



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**  
SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #75  
Nashville, Tennessee 3720  
(615) 244-235  
Wilmer C. Fields, Director  
Dan Martin, News Editor  
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W. Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201-3355, Telephone (214) 720-0550  
**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
**RICHMOND** (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

April 24, 1987

87-62

Rogers Will Allow  
Nomination In 1987

By Dan Martin

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian P. Rogers will allow his name to be placed in nomination for a third term as president of the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., told Baptist Press: "If the brethren want me, I hope to serve another year.

"Three things have led me to that conclusion. First, I have prayed and feel a calmness in my heart about it. Second, I have received a great deal of encouragement from my brethren and trusted friends. Third, I have a deep love for our denomination, and I hope that I can be of help to it. In my heart, I believe I can."

He said his decision is made "not so much in the sense that work is uncompleted as in the sense that I can be useful and helpful in coming to a resolution of some of our differences and getting on with the job of telling the world about Jesus."

If Rogers is elected during the 1987 annual meeting of the 14.6-million-member denomination scheduled June 16-18 in St. Louis, it will mark the first time in recent years a person has served three terms as president. The last person to serve three terms was the late R.G. Lee, Rogers' predecessor at Bellevue Baptist Church, who served 1949, 1950 and 1951.

Rogers was elected on the first ballot in the 1979 annual meeting in Houston, drawing 51.3 percent of the vote against five other candidates. He declined to allow his nomination for a second term at the 1980 annual meeting.

Rogers was again elected in 1986, receiving 54.2 percent of the vote, defeating W. Winfred Moore of Amarillo, Texas.

Since Lee's service nearly 40 years ago, the SBC bylaws have been changed to allow a person to serve only two consecutive terms. A person may, however, serve two terms and be eligible to serve again after a one-year lapse. Thus, under SBC bylaws, Rogers is eligible for a second consecutive term.

Rogers says he "really feels we are coming to a healing in our denomination. I admit it is slow and that there are still some very serious problems, but I sense a lowering of rhetoric on a number of fronts. I also sense a coming together of both sides in many areas.

"Because of this, I am cautiously optimistic and would like to be a part of seeing that continue to happen," he added.

Rogers, a member of the SBC Peace Committee, said he is "optimistic about what the Peace Committee will do and is doing. I believe the Peace Committee has been very honest and open, contrary to the opinion of some detractors. I believe our committee has been marked with open disagreement and sometimes exasperation, but, at the same time, much candor, love and mutual respect."

He added he thinks the "big issue in this convention will be the report of the Peace Committee and its ancillary and subsidiary issues."

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Rogers said he believes the report will not include a "rewrite of the Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963, but will include, at least, an interpretation of it, coupled with some illustrations so that people can indeed see what the majority of us feel that statement means."

The president added he believes the Baptist Faith and Message Statement "is extremely strong" and that Southern Baptists "already have ... an explanation of what the statement means. I would expect, therefore, for the Peace Committee to so illustrate the statement as to say to the Baptist constituency that we believe peace and healing will come to the denomination when we adhere to what we believe is the obvious meaning of the statement."

Rogers was asked about whether he believes he will be challenged for a second term. Rumors have circulated for months Richard Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix Baptist Church in Phoenix, Ariz., will be nominated in a challenge to a second term for Rogers.

"I don't know that it will be altogether healthy for our denomination to begin to build an 'another candidate' mentality right now. We have a lot of substantive issues we need to look at as calmly and thoroughly as possible, and that is one of the reasons I hope we do not become polarized over personalities," Rogers added.

Rogers, 54, has been pastor of the 16,000-member church since 1972. Both of his predecessors, R.G. Lee and Ramsey Pollard, were presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He is a native of Florida and a graduate of Stetson University in DeLand, Fla.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; and the California Graduate School of Theology in Glendale.

Bellevue Baptist Church has been the top Cooperative Program giving church in the Tennessee Baptist Convention for a number of years.

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Presidency Should Seek  
Man, Jackson Believes

N-10  
By Dan Martin

Baptist Press  
4/24/87

PHOENIX (BP)--Southern Baptists should "go back to letting the office of president seek the man, not the man the office," Richard Jackson said.

For months, it has been rumored Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, would be the standard bearer for moderate-conservatives at the 1987 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 16-18, in St. Louis.

