

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Smith, G. Reid (1895-1976) was born in Adrian, Georgia. He studied for the ministry under the Methodist faith and in 1939 was baptized into the Baptist faith. He served as pastor of churches in Georgia and Florida including West Little River Baptist Church, Miami. Smith and his wife, Maude had one son.



his friends said.

two grandchildren.

Rev. G. Reid Smith, 81

Reverend **G. Reid Smith**, 81, a minister for 50 years, died Saturday at Hialeah Hospital.

Rev. Smith was born in Adrian, Ga. He attended Asbury College in Kentucky and received undergraduate degrees from both Milikin University in Illinois and Yankton College in South Dakota. He later received his advanced degree in teaching from South Georgia College.

He served for 50 years in the ministry, which took him to 10 different churches in Georgia and South Dakota. In the Miami area,

where he lived for the past 30 years, he was pastor at West Little River Baptist Church and visitation minister at Hialeah First Methodist Church and Allapattah Methodist Church.

He was a member of the Masons.

He is survived by his wife, Maude; a son, Walter Hardin; a sister, Mrs. Effie Harrell; and four grandchildren.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Monday at the First United Methodist Church of Hialeah. Friends may call from 2 to 4 p.m. today at Philbrick and Son Coral Gables Chapel.

REV. G. REID SMITH

JOINS BAPTIST CHURCH

SAVANNAH, Ga., Oct. 2—(AP) The Rev. G. Reid Smith, former Methodist minister, who for a time was pastor of an independent church, and who previously had been pastor of Aldersgate and Pierce Memorial Methodist church, yesterday was baptized into the Baptist church by the Rev. W. A. Taliaferro, pastor of the Bull street Baptist church here.

Smith came to Savannah in the summer of 1938 after serving in Macon, and subsequently at a church in Adrian he organized. He conducted revival services at Aldersgate church in August, 1938, and then was named pastor of that church as well as of Pierce Memorial.

At the South Georgia Methodist conference at Waycross in November, 1938, he retired from the conference. Later he established an independent church here, where he conducted services for some months.

His admission to the Baptist church was as a layman.

The Columbus Ledger
Mon, Oct 02, 1939 -Page 12

FORMER PASTOR HERE

Rev. G. Reid Smith, former Methodist minister, who joined the Baptist church in Savannah yesterday, served in Columbus.

He was assistant under Dr. J. A. Thomas, pastor of St. Luke Methodist church and was pastor of the Wynnton Methodist church. The Rev. Mr. Smith was assigned to a church in Macon after leaving Columbus.

G. Reid Smith to Leave First Street Methodist

Rev. L. E. Williams Will Come
to Macon From St. Mark
Church in Columbus

Bishop W. N. Ainsworth announced last night changes in assignments for three ministers in the South Georgia conference.

The **Rev. G. Reid Smith**, pastor of the First Street Methodist church here for the past several years, is being released from that assignment to do evangelistic work.

In his place, the **Rev. L. E. Williams** will come here from St. Mark church in Columbus, Bishop Ainsworth said. The **Rev. George F. Erwin**, former pastor of the Bibb circuit who now is doing evangelistic work, will become pastor of the Columbus church.

Effective Immediately

Bishop Ainsworth issued a formal statement:

"The **Rev. L. E. Williams**, now of the St. Mark church in Columbus is appointed pastor of the First Street church in Macon and the **Rev. George F. Erwin**, now in evangelistic work, is appointed to St. Mark in Columbus." The **Rev. G. Reid Smith**, heretofore at First Street, will enter the evangelistic field.

"These changes are made to ac-



G. REID SMITH

commodate the **Rev. G. Reid Smith** who asked to be released at First Street church in order to do evangelistic work.

"All changes are effective at once."

Mr. **Smith** is president of the Macon Ministerial Association.

Miami Calls Ga. Minister

Assuming the pastorate Sunday of the West Little River Baptist church will be the Rev. G. Reid Smith, who arrived in Miami from Pinesville, Ga., Thursday.

The Rev. Mr. Reid has been pastor of the Pinesville Baptist church for two years. The church grew with the small town, which boomed into a city overnight, when the army moved into Camp Stewart just outside.

The Rev. Mr. Smith takes the place of the late Rev. Harry A. Whipple at the West Little River church. A special Sunday service of welcome is planned for the new pastor. Special choral selection in the evening will include "The Heaven's Are Telling," Beethoven, under the direction of Mrs. L. G. Spenser. Special orchestra music will be under Director R. L. Barron.

New Charge Accepted By **Smith**

The **Rev. G. Reid Smith** has accepted a call to serve his home church in Adrian, Ga., as its pastor. He will deliver his farewell sermon at West Little River Baptist church Sunday.

The **Rev. Mr. Smith** has served the Miami congregation for the past three years.

Under his ministry, the membership has grown from less than 300 to approximately 500, the Sunday school doubling in enrollment and attendance.

