

## ***Baptist History Homepage***

### **Southern Baptists and Alien Immersion in 1915**

By W. P. Throgmorton

[A letter sent to Baptist editors and leaders in various states.]

"Dear Brother: I am investigating a question of facts. What per cent of Baptist churches in your state receive or would receive alien immersions as valid? Please answer briefly according to your best judgment and information, on return postal sent therewith.

Your brother, W.P. Throgmorton"

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"Here is the information we received. We do not quote all that is contained in the replies, but only so much as answers the question:

Alabama, F.W. Barnett, Editor of *Alabama Baptist*: 'I should say the number would be negligible. I have heard of a few city churches that have done it.'

**Arkansas, E. J. A. McKinney, Editor of *Baptist Advance*: 'I will say that in my judgment there is not a Baptist church in Arkansas that would receive alien immersion.'**

Florida, Wm. D. Nowlin, until recently Editor of the *Florida Baptist Witness*: 'So far as my knowledge goes, only two churches in Florida have received alien immersions, and they do not defend or make a practice of it, I understand.'

Georgia, H. R. Bernard, Secretary of State Missions: 'Not half a dozen stand for alien immersion.'

Kentucky, J. W. Porter, Editor of the *Western Recorder*: 'I think it safe to say that twenty-five would be a very liberal estimate of the number of churches in this state that would accept alien immersion.'

Louisiana, G. H. Crutcher, Secretary of State Missions: 'I think possibly there is one church in this state that would of its own accord receive alien immersion. I believe we have only three pastors who would ask their churches to receive alien immersion, while we have about 703 churches and about 300 preachers.'

Maryland, A. J. Fristoe, Secretary of State Missions: 'In Maryland we have seventy-six churches. One hundred per cent will accept a person immersed upon a profession of his faith by a minister of any evangelical denomination, so far as I know.'

Mississippi, P. I. Pipsey, Editor of *Baptist Record*: 'I do not believe a single church in Mississippi would receive alien immersion without protest. If it were left without discussion any church would vote against it. If it were fully discussed no church would

receive it. If the pastor should take advantage of the people and urge it or recommend it, they would in some cases receive it to prevent unpleasantness.'

Missouri, S. M. Brown, Editor: 'In my judgment one-fourth of our churches in Missouri would receive alien immersion.'

New Mexico, E. B. Atwood, Secretary State Missions: 'So far as my information goes there are no Baptist churches in New Mexico at present who are receiving alien immersions, and I do not think any would be willing to do so.'

North Carolina, Livingston Johnson, Secretary State Missions: 'If I should make a rough guess I should say twenty-five per cent.'

Oklahoma, C. P. Stealey, Editor of *Baptist Messenger*: 'In my judgment you could not find more than one church in one hundred in Oklahoma that practices alien immersion.'

South Carolina, B. P. M., Field Man of the *Baptist Courier*: 'At least 75 per cent would reject it.'

Tennessee, E. E. Folk, Editor of *Baptist and Reflector*: 'It is impossible, of course, to get exact figures. My estimation, however, is that not more than one or at most two per cent of the Baptist churches in Tennessee would receive alien immersion as valid. I know of very few pastors in the state who would favor it.'

Texas, F. C. McConnell, Secretary of State Missions: 'The churches of Texas are practically unanimous in rejecting alien immersion. I do not suppose ten churches in 3,600 would even consider receiving a person with such immersion.'

Virginia, Pastor M. R. Cooper, formerly a pastor in Illinois: 'it is my opinion that 75 per cent of the Baptist churches in Virginia, do not favor alien immersion. All prefer regular baptisms, but 25 per cent are willing to tolerate alien immersion.'

'As to the churches connected with the Illinois Baptist State Association, they are virtually unanimous in rejecting alien immersion. The exceptions are very few indeed.'

"So here are the facts: **Less than seven and one-half per cent of the Baptist churches of the Southern Baptist Convention would receive alien immersion.** The only state where receiving alien immersion prevails in Maryland, and it has only seventy-six churches with less than 15,000 total membership."

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The above quote is from the *Illinois Baptist* newspaper on February 6, 1915.

[W. P. Throgmorton (1849-1929) was a leading Southern Baptist pastor in Illinois. He pastored throughout the state and served as editor of *The Baptist Banner*, *The Baptist News*, and later *The Illinois Baptist* newspaper. In 1905, he led in the organization of the Illinois Baptist State Association and helped the group to join the Southern Baptist Convention in 1907. This article clearly and undeniably shows that ninety years ago

the vast majority of Southern Baptists throughout America rejected alien (non-Baptist) immersions.]

This document was provided by Ben Stratton.

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