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**BSSB to exceed '95 expectations;
trustees OK \$266.7 million budget**

**Baptist Press
9/28/95**

By Charles Willis

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A projected record turnaround in finances and a range of ministry successes highlight the Baptist Sunday School Board's 1994-95 year, according to a report from President James T. Draper Jr. to the agency's trustees, meeting Sept. 25-27 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

The detailed, 70-minute report was met with a standing ovation in response to projections for the fiscal year to end just five days later on Sept. 30.

Draper told trustees "... the news is good. In fact, in some areas, the news is spectacular!"

Projections for year-end are for \$244.5 million in income, more than \$1 million over budget and almost \$20 million ahead of last year. Funds Provided from Operations, revenue above operating costs used for expanded ministries, is projected at \$5.6 million, compared to a budgeted \$100,000 and last year's loss of \$8.2 million.

Draper said the loss of a year ago "was a low point for me, for the (board's) executive management group and for all employees."

Trustees later approved a 1995-96 budget of \$266.7 million, a 9.1 percent increase over the current year's projection including Funds Provided from Operations of almost \$6.5 million, a 14.9 percent increase over this year's projection, and 2.4 percent of total revenue.

Due to rising paper costs that have outpaced inflation, trustees also approved a 7 percent average increase in the prices of dated church literature beginning with the April-May-June 1996 issues. Paper pulp prices increased 66.9 percent from June 1994 to June 1995, reaching an all-time high in September.

In reporting on the current budget, Draper said revenue was \$227.3 million through Aug. 31, compared to a budget of \$217.9 million, or 4.3 percent ahead of budget.

"As of Sept. 30," he announced, "our capital debt will be down to \$8.4 million. We are ahead of our three-year payback schedule." The last capital loan will be paid off in September 1997.

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Final year-end totals will be available in early November.

"The most important reason for these improved results is that our employees have made a supreme effort, not only in cutting costs and living within the budget but also in improving productivity, listening to the wants and needs of churches and individuals that buy our materials and services, improving existing products, developing creative new resources and solving problems. It has been a team effort all across the board.

"We have reduced expenses even when it hurt. Needed positions have gone unfilled. Our budget for next year acknowledges the need for filling some vacant positions. We have developed and implemented improved processes for monitoring budgets and developing projections."

Among improved results he reported are:

- Projected sales of \$94.2 million by the retail group, representing \$7 million or 8 percent growth.
 - A major turnaround by the church leadership services division resulting in a net contribution for 1994-95 compared to a loss last year.
 - An actual sales growth of 19 percent by Broadman & Holman (B&H) through August.
 - An excellent year for Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.
 - Increased productivity by corporate overhead components, while operating under budget.
 - Continued organizational fine-tuning, resulting in reduced personnel costs.
- "Even as we celebrate these good results, we must recognize it will be a tremendous challenge to continue to improve," he said. "We must establish an ongoing pattern of profitable operation, while growing and improving our products, services and ministries."

In the area of progress toward achieving the agency's vision, he cited:

- Improvement in identifying problems and moving quickly to identify and implement solutions. Budget management, meeting editorial deadlines for shortened production schedules and filling and shipping literature orders accurately and on time were among examples he provided trustees.
- Progress in soliciting and listening to feedback about materials and services and then making improvements. For example, he said, while the rate of decline in sales of Sunday school literature has slowed, substantial improvements introduced in adult Life and Work materials last October have resulted in an average 1.4 percent increase in quarterly sales for the year.
- Progress in increased cooperation across organizational lines. Involvement in the "Right from Wrong" campaign, resulting in resources designed, produced and introduced in less than a year "required tremendous downline cooperation across lines," he observed. "The church growth group is distributing these materials to Southern Baptists. Broadman & Holman is distributing them to the trade. And Baptist Book Stores are promoting and selling the materials and supporting the entire campaign."
- Improvement in the board's ability to take advantage of opportunities. Among examples are the relocation and remodeling of retail stores, resulting in improved sales and service; the provision of a full range of services by church architecture services, with staff licensed to practice in 22 states; distribution of the "Christy" video through B&H. "True Love Waits," the teen-age sexual abstinence campaign, is continuing to spread around the world, with national campaigns under way in other countries.
- Continued analysis of every facet of operations, seeking to look at established ministries with a fresh pair of eyes. He referenced conference centers and work in progress on a mission statement, a master program plan and master facilities plans.

