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**Rankin faces questions, possible challenge at trustee meeting**

By Robert O'Brien

HOUSTON, Texas (BP)--Foreign Mission Board trustees will arrive in Houston June 14 for a special called meeting amidst news reports that some trustees may mount a challenge to presidential nominee Jerry Rankin.

They will close a portion of their special called meeting, scheduled from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Second Baptist Church, to question Rankin.

But they will reopen it for a formal motion from a 15-member search committee that they elect Rankin by roll call vote as the 10th president of the Southern Baptist foreign missions agency. To win election, he must receive 75 percent support of the trustees present and voting.

A report in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram quoted Paige Patterson as saying, "There definitely will be a challenge of his nomination."

But Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., told Baptist Press he has no specific knowledge of a challenge.

"I've heard people objecting and raising questions about the nomination, and I probably said that (to the Star-Telegram) but that's far short of saying it will be contested. I don't know that it will be, but I do know a lot of people have questions that need to be answered."

Objections seem to center around questions raised about what Rankin, 51, a 23-year veteran of foreign missions, believes about modern-day practice of the gifts of the Spirit, such as glossolalia or speaking in tongues.

Some express concern that Rankin hasn't been part of the political process of the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative resurgence.

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Rankin, who says he does not speak in tongues or advocate it for others, has said he is unwilling to discard any portion of the Bible on the basis of man-made theories. "I cannot in conscience throw out any portion of the Bible, either on the basis of ultra-dispensationalist theory (which dismisses some gifts of the Spirit) or on the basis of higher (biblical) criticism."

Patterson, a former FMB trustee, said if his understanding of Rankin's views is correct "a vast majority of Baptists" disagree that tongues is still a valid spiritual expression.

The search committee, which unanimously nominated Rankin after a year's search for a successor to R. Keith Parks, stands firmly behind his nomination, according to Joel Gregory of Dallas, search committee chairman, and John Jackson of California, trustee chairman.

Despite predictions that opponents may muster enough votes to deny Rankin a 75 percent majority, Gregory and Jackson predicted he will win.

"If there are votes against him, they will be isolated votes," Gregory said. Other estimates vary from 12 to 25 in opposition. With 87 trustees eligible to vote, 22 votes would defeat Rankin, if all trustees come to Houston.

Both Gregory and Jackson believe there is no single Southern Baptist viewpoint concerning the validity of spiritual gifts today.

They both also declared that Rankin should not be disqualified for service on the basis of his biblical interpretation of spiritual gifts or on the nature of his political activity.

Rankin has not been politically active because he has been on the mission field for 23 years," Gregory said. "But he is very much a friend of the conservative resurgence."

Gregory said Rankin's critics range "from those who have some theological concerns, to those who don't understand the situation, to others who oppose him on a pretext because they didn't get the candidate they wanted."

Patterson, however, said, "The committee and the candidate need to be forthright and precise about whether Dr. Rankin believes he has a prayer-tongue and that if other forms of ecstatic utterance of today are legitimate expressions of the biblical gift of tongues."

Gregory said that those who have questions "could and should get up and express their convictions at the meeting with the man (Rankin) present" and let the him speak for himself. Rankin said earlier that he has had occasion in his private prayer life to "pray in the Spirit" because he as been "so overwhelmed with a sense of the Lord's presence that my prayer could not be verbalized."

"That's not public," Rankin said. "I don't urge others to do the same, and it doesn't make me any holier than anyone else."

He also said in an interview that he had a one-time experience when a man at a worship service in Singapore spoke in tongues and he interpreted because of an awesome sense of the Lord's presence that he never experienced before or since.

Rankin said he does not believe he has the spiritual gift of interpreting based on that one-time event. Neither has he ever been led to speak publicly in tongues, he said, nor advocated it for others.

"We have measured the moment by the man, not the man by that moment, Gregory said of the search committee. "It's just a one-time thing that happened. Dr. Rankin is not a charismatic. Our investigation revealed he has remained true to Baptist doctrine.

"The integrity of the conservative resurgence really depends upon the advocacy of the inerrancy of the Bible, not upon a certain interpretation or hermeneutic," Gregory said. "Here, we're dealing with a desire by some to enforce an interpretation that may well be a minority view among Southern Baptists as a whole."

