



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) 254-5481

RICHMOND Richard M. Styles, Acting Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 5, 1976

76-78

Jaroy Weber Reacts to Two
Years as President of SBC

By Toby Druin

LUBBOCK, Tex. (BP)--Jaroy Weber winds up two years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Norfolk in June.

Those two years have seen him travel almost a quarter of a million miles, make more than 100 addresses as Southern Baptists' highest elected officer--more than one a week--and through it, he says, gain a deepened appreciation for the denomination, its people, churches, and pastors.

"I am more proud of Southern Baptists than before I became president," Weber said in his office here where he is pastor of the First Baptist Church. "My contact with Southern Baptist leadership both in the denominational structure and in the pastorate has made me more confident in the ability and commitment of these leaders than I have ever been before.

"The general attitude of our leadership, the philosophy of the pastors in trying to make the churches biblical and evangelistic and the overall atmosphere of all the meetings I have attended is progressive, hopeful and optimistic about what we are trying to do," he said.

Reflecting on his tenure and the insight it has given him, the stocky pastor who described himself at his election two years ago as a "conservative Bible-believing preacher," said convention unity in the last few years and success in increased giving and enrollment is due to a return to "theological conservatism."

He also commented on a variety of other subjects, including the charismatic movement, qualifications a person should have before election as convention president, the role of the SBC Pastors' Conference, requirements for convention affiliation, and the invitation to President Gerald Ford to speak to the convention.

Weber was elected president of the convention in Dallas in 1974 and reelected to a second one-year term last year in Miami Beach. He is not eligible for reelection in Norfolk.

His presidency has been a busy one. The first year he logged more than 101,000 miles in convention travel and in the past year he has added another 115,240 miles and 62 speaking engagements, including a trip to the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm. He is proud that in spite of the demands on his time only four times during the last year will he have been out of his pulpit on Sunday.

"My staff has done a marvelous job of filling in for me when I have had to be gone," he said. "They deserve a lot of credit for the success the church has achieved over the last year." Weber became convention president only a few months after assuming the pastorate of the 10,277-member congregation. In the last two years, the church has baptized more than 400 new converts and has had more than 1,750 total additions.

He will welcome the election of a new president, he said. "All I want is to get back here and pastor my church." Weber added, however, that he was grateful for the experience of getting to know denominational leaders and pastors better through his travels and speaking engagements.

-more-

In those travels, he said, the most frequent expression he has heard is a fear of "liberal tendencies" within the denomination. "I am sure it is true," he said, and added the charge probably would apply primarily to educational institutions. "But I don't think we need to get concerned about it until it gets more specific," he added.

"It is not as widespread as people would have us believe, and if there are going to be accusations I think there ought to be more specific references."

Weber said one of the biggest problems facing the denomination is its success. "We have had such apparent success," he said, "that it is very easy to depend on our own innate abilities for progress rather than depend on the Holy Spirit."

He cautioned that the convention has become so large that it is impersonal in many cases. "We need to be sure we stay person-centered and keep in mind that in everything we do we need to have the individual in mind--a local church member or local pastor," he said.

The SBC president said he had heard a lot of talk over the past year about what constitutes a Southern Baptist Convention cooperating church. At present, convention membership is limited to "messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention." A convention messenger must come from a church which is in "friendly cooperation with this Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work and has during the fiscal year preceding been a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work."

The denomination is "caught between the horns of a dilemma," Weber said. "We want the democracy and freedom and yet we want responsibility. Ask any denominational leader if sending money to the Cooperative Program is enough for a church to be a member of the convention and all agree it is not--that there ought to be some doctrinal guideline as well. But our freedom does not allow us the right to construct such a guideline."

He said he had talked to many people about how membership affiliation requirements could be changed but had received no encouragement as to how it could be accomplished.

"Nobody wants a creed; nobody wants to set up a doctrinal statement," he added. "Anyway, nobody could make a complete creedal statement for Baptists because what we do when we do that is bind God's revelation of Himself. He may give us a new revelation tomorrow."

Some, he said, have pointed to the statement of Baptist Faith and Message adopted in 1963 as a creedal statement.

"But you can accept the faith and message statement with shades of interpretation, just as the charismatics do," he said. "The charismatics take the Holy Spirit statement and say they believe it and print it in the front of their church papers."

Weber said he felt the charismatic movement among Southern Baptists has "reached its peak and maybe tapered off in the Bible Belt where there is a great deal of biblical preaching. Biblical preaching," he said, "is the solution to all problems. I don't know of any problem we face in our churches that strong biblical preaching wouldn't correct," he contended.