-- Development of resources that meet needs and transform lives. "Experiencing God," he said, "stands as our most remarkable recent example. We continue to ship 1,300 copies of this course every business day to churches and individuals around the world."

-- Progress in using technology to maximize effectiveness and meet needs. For example, he said SBCNet, the denomination's data communications network, now has more than 6,000 subscribers.

Draper reminded trustees, "In 1991, I emphasized that the purpose of seeking greater revenues always must be to provide more ministry."

Ted Warren, executive vice president and chief operating officer, said the board needs to generate a positive financial margin "to sustain its current and future operation and ministries and to provide funds for growth and improvement in ministries."

He said funds above operating expense will be used to pay off debt, fund new assignments from the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, continue to "fix" the board's business, purchase and repair assets, provide for working capital as business and ministry grow and bring contingency reserves up to SBC-required levels, among other items.

With implementation of the SBC Program and Structure Study Committee recommendations, if bylaw changes are approved in 1996, the BSSB will take on additional ministries that have been funded by the Cooperative Program. Those include stewardship education, church history and heritage education, capital fund-raising, implementing a comprehensive strategy for enrichment ministries with men and women and assisting churches with Christian school and home school ministries. The BSSB receives no CP funds but is self-supporting and contributes funds annually to SBC agencies and state Baptist Conventions.

In other matters, trustees heard a progress report on a feasibility study for raising capital funds for needed facility improvements at Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest Baptist Conference centers. A recommendation on whether to conduct a capital campaign is expected to be presented to trustees in their February 1996 meeting.

Trustee chairman Kirk Humphreys, an Oklahoma City businessman, said he believes conference centers "have been places that have been easy to neglect. If we are going to own them, they ought to have the stamp of excellence on them." He encouraged trustees to "make the conference centers a high priority and restore them to a footing they ought to be on."

A report from the church growth group cited plans for a National Conference for Church Leadership at each conference center in 1996; changes in Bible teaching curriculum lines that will result in the Bible Book Series becoming the Exploring the Bible Series and the Convention Uniform Series becoming the Family Bible Series; and an increasing number of widely known authors providing materials through the discipleship and family development division for production of interactive products.

The trade publishing cited current and future products including "Storybook Tree," videotapes that incorporate storytelling, sing-along music and Bible teaching; release of "Christy, The Sweetest Gift," the second in the video series distributed by B&H, the "Experiencing God Bible" to be released in an NIV version in 1996; availability by December 1995 of 11 of the expected 22 volumes of New American Commentary; and publication of four of the 12 volumes in the Library of Baptist Classics

Among accomplishments reported by the retail group were the openings of new Baptist Book Stores in Montgomery, Ala.; Augusta, Ga.; and Fayetteville, N.C. Stores were relocated this year in Springfield, Va.; St. Louis; and Louisville, Ky. The Nashville, Tenn., store was remodeled. In the coming year, eight more stores will be relocated and two others will be remodeled.

SBC President Jim Henry, who has attended BSSB trustee meetings since assuming office in 1994, said he sees evidence of God's presence among Southern Baptists wherever he travels.

"God is at work and we are proud -- not in a boasting sense -- but we don't need to be ashamed," said Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. "We must continually share what God is doing so wonderfully in our midst."

Draper said he believes "if there was ever an opportunity to preach the gospel, it's today. This is our time. I don't want to pass on to those who come behind us failed opportunities."

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**BSSB trustees vote funds
to endow Draper chair**

**Baptist Press
9/28/95**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Baptist Sunday School Board trustees unanimously authorized a gift of \$200,000 to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for the James T. Draper Jr. Chair of Pastoral Ministries Sept. 25 during their fall meeting at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Established in 1994, the Draper chair will be activated when designated endowment funds reach \$1 million. First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, where Draper served as pastor 16 years before becoming BSSB president in 1991, recently pledged \$100,000.

In speaking for the motion, BSSB trustee Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., where Draper is a member, said the board is the beneficiary of the heritage of Southwestern Seminary's influence on the Draper family.