Noting that both Rankin and his critics believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, Gregory said: "We need to take care that we do not move beyond the shared view on inerrancy and unnecessarily enforce an interpretation."

Gregory said he had just talked by phone with "the president of another SBC agency, who is highly identified with the conservative movement, and he and his entire executive council have the same view as Dr. Rankin of the present operational view of the spiritual gifts."

He said he would not reveal the names of the SBC leaders in question "without their permission to do so."

"The majority of conservative people are tired of the fighting and rhetoric and desire that we move on and reach this world," said Jackson, who expressed strong support for Rankin's spiritual, administrative and experiential credentials to serve as FMB president.

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**Southern Baptists among  
Somali aid workers evacuated**

**Baptist Press  
6/11/93**

MOGADISHU, Somalia (BP)--Thirteen Southern Baptists working with international aid organizations have been evacuated from Somalia at the request of the United Nations.

Escalating tension between U.N. forces and gunmen loyal to warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed caused the United Nations to ask all aid groups to leave the country so troops would not have to worry about protecting expatriates in case fighting breaks out again.

Twenty-three Pakistani troops were killed and approximately 50 injured June 5 when their U.N. unit moved in to check Aideed's gun caches in Mogadishu. Since then a show of force in the battered city, including French and American troops, has heightened speculation the U.N. force may be preparing a punitive strike against Aideed.

The evacuation by the Southern Baptist volunteers means that the daily feeding of 46,000 people has been suspended, as well as operation of 22 medical clinics. That part of the world's efforts to aid the Somali people is being funded by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"We hope to be back in Somalia within a week or two when things settle down again," one worker told Baptist Press. "But if things explode we are looking at other areas where we could help in Ethiopia or maybe Somali refugee camps in Kenya."

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**Ed Young clarifies remarks  
in Baptist magazine article By Tim Palmer**

HOUSTON (BP)--One of the people who says he was taken aback by a recent magazine article about Ed Young was Ed Young himself.

MissionsUSA, published by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, profiled the current president of the Southern Baptist Convention and his church -- Second Baptist Church of Houston, Texas -- in its May-June edition.

The article reported that Young had told a group of new members he could just as easily be Presbyterian as Southern Baptist. Young also was quoted as saying, "And if we were naming the church today, Baptist probably wouldn't even be in the name. So many people who join our church aren't Baptists and we don't try to make them Baptists. Generic things are where the thinking baby boomers are today."

Young discussed his reaction to the article in a telephone interview with Missouri Baptists' newsjournal, the Word & Way. In the interview, he explained the Presbyterian remark; he protested his church being labeled one that practices "a user-friendly brand of evangelism"; and he elaborated on use of the term Baptist.

Martin King, the HMB's public relations director, told Baptist Press the magazine's staff is confident quotations in the article are correct and that the article "presents a positive portrait of one of the most dynamic evangelistic churches in the Southern Baptist Convention."

"However, it's unfortunate his remarks have been misinterpreted and misapplied by some," King said, noting the HMB welcomes Young having opportunity to clarify his use of various terminologies.

In the Word & Way interview, Young said what he told new members and prospects during a Sunday luncheon question-and-answer session at his church was that Baptists are probably closest to Presbyterians in doctrine.

"Theologically we're more like the Presbyterians -- I believe -- than any other Protestant denomination," Young said. He added that he never dreamed the remark would be reported "in isolation."

Young said he had not complained to the Home Mission Board about the article, which has not generated a great deal of criticism. One pastor wrote a letter to the Texas Baptist newspaper to question the appropriateness of Young's reported remark about being a Presbyterian.

"How can our convention president champion Baptist causes with ambiguous conviction over his denomination affiliation?" asked pastor Kim Hall of Hunters' Glen Church in Plano, Texas, in the May 26 edition of The Baptist Standard. Convention president Young said he telephoned Hall to explain himself.

Young also took exception to a paragraph from the article that read: "Whether your feelings are pro or con about today's megachurches, which seem challenged to see who can develop the most user-friendly brand of evangelism, Second Baptist, Houston, is probably the example you point to."

The reference to "user-friendly" evangelism was inappropriate, Young said.