Weber said he had noted recent state paper editorials about the selection of his successor as president and said he agreed that the convention ought to seek the man and not the man seek the office.

"There's nothing wrong in names being suggested throughout the convention year as possibilities," he said, "but I don't think any individual ought to start a structured campaign to be elected. I think if anyone does he is not the type person who should be elected."

Weber said the convention president should be a person who is familiar with Southern Baptist structure, who has familiarized himself with the work on the association, state and Southern Baptist Convention level.

The Lubbock pastor had just completed a term as president of the Pastors' Conference when he was elected to the convention presidency. There was a time, he acknowledged, when criticism was rampant that the Pastors' Conference was too often used to promote a person for the presidency.

"Then the convention reacted and said in essence it was not going to elect anyone who had been Pastors' Conference president," he said and added some were surprised at his election in 1974.

"I don't know that the convention has changed its mind," Weber said. "I know I was president of the Pastors' Conference before I was elected convention president, but I don't think any man ought to use that (Pastors' Conference presidency) with the idea that it is a tool to get elected as convention president."

Weber said he would have no problem with rescheduling the Pastors' Conference to follow the convention to remove it as a potential presidential launching pad.

Weber said he believes that at the 1976 convention, June 15-17 in Norfolk, Southern Baptists will make a new commitment to reach America and the world for Christ and "evangelism will come into focus as never before. I think it will be a very positive convention."

Weber is an ex-officio member of the SBC Committee on Order of Business and acknowledged the committee has been criticized because of its invitation to President Gerald Ford to address the convention. He defended the invitation.

"It was no last minute decision," he explained. "The committee talked at the convention last year about inviting him. They invited him on the basis that he is the President of the United States, not that he is Gerald Ford. -30-

(BP) Photo to be mailed to Baptist state papers.

#

Churches Excluded From
Proposed Lobbying Act

Baptist Press
5/5/76

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Churches, conventions of churches, and associations of churches and their integrated auxiliaries are excluded from a new proposed lobbying law introduced by U. S. Rep. Barber B. Conable (R.-N.Y.) and 14 co-sponsors.

The bill, H. R. 13500, is the result of four years of work by Conable and was introduced after lengthy consultations with representatives of charitable and religious groups. The churches are excluded at the request of their representatives.

A hearing on the bill was set by the House Committee on Ways and Means for May 12, an unusually short period of time from its May 3 date of introduction.

The chief purpose of the Conable bill is to define more specifically than does present law the amount of money which non-religious public charities may spend to influence legislation without losing their tax-exempt status.

Current law provides for tax exemption for certain charities--including churches and their agencies--"no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation."

The rule of thumb interpretation of the present lobbying law that applies to such organizations is that five percent of their budgets is the limit which they can spend on influencing legislation without losing their right to receive tax deductible contributions.

The objection to the present five percent rule is that it is not statutory, is applied unevenly, and thus causes confusion and uncertainty.

The new rule, however, would spell out the exact amounts that non-religious charities could spend on efforts to influence legislation and at the same time retain their tax exemption.

In introducing his bill, Conable explained, "under the new standards, an organization incurs a tax if it spends more on influencing legislation than the permitted amount determined under a formula in the bill. The limits are set on a sliding scale, which allows proportionately lesser expenditures for larger organizations."

Conable further explained, "The permitted nontaxable amounts are 20 percent of the first \$500,000 of the organization's total expenditures; 15 percent of the second \$500,000; 10 percent of the third \$500,000; and 5 percent of any additional expenditures."

"No matter how large the organization, if it spends more than \$1 million on influencing legislation in any one year, it would have to pay a tax of 25 percent of the amount of any excess over this permitted level," the congressman added.

During the formative period of the proposed legislation, representatives of the nation's churches struggled against any effort on the part of government to define the mission of the churches by legislative definition of what they could or could not do to maintain their tax exempt status.

-more-

As a matter of history, the churches have never approved of the "substantiality" provision contained in the present law. The churches have felt that, under principles of religious liberty and separation of church and state, government has no authority and is incompetent to define the kinds of activities or to set limits on the activities that the churches determine for themselves are a part of their mission in the world.

For this reason, the church representatives insisted that the following provision be included in the bill: "It is the intent of Congress that enactment of this act is not to be regarded in any way as an approval or disapproval of the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit in *Christian Echoes National Ministry, Inc. v. U. S.*, 470 F. 2D 849 (1972), or of the reasoning in any of the opinions leading to that decision."