As rumors persisted, Jackson was asked by Baptist Press if he would allow his nomination for the presidency of the 14.6-million-member denomination.

Jackson said he is not a candidate "for anything, but will allow my nomination." However, he said he "will not turn one hand, attend one meeting or identify myself as a candidate for any group. If anybody feels I can help the denomination and wants to nominate me, they have my permission to do so."

Jackson said he made his decision before current SBC President Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., announced he would allow his nomination for a second term, and "without knowing his (Rogers') intentions."

"I do not know what he (Rogers) is going to do, but my position has been that the office ought to seek the man rather than the man the office. That is the way it used to be. It didn't always happen that way, but it was the right ideal, the Baptist way. I think the convention made a bad mistake when it decided anyone nominating someone had to have their permission to do so. I think anybody ought to be able to nominate anyone they feel could help and the person nominated ought to feel honored that somebody thought they could make a contribution," Jackson said.

"At the present time, with things the way they are, there is no way the office can seek the man, especially since it seems someone has to be a declared candidate (before he can be nominated or elected). I think the Baptist way is that we have priesthood of the believer and messengers ought to be free to do what they feel God is leading them to do."

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Jackson said: "Nobody has asked my permission to nominate me, nor will I give my permission to any individual to nominate me. I am not arrogant enough to think somebody will nominate me, or that Southern Baptists would feel they need me enough to elect me, but I would be grateful that somebody thought I could make a contribution, whether I would get even one vote.

"I am for the Baptist way of doing things, because I feel the Baptist way is based on the biblical way of the priesthood of the believer and cooperation among those believers. I think we should return to that. I am not saying I am the answer, but I am available to be nominated or not nominated, elected or not elected. I will serve God and the denomination as an independent, cooperating Southern Baptist, whatever happens because I believe God is bigger than this whole thing," Jackson added.

"I am as independent as a hog on ice and as cooperating as I know how to be in trying to win this world to Jesus Christ," he said.

Jackson has been nominated twice before for the presidency of the SBC, in 1977 and again in 1980. In addition, he nominated Bailey Smith of Del City, Okla. — who won a first ballot victory in 1980 — for a second term in 1981, and also nominated W. Winfred Moore of Amarillo, Texas, at the 1986 annual meeting.

"I nominated Bailey for the good of the convention, because I felt the incumbent should be re-elected. I nominated Winfred because I felt I had a mandate from God to do so. I did not nominate him (Moore) against Adrian Rogers (who ultimately won) but for Winfred Moore," he said.

Jackson, whose church was the top Cooperative Program giving congregation in the SBC last year, topping \$1 million, said: "I don't have any agenda or axe to grind. People don't have to agree with me. (If elected) I would try to give Southern Baptists a voice in Baptist affairs. I would treat each person on the basis of their love for the Lord, their cooperative spirit and their love for the denomination. You don't have to agree with me, but if your commitment is to the Lord and the Southern Baptist Convention, then we will be pretty well together."

Jackson, 48, is a native of Texas and a graduate of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has been pastor of the North Phoenix congregation 20 years and during his 30-year ministry, has baptized more than 15,000 persons.

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McCarty To Return  
As Parliamentarian

Baptist Press  
4/24/87

ST. LOUIS (BP)—C. Barry McCarty, the Church of Christ preacher who drew high marks as parliamentarian for the Southern Baptist Convention in 1986, will stage a return engagement for the 1987 annual meeting.

Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian P. Rogers told Baptist Press he has asked the same team of five parliamentarians who served at the 1986 annual meeting to return to assist him at the 1987 meeting, scheduled June 16-18 in St. Louis.

"He (McCarty) received so many accolades from both sides of the aisle and I believe he will do a good job. He is eminently qualified and seems to have a love for Southern Baptists," Rogers said.

Rogers said he had asked the same four men who served with McCarty in 1986 to serve again. The chief assistants will be John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., and James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas.

Sullivan is former two-term first vice president of the SBC and Draper was SBC President 1982-84. Sullivan also has been chairman of the bylaws workgroup of the SBC Executive Committee.

Also to serve will be Dan Collins, an attorney from Greenville, S.C., and Joe Reynolds, an attorney from Houston.

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Rogers said: "I have a lot of security in my heart knowing those men will be there. I think they have the respect of the vast majority of us."

