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NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420.17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

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**Jerry Rankin installed
as 10th FMB president**

By Erich Bridges

**Baptist Press
10/11/93**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Jerry Rankin was formally installed as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board Oct. 10 amid the sound of horns, drums and choir anthems at Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

Perhaps the high point for Rankin himself, however, was the quietest.

It came when he and his wife, Bobbye, knelt for a prayer of dedication before 1,000 people at the installation service. They were joined on the podium by more than 20 Baptists from 11 nations who attend Richmond-area churches -- representing the world Rankin will lead Southern Baptists to reach.

Rankin, 51, is known as a man of prayer and has acknowledged many times how much he will need it for the task that lies ahead.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis, one of several Southern Baptist agency leaders participating in the service, said he had come to know Rankin well only in recent months. But before that, he said, he kept hearing about Rankin's daily habit of rising before dawn to pray.

Regardless of Rankin's missionary experience and other qualifications, "I have to believe God is going to use that kind of man," Lewis said.

A veteran of 23 years of Asia missions, Rankin assumed the board presidency immediately upon his election to the post June 14. The installation ceremony served as a kind of spiritual send-off for him.

Other tributes came from Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien; Brotherhood Commission President James Williams; Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman; and FMB trustee chairman John Jackson, who led the service. Representatives of six other SBC agencies also attended. SBC President Ed Young, scheduled to speak, was unable to attend because of needs in his church.

Also present were Rankin's mother, his two children, numerous FMB staff members and about 130 missionaries, missionary candidates and missionary retirees. Rankin paid tribute to his predecessor, R. Keith Parks, who was not present, citing him as a major influence in his own missionary career. Parks retired as FMB president a year ago citing philosophical disagreements with board trustees. He now heads the missions program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

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"We love Keith and Helen Jean Parks," Rankin said. "We started our missionary career as he was our area director (in Southeast Asia) and later became our president. He's been a personal mentor and encourager, a spiritual example in my life. I regret that they could not be here tonight."

Southern Baptist "women, girls and preschoolers, including your own precious mothers, have prayed for you as missionaries," O'Brien told the Rankins. "Now we'll pray for you as president of the Foreign Mission Board."

Williams said he was challenging the growing ranks of men and boys involved in Brotherhood mission programs to "step up and join our women and girls" in supporting foreign missions. "The mission spirit is very much alive in our churches."

His challenge to Rankin: Trust in the creative power of God to reveal new horizons in missions, the closeness of Christ to sustain in victory and defeat and the Spirit of God to overcome enmity and division.

Williams also appealed to the new mission board leader to "trust in our Baptist people, who are praying for you and are really hungry to come together" around missions after years of theological division.

Greeted by standing applause as he returned to the podium to speak, Rankin acknowledged that division had hurt missions.

"Many Southern Baptists, missionaries and mission supporters have been disheartened," he said. "Not unlike the children of Israel in exile, they have felt that God's progress toward his purpose being fulfilled in winning a lost world has lagged. The task of evangelizing a world without Christ has been exiled, imprisoned by dissension, denominationalism and discouragement."

But the prophet Jeremiah has a message for Southern Baptists just as he did for the Israelites in exile, said Rankin:

God is always there -- watching and understanding -- and has seen the suffering, conflict and turmoil. He also knows such pain is necessary to bring about a blessing and fulfill his purpose. God told Jeremiah, "My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land."

"God is leading us back as Southern Baptists to the land of the foundational truths of his Word, to fulfilling his purpose that we might become a blessing to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ, that all the world might know him," Rankin said. "He is bringing us to be unified, no longer concerned about power and prestige and influence, but only to lift up Jesus Christ that a lost world might know him."

God hasn't raised up Southern Baptists, Rankin declared, "to be put on the shelf, to be discarded, to become ineffective. But he's built us up and blessed us in order to honor his Word, to exalt Jesus Christ and to carry out the evangelistic fervor for which he has called us together in cooperation."

Rankin also disputed the notion that the Foreign Mission Board is in decline, reminding listeners that missionary ranks are nearing 4,000 in 131 countries, with several thousand additional missionary candidates now at some point in the appointment process.

"God is continuing to call out laborers ... and I am convinced that Southern Baptists will be called to faithful support that God's purpose can be fulfilled," Rankin said. "God is enabling us to plant our witness. That witness cannot be uprooted, because it is God's desire for every tribe and people and tongue and nation to come to the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

But God's most important message to Jeremiah, Rankin concluded, is this: "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart."

If Southern Baptists are to be used by God to reach the world, Rankin said, "we must have a heart for the Lord above all else."

Rankin admitted he was ineffective as a young missionary in Indonesia -- despite all his education, enthusiasm and good mission strategies -- until he learned that lesson.