"Dr. Draper is a graduate of Southwestern, his dad was a graduate and his grandfather was a graduate. The roots of the Draper family run deep at Southwestern," Sutton said. "He was a trustee and chairman of the trustees for the seminary."

When Draper agreed to lead the Sunday School Board, Sutton observed, "He took great professional risk. He came because he felt God had led him."

Approving the gift, Sutton said, "is a way we can say 'thank you, Dr. Draper, for taking a risk.'"

Southwestern Seminary President Ken Hemphill said: "I think it's very appropriate that the Sunday School Board trustees recognize and honor Dr. Draper. This action also shows that the board is interested in theological education and supports education."

The BSSB gift pushes funding toward the halfway mark with cash and pledges totaling \$442,786 as of Sept. 26, according to Rodney Geno, director of development records and research at Southwestern.

Sutton noted the purpose of the Draper chair is "to train ministers for the 21st century to spread the gospel." The professor who occupies the chair in the school of theology will be an academician who is knowledgeable in all phases of pastoral ministry and who has served as a pastor at least 10 years.

Sutton said the board has had a history of assisting with institutional needs of SBC agencies, including contributions and other resources.

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**BSSB literature prices
to increase in April '96**

**Baptist Press
9/28/95**

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Due to rising paper costs that have outpaced inflation, the price of dated literature produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board will increase an average of 7 percent beginning with the April-May-June 1996 issues.

"This increase was approved by our trustees during their Sept. 25-27 meeting at Ridgecrest Conference Center and we wanted to get the information out as quickly as possible because we know churches need to have this for use in budget planning," said Gene Mims, vice president of the board's church growth group.

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Mims noted paper pulp prices have increased 66.9 percent from June 1994 to June 1995 compared to an inflation rate for the period of 3 percent. Paper pulp continued to increase, reaching an all-time high in September.

Paper costs have risen from 5.29 percent of total BSSB literature sales to 10.39 percent in just six quarters. For example, he noted one type of paper widely used in dated literature, Penagra Suede, has risen from \$35 per roll in January 1993 to \$62.66 in June 1995.

Mims said the 7 percent increase is an average. Some resources will go up less; others, more, such as titles with limited circulation that cost more per copy to produce.

"While inflation periodically forces an increase in the cost of literature prices, we regret that increases in paper costs beyond the rate of inflation have necessitated this increase," Mims said. "We are glad that our prices continue to be among the lowest for dated church literature. We are committed to providing relevant, high-quality, high-value church literature at the lowest possible cost."

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Gambling commission needed,
SBC leaders tell congressmen

Baptist Press
9/28/95

By Bill Merrell & Tom Strode

WASHINGTON (BP)--A federal commission to scrutinize gambling's effects on the nation should be established, Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry and Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard D. Land said in a letter to the 35 members of the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee.

Committee hearings are scheduled to begin on the proposal Sept. 29. Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., is committee chairman.

The letter stated, "We agree with the sponsor of H.R. 497, Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., the United States is on a 'gambling binge.' We also share Rep. Wolf's assertion, 'This is an issue of national economic importance, and I believe the new Congress should examine it closely.'"

Wolf introduced the bill to form the National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission for the purpose of compiling information on gambling's effect on economics, crime, families and individuals. The nine-member panel Wolf proposes will have three members appointed by the president, three by the Senate majority leader and three by the speaker of the House of Representatives. One of the appointees should be a governor from a state which has legalized gambling, he said.

The commission, Wolf said, should review the cost and effectiveness of federal and state regulations, gambling's impact on other businesses, the influence of gambling promoters on the development of policies regulating gaming, the relationship between gambling and crime, teen-age gambling and the effect of pathological gambling on individuals, families and social institutions. It also should propose whether gaming operations on Indian lands should be regulated by the states, not just the federal government, he said.

The letter to Judiciary Committee members voiced Southern Baptists' advocacy of the panel in plainest terms: "The Christian Life Commission strongly supports the adoption of H.R. 497." The CLC had gone on record applauding Wolf's proposal when he announced his intention to file it in the spring of 1995.