With income nearly tripled, the building fund has increased from \$3,600 to \$15,000. A building lot on 79th st. extending 210 feet has been purchased in anticipation of erection of a new church building.

The **Rev. Mr. Smith** will leave for his new charge immediately after the morning service Sunday.

USE AUDITORIUM PALM SUNDAY

W. Little River Baptists Constructing New Church

No. 133 In a Series
By JOSEPH FAUS

The beginning of West Little River Baptist Church was on Mother's Day in 1926 when Pastor Charles R. Lee and a few members of Little River Baptist Church went west into an area then called "the tropics" to establish another preaching station.

The first service was held on the porch of the P. & H. Grocery Store at NW 22nd Ave. and 82nd St. Among those who helped in it and other services were Mr. and Mrs. Luke McClam, Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Griffin, Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Lee, and Miss Rosalie Muns. All of these good "home missionaries" are yet living.

Other meetings followed in homes and in a skating rink; and to these came men and women and boys and girls who heard the gospel of Christ for the first time.

Destroyed By Storm

The small but growing band of believers raised enough money to build a small wooden tabernacle on a piece of borrowed property at NW 23rd Ave. and 80th St. Shortly after regular weekly worship had been in this structure the hurricane of Sept., 1926, came and the building was demolished.

Undaunted, the little group of Baptists put up a tent and continued preaching the gospel. Many conversions were made, and new members came in. During the summer of 1927 another frame building was constructed and a little later three adjoining lots were purchased.

On Sunday, Nov. 13, 1927, West Little River Baptist Church was organized with 33 charter members. The Rev. B. B. Blich became the first pastor, and served the church two years. It was during his pastorate that Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Fisher, a most



REV. J. ROBERT COCKRELL
Pastor W. Little River Baptist

helpful couple, became members of the church. Mrs. Fisher is yet active in the work.

From 1930 through 1931 the Rev. W. H. Sledge was pastor, and has served the church at interims many times since. The Rev. G. Gordon Hunter came as the third pastor in 1931 and continued until 1936. Dark days of the depression were unable to crush the spirit of this pastor and his people. Church records of this period show that the total income of the church was often less than \$15 per month, of which the pastor received \$5.

During this period John H. Suter, veteran deacon, came and was instrumental for much good in the church. He is now deacon emeritus.

The Rev. J. H. Gates was the fourth pastor, and served until 1937. A revival during his ministry introduced the Rev. K. A.

Whipple, the next pastor. The Rev. Mr. Whipple served the church sacrificially and gloriously until 1944. He inspired the people to build.

The Rev. G. Reid Smith became the sixth pastor. Two hundred and ten feet of land on 79th St. were bought. New members came, money was collected or pledged for a new church plant. But before work could begin the Rev. Mr. Smith was called to a church in Georgia.

Native of S. Carolina

The present pastor, the Rev. J. Robert Cockrell, came on Jan. 1, 1948. He is a native of South Carolina, a graduate of schools in that state, and of Wingate College in North Carolina, Mercer University in Georgia, and of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where he received his divinity degree. His subsequent pastorates in New Jersey and Georgia were marked with success. For several terms he was Associational Moderator.

Soon after his arrival in Miami the church built for his family a beautiful CBS pastorium which is valued at \$12,000. In the last four years he has welcomed into the church 325 new members, 129 of these by baptism, making a total of 709 as of today. More than \$80,000 has been contributed to the church during this period. Work progressed rapidly on the auditorium of the church plant. Total value of church property is now about \$125,000.

First services in the auditorium will be held on Palm Sunday, April 6. This attractive building measures 111 by 60 feet, and when fully completed will seat 1,000. Plans have been made for the erection of an educational building to house an equal number of persons. West Little River Baptist Church will then be well equipped to serve the spiritual needs of one of Greater Miami's most rapidly

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Pastor Cockrell's ministry is not confined to West Little River. The people of Miami Baptist Association's 49 churches have kept him a member of their Steering Committee for several years, and as chairman of their Committee on Civic Righteousness. The Rev. Mr. Cockrell has spearheaded many attacks against social injustices in Dade county and Florida.

542 in Sunday School

The Sunday school, which has an enrollment of 542, is led by Superintendent W. L. Fletcher. The Training Unions, directed by A. Wilson Lewis, have an enrollment of 138. C. A. Streetman is president of the Brotherhood, and Mrs. A. J. Nelson is president of the Women's Missionary Union. Closely associated with the pastor in the spiritual ministry is the board of deacons, chairman of which is W. R. Cromer, Sr., Mrs. L. G. Spencer, Sr., and Mrs. R. L. Stephens are directors of the three choirs; and Mrs. B. R. Hemby is organist.

West Little River Baptist Church today is a monument to the little band of noble missionaries who in 1926 set forth to build what has become one of the most outstanding "Rocks of God" in Dade County.