

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 M. and Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

April 25, 1975

75-66

A Year in Review:Weber 'Appreciates' SBC;
Urges Renewed Commitment

By John Rutledge

LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--The driver of the limousine from the Lubbock airport talked about politics, the weather and First Baptist Church.

"It's so big they have to have more than one worship service," he said over his shoulder.

"We have seven cabs going out to the college on Sunday for students who don't have a way to get to the church. They just sign a card and the church picks up the tab." He drove in silence for a while. "You know, they get more than \$10,000 in their Sunday School offering. It's a big church."

No, the driver was not a member, he said. Not even a Baptist.

Two of the passengers were on their way to the church. The third was a young man going to visit a friend at Texas Tech, and obviously intrigued at the way the conversation had taken a religious turn.

"They take God seriously here, don't they?" he said.

Jaroy Weber, pastor of First church in Lubbock and completing a year as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), confirmed the man's observation later in an interview.

"This is basically a conservative area. You don't see the campus extremes that you do at other schools. This conservative spirit expresses itself in religious commitment."

He was elected president three months after becoming pastor of the Lubbock church about a year ago. The dual responsibilities as pastor and president have stretched him to the limit but have not strained his relationship with this congregation.

When Weber accepted the presidency last year, he promised his church he would be in the pulpit every Sunday and most Wednesday nights. He has kept his word, but it has meant late-night flights back to Lubbock from speaking engagements and missing hours of sleep.

"You have to fight for time," Weber said, "during the flight or in a motel room, for study and sleep. I've been pressing it at both ends, but I'm in good health."

For a man with both feet on the ground doctrinally, Weber has been up in the air much of his time. By June 9 he will have flown 101,398 miles during the year, with the longest trip to Lausanne, Switzerland; the shortest to Littlefield, Tex.

Despite Weber's double life, the church has grown. More than 800 joined the church during the first year and 207, the largest number in the church's history, have been baptized thus far this year, out of a goal of 300.

Had Weber not made the effort to be in the pulpit, the results might have been different. "That's been the difference in whether the church just sits here and marks time or moves forward," said Weber, whose new book, *Winning America to Christ*, was to be released in May.

He also credited his staff and laypeople. "They said they would take up the slack as much as they could.

"The secret of my ability to adapt is that I know the attitude of the church is so wholesome. If there were rumblings, it would be tough," he said.

Lattimore Ewing, assistant business manager, assessed his pastor's performance from the perspective of 34 years at the church.

"It's really remarkable the way the work has held up. I know it's been awfully hard on him, especially since he was so new. People have been proud of the fact he's president and have been willing to buckle down."

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Preston Johnson, chairman of the deacons, said, "He hasn't missed a heartbeat in that church. I don't understand how he stands up. I'd rather have Jaroy Weber half-time than any other preacher full-time. He just preaches the stars down every time he gets up there."

Mrs. Helen Sandlin, the church's Woman's Missionary Union president, said the church has been pleased and happy. "He's gone the extra mile," she said, "He's not neglecting our church in any way or as president."

After a year of listening as well as speaking to a cross section of Southern Baptists, Weber said he has learned to appreciate the denomination and its work more than ever.

"It is the mission element that brought us together in the first place and it is the cement that keeps us together."

He said he hopes people will leave the SBC's annual meeting in Miami Beach in June with a greater compassion for the spiritual and physical needs of the world. "World conditions are so serious that we can't debate insignificant issues" he said.

"Some of last year's issues have been resolved," he said. "The restructuring of the division of evangelism in the Home Mission Board has been accomplished, and the general opinion on a name change for the convention has been reflected to the committee of seven" (which will recommend no change be considered at this time).

An issue that Weber hopes will not come up at the convention is the charismatic movement. He said he has been so misquoted and misunderstood on that subject that now he has a typed statement he sends persons wanting his opinion.

"The good thing that came out of the movement was that it made Baptists study the word of God about spiritual gifts, and preach it and teach it.

"I think the movement has peaked out."

He reiterated his statement that the convention has enough elasticity for people who differ on teachings about spiritual gifts:

"I doubt that the Home or Foreign Mission Board would appoint the one who taught that the baptism in the Holy Spirit, as interpreted by charismatic tongue-speaking groups, is a valid experience. There have been some problems that the Foreign Mission Board had to deal with."

During Weber's first year as president, convention baptisms dropped for the first time in several years. He said one reason for the drop is that the newness has worn off the bus ministry and Witness Involvement Now programs.

"We need to make a renewed commitment to these two and other methods," he said.

"We will see a renewed emphasis from the convention that will help Baptists."