He added he does not expect any parliamentary wrangles, and said: "The last time I presided (in 1980) things went very smoothly. I am very grateful for that."

The issue of a parliamentarian became controversial following the 1985 annual meeting when then President Charles Stanley ruled out of order an effort to amend the nominations of the SBC Committee on Committees.

The ruling resulted in lawsuits in federal district court and in Georgia state court. The state court suit was dismissed, and the federal district judge ruled on behalf of the SBC and its Executive Committee. The suit currently is being appealed to a federal circuit court.

McCarty, pastor of a Church of Christ in Jarvisburg, N.C., is professor of public speaking and debate at Roanoke Bible College in Elizabeth City, N.C. He is a graduate of Roanoke Bible College, Abilene (Texas) Christian University, and holds a doctorate in rhetoric and argumentation from the University of Pittsburgh.

He is a professional parliamentarian and a former vice president of the American Institute of Parliamentarians. He conducts lectures and seminars on convention parliamentary procedure for state and local government bodies, professional associations and political action groups.

This spring, a book on parliamentary procedure for church leaders will be published by Broadman Press, a division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Educators Claim Success  
For Grouping Adults By Age

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press  
4/24/87

NASHVILLE (BP)--While the very thought of reorganizing a Sunday school to group and grade adults by age gives ministers of education gray hair and battle scars, it can be done successfully if leaders and members understand the true purpose of Sunday school, a minister of education told his colleagues.

"The purpose of the Sunday school is to reach people through the study of the Word of God," Steve Stege, minister of education at Grand Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Ark., told participants in a session during the National Minister of Education Conference in Nashville.

In implementing a reorganization, Stege urged: "Be flexible. We need to realize we are serving people. In our attempt to be efficient, we can lose our effectiveness. Success doesn't depend on whether every person moves to their designated class but whether you are reaching people."

Adults come to Sunday school for three reasons: fellowship, Bible study and a spiritual atmosphere, said Stege. These also are the reasons often cited when adults resist moving to a new class.

"It's paradoxical that the three things that will grow a Sunday school will ultimately destroy it if leaders don't understand its purpose," said Stege. "Who wants to give up fellowship, a teacher that meets their needs or people with whom they enjoy Bible study unless there is a greater purpose?"

Stege and Alan Tungett, adult Sunday school consultant at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said most Southern Baptist churches group adults by age and sex, and many also offer coeducational or couples classes. Both agreed that age grouping is more easily done when emphasizing year of birth rather than age.

Conference participants identified other options for grouping, such as age of children, interests, career field and geographic region of the town or city.

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"There are values and objections to every way we group in the church," said Stege. "What we have to come back to is the purpose of the Sunday school. Where there is no easily definable purpose of an organization, then survival and maintenance become the top priority."

Stege, who has led two major Sunday school reorganizations at Grand Avenue, said the vast majority of adults will agree to change classes when their leaders support the concept and they understand its purpose.

He urged ministers of education to plan a reorganization to allow plenty of time for planning, talking and listening so that people understand not only what changes are taking place but why.

More than 700 people attended the National Minister of Education Conference sponsored by the Sunday School Board.

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Old Literature Helps  
Youth Begin New Life

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Baptist Press  
4/24/87

IRINGA, Tanzania (BP)—An old Sunday school quarterly, pulled from the shelf to be used to roll marijuana cigarettes, challenged a young Tanzanian man to rethink the life he was living.

Today he is preparing to preach the same gospel that so unexpectedly confronted him.

Keith Oliphint, a Southern Baptist missionary from Texas now living in Iringa, Tanzania, wrote the literature while he was working in Mbeya, Tanzania. Last winter he got a puzzling letter from a man he knew as "Gibbons" asking his advice on how to prepare to be a preacher, urging, "Please help me like you helped me the first time."

Oliphint couldn't remember a first time. And he had not seen or heard from Gibbons for years.

A second letter filled in the gaps. After the Oliphints left Mbeya, Gibbons had left the church and begun living a life of alcohol and drugs. One day while searching his father's bookshelf for paper to roll marijuana cigarettes he came across the quarterly. He recognized Oliphint's name and decided to read "A New Person."

After reading the quarterly, Gibbons "gave his heart and life to Jesus as Lord so that he also could be a new person," returned to church and is now a leader in his church's youth group, Oliphint reported.

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