"A congressional commission has the potential of alerting Americans to the dangers of gambling in the same way that the Commission on Pornography formed in 1985 by then-Attorney General Edwin Meese warned of the danger inherent in allowing unbridled proliferation of pornographic material," said Lamar Cooper, the CLC staff member who handles the gambling issue.

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"The gambling industry has convinced large numbers of the public and state legislators that gambling revenue is a 'free lunch' to state budget needs, but there still 'ain't no free lunch,'" Cooper said. "An unbiased commission could point out the discrepancies that exist between what the gambling industry promises to state governments versus what it actually delivers. The use of gambling as a source of revenue does not come without a cost. That cost is the negative impact it has on people and communities."

The proposed commission should be established in a "fair and balanced" way, Wolf said, in order to centralize data so "governors, state legislators and citizens can have the facts they need to make informed decisions."

Wolf has opposed attempts to legalize riverboat gambling in Virginia and would fight against gambling in the District of Columbia, but he said he is not taking a position on what the other 49 states should do.

Wolf gave some examples of his concerns about gambling's impact:

-- "Gambling cannibalizes other business, such as restaurants," he said. The number of restaurants in Atlantic City decreased in 10 years from 243 in 1977, the year after the legalization of casinos, to 146.

-- In the first 16 years of casino gambling in Atlantic City, the police budget tripled to \$24 million while the population fell 20 percent, according to The Wall Street Journal. The crime rate rose 230 percent in the city's first 13 years of legalized casinos, Wolf said.

Only Hawaii and Utah prohibit gambling. There are lotteries in 37 states and casinos in 23 states, Wolf said. By the year 2000, it is predicted 95 percent of Americans will live within a three- to four-hour drive of a casino, he said.

Henry and Land urged careful consideration and speedy approval in setting up the government commission, saying, "We hope that you will agree with us that The National Gambling Impact and Policy Commission must be established and its work quickly and thoroughly completed."

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EDITORS' NOTE: With all its cultural richness, natural beauty and vast human and economic potential, plus its freedom at last from colonial rule, why does Africa suffer so much? In a series, "Cry the Beloved Continent: Chaos, Crisis and Hope in Africa," Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board journalists reflect on that question -- and the challenge missionaries and African Christians there face. The first and second segments (on Angola and Liberia) of a multi-package series were sent earlier. The third segment -- two stories on Nigeria -- follows. A final segment on Zaire is yet to come. The stories may be used individually, together or as a series.

Vision for Christ prospers
amidst problems in Nigeria

By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
9/28/95

IBADAN, Nigeria (BP)--Nigerian Baptists have caught a vision of reaching their country for Christ, and the result has been a two-year surge in baptisms and church starts.

In 1990, Nigerian Baptists committed themselves -- despite the nation's political, economic and religious turmoil -- to carry out "Operation Reach All," a visionary plan to take the gospel to all of Nigeria's unreached areas and peoples by A.D. 2000.

Operation Reach All calls for intensive prayer, evangelism, witness training, missions and church planting -- and seeks 5,740 new church starts by the decade's end. That more than doubles the 5,093 total at the end of 1994.

As the vision of reaching Nigeria for Christ has gripped them, Nigeria's 646,740 Baptists have seen a dramatic upturn in baptisms and church starts. Baptisms grew by 18 percent and nearly 23 percent, respectively, in 1993 and 1994. Nigerian Baptists baptiz d 31,250 in 1993 and 38,340 in 1994.

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Meanwhile, new churches more than doubled in 1993 (with 179), then more than doubled again in 1994 (with 437). In the first two months of 1995, Nigerian Baptists recorded more church starts than in all of 1993.

If that growth continues, they'll reach their goal three years early. They believe their "ambitious" plan may be only part of what God has in mind.

"God is working wonders among our people," said S. Ola Fadeji, general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. "From the beginning of our history, we have been conscious of the importance of evangelism and church planting. We are more conscious than ever because of Operation Reach All."

"As great as things are, even greater things can happen in Nigeria," asserted Bill Phillips, who directs Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board work in west Africa. "We'll just have to wait and see what God has planned."

Baptists in Nigeria realize reaching Nigeria is a "God-sized task." Southern Baptist missionaries have worked in Nigeria for 146 years, and the Nigerian Baptist Convention is one of the world's strongest. Yet 409 of the country's 463 distinct people groups still have little or no access to the gospel. Half of Nigeria's 98 million people are Muslim or animist.