In the case cited above, an organization headed by Billy James Hargis of Tulsa, Okla., lost its right to receive tax deductible gifts because it engaged in excessive political activity.

If the new proposed lobbying bill becomes law, the following definition of "influencing legislation" will be approved: "the term 'influencing legislation' means--(A) any attempt to influence any legislation through an attempt to affect the opinion of the general public or any segment thereof, and (B) any attempt to influence legislation through communication with any member or employee of a legislative body, or with any other government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of the legislation."

The outlook for the enactment of the Conable bill into law this year is uncertain. It has been introduced late in the session when Congress is struggling for adjournment to campaign in the elections. Major objections could be raised in the hearing slated for May 12.

On the other hand, the work that has been done thus far may pave the way for an early enactment of the bill when it is reintroduced when Congress comes back in 1977.

-30-

Kentucky Baptists Elect
Halbrooks, Set Budget

Baptist Press
5/5/76

BAGDAD, Ky. (BP)--The Kentucky Baptist Convention's executive board elected a new state Sunday School director and recommended an \$8.7 million state Cooperative Program unified budget for the fiscal year beginning Sept. 1, 1977.

The new director, Fred Halbrooks, joined the Kentucky staff in 1974 as Sunday School associate. He had previously served as minister of activities at First Baptist Church, Cullman, Ala., as a missionary to Brazil for 18 years, 1955-73, and before that, as pastor of churches in Alabama. He is 55.

He succeeds Roy E. Boatwright, who is retiring after nearly 24 years in the post.

The \$8.7 million budget, which will be recommended to the Kentucky Baptist Convention for approval in November, includes \$7.2 million for worldwide missions through the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program. That compares with \$6 million from next year's budget and \$5.5 million from the current budget.

-30-

Billy Graham to Aid
Seminary Fund Drive

Baptist Press
5/5/76

FORT WORTH (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham has accepted the honorary chairmanship of the national portion of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's "Eight by Eighty" fund raising campaign.

The campaign, designed to raise \$8 million for the Southern Baptist-related seminary, the world's largest seminary, is seeking \$5 million inside Texas and \$3 million in other parts of the country. The money will be used for endowment and capital improvements.

Graham, a Southern Baptist, was in Fort Worth to address a banquet on behalf of the campaign.

-30-

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Option, Inc., an abortion clinic, has been operating since April 1 in property owned by the Walnut Street Baptist Church, according to a copyrighted story in the Louisville Courier Journal.

But, in wake of the furor surrounding the incident, the two-year-old clinic has agreed to move out as quickly as possible, although it holds a one-year lease, Wayne Dehoney, Walnut Street pastor and former Southern Baptist Convention president, told Baptist Press.

The clinic--which does legal, medically-supervised abortions, mostly elective abortions--moved into the old Norton Memorial Infirmary, which the church bought 16 months ago for \$577,000, the Courier Journal story by Keith Runyon reported.

When the congregation bought the hospital and its grounds, members were asked to suggest ways to use the property. They immediately took action to utilize its parking facilities during worship services and converted the old nurse's dormitory into a residence for single young women last summer.

Five businessmen in the 6,223-member Walnut Street Church congregation formed a corporation to manage the main hospital building and sent flyers to businesses and others, asking if they would be interested in moving there.

Option, Inc., was one of the organizations which accepted the opportunity.

"The church leased the property to the corporation which in turn sublet it to tenants," Dehoney told Baptist Press.

"Our purpose in leasing the Norton property to another corporation of volunteer businessmen was to remove me as pastor and the church from any involvement in the commercial operation. Consequently, I know very little about the details of their operation.

"However," he continued, "this particular lease was discussed with me in advance of their moving in. I told a member of the corporation that I personally had no moral or theological problem with the operation of such a legal, ethical clinic.

"This is a basic watershed between Protestant and Catholic theology on two questions--the morality of birth control, of which abortion is another form, and the question of when life begins," he said.

Dehoney, who said he "didn't anticipate the deep feelings on the matter and the position that the church would be maneuvered into because we held title to the land," added:

"Protestant theology generally takes Genesis 2:7 as a statement that the soul is formed at breath, not with conception. However, as Baptists believe in the priesthood of every believer to search the Scriptures, find truth and make moral decisions for themselves, we have differing views on the matter of birth control and the question of when life begins.

"The operation of a clinic on these facilities has become an offense to many people," said Dehoney. "For this reason, I have asked the committee to terminate the lease as soon as possible. I have asked our church members to put the matter behind us and get on with our business of a spiritual ministry.

