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First Baptist Church Anniversary Celebrations

First Baptist Church (Shelby, NC)

1947

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The Shelby Daily Star

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The Shelby Daily Star

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HERITAGE OF A GREAT CHURCH

This week the First Baptist church is celebrating its centennial with a galaxy of speakers that ranks tops in this great denomination in the South. In 1841 Cleveland county was formed. Six years later a small band of 25 men gathered and organized the First Baptist church, which today has a membership of over 2,600. This week's celebration serves to impress upon us what a heritage has been ours from that small band and those who came after them, for without the influence of the First Baptist and the other fine churches of this county, Cleveland county would have been backward spiritually, socially and economically.

The First Baptist and the other churches have been a stabilizing and civilizing influence, the like of which no other institutions have wielded, so the heritage of those courageous pioneers who crusaded for Christ is a priceless heritage which we should deeply appreciate and perpetuate.

Dr. Zeno Wall, who has served as pastor of the First Baptist church for 22 years, has never been a leader who followed the new-fangled isms. He is a fundamentalist and has brought to his pulpit for this celebration such dynamic and inspiring personalities as Dr. Ellis A. Fuller, Mrs. J. M. Dawson, Dr. M. T. Rankin, Dr. J. B. Lawrence, Dr. W. F. Powell, Dr. Louie D. Newton, Dr. Duke McCall, Dr. Charles H. Durham and Dr. Sankey L. Blanton.

Those who heard Dr. Fuller and Mrs. Dawson yesterday agree that Shelby has never had the privilege of hearing two more stirring messages. They are but samples of what is to be heard each night this week until the climax of the centennial celebration comes next Sunday.

Evangelism has been emphasized in the First Baptist and the other churches in Cleveland since the county was chartered in 1841 and this explains the fact that there are now more than 70 white churches and some 30 colored congregations in Cleveland. The influence of these churches has been the dominant force in the county, made so by the courageous Christians who founded and built churches through the intervening years.

Truly, the heritage is of priceless value and this week is a memorable one in the life of the First Baptist and of the community.