Nigeria's deteriorating political and economic life complicates the task. The collapse of international oil prices in the 1980s wreaked havoc on the economy. The currency, the naira, went into free fall -- diving from a \$1.50 U.S. exchange value in 1982 to a little more than a penny today. Nigeria's military rulers are coming under increasing international pressure over alleged human rights abuses.

While the collapsing economy fosters crime, two decades of religious conflict compounds the challenge of spreading the gospel. Muslims routinely block land purchases for church buildings and exclude Christians from political office, jobs and schools. Failure of such tactics to slow Christian growth has led to threats and often violence against Christians. About 6,000 people -- mostly Christians -- have died in rioting since the 1980s.

Yet extreme difficulty and persecution often turn people to Christ. In northeastern Nigeria's Gongola State, churches are opening so many "preaching stations" that missionaries Ron and Kathy Copple can hardly keep up. The Copples work in an associational ministry with churches in and around the city of Yola. They returned from a furlough last year to discover one previously lethargic church had opened 17 preaching stations while they were gone.

"The Lord is doing something great here, and I can't say we've had anything to do with it," said Copple, of High Point, N.C. "The Lord simply impressed the need on them. That's the good part. We have strong, missions-minded congregations starting new churches everywhere they see a need. I simply try to encourage it."

Congregations like First Baptist Church of Numan don't have to look for places to start a church, Copple explained. Most have more invitations than they can handle.

A job transfer often moves a Baptist family to another village, where no Christian witness may exist. The family begins a house fellowship and recruits their home church as a sponsor. The mission grows and word spreads to nearby villages. Soon the new congregation is looking for land to build on and opening its own preaching stations in the nearby towns.

Copple attributes much church-starting enthusiasm to the impact of training lay leaders in basic discipleship, doctrine and church growth.

Enrollment in Theological Education by Extension (TEE) classes at First Baptist, Numan, has tripled in two years. One deacon was so eager for TEE training in his own language that -- instead of waiting for the next term when it would be available -- he insisted his pastor sit with him at the back of the class and translate the lessons.

"In TEE, church members learn things of lasting benefit, principles that strengthen existing work and encourage new work," Copple said. "In the long run, we'll see more churches started because of trained leadership than any missionary could ever start."

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This story was adapted from the July-August 1995 issue of The Commission magazine, published by the Foreign Mission Board. (BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 9/27/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

Vengeance and love square off
in Nigeria's religious conflict By Mark Kelly

Baptist Press
9/28/95

KADUNA, Nigeria (BP)--Christians fled when they heard the chanting: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet!"

A mob of 200 young people marched toward Oore-ofe Baptist Church in Kaduna, where a Sunday morning worship service was in progress despite threats from Muslim leaders to burn Christian churches that day.

Clutching torches and cans of gasoline, the Muslim marchers stood at the gate of the church compound, crying: "Kill them! Burn down their church! Confiscate their property!"

Pastor Fola Lateju, now alone in the building, decided to face them. Walking to the gate, he told the crowd, "What you are about to do is against the will of God. You will incur his wrath. Go back and tell those who sent you that this is against God's will."

Taken aback, mob leaders paused to talk among themselves. Suddenly they seized the young pastor, drenched him in gasoline and torched his clothing.

Nothing happened.

Turning to a clump of grass, they poured out some of the gasoline and touched the torch to it. The grass exploded in flames.

Wheeling back on Lateju, they drenched him again, but for the second time the torch would not set him ablaze. A third try also failed.

Confusion spread among the Muslims, and Lateju retreated into the churchyard. The crowd followed, pelting him with stones. One attacker struck him with a weapon, and he fell, bleeding profusely from the forehead. The Muslims left without burning the church. Several deacons emerged from hiding and took their injured pastor to a nearby clinic.

God has intervened on several occasions to protect his people in the face of Muslim persecution, says Lateju, who now teaches world religions at the Nigerian Baptist seminary in Ogbomoso.

Northern Nigeria has endured 20 years of religious conflict. Clashes between rival Muslim groups, or attacks on Christians, often have degenerated into rioting and bloodshed, ending only with police or military intervention.