"I have contacted Option, Inc. They regret the embarrassment to the church and agreed to move as quickly as possible."

The Southern Baptist Convention went on record in resolutions in annual national sessions in 1971 and 1974, calling for the "sanctity of human life" but urging "Southern Baptists to work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal abnormality, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental and physical health of the mother."

In 1973, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, of which Walnut Street Church is also a member, adopted the same resolution on abortion.

The resolutions on both the national and state levels are not binding on a local church.

In an interview with the Courier Journal, Ronald Cox, manager of the clinic, said Option, Inc., was opened so that "the women of Louisville could have an option on whether they want to be a mother or not. We think motherhood should be optional. It should be a choice." He said all abortions are performed only in the first tri-mester (12 weeks) of a woman's pregnancy.

A local doctor, who received a notice Option, Inc. mailed to Jefferson County Medical Society members announcing the move to the old Norton Infirmary, said he thought it was "reprehensible" for church-owned property to house an abortion clinic. "This puts the church directly in the abortion business," he told the Courier Journal, adding that he had mailed a strong note of objection to Dehoney.

Churches Battle Pro.
Over Abortion Clinic

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Option, Inc., an abortion clinic, has been operating since April 1 in property owned by the Walnut Street Baptist Church; according to a copyrighted story in the Louisville Courier Journal.

But, in wake of the furor surrounding the incident, the two-year-old clinic has agreed to move out as quickly as possible, although it holds a one-year lease, Wayne Dehoney, Walnut Street pastor and former Southern Baptist Convention president, told Baptist Press.

The clinic--which does legal, medically-supervised abortions, mostly elective abortions--moved into the old Norton Memorial Infirmary, which the church bought 16 months ago for \$577,000, the Courier Journal story by Keith Runyon reported.

When the congregation bought the hospital and its grounds, members were asked to suggest ways to use the property. They immediately took action to utilize its parking facilities during worship services and converted the old nurse's dormitory into a residence for single young women last summer.

Five businessmen in the 6,223-member Walnut Street Church congregation formed a corporation to manage the main hospital building and sent flyers to businesses and others, asking if they would be interested in moving there.

Option, Inc., was one of the organizations which accepted the opportunity.

"The church leased the property to the corporation which in turn sublet it to tenants," Dehoney told Baptist Press.

"Our purpose in leasing the Norton property to another corporation of volunteer businessmen was to remove me as pastor and the church from any involvement in the commercial operation. Consequently, I know very little about the details of their operation.

"However," he continued, "this particular lease was discussed with me in advance of their moving in. I told a member of the corporation that I personally had no moral or theological problem with the operation of such a legal, ethical clinic.

"This is a basic watershed between Protestant and Catholic theology on two questions--the morality of birth control, of which abortion is another form, and the question of when life begins," he said.

Dehoney, who said he "didn't anticipate the deep feelings on the matter and the position that the church would be maneuvered into because we held title to the land," added:

"Protestant theology generally takes Genesis 2:7 as a statement that the soul is formed at breath, not with conception. However, as Baptists believe in the priesthood of every believer to search the Scriptures, find truth and make moral decisions for themselves, we have differing views on the matter of birth control and the question of when life begins.

"The operation of a clinic on these facilities has become an offense to many people," said Dehoney. "For this reason, I have asked the committee to terminate the lease as soon as possible. I have asked our church members to put the matter behind us and get on with our business of a spiritual ministry.

"I have contacted Option, Inc. They regret the embarrassment to the church and agreed to move as quickly as possible."

The Southern Baptist Convention went on record in resolutions in annual national sessions in 1971 and 1974, calling for the "sanctity of human life" but urging "Southern Baptists to work for legislation that will allow the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal abnormality, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental and physical health of the mother."

In 1973, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, of which Walnut Street Church is also a member, adopted the same resolution on abortion.

The resolutions on both the national and state levels are not binding on a local church.

In an interview with the Courier Journal, Ronald Cox, manager of the clinic, said Option, Inc., was opened so that "the women of Louisville could have an option on whether they want to be a mother or not. We think motherhood should be optional. It should be a choice." He said all abortions are performed only in the first tri-mester (12 weeks) of a woman's pregnancy.

A local doctor, who received a notice Option, Inc. mailed to Jefferson County Medical Society members announcing the move to the old Norton Infirmary, said he thought it was "prehensible" for church-owned property to house an abortion clinic. "This puts the church directly in the abortion business," he told the Courier Journal, adding that he had mailed a strong note of objection to Dehoney.