The best way to win people to Christ is to build great churches, he said, and many are being built around the country.

"They are staying with the basics with this commitment" he said, as well as being "innovative enough to make the gospel attractive to modern man."

He thinks First Baptist Church, Lubbock, is one of those churches. Through college minister Barry Wood, the church ministers regularly to about 3,000 students and attendance in all programs is increasing.

Weber is excited about the plans for a Baptist bicentennial bell that will be dedicated May 27 in Philadelphia and then travel down the eastern seaboard for a visit to historic Baptist sites. The bell will be on the platform during the Miami Beach Convention, Weber said, and the sessions will open with its ringing.

He said there would be a "patriotic and revival atmosphere" at the convention, and "a burden to meet human needs" that he hopes will not be distracted by lengthy debates. "People will be saying, 'The world's in a mess. We'd better get right ourselves.'"

"God is going to use this crisis as an opportunity to bring us back to the basics."

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist editors.

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Allapattah Church Sets
SBC Child Care Schedule

Baptist Press
4/25/75

MIAMI (BP)--Allapattah Baptist Church here will provide pre-school child care for residents outside of Dade County during the sessions of the Woman's Missionary Union, Pastors' Conference and Southern Baptist Convention, June 9-12, in Miami Beach.

The facilities will be open from 30 minutes prior to each session until 30 minutes after each session concludes, according to Mike Dunagan, chairman of the SBC nursery committee.

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Allapattah Church, which may be reached from the Miami Beach Convention Center via Interstate 195, is at 3300 N. W. 17th Avenue. Entrance to child care will be on N. W. 34th Street only. Maps showing the church's location will be furnished at the SBC information and registration desks.

The fee will be \$4.00 for each child per session. No additional charge will be made for lunch or dinner, but "a substantial extra charge will be made for children picked up late" Dunagan said.

Transportation will be provided to and from Allapattah Church for those who arrive by air. Parents should call (305) 758-0559 or write Miami Shores Baptist Church, 370 Grand Concourse, Miami, Fla. 33138 for information.

The church asks that identification be put on each child and his or her belongings and suggests that reservations would be helpful. Contact Mrs. Bonnie Smith, director, day care center, Allapattah Baptist Church, Box 420159, Miami, Fla. 33142.

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Ford Uses Baptist
Facilities in New Orleans

Baptist Press
4/25/75

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--When President Gerald Ford paid a visit here to speak the dedication of the F. Edward Hebert Library, he used Baptist facilities for his staff.

The entire building of the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans, the newest available structure to the library honoring the U. S. Congressman, was used as a command post by the White House staff, with two direct lines to the White House.

While the White House staff used the conference room for their command post the Secret Service set up communications facilities in the kitchen.

Electricity for dedication ceremonies was channeled through Baptist center lines.

Mercer Irwin, executive secretary of the New Orleans Association, and his associate, Nolan Johnston, and their wives were given special seating in the VIP section at dedication ceremonies.

The Baptist center is owned by the New Orleans Association and houses Baptist student and associational offices. Some financial support is given by the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

President Ford, in addition to participating in library ceremonies, was in Louisiana to attend off-shore oil drilling operations.

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'Russian Christians Don't Want
To Leave; They Want Freedom

Baptist Press
4/25/75

NASHVILLE (BP)--Most Christians in the Soviet Union do not want to leave their country, as many non-Russians surmise, but instead want the freedom to worship under their own government, an expert on Russian church-state relations said here.

"The Russian people don't want our western decadence," said Roger Hayden, an associate of the Centre for the Study of Religion in Communist Countries, London.

"I also know of some Jewish refugees from Russia who wanted to get back into Russia, after having gone to Israel and other places," Hayden noted.

"I wouldn't say this is widespread," he added.

Even so, Hayden said in an address to the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and the Southern Baptist Historical Society, "There will always be somewhere in Russia 10 men who are willing to stand up and risk their lives if necessary for the sake of truth and justice."

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"The keeper of the conscience of a great state is not always, or even usually, its government," said Hayden, the pastor of Haven Green Baptist Church in London.

Hayden, in his address, cited parallels and contrasts of the recent and current Russian church situation to 17th century England, which he said was also a time of religious persecution.

"From 1660-89, in England, the dissenters, or nonconformists of all denominations, experienced persecution at the hands of the state and the Church of England," said Hayden.

Persecution of Baptists and other religious groups have persisted in the Soviet Union, to the present time, Hayden said. He noted that a number of groups have been lumped under one umbrella grouping as "Baptist". Actually, there are Mennonites, Pentecostals, Baptists, Lutherans and others termed "Baptist" by the government, he said.