An upsurge in activity by militant Islamic groups -- some reportedly directed by agitators sent from radical Muslim nations -- has raised tensions in Nigeria's once-peaceful religious environment.

Groups like Izalah -- dedicated to "purifying" Islam of innovations -- clash with others like Jamatul Nasir Islam, a more politically minded council of Muslim emirs, imams and scholars. The mix becomes more volatile with the addition of factions like the Maitasine, a bizarre sect obsessed with blood. Their rites reportedly include drinking their enemies' blood -- especially of rival Muslim groups. The Nigerian government has used military action in its efforts to disband the sect.

Besides tensions between Muslims, a surge of growth among Nigerian Christian groups set the stage for more conflict.

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Muslims reportedly have tried several strategies to slow Christian growth: blocking land allocations for church buildings; excluding Christians from political office, jobs and schools; shutting off the supply of gasoline or currency to stymie the economy in strong Christian areas; even encouraging Muslim men to impregnate Christian women. Failure of those tactics has led to threats, intimidation and often violence against Christians.

Persecution peaked in the late 1980s but has continued sporadically. Last September, a Baptist church building was burned and a pastor and deacon from an evangelical church killed in Potiskum, in northeastern Nigeria's Borno State. About 6,000 people -- mostly Christians -- have died in rioting since the 1980s. One result: the growing popularity of a militant Christian faction, the Christian Association of Nigeria, that pledges to retaliate for every instance of anti-Christian violence.

Lateju abhors such vengeance -- or violence from any side -- even though he himself has suffered at the hands of Muslim militants. Instead, he participates in PROCURA (Project for Christian and Muslim Relations in Africa), an organization dedicated to winning Muslim to Christ.

Organized in 1959, PROCURA conducts seminars to teach Christians the basic tenets of Islam. Understanding Muslim beliefs opens the door to friendships -- and opportunities to share God's love -- Lateju says.

Muslims revere Jesus as a prophet, virgin-born and sinless in life. This provides an important point of contact for Christian witness. When Christians show they understand the basic beliefs and customs of Islam, the door to friendship often opens.

"We emphasize witness through living the Christian faith before our Muslim friends: prayer, Scripture reading, attending Christian meetings, being kind to others," Lateju explains. "Muslims respond to such witness. Many converts have been won this way among both nominal Muslims and Muslim leaders."

Vengeance and retaliation will not defuse Nigeria's religious powder keg, Lateju says. Understanding, friendship and living a life of love will.

Some observers expect Muslim-Christian tensions to worsen over the next decade, culminating in the division of Nigeria into a Muslim north and Christian south. Others dismiss the idea as a myth.

While a northern Muslim oligarchy has controlled the country since independence in 1960, elections in 1993 demonstrated the power brokers hold little sway over the populace. Not only did a moderate Muslim from the south get the overwhelming majority of votes in presidential balloting, but non-Muslims prevailed in most local elections in many northern states.

When the military government annulled election results and arrested the self-declared presidential winner, riots and strikes swept Nigeria. A strike in the oil industry, which generates 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign earnings, paralyzed the country and sent an already-declining economy into a tailspin.

If rapid growth of Christian churches continues unabated in the north, the Muslim power base will continue to erode, observers say. Muslim political or religious leaders may feel driven to more desperate -- and violent -- measures to maintain control.

Should that happen, will Christians fight fire with fire, or respond with love and mercy -- like Fola Lateju?

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This story first appeared in the July-August 1995 issue of The Commission magazine, published by the Foreign Mission Board. (BP) photo (vertical) mailed 9/27/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

**Southern faculty commends
transfer of Carver School**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's faculty has adopted a statement commending the administration and trustees in their actions to resolve the future of the Carver School of Church Social Work, but also lamenting the loss of the school.

Seminary trustees will vote in October on a proposal to transfer the Carver School to Samford University, a Baptist-affiliated university in Birmingham, Ala. The trustees' meeting will be at the seminary's Louisville, Ky., campus.

Southern's faculty, in their Sept. 27 meeting, affirmed the Carver School's students and faculty and pledged "continuing commitment to the Christian values of Christian social ministry exemplified by the Carver School." The statement commends the work of the trustee study committee, seminary administrators, Carver School faculty and Samford University "for their efforts at finding a resolution that allows the Carver School to continue its notable tradition at another locale."

