

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 202

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the pastor and members of Cedar Grove Baptist Church on the occasion of its 200th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, founded on irrefutable truths in the scriptures, the historic Cedar Grove Baptist Church, located approximately five and one-half miles north of Lebanon, Tennessee, was constituted on May 15, 1813, by Elders Josiah Rucks, John Wiseman, John Jones, and Thomas Durham; and

WHEREAS, Cedar Grove is the fourth oldest Southern Baptist church in Wilson County; and

WHEREAS, believed to have its roots in the old Spring Creek Baptist Church, the church's first pastor was the dynamic Elijah Maddox, who effectively preached the word of God for twenty-six fruitful years (1815-1841); and

WHEREAS, in 1814, Cedar Grove Baptist Church joined the Concord Association while it was in session at Salem Church in Liberty, Tennessee; in 1899, the church lettered from the Salem Association, which it had joined in 1822, and became attached to the New Salem Association; and

WHEREAS, in 1865, during the time of slavery, Cedar Grove showed that there was no room for prejudice, having ninety-nine white members and eighty-five black members; and

WHEREAS, in 1880, a large Bible, still in use, was purchased by church members for use by all who held services at the church; and

WHEREAS, in May 1883, the first Sunday School was established. The members would come faithfully each Sunday and tie their horses to the cedar trees, which were used as hitching posts; and

WHEREAS, by 1902, there was a new house of worship and 157 members; in 1909, a new pump organ was purchased and Miss Hattie Mabry (Mrs. Bob Burford) became the first organist; and

WHEREAS, also in 1909, the church sent its first delegate to the Southern Baptist Convention, and in 1921, Cedar Grove joined the Wilson County Baptist Association; and

WHEREAS, during the depression and all of the 1930s, the church struggled, but with the help of God and the ministers and members, the church survived and prospered; and

WHEREAS, from 1942-1944, many servicemen attended Cedar Grove while camped in Middle Tennessee. Conversions were made and many joined the church; and

WHEREAS, in 1944, a bus ministry was begun, and Brother Henry Buhler was the first driver. That same year, five new Sunday School rooms were added; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, the church went to full-time preaching; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, electricity was installed and another addition was built; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, Wilson County Baptist purchased time on the radio; the church participated in this successful ministry; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, a need had arisen for a residence for the pastor; plans were put into motion, land was purchased, and construction began; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, the residence was completed, and the first occupants were the family of Brother Ira W. Suiter, who served until 1969; and

WHEREAS, a new pastor, Brother Bob Carroll, came on board in 1969, and during that year, he and Brother J.G. Crips labored feverishly on the project of remodeling the sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, a new educational wing was added, bathrooms were remodeled, and Fellowship Hall was enlarged; in 1975, a pictorial directory was published, the Baptistry was installed, and the Jail Ministry was started; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, a new bus ministry was started, and the Recreational Building was added in 1977; and

WHEREAS, the present pastor of the 118-member church is James T. Fesler, and the deacons are Shelton Howell, James Kolbe, Eugene Graves, Ray Ferrell, and Sam Patton, all of whom are doing exemplary jobs; and

WHEREAS, the former pastors of this church were Elijah Maddox, E.W. Haile, William Barton, Johnathan Wiseman, D.W. Lee, Richard Lyon, John Johnson, J.S. Rice, J.B. Chapman, G.A. Ogle, J.G. Vickers, Z.A. Lyon, J.R. Hearn, J.T. Oakley, L.N. Brock, J.H. Grime, W.J. Couch, J.F. McNabb, J.J. Carr, S.N. Fitzpatrick, W.E. Rakes, J.H. Oakley, Willie Wilkes, and T.H. Vantrease; and

WHEREAS, other former pastors of this church include W.J. Watson, G.W. Ramsey, A.D. Roberson, J.C. Yelton, Hoyt Huddleston, Vern Powers, Thomas Johnson, Herbert Mann, Regan Gibbs, Jim Adkins, Ira W. Suiter, Robert Carroll, Roy Huddleston, Jr., Bill Enoch, Terry Fesler, Larry Vanhook, Ronnie Smith, Bill Dwyer, Douglas Cather, Robert Capra, and Bernice Walpole; and

WHEREAS, for 200 years, the Cedar Grove Baptist Church has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love, serving as a bastion of faith and outreach to the people of Wilson County; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend the pastor and members of Cedar Grove Baptist Church on the occasion of the church's 200th anniversary and offer our sincerest wishes for every continued success as an uplifting beacon of the Lord's good will.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.