"All Christians in the Soviet Union," Hayden continued, live under a "tremendous tension of religious freedom--to varying degrees."

But "the time has come to call the Soviet government's bluff." The word from Christians inside Russia is that they want outsiders to petition the Russian government for greater religious freedom and freedom from persecution, Hayden insisted.

Asked why more information concerning Christians in the Soviet Union and religious liberty/persecution was not seen in the West, Hayden replied, "The (news) media hold the strings."

Hayden's address and a dialogue period concluded the three-day meeting of the Historical Commission and the Historical Society.

Speakers for the event included Louie D. Newton, former Southern Baptist Convention president, now 83-years-old; Robert A. Baker, commission chairman, of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth; Walter B. Shurden, Historical Society president, of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.; Thomas L. Charlton of Baylor University in Waco, Tex.; Arthur L. Walker of Samford University in Birmingham and Albert McClellan, associate executive secretary and director of program planning for the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, Nashville.

Charlton, along with A. Ronald Tonks, assistant executive secretary of the Historical Commission, participated with J. M. Gaskin of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission in a panel discussion on implementing an oral history program.

The commission's first annual Norman W. Cox Award for the best history article published in 1974 by the Southern Baptist agency went to Jack Birdwhistell, a doctoral candidate at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, for his work on Anabaptists, published in the January, 1974, issue of The Quarterly Review.

The award is named after the late Norman W. Cox, the first executive secretary of the Historical Commission. Lynn E. May Jr., is now the executive secretary.

The commission announced a bicentennial history writing contest from May 1, 1975, through April 30, 1976, with awards to be given in three categories--books, church and association histories, articles and manuscripts.

Some suggestions for Southern Baptist participation in the bicentennial observance were cited. And speakers noted particularly the 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Program unified budget of Southern Baptists, being observed this year.

Criswell Tongue-lashes
Tongues; Pentecostals Object

By Helen Parmley

DALLAS (BP)--W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church here, has set off a furore among Pentecostals with his recent explosive lambast against glossalalia, the practice of speaking in tongues.

"Throughout Christian history, wherever this phenomenon has arisen, it has been looked on as an aberration and a heresy," declared the 65-year-old shepherd of the 18,000-member church, largest congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The remarks of the former Southern Baptist Convention president to an evangelism conference of Baptist pastors at First Baptist Church, sponsored by the Dallas Baptist Association, were challenged by United Pentecostal leaders who, in advertisements in the Dallas Morning News and Dallas Times Herald, have demanded a public apology or discussion.

The advertisement refers to Criswell's much publicized debate with atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hair by noting: "Why will he have a public discussion with an atheist and refuse to have a public discussion with a Bible scholar?"

Apparently Criswell will neither apologize nor debate, but rather stand on his earlier statements which were mostly taken from his book "The Holy Spirit in Today's World" (Zondervan).

In his talk on the Holy Spirit, Criswell was critical of the charismatic movement which has crept into mainline denominations and referred to its practices, particularly tongue speaking, as divisive and hurtful. He said he is not against classical Pentecostalism but merely the divisiveness caused by tongues.

Any discussion, debate or talk about tongue-speaking usually centers on the scripture of I Corinthians, chapter 14, where the apostle Paul mentions the phenomenon several times. But, as in most cases of proof texting the Bible the reader finds the passages validating his position.

In their public challenge, the Pentecostals pointed first to verse 5, "I would that ye all spoke with tongues . . ."

But Criswell completed the passage, ". . . but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth (speak out for the Lord) than he that speaketh with tongues."

Also cited by the Pentecostals is verse 18, "I thank God I speak with tongues more than ye all," which Criswell points out is followed by verse 19. "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."

The classic Pentecostals, as well as contemporary charismatics, claim Paul, in his letter to the church at Corinth, recorded his approval of and participation in tongue speaking. They also say he laid out explicit instructions on how the spiritual gift is to be used.

John L. Sherrill, author of the book "They Speak with Other Tongues," wrote: "Paul saw clearly the dangers in undisciplined use of tongues. The gifts of the spirit were given to 'build up the church' and not for the private use of individuals," Sherrill said.

But Criswell, who recently completed a two year study of the Holy Spirit, claims, "The basic doctrine of tongue speaking is unscriptural and wrong."

He quoted Scripture to say the word "tongues" in the Bible usually meant an understood language. The purpose of tongues, he said, was a means for the Jews to bring the message of salvation to people of other languages.

A fiery, fundamentalist preacher who believes in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, he stressed the importance of hermeneutics, the science of interpreting text with context, to understand any scripture.