Although the statement "laments" the loss of the school and its curriculum, President R. Albert Mohler Jr. noted social ministries courses will continue to be offered at Southern through the master of divinity-social ministries degree program. Under the proposed agreement with Samford, Southern would agree not to offer a master of social work degree.

Some faculty expressed concern about what they feared was a misperception that the loss of the Carver School implied a devaluation of social ministry as part of theological education. According to Mohler, however, "The proposal from the trustee study committee makes clear our determination to maintain Southern Seminary's historic commitment to social ministry as a part of Christian ministry."

An amendment was offered during the faculty meeting to delete the commendation of all parties concerned, and simply to commend the Carver School to Samford. The amendment failed to receive a majority vote, and the original statement was approved by a large margin.

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**AFA ends boycott of Kmart;
declares boycott effective**

Baptist Press
9/28/95

TUPELO, Miss. (BP)--With the American Family Association recently ending its four-year boycott of Kmart, two lessons have been learned, according to a Southern Baptist spokesman.

Lamar Cooper, a Christian Life Commission staff member who coordinates the agency's anti-pornography efforts, noted:

- Economic boycotts to express moral convictions can be effective.
- Sometimes it requires perseverance to gain the intended result.

The conclusion of the boycott came when Kmart's new chairman informed AFA the discount chain store had ended affiliation with bookstores which sell pornographic materials, just as the organization had asked.

In early September, Floyd Hall, new chairman, president and chief executive officer of Kmart, wrote AFA President Donald Wildmon saying the corporation would "honor its tradition as a family oriented store that shares many of the same values as your organization. As I hope you know, recently Kmart completed the total sale of all of our book subsidiaries and no longer has any affiliation with Waldenbooks or Borders.

"I hope this draws to a close our past differences and I look forward to working with you and your fine organization."

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Cooper, responding to the Kmart acti n, said, "We are pleased by the announcement from Kmart's new chairman, Floyd Hall, that Kmart will disassociat itself from bookstores that sell pornographic literature."

AFA had distributed 20 million cards promoting the boycott since former Kmart chairman Joseph Antonini refused to pull pornography from bookstores in which the parent store had invested. In recent years, Kmart had suffered serious financial declines.

"Our boycott was not totally responsible for the economic woes of Kmart, but (it was) certainly a major part of their economic decline," Wildmon stated.

The support of thousands of churches and hundreds of Christian radio stations aided in the boycott, Wildmon said.

Cooper expressed dismay that many companies refuse to respond to anything other than economic pressure. "It is regrettable that corporations have not been willing to listen to reasonable arguments about the harmful moral, social, psychological and spiritual impact of pornography use. It seems that economic consequences are the only thing they are willing to consider. Because this tragically is true, it will be necessary to address these issues by economic means with other corporations such as AT&T who have shown unwillingness to listen to concerns about support of homosexual rights groups, Planned Parenthood and other anti-family organizations."

Under Wildmon's leadership, AFA has been a leader in providing information on companies which sell pornography or advertise on television programs which include profanity and illicit sexual material.

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Compiled by Tom Strode and Bill Merrell.

Quiet river baptism
becomes public witness

By Karen Edwards

Baptist Press
9/28/95

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--After having attended New Hope Baptist Church in Minneapolis for several months, Selbert Athias, a native of Jamaica, presented himself for baptism and church membership. He had been a Christian a number of years, but had not yet experienced believer's baptism.

He had but one stipulation: He wanted to be baptized in a river -- like Jesus.

Since it was late winter in Minnesota, the decision was made to wait until summer. However, at the beginning of summer, Athias experienced a number of health problems, delaying the baptism. By August, he was well and plans were made for his baptism in the Mississippi River.

Just two Sundays before the scheduled baptism, another adult, Melissa Dawson, a young single mother with two preschoolers, professed her faith in Christ and asked for baptism. Dawson was given a choice to join in the baptism at the river or wait another week until baptism could be scheduled at Southtown Baptist Church, Bloomington, Minn., New Hope's sponsoring church. After some thought, Dawson decided to be baptized in the river.

