

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.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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 floor.

"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 Baptist business and inspiration?"

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

When Ford accepted the speaking engagement he did it with the proviso that if the responsibilities of his office dictated it, he would have to cancel out at the last minute. This could avert any embarrassment to him or to the convention.

A spokesman for the White House scheduling office said that the SBC invitation 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 said.

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 said.

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.

Should not press to go?

ICE 1910

72

1

Saturday, April 17, 1976

The Washington Star

DR CONNOR:

These items came out with some
RBC outbox today.

BRippie
4/22/76