"The part must be explained by the whole," he said, and gave an example of how the Church of Christ has taken an isolated verse from the last chapter of Mark to support their case for salvation through baptism. The section also contains the statement by Jesus that "In my name . . . they shall speak with new tongues."

"The ending of Mark," he said, "is lost from the beginning," a statement with which Pentecostals agree. "Nobody knows how Mark ended his gospel. It ended at the eighth verse of the 16th chapter and from there on somebody wrote another ending, and somebody else wrote another ending," Criswell said.

Applying this law (of hermeneutics) Criswell said the tongue situation is an isolated incident not dealt with by Paul in any other of his 13 epistles. Nor, he added, is it mentioned in Revelation.

In I Corinthians 14:39, Paul wrote: Forbid them not to speak in tongues," said the pastor. "If that refers to churches other than in Corinth, isn't it strange he never mentions it to the churches in Rome, Philippi, Galatia and Ephesus? Does he mean not to forbid just in one place? "It was a problem only in Corinth and that is why the discussion."

Criswell said that while charismatics insist the necessary evidence of the filling of the Spirit is tongue speaking, no man in the Old Testament spoke in an unknown tongue.

"Our Blessed Lord, filled with the Spirit, never spoke in an unknown tongue," declared the pastor, "and, in 2,000 years of Christian history, those saints named never spoke in unknown languages."

The United Pentecostal advertisement, disputed his claim, citing the Apostle Paul.

Criswell continued: "God is not an author of confusion, nor does he deliver an uncertain message. Yet they (the Pentecostals) stand up and avow if you haven't spoken in tongues you are a second-class Christian. If I ever saw a doctrine filled with parenthetical pri e, that is it."

"They think I am naive and they think they can fool me into thinking that gibberish is a language," he said. "If that is the Christian faith, then I am not a Christian."

Criswell characterized the charismatic movement as a "woman's movement," a comment which has drawn criticism from women ministers in Dallas.

He said the seeming contradiction between I Corinthians 11, where Paul gives instructions on how a woman should dress when praying or prophesying in public, and I Corinthians 13: 34, where women are told to "keep silent in the church," is resolved by interpreting the verses in context.

"Either Paul has lost his marbles, or there is something there I need to know. These verses are imbedded in a chapter on speaking in tongues. She's not to do it," he said.

Then, he added an observation: "You stop the women from speaking in tongues, and the practice will absolutely disappear from the earth. The tongues movement is a woman movement. And when she's taken out of it, it perishes on the vine."

"Wherever you see it (tongues)," Criswell added, "you just remember it will be divisive, heretical and hurtful. The outside world will look upon us as a strange people. It brings disgrace and dishonor to the name of the Lord . . . I could not conceive of my Lord speaking in an unknown tongue."

The Dallas Baptist Association has been involved in a controversy on the charismatic movement. At their annual meeting last year, the association resoundingly approved a resolution urging charismatic churches to either straighten up doctrinally or "voluntarily withdraw" from the association.

Although it mentioned no church specifically, many believed it referred to Beverly Hills Baptist Church, a church in the association which does practice charismatic ministries.

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Helen Parmley is religion editor of the Dallas Morning News.

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Ex-Southern Baptist Minister
Denies Bombing Charges

Baptist Press
4/25/75

MEMPHIS, (BP)--Psychic David Bubar, a former Southern Baptist minister, has been indicted, along with 10 other men, in the March 1 bombing of the Sponge Rubber Products plant in Shelton, Conn.

According to news reports, Bubar, a native of Blaine, Maine, is an ordained Southern Baptist minister, who said he left Southern Baptists in 1969 to utilize his clairvoyant abilities. Since then, he has reportedly presided over First Century Christian Church, Memphis, served as advisor to the boards of several businesses and conducted seminars in psychic development.

The question revolves around whether Bubar, spiritual advisor to the Charles D. Moellar, president of the plant's parent company, Ohio Decorative Products, merely predicted the disaster or physically assisted the prediction into self-fulfillment.

The indictments handed down charge the 10 men with conspiracy, as well as the actual dynamiting and use of interstate facilities to transport two barrels of dynamite and 24 barrels of gasoline, which the government said was used as an accelerant in the fire.

Bubar and his attorney have labeled the charges as "ridiculous" and "religious persecution" and deny Bubar had anything to do with making his prophecy of disaster at the plant come true.

According to reports, Bubar, in his capacity as Moellar's advisor received the second of two checks totalling \$35,000 on Feb. 28, the day before the explosion.

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**460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219**

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LYNN MAY
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE. NO.
NASHVILLE TN 37203