

For Release May 17, 1958

HOUSTON, Tex.-----The first of more than 15,000 Southern Baptist Conventioneers were arriving in Houston today for the Convention and its related meetings. They will be here for a week.

The Rice Hotel will serve as Convention headquarters and the Houston Coliseum is meeting place for the Convention. However, hotels and motels have been without vacancies for weeks and many Houston Baptists have opened their homes to accommodate Conventioneers.

Other meetings than the Convention itself will be held in various churches and meeting halls in the city.

Attendance is expected to set a record for the Southern Baptist Convention, holding its 101st session. The Convention is 113 years old, and convenes annually except for a dozen years in which wartime emergencies and other factors have prevented meeting.

Previous attendance record was set in 1953 at Houston when 12,976 messengers--church-elected representatives--presented credentials. Messengers comprise about two-thirds total attendance. Convention leaders expect the registered messengers to surpass the 13,000 mark easily this year.

The two chief preliminary meetings open Monday. They are the Woman's Missionary Union, Convention women's auxiliary, and the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference, an organization of ministers.

Two other special church groups meeting in separate preliminary sessions are church musicians and church directors of religious education. In addition, during the coming week several dozen seminaries, colleges, special groups, and other organizations will hold dinners and observances.

The Convention itself opens Tuesday night and runs through Friday night.

A major item on opening night is the address of the Convention president, Rep. Brooks Hays (D., Ark.) in which the work of the Convention will be reviewed and challenges to future action may be presented.

Also being presented that night is a special drama on the Baptist Jubilee Advance, a program of church extension and evangelism in which Southern Baptists and six other Baptist groups---with a total 19 million members---are participating.

The Convention Sermon will be brought Wednesday by Robert E. Naylor, pastor, Travis Ave. Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

The main business session will be on Thursday afternoon when the messengers consider the report of their Committee to Study Total Convention Program. This committee is making recommendations for new Convention agencies and for reorganization of the work of existing agencies.