A quiet, peaceful site was located at Crosby Farm Park in St. Paul. There was a pavilion for an all-church picnic, lots of grass for the children to play, a paved path of about three blocks that led down to a sandy beach by the river. Since most people who attend New Hope do not own cars, it took a great deal of organizing, plus borrowing Southtown's van, to arrange to transport everyone who wanted to go. Nine very full vehicles transported 64 people plus picnic goodies to the river, including Athias' four adult children and his ex-wife.

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The congregation gathered at the pavilion and walked to the river behind the pastor and the baptismal candidates as they sang choruses and hymns. Several times the group had to move over for morning walkers and bicycle riders. It was a wonderful sight -- 21 Ethiopians, including some who are Muslim, Jamaicans, whites, blacks, young, middle-aged and old, walking and singing as one family, reminiscent of heaven and of Revelation 5:9-12 which says, "... with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe, and language and people and nation ... and in a loud voice they sang: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain"

At the edge of the river, New Hope pastor Bob Edwards read Scripture and talked simply about the meaning of baptism. Athias and Dawson each gave their testimony and spoke of their gratitude to God and to their new church family. Then, Pastor Bob and his son, Mike, assisted Athias and Dawson into the river.

At that very moment, the Josiah Snelling river boat came around the corner. The congregation heard the music and laughter even before they saw the boat; some wondered if that might detract from the service. However, the sounds from the boat stopped and it passed by quietly, with its passengers staring in amazement at the sight of two people being baptized in a river.

"Now that was no coincidence," one of the church members observed. Baptism always has been a way to declare one's faith publicly. And on that late August Sunday, the baptism in the Mississippi River was no exception.

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Edwards is growth consultant for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Her husband, Bob, is pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Minneapolis. Gomer Lesch contributed to this story.

Christians more than forgiven,
Willard says in SEBTS lectures

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
9/28/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Now what? Once someone has accepted Jesus Christ's gift of salvation, what's next?

A popular bumper sticker seems to reflect what many people believe to be the extent of Christianity: "Christians Aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven," said Dallas A. Willard, professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

"Is a Christian just forgiven?" he asked, questioning the bumper sticker's assertion. "Is that all there is to it?"

Willard spoke at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 26-27 as part of the Page Lectures, held annually on the Wake Forest, N.C., campus, featuring a theologian addressing issues of concern to the Christian community.

Willard, an ordained minister and author of several books on spiritual development, spoke on the issue of "spiritual formation" and its relation with "the Christian gospel."

The increasing number of ministers who have damaged their Christian witness by committing acts of infidelity, Willard said, illustrates the lack of spiritual formation in the church today. He hinted that for far too many Christians it never goes beyond just being forgiven -- there is a clear lack of personal spiritual growth.

"We create an image by our outward actions but God sees the heart," Willard said. "What is distressing to think about is not that these men fell, but what was their life like all the years before they fell? You see, it's the inside that needs transformation."

The church's witness has been tainted because the full gospel message is not being proclaimed, Willard said.

"We have a version of faith now that does not lead to discipleship and does not lead to transformation," he said. "What we see in our churches and even sometimes in our ministers is not against what we teach. It's actually the result of what we teach."

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The basic problem with the world inside and outside the church, Willard said, is "people will not assume responsibility for being who they are. And because they don't do that repentance becomes impossible."

Most Christians are failing to fulfill the Great Commission to "make disciples of all ethnic groups," because they do not have a heart for Christ, he said. "Passivity is the curse of our day. If we wish to have the heart of Christ, the one thing that we must be sure to do is to follow him in his practices."

Churches have erred in their teaching which presents discipleship as a form of legalism, Willard said.

"When I look at the acts of Jesus, I don't simply see something which I ought to do," he said. "I see something I want to do."

Discipleship, Willard said, is an expression of obedience to Christ. "Our love for him will make us his disciples and bring us to stay with him and learn how to be like him to such an extent that the natural outflow of our lives will be the deeds of Christ, the words of Christ."

But before spiritual formation can be achieved, Willard said, one must spend quality time with God.

"We need long periods of solitude," he said. "Everyone is so oriented toward actions that they never have time to be alone with God."

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