"I found myself on my knees praying, 'God, why have you brought me here?'" he recalled. The answer, he said, came from the New Testament book of Acts, which tells the story of a small band of mostly uneducated believers who shook the world simply by lifting up Christ.

"God loved the people of Indonesia and wanted them to know Jesus," Rankin said. "Jesus was living within me, and that's the only reason why I was there -- that Jesus might be lifted up and glorified in a positive witness.

"The only reason God has placed me where I am at any time is so that Jesus might be manifested in my life."

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(BP) photos to be mailed 10/12/93 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Soldier tells chaplain
of victory in Somalia

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
10/11/93

LANDSTUHL, Germany (BP)--The testimony of a soldier wounded in Somalia brought an unexpected joy for chaplain Mike Green.

Green has been deputy staff chaplain for Second General Hospital at Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center in Germany since July 15. Soldiers wounded in Somalia were transferred there before returning to the United States.

As Green talks to soldiers, "I try to find out where they are spiritually," he said. Many of the survivors have a deep understanding of God's grace, said the Texas native who is endorsed by the Home Mission Board's chaplains commission.

One soldier, a Southern Baptist, was in intensive care when he told Green he led someone to make a profession of faith while in Somalia. The soldier told Green his wounds were only temporary, but leading someone to a decision with eternal consequences made his Somalia duty was worthwhile.

As a chaplain, Green is part of a team of social workers and psychiatrists who help soldiers debrief. Generally the soldiers expressed grief and sadness over their traumatic experiences in Somalia, Green said. But the soldiers were extensively trained and are recovering well emotionally, he added.

Chaplains also counseled the hospital's staff who sympathized with the soldiers' sadness, Green said.

"Only God has an objective viewpoint of everything that happens," Green said. "If I can help them see that, it helps them resume a sense of normalcy."

Green, a native of Georgetown, Texas, is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University. He also has a master of divinity and master's degree in psychology and counseling from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

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BSSB offers toll-free number
for 'True Love Waits' queries

Baptist Press
10/11/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Trying to track down some information about "True Love Waits," the nationwide sexual abstinence campaign aimed at teen-agers and college students?

Answers to your questions are only a toll-free call away, thanks to a new 1-800 number recently installed by the sponsor of the campaign, the Baptist Sunday School Board. People with questions about "True Love Waits" can now call 1-800-LUV-WAIT between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (Central Standard Time) Monday through Friday.

"We wanted to make it easier for church leaders and other interested persons to obtain information about the campaign," Richard Ross, one of the "True Love Waits" coordinators, said. "This gives us a central number people can use to get their questions answered."

The Sunday School Board has been inundated with calls about "True Love Waits" since the campaign was launched last April, thanks in part to extensive media coverage. The board recently hired two additional staff members to give exclusive attention to the campaign.

Betsy Wedekind will staff the new toll-free line and Barbara Brake will help field media inquiries and assist churches in planning their involvement in "True Love Waits"-related events next summer in Orlando, Fla., and Washington. Brake can be reached directly by calling (615) 251-3630.

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Ross said churches that have no specific questions about the campaign and simply want to order the "True Love Waits" campaign kit, audiocassette or the Christian sex education resources should call the BSSB's customer service line, 1-800-458-2772.

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ANALYSIS

Preachers, journalists can
lessen distrust, study says

By Terry Mattingly

Baptist Press
10/11/93

NEW YORK (BP)--When the Jimmy Allen talks about "religion" and "news," he roams from the cradle to the grave and beyond.

"Here's the essence of religion: How did we get here, what do we do while we're here, how do we get out of here and where do we go?", said Allen, a past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and veteran of decades of media work. "Now, if newspeople started asking those kinds of questions, and if preachers gave them some honest answers, then you'd have some real news stories that people would read."

But most journalists don't know enough about religion to ask these big questions. Meanwhile, most clergy don't know enough about modern communications to give clear, media-friendly answers, said Allen during a conference on religion and the news at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center at Columbia University.

The result is a chasm of misunderstanding and fear, according to "Bridging the Gap: Religion and the News Media," a report written by Allen and Los Angeles Times religion writer John Dart.

Society, journalism and religion are weakened by the distrust between two powerful professions, said John Seigenthaler, chairman of the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center in Nashville, which sponsored the report. The result is "two alien cultures, ... one rooted largely in a search for the facts and the other grounded in a discovery of faith beyond facts."

"Bridging the Gap" was based, in large part, on a survey of about 900 clergy, religion writers and newspaper editors. It found 58 percent of mainline Protestants, 70 percent of Catholic priests and 91 percent of evangelical clergy agreed, either strongly or somewhat, with this statement: "Most religion coverage today is biased against ministers and organized religion."

