

New Pastor Takes Fieldcrest Pulpit At Sunday Services

The Rev. Winburn C. Davis Jr. has been called as pastor of Fieldcrest Baptist Church and will assume his duties Sunday.

He came to Fieldcrest from Battle Creek Baptist Church in Springfield, Tenn.

Davis was ordained in November 1965. He is a graduate of East Tennessee State University and Austin Peay State University and will be attending Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest. The Davises will reside in Wake Forest until they can locate a home in Durham.

Dunn Record

Durham Herald

Durham Sun

Elizabeth City Advance

Fayetteville Observer

Gastonia Gazette

Goldsboro News-Argus

Greensboro Daily News

Greensboro Record

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Gates

MAR 4 1972

By WINBURN C. DAVIS

Pastor

Fieldcrest Baptist Church

Editor, The Sun:

The Saturday, August 4th, Sun article by Grace Kutkus, "Immersion Debate Stirs Up Baptists," contained some statements I feel compelled to try to clarify. It is just this type of exposure of the problems we face which confuse the issues. I am sorry to have to take issue with my brother in the ministry Rev. Robert McClernon, but either he is not aware of Baptist doctrine or he was misquoted by Mrs. Kutkus.

I refer specifically to Rev. McClernon's statement, "But we cannot with integrity say that only those baptized by immersion have been baptized. That puts us in the intolerable position of saying that 95 per cent of the Christians in the world are not Christians." It is especially with this latter statement that I cannot agree.

For the benefit of those who do not understand the issue, there is presently a disagreement in the Yates Baptist Association as to what "Baptist" denotes. If an individual desires to become a member of a Baptist Church, he should be willing to practice whatever that church and Baptist doctrines hold to be wholly Baptist. Every first year seminary Greek student learns that the Greek word for our English word Baptize indicates that "to baptize" one must be "immersed." Therefore it has long been a Baptist doctrine that for the Baptists, one should be immersed. If one wants to be a Methodist and be baptized by sprinkling, that is his privilege and Baptists do not argue with Methodist doctrine. But to be a Baptist, the method of baptism is immersion, only those who attempt to be Baptist and refuse immersion, are not wholly Baptist for their refusal to practice what is traditionally

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Baptist. It is as much the same if one were to become an American citizen and refuse to meet one of the government requirements to become a citizen of this country. They might "call" themselves an American citizen, but until they have met all the requirements of citizenship, they are in fact, still aliens! Those who "call" themselves "Baptist" but have not been baptized by immersion, are "alien Baptists." Watts Street Baptist Church and others in the State

accept members into their memberships and call them Baptists when they have not been baptized by immersion. Were the same person trying to transfer his membership from Watts Street Baptist Church (under those circumstances) to most other Baptist churches in the State, he would find that his lack of immersion would make him ineligible for membership transfer since most Baptist churches have as a membership requirement, baptism by immersion, only.

Now to Mr. McClernon's

statement, baptism, according to Baptist doctrine, follows one's conversion to Christianity and is testimony to that conversion. It is not a part of that conversion. Baptist doctrine clearly teaches that one can be a Christian and not be baptized at all. Or those who are members of the Protestant denominations which practice baptism without immersion, Baptists fully accept them to be Christians. Catholics who have trusted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and accepted his death as redemption for

3, 1973

THE DURHAM SUN

Editor Focuses On Baptism Contr

the Union County schools this
Chapel Hill and will teach in
University of North Carolina at
The bride is a graduate of the
church parish house.
hosts at a reception in the
Mr. and Mrs. Nunnally were
Baldwin.
Claude V. Jones III and Amy
Children in the wedding were
Va., and Charles B. Webb.
Frank C. Willson of Ashland,
brother of the bridegroom,
Julian A. Swedish of Glen Allen,
Durham, the bride's brother,
Wallace E. Nunnally of Chapel
Hill was best man. Ushers were
Richard Mowery of Chapel
were bridesmaids.

Spoken Nunnally

MRS. PHILLIP I

Controversy

their sins are fully Christians. Jews, Arabs, Indians, etc., etc., who have done so are likewise accepted by baptists as fully Christians. Whether one has been baptized by immersion or not does not affect their standing as Christians and Baptist doctrine is clear on that. Those who have not been baptized by immersion, Mr. McClernon, are Christians, but they are not Baptists.

Those members of Mr. McClernon's church who have not been immersed would not be accepted in the vast majority of churches who are Baptist (regardless of their affiliations). It is the fact that Watts Street Baptist and a few others across the state have departed from Baptist Doctrines which are practiced overwhelmingly by 99 per cent of Baptist churches.

Finally, it is not even true that we feel that those churches who practice "alien doctrine" should change their practice. Each Baptist church retains control over itself only. We have no structure of governing body to dictate to us this and that. We respect the right of Watts Street Baptist Church and University Baptist Church and a few others to practice whatever doctrine they wish. But as it would be true for any American to become disturbed if one of our States would declare its allegiance to Communist China but still be a part of "America," so are Baptists disturbed when wayward doctrines are practiced and one church wishes to call itself Baptist. These churches should rename "Interdenominational" and let us protect the name "Baptist" to be understood worldwide as a distinctive body who practice the heritage which has brought us to where we are today. We would desire from Watts Street Baptist, University Baptist and the others who follow their dictates on immersion, the same privilege of freedom to be "pure" Baptists as they wish from us to leave them alone! Yet it has continually been the rule that Rev. McClernon and his church "stir up the voters" over this issue time and time again. What are they trying to prove?