The original documents are located in Box C39, folder "Presidential Handwriting, 4/24/1976" of the Presidential Handwriting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 24, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JERRY JONES

FROM:

JIM CONNOR

The attached clipping was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Should we press to go?"

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney

Attachment:

Clipping from WASHINGTON STAR

entitled: "Will Ford Address Baptists?"

Will Ford **Address Baptists?**

By William Willoughby Washington Star Staff Writer

The Southern Baptist Convention is being pressured to withdraw its invitation to President Ford to address the conference on June 15 when it meets in Norfolk.

Robert J. Hastings; editor of the Illinois Baptist newspaper, said the country's largest Protestant denomination should not be giving the President or any other candidate a platform and free publicity during an election year — even if it is the country's Bicentennial.

Hastings said that if the committee handling the agenda for the convention does not withdraw the invitation, then a motion to amend the program will be made on the convention

"It would be an embarrassment to all concerned for the issue to be raised publicly," the editor said.

HASTINGS IS the second editor of a state convention newspaper to ask that the President be kept off the program. Editor C.R. Daley of the Western Recorder, official newspaper of the Kentucky state convention, asked, "What place does a chief of state have in a meeting of Bap-tist business and inspira-

Daley said that to have a president who is running for re-election on the pro-gram of the 12.7-million-member SBC "is very questionable."

tation to Ford, although accepted, is "still under consideration," that is, he is holding his withdrawal option open. No final decision will be made until the last two or three weeks before the convention, the White House spokesman

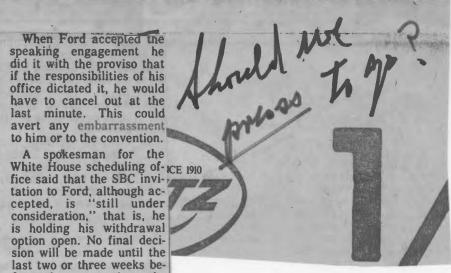
Hastings, although a registered Republican, said he is "a Carter man" but that that is not the reason he wants the invitation withdrawn.

"WE ARE IN the embarrassing position of giving Ford this political platform in an election year, while one of the finest laymen Southern Baptists have ever produced is likely to be his opposition," Hastings

He was referring to former Gov. Jimmy Carter of Georgia, a Southern Baptist and the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. Ford is an Episcopalian.

Hastings said that because Carter is a Baptist does not mean the Southern Baptists should invite him to address the convention. "But neither does it mean we should give his opponent a platform.

Meanwhile, there is some dismay among Southern Baptists over the fact that, contrary to normal practice, the back page of a magazine produced by the convention's Sunday School Board displays a large picture of Carter. The magazine is available to nearly every Southern Baptist family.



Saturday, April 17, 1976

The Washington Star

DR CONNOR:

These items came out with some RBC outbox today.

BRippie 4/22/76