local facilitator will help maintain personal contact, he said.

While completion of the BIN equipment installation will not be finished until October, Pruett already anticipates church member benefits through "expanded ideas for teaching and training, improvement in what we're doing now and an awareness of denominational emphases and concerns."

Cary Heard, pastor of the 2,830-member church, hopes the congregation can use the programming on Baptist polity and doctrine. "The potential and flexibility are there to do just about anything," he said.

Plans to broadcast portions of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, Heard said, will enable Southern Baptists to see any events as they happen, "instead of reading what others say of us." Ultimately, he hopes members of Park Hill Baptist Church will gain from denominational programming "a view larger than their own church and Sunday school class."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press