

April 9, 1958

Minister Baptizes 114 In Service On Easter

DALLAS--(BP)--Wallace Bassett, pastor of Cliff Temple Baptist Church here, baptized 114 persons on Easter Sunday. This was twice as many converts as Bassett has baptized previously on any one day.

The Easter Sunday was his 41st Easter as pastor of Cliff Temple Church.

The 73-year-old minister preached three times Easter Sunday, and met with the church deacons in addition to undertaking the baptism service.

When asked before if he thought he could do this, Bassett replied, "I know I can, and besides that I am going to Oklahoma City Monday (after Easter) and help with their simultaneous revival. Keeps me out of trouble!"

Bassett has immersed more than 5,000 people since he has been a preacher. Most of the candidates for baptism professed faith during a revival conducted in Cliff Temple Church.

Wade Freeman, Dallas, superintendent of Texas Baptist evangelism department, led the first week of the revival, with Bassett conducting the second week.

A special afternoon baptismal service was held. Each person baptized received a flower from Bassett, a custom the minister originated in special observance of Easter.

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Christenberry Accepts Position With Furman

GREENVILLE, S. C.--(BP)--George A. Christenberry, president of Shorter College, Rome, Ga., has been named Administrative Director of Furman University here effective on July 1, Furman president John L. Plyler has announced.

As administrative director, Christenberry will assist President Plyler with administrative responsibilities. He is a former Furman staff member, having served as dean of the men's college before becoming president of Shorter in 1953.

Both colleges are Southern Baptist colleges.

A native of Macon, Ga., Christenberry attended public schools in Greenville. He graduated magna cum laude from Furman in 1936, receiving his master of science degree from the University of North Carolina in 1938 and his Ph.D. there in 1940.

After serving as professor of biology and head of the department at Meredith College, Baptist women's college at Raleigh, N. C., for three years, he joined the Furman faculty in 1943. A year later he entered the Navy as an officer and served in the Pacific area. He returned to his teaching position at Furman in 1946, later becoming professor of biology and dean of the men's college.

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'We're Ready,' Houston General Chairman Says

HOUSTON--(BP)--"Everything is in readiness for the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in our city. The only real problem that we have encountered has been in the matter of reservations. This is being taken care of as promptly as possible."

This comment was made by E. H. Westmoreland, Houston, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, and chairman of general arrangements locally for the Convention.

"Since it is necessary to assign latecomers to homes, those now writing (for reservations) will have to exercise patience. However, we promise to take care of everyone who desires to attend the Convention," Westmoreland continued.

Although five churches are opening their nurseries, Westmoreland said "The committee would urge that parents leave their children at home if it is at all possible."

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BAPTIST FEATURES

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Burton, secretary of the home education department and editor of Home Life, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, serves also as secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention. He offers some timely suggestions to churches sending messengers to the 1958 session of the Convention.

"The Convention Shall Consist of Messengers"

by Joe W. Burton, secretary, Southern Baptist Convention

The constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention carries this interesting definition: "The Convention shall consist of messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches co-operating with the Convention."

That is the concise basis on which some 12,000 to 15,000 Southern Baptists will gather in Houston the last week of May to establish policies and programs for the denomination. Note a few significant points.

Messengers are sent. It is inherent in the idea of bearing a message. They come with a message, in effect saying one to another, "Let us participate together in kingdom work," for these messengers "are members of missionary Baptist churches co-operating with the Convention."

Come and welcome. Any church anywhere in cordial co-operation with the Convention can send a messenger to its annual meetings, enter into its sessions, vote on every matter of policy or program. The one and only limitation is that the church should participate in the work fostered by the Convention.

The constitution further elaborates at this point that the messenger should come from a "regular Baptist church which is in friendly co-operation 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."

To effect some order and understanding, the Convention has prescribed that there may be one messenger from any such church and an additional messenger for every 250 members, or one for each \$250 contributed to the work of the Convention during the fiscal year preceding, up to a limit of ten messengers from any one church.

But again these necessary regulations are not to restrict or to limit. Rather the whole spirit is a hearty welcome to all Baptists who desire to co-operate in this world wide program for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Messengers are certified. The constitution further provides that "the messenger shall be appointed and certified by the churches to the Convention." Here again is no sergeant at arms to enforce any restrictive order, but a good rule to effect proper procedure and emphasize relationship.

Right here we have been lax. Churches and messengers have not been careful about election and certification. I see it year after year at the registration desk as the thousands of messengers enrol at the Convention.

Certainly we have no thought of setting up any sort of police surveillance to make certain that each messenger has been duly appointed and certified by his church. Nor is there any drive known to me toward enforcement of rigid legalistic regulations with reference to participation in the annual meetings of Southern Baptists.

Our annual Conventions are among the most significant gatherings of Christians in all the world. It is an honor as well as a sacred trust to be a messenger to such a Convention.

We do need to check ourselves on being duly appointed and certified, but the time and place to be appointed and certified will not be in Houston, Tex., on May 20. The time is now and the place is in your own church where with prayerful concern and the Lord's leading you will name those who will be the messengers to the 101st session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

To certify that appointment registration cards have been mailed to each state mission secretary for distribution to the churches.