

E. Hezekiah Swem

(- 14 May 1936)

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Called To Another Field

Rev. E. Hez Swem Accepts Charge in Dothan, Ala.

Has Served Second Baptist Church in Washington More Than Twenty-Five Years

Rev. Edmund Hez Swem, pastor of the Second Baptist Church and moderator of the Columbia Association of Baptist Churches, which includes all the white Baptist churches of the District of



Columbia, is to leave Washington. He has accepted the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Dothan, one of the most progressive and prosperous of the smaller cities in southeastern Alabama, and which has a population of 10,000.

The determination of the pastor to leave Washington was not known to many of even his intimate friends when he made known his resignation at the close of the morning service in the Second Baptist Church yesterday, and the announcement came as a great surprise to the Easter worshippers. For over a quarter of a century Mr. Swem has been identified with the Baptist denomination in the National Capital. He has always been foremost in the work, and has led the effort which has caused the Second church to grow from a very small beginning to one of the influential congregations of the denomination here. He is a native of Indiana and a graduate of the

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, at Louisville.

His Work in Washington

After a pastorate of a few years in his native state he came to Washington and began his work in this section. Since he took charge of the Second church it has grown in membership, and is today the second largest church of that faith in Washington. When he was seen this morning he said that, while the breaking of so many strong ties here in Washington was hard for him, he felt that the opportunity for service in Alabama is a great one and could not be ignored. He said it has been a pleasure to serve the Baptists of Washington as the moderator of their churches in the Columbia association, and he regrets as well the severance of his relations with the people of the Second church, but he feels the call to the south is an imperative one.

Membership of Six Hundred

There are two Baptist churches in Dothan, the first, of which Mr. Swem is to be pastor, having a large, commodious edifice and a membership of 600. It also has a parsonage, and the pastor said today that he believes the health of Mrs. Swem, who has been somewhat indisposed for some time, will be greatly improved in the warmer climate of the sunny south.

Five times during his pastorate in this city the Rev. Mr. Swem has been chosen to the moderatorship of Columbia Association of Baptist Churches, which is the highest office which Baptists of the District of Columbia can bestow. He has also been appointed to represent his denomination in this section at the great Southern Baptist convention to be held in Baltimore in May.

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Dr. E. Hez Swem Succumbs at 79

Noted Baptist Evangelist Served Here About Half Century

Rev. Dr. E. Hez Swem, widely known retired Baptist pastor and evangelist, who served as pastor of Washington churches for approximately half a century, died early today after a long illness at his home, 905 Massachusetts avenue northeast. He was 79 years old.

Dr. Swem retired as pastor of the Centennial Baptist Church, Seventh and I streets northeast, July 15, 1934, because of ill health. He had been pastor of that church for more than 22 years.

Original in Preaching Methods

During his long career as clergyman, he had become nationally known for his devotion to the ministry and his originality in methods of preaching and choosing of texts.

Some 20 years ago he went on a tour and conducted evangelistic services over a large part of the country. At one time was known as the Capital lecturer.

He long had been a strong advocate of making the church an attractive place to attend and was one of the first to advocate comfortable seats in churches.

Installed Electric Fans

Carrying out this thought, he had installed in the Centennial Baptist Church chairs with arm rests. In hot weather he invited the men to take off their coats and had electric fans installed to further insure the comfort of his congregation.

During his ministry he consolidated the Capital and Centennial Baptist Churches retaining the name of the latter church. He was a leader in the drive for the new church building which was completed in 1915.

While serving here, he was five times moderator of the Columbia Association of Baptist Churches.

A native of Greensburg, Ind., Dr. Swem was the son of the late Dr. and Mrs. Edmund Bowers Swem.

Dr. Swem, an only son, had three sisters, all deceased. He was educated at De Pauw University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

First Pastorate in Indiana

His first pastorate was in Lawrenceburg, Ind., where he was ordained in March 1881. He came here about 1884 to become pastor of the Second Baptist Church, a post he held for over 25 years.

Dr. Swem had written many Gospel songs and tunes and 39 of his productions were published recently in a special edition by well known publishers.

He was a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity, was a thirty-second degree Mason and belonged to the Knights Templar. Recently, the B.B. French Lodge, F.A.A.M., to which he belonged, presented him with a gold button, emblematic of his 50 years of membership.

He is survived by his widow, the former Miss Minnie L. Johnson, two sons, John B. Swem of this city and Lee Allan Swem, New York, and a daughter, Mrs. Thomas E. Griffith, The Dalles, Oreg. He also leaves five grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 8 p.m.

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Dr. Swem's Rites Will Be Tonight

Services for Former Pastor to be Held at Centennial Baptist

Funeral services for Rev. Dr. E. Hez Sem, 79, retired Baptist pastor, who died yesterday at his home, 905 Massachusetts avenue northeast will be held at 8 o'clock tonight in Centennial Baptist Church, Seventh and I streets northeast, where he was pastor for more than 22 years.

Rev. Dr. Wilson Holder, present pastor of the church, will officiate, assisted by Rev. Dr. John C. Ball, pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church and Rev. Dr. F.W. Johnson, pastor of Grace Baptist Church. Burial will be private tomorrow morning.

The time for the services was chosen in accordance with Dr. Swem's wishes not to cause any one inconvenience. He always advocated making churches as comfortable as possible.

Dr. Swem, widely known as an evangelist, retired as pastor of Centennial Church July 15, 1934. He came here in 1884 as pastor of Second Baptist Church, a post he held for over 25 years. Subsequently he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Dothan, Ala. But left there after serving only six months because he and his family wanted to return to Washington. Here he organized Capital Baptist Church and later brought about its consolidation with Centennial Church.

On his birthday, last March 29, the Baptist Ministers' Conference voted him the insignia of Veterans of the Cross in token of his many years service as pastor.

The religious press has praised Dr. Swem for his originality, power and interesting manner in preaching.