"One of the problems the (Christian) church has today is we have watered down the cost of discipleship," he said. "The cost to get into heaven is free. The cost to get heaven into you is very expensive."

Young said Second Baptist is user-friendly to the unchurched people who take part in programs that are designed to attract them. He added that too many churches "cocoon behind stained glass" instead of befriending sinners as Jesus did.

At Second Baptist, recreational activities such as softball bring lost people into contact with Christians who can influence them to take part in Bible studies and attend worship services.

In the process, Young said, "The Holy Spirit does his work; there's conviction of sin; they come to Christ."

Then the work starts. The church does a five-week follow-up on new believers; a deacon is assigned to each one. Every new member is assigned to a ministry. "It's not 'user-friendly' evangelism," Young emphasized.

As for the term Baptist, Young spoke carefully, saying he didn't know if he would include it in the name if he were starting a new work today. Location and other factors would have to be assessed.

"I'm a Christian first and a Baptist second," Young said. He stated that he is a Baptist because Baptist doctrine as stated in the Baptist Faith and Message is true to what the Bible teaches.

Though Second Baptist Church has averaged 40 to 50 new members a week over the past 10 years, Young noted, "We don't get a lot of letter growth."

"We're geared to reaching pagans," he said. "We want them to come to Christ -- not to come be a Baptist." Last year the church baptized more than 900 people.

Young noted that whether to include "Baptist" in the name has become an issue among Texas churches. His son Ed Young is pastor of Fellowship of Las Colinas Church in suburban Dallas.

"They are thorough-going Southern Baptists but they do not have Baptist in their name," Ed Young the father said.

He also pointed out that the "Southern" in "Southern Baptist" is an anachronism, since it refers to a geographic area that no longer applies for the entire convention.

Young acknowledged that the image of "battling Baptists" has been a negative.

"We so politicize our denomination," Young said. He commented that while his remarks in MissionsUSA have attracted some attention, no one has ventured to report on whether his appointments to the SBC committee on committees -- "really the major thing I do" -- were good or bad. "I tried to do a semblance of balance and openness."

Young said futurists point to a decline in denominationalism in a generic society but the fact that Baptists are growing in number shows they should continue to cooperate.

"Our being together is scriptural," said the SBC president. "I believe God can still use us."

Young sees God using Baptists in new ways. "We can't just intensify what hasn't been working," he pointed out. He spoke enthusiastically of the innovative pageant-style presentations planned for the June 15-17 SBC annual meeting in Houston.

The Southern Baptist Convention came into being during the last great spiritual awakening the United States experienced, Young said, and great revivals cut across denominational lines. "That's what I'm praying for."

He said he hoped the thrust of his presidency of the convention would be a return to evangelism and missions. "That's where we've gotten on side streets."

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**Choral music's Joe Parks  
dies before music session**

**Baptist Press  
6/11/93**

HOUSTON (BP)--Church choral music composer Joe Parks, 66, died June 10 of a heart attack about 40 minutes before he was to lead a reading session of new music at a Southern Baptist Sunday School Board conference.

Parks, of Chattanooga, Tenn., was eating lunch with his wife, Wilda, when he suffered the heart attack, according to Mike Wilkins, director of the BSSB's Music Service unit, sponsor of the "Prelude" conference for ministers of music at Houston's Wyndham Greenspoint Hotel.

Medics arrived within minutes but were unable to revive Parks, Wilkins said.

From a nearby room, conference participants sang "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" as the medics worked on Parks and his wife watched, Wilkins said. Wilkins then led Parks' reading session of new choral music.

Parks was a member of Chattanooga's Woodland Park Baptist Church, where his funeral will be held Sunday, June 13.

He was the composer of nearly 1,000 musical titles and author of "Songleading Made Easy," published by the BSSB's Convention Press. In a Baptist Press feature in March of this year, Parks said he wrote most of his music for small churches. "The majority of our (Southern Baptist) churches are under 350 members," he was quoted as saying, "and the average choir in those churches has 18 members -- 15 women and three men."

In addition to his wife, Parks is survived by three sons, Michael, of Warner Robbins, Ga.; Monty of Augusta, Ga.; and Marty of Jackson, Miss.

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