Only 18 percent of the journalists agreed. Also, 75 percent of the religion writers said religion was "very important" in their lives and 72 percent of the editors said it was either very or somewhat important to them.

Based on this survey, and numerous interviews, Allen and Dart concluded most shallow and inaccurate news about religion is caused by ignorance and apathy, and rarely outright prejudice.

"It's obvious that something must be done about the religious IQs of American journalists," said Allen. Meanwhile, seminaries do little or nothing to prepare clergy to work in a media-driven society, he said.

Journalists, clergy and academic leaders at the conference said it's time for change. All agreed news coverage is more accurate and informed when editors hire and unleash trained religion writers and when religious leaders are candid. Leaders on both sides should work together to create educational programs for journalists and clergy, as well as to publish primers for journalists.

Clergy must learn the hard lesson that the media do not exist to promote religious causes or to help smooth over divisions. At the same time, journalists must acknowledge that religion is one of the most powerful, and often positive, forces in American life.

It would help, said several speakers, if newspeople spent time talking with ordinary religious people, and clergy tried to encourage journalists, as well as shout at them.

After all, many historic events -- such as the Civil Rights Movement and the liberation of Eastern Europe -- began informally in gatherings of believers in church basements. Reporters rarely visit houses of worship, let alone the basements.

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When it comes to religion, most reporters are only interested in "politics, pageantry and pedophilia," said Brian Healy, an active Catholic who is a senior CBS News producer. This is especially true in elite television newsrooms, where most journalists consider religious people either "silly," "backward" or "downright dangerous."

When it comes to the hot issues of faith, morality and public life, such as abortion or gay rights, "most of my colleagues are one-minded and that mind is already made up," said Healy.

But Dart and Allen insisted the biggest problem is that many journalists are simply "tone deaf" to spiritual melodies in life. They wrote: "To them, religion in all of its complexity is either a disturbing cacophony of sounds or innocuous background music easily tuned out."

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Mattingly, who teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee, writes a weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service. Reprinted with permission of the author and Scripps Howard News Service.

Speakers, program lead seminary
to drop conference sponsorship

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
10/11/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has dropped its sponsorship of a conference on women in the church based on the speakers and program direction, not because of the topic itself, according to seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr.

The March 1994 conference, "Towards Solidarity: A Conference on Women and the Church," is being planned by the Theological Education Association of Mid-America (TEAM-A), a consortium of Kentucky and Indiana theological schools. The keynote speakers recently selected by a joint planning committee are Letty Russell of Yale Divinity School and Mercy Oduyoye, a native of Ghana active with the World Council of Churches.

Mohler indicated the selection of keynote speakers and workshop topics reflects a more radical feminist approach to the topic that is "not at all sensitive to the concerns of evangelicals."

While no longer an official sponsor of the conference -- the first such event sponsored by TEAM-A -- Southern Seminary will cooperate with consortium members by providing previously arranged housing for some participants, and seminary faculty and students will be free to participate in the event.

"Southern Seminary has the maturity to discuss these issues in a manner appropriate to a Baptist theological seminary," Mohler said. "Evangelicals can and will discuss these issues within the context of mutual respect and biblical authority. This conference represents an ideological and theological agenda committed to feminist theology in the mainline Protestant churches. It is not an appropriate forum for evangelicals to discuss the role of women in the church."

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Montana Fellowship
welcomes 5 new churches

By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
10/11/93

BILLINGS, Mont. (BP)--Montana Baptists welcomed five newly constituted churches into their fellowship during their annual meeting.

Members of the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship, gathering at Trinity Baptist Church in Billings Oct. 6-7, also elected new officers and heard progress reports on its goal to double the fellowship's size by the turn of the century.

Messengers voted to approve a budget of \$930,370. Of this total, 21 percent, the same as last year, will be forwarded to national Cooperative Program causes. James Nelson, executive secretary-treasurer, said the fellowship's portion of the overall budget will increase by 9 percent, or \$17,360, to a record \$255,538.

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The five new churches represent the first time in four years the fellowship has grown by more than four congregations. Nelson told messengers the new growth, which included 13 new church starts this year, will fuel the fellowship's efforts to boost Southern Baptist membership to 2 percent of the state's population by the year 2000.

Nelson backed up his projection by citing two of the state's newer congregations, which led the fellowship in baptisms for the year. Three-year-old Superior Baptist Church posted the largest gain with 44 baptisms while two-and-a-half-year-old Park City Baptist Church was recognized for 42 baptisms.

Montana Southern Baptists now number 9,800 members in 121 congregational units among the state's 800,000 population.

Messengers elevated Doug Hutcheson, pastor of Westside Baptist Church in Great Falls, from vice president to president of the fellowship. Sammie Daniels, pastor of the Park City church, was elected vice president and chairman of the executive board.

The 1994 fellowship meeting will be Oct. 5-6 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Havre.

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Staffer to track use, impact
of BSSB's 'Experiencing God'

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
10/11/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Christians are moving back to discovering God's will for their lives, according to a Baptist Sunday School Board official who said growth in sales of "Experiencing God" materials has resulted in appointing a resource person for what could become global spiritual revival.

Sam House has been assigned to coordinate projects relating to Experiencing God/Fresh Encounter resources, said Roy Edgemon, director of the discipleship and family development division.

"Our aim is to have the greatest possible impact on global revival and spiritual awakening," Edgemon said. "We want to do all we can to help the BSSB and other Southern Baptist agencies focus resources and energies in a consistent message toward that end."

Sales of "Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God" written by Henry Blackaby and Claude King reached more than 46,000 units in September. In August and September, a total of 30,000 "Fresh Encounter" member's books and nearly 7,000 leader's guides were sold, House said.

House said he will be responsible for "maintaining a clear perspective of the big picture for the overall project." As a central communications channel, House is facilitating the coordinated development and marketing of the products as well as ensuring they achieve the maximum impact throughout the SBC and other national and international markets.

House cited several instances where churches in denominations other than Southern Baptists are studying "Experiencing God" and witnessing revival.

"These resources are moving people back to being dependent on God," House said.

"I believe there is a spiritual movement, and it is much broader than the Southern Baptist Convention," House said. "I'm convinced God is dealing with leaders across the country. Leaders (in all denominations) have a corporate responsibility as members of the body of Christ to pray for spiritual awakening."

The spiraling sales of the resources have led to problems keeping it in stock, House said. As coordinator, one of his duties will be to keep tabs on all projects that might result in a surge of sales.

"Experiencing God" resources presently include a study course, a leader's guide, a video and audiocassettes. House said new "Experiencing God" resources in the works include a youth edition, a Bible and a book.

"Fresh Encounter" materials which seek to spearhead national revival by challenging churches to identify and overcome self-defeating habits and renew relationships with God include an introductory video, a book, a leader's manual, six messages by author Henry Blackaby on two videocassettes, a booklet accompanying the video and a set of audiocassettes.

Two seven-hour teleconferences, one about "Experiencing God" to be broadcast Feb. 12, 1994, and one about "Fresh Encounter" to be broadcast April 23, will feature Blackaby, King and Avery Willis, a Sunday School Board official assuming new responsibilities at the Foreign Mission Board as overseas vice president. Broadcast times and places will be announced at a later date.

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Philadelphia home missionary
elected Food Bank executive

Baptist Press
10/11/93

PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Gaynor Yancey, 20-year veteran of Christian ministry in Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey, has been elected executive director of the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank.

Yancey, a Southern Baptist home missionary, has been director of Christian social ministries for the Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association since 1982.

She began her new duties Sept. 13 after unanimous election by the food bank's board of directors, and with the HMB she is moving to unpaid reserve status.

At the food bank, she will work with 10 professional staff people and supervise the nonprofit organization's warehouse operations. Yancey noted there are an estimated 500,000 chronically hungry people in the five-county Philadelphia area. The food bank works with 550 organizations, half of them churches, the other half shelters, soup kitchens and other avenues of assistance, she said. Last year the organization delivered 9 million pounds of food.

Yancey said her new work is consistent with "my personal Christian understanding of the gospel that Christians must penetrate the non-believing world with the love of Christ."

In 1983 Yancey was the first recipient of the Clovis A. Brantley award, which is given annually by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for outstanding achievement in the field of Christian social ministries.

Her ministry as a home missionary in Pennsylvania and South Jersey began in 1973 when she served as director of weekday ministries at Frankford Avenue Church in Philadelphia.

She holds the master of social work degree from Temple University and presently is a Ph.D. candidate in social work at the University of Pennsylvania.

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1992-93 CBF global missions
offering falls short of goal

Baptist Press
10/11/93

ATLANTA (BP)--The first global missions offering for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship reached 91.2 percent of the \$2 million goal, according to Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator.

The offering, with an emphasis from November 1992 to May 1993, was for both home and foreign missions because the CBF promotes only one missions offering. The theme was "Keeping the Promises."

Sherman said the offering was \$1,824,000 as of Sept. 1, or 91.2 percent of the goal.

"This is a first effort for us (CBF)," Sherman said, "and we feel good about our progress."

The goal's theme was broken into three areas: support for the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, with \$345,000 sent; promise to support "old order" missionaries (those who cannot in good conscience work for the SBC) with \$1.2 million raised; and the promise to "help the needy and the helpless and the oppressed," with \$279,000 raised out of a goal of \$455,000.

The CBF will begin collecting its 1993-94 global missions offering in November with a goal of \$3 million.

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