

Cecil A. Roberts was born in Waco, Texas. He graduated from Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Roberts served as pastor of churches in Oklahoma and Florida including First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, 1962-1967. He served as Chaplain to the Florida House of Representatives during his Tallahassee pastorate. Roberts and his wife, Delores Patterson Roberts had three daughters.

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Tampa Bay Times
Sat, Apr 18, 1964 · Page 44

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- ✓ In demand across the South as a preacher.
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Chaplain's Prayers Distributed

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — The chaplain's prayers opening the daily sessions of the 1963 house were so general and thought-provoking that one representative printed them in a booklet and distributed them to lawmakers and friends.

The prayers were delivered by the Rev. Dr. C. A. Roberts, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, who served as official chaplain to the house of representatives.

Rep. Woodie Liles of Hillsborough County had them printed in an eight-page booklet. The prayers themselves ranged from 37 words to 81 words, including the phrases "our Father," "in Christ's name," and "Amen."

ALTHOUGH WRITTEN for legislative doings, the prayers could be used by almost anyone.

Here are parts of some of the general prayers:

—April 3: "When we succeed without sacrifice, help us to know it is because others have sacrificed before us. And when we sacrifice without succeeding, may we know it is that others might succeed after us."

—April 5: "We ask that You judge us neither for where we've been, nor for where we stand at the moment, but rather by the direction we honestly seek to move in life toward Thee."

—April 29: "WE thank Thee for Mondays, for they remind us that we can begin again."

—May 1: "... Teach us not only to choose between



REV. C. A. ROBERTS
... Prayers printed

right and wrong, but also between the better and the best."

—May 6: "Give us enough of failure to make us lean harder on each other. Give us enough of success to make us know we walk with Thee."

—May 7: "Teach us how to want the right things, for most of our failures have come when we got what we wanted, and what we wanted wasn't best."

—May 16: "In the business of living, help us distinguish between what is primary and what is secondary; between what is urgent and what can wait; between what is of great value and what is of no consequence."

—MAY 20: "TEACH us to measure time by the deeds we do and not by the days we work. Help us to spend more time making friends and less time using people."

—May 21: "Teach us to love those who need loving and help those who need help."

Woman Tortured by Agonizing ITCH

"I nearly itched to death 7 1/2 years. Then I found a new wonder creme. Now I'm happy," writes Mrs. P. Ramsey of Calif. Here's blessed relief from tortures of vaginal itch, rectal itch, chafing, rash and eczema with an amazing new scientific formula called LANACANE. This fast-acting medicated creme kills harmful bacteria germs while it soothes raw, irritated and inflamed tissue. Stops scratching—an speeds healing. Don't suffer! Get LANACANE at drugstore.



CHECK WITH GEORGE STANLEY CHECK WITH GEORGE STANLEY



REV. C. A. ROBERTS
... Prayers printed

Capital Pastor 'Most Outstanding'

By ANN WALDRON
Of The Times Staff

TALLAHASSEE — Back in 1950 a bespectacled college freshman used to go out to a cemetery in Waco, Texas, every night about 11 o'clock and practice preaching to the grave-stones.

He had one sermon and he worked on it and practiced it and perfected it and polished it there in the graveyard — but there was never anyone there to hear it.

He wanted desperately to preach, but no one would invite him to preach.

Finally, the opportunity came. The churches in his hometown of Ft. Worth invited him to preach during one night of a week-long youth revival at the amphitheater.

And so it was that Cecil Albert Roberts Jr., preached his first sermon to a crowd of 6,000.

The sermon was a huge success — 200 people came forward after it was over — and C. A. Roberts was on his way.

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Roberts' career began, actually, before the graveyard scene.

"One Sunday night in Ft. Worth when I was a freshman in high school," he said, "a bunch of us boys skipped church and we went out and rocked the basketball coach's house. He had a drinking problem any-

way, and he reached for a shotgun. He thought he got one loaded with bacon rind but it had buckshot in it.

Two of the boys were injured slightly. I was nearly killed. For 19 days in the hospital, they didn't expect me to live. They just kept taking me back to the operating room. The case got an awful lot of publicity. The coach was indicted and lost his job. I recovered, but the whole thing was a tragedy. That's how my name got known in Ft. Worth and why, actually, I was invited to preach at a revival."

Roberts felt that his life was saved for some purpose, but it was years before he announced publicly his intention to become a preacher.

"That was the period when I wanted to preach and nobody would ask me," he said. "I didn't even get to teach Sunday school. I almost dropped out of Baylor my freshman year I was so discouraged. But a friend of mine told me that when I had something to say, I'd get a chance to preach."

After the sermon at the youth revival, the invitations came flooding in.

at Fort Worth and drove to Altus on weekends. The church gave him six weeks off to study for his orals and then chartered buses so that 150 members could journey to Fort Worth for his graduation.

Roberts wrote his thesis on "The Apologetic Significance of Jonathan Edwards' Doctrine of Religious Experience."

"I did my doctoral work in philosophy instead of theology," he said. "I wanted to know what people thought who were not interested in religion. And it's paid off in my work with students at Florida State University."

Under his ministry, the church in Altus grew and flourished, but in 1960, he accepted the call to the larger church in Tallahassee — under several conditions.

He asked for more than the ordinary amount of time for study. (He spends every morning, if possible, in his study.) He also wanted time for travel and as much time as the church could spare for him to preach in other towns and cities.

His fame as a preacher has spread. He will preach this summer at Baptist assembly

tion — they were pointed and made sense. Legislators liked them so well, in fact, that they had them printed in a little booklet.

Roberts thoroughly enjoyed working with the Legislature and feels grateful that his ministry was extended to such a group. He has become, someone remarked, a "politician's preacher," and travels about the state to political gatherings.

He was asked to give the invocation at the Governor's Baseball Dinner in Tampa recently and again caused a minor sensation. The rowdy sports-writers and ballplayers refused to quiet down, sit down, or put down their beer mugs for grace. Roberts merely stood at the head table with his head bowed until the room became absolutely quiet. Then he prayed one of his short, pointed prayers. The sports crowd broke into applause.

Roberts travels with the FSU football team with his expenses paid. This, he says, is "mere freeloadng," but he does lead the team in prayer before each game.

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spread. He will preach this summer at Baptist assembly grounds in Glorietta, N. Mex. and at Ridgcrest, N.C.

He has written three series of Sunday school lessons for teenagers and is working on the fourth.

"This is bone-killing work," he said. "My wife says she'll divorce me if I take on another series."

Roberts has two hobbies — golf and reading. He reads voraciously and subscribes to 36 periodicals and belongs to several book clubs.

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FLORIDA HOUSE Speaker Mallory Horne invited Roberts to become House chaplain.

Roberts' prayers each morning created a minor sensation in the Legislature. Not only were they brief — an innova-

tion — a crisis occurred in his ministry at the segregated First Baptist Church here. At his urging, the deacons submitted to the congregation at a Wednesday night prayer meeting a proposal for a ballot at the Sunday morning service on the question of opening the church's doors to all persons—black or white.

The Wednesday night group refused — 640 to 626 — to present the ballot on Sunday to the congregation.

But the matter is not closed. Roberts refuses to discuss it with the press, saying merely that it is an internal matter, but members of his church say that committees are still working on it.

The church has survived the battle so far, and Roberts has no plans for leaving.

The **Rev. Dr. C. A. Roberts**, new pastor of the First Baptist Church, and Mrs. **Roberts** will be honored by the members of the staff and the official board of the church at a reception Tuesday evening from 8 to 10 in the recreation hall of the church.

Guests will be greeted at the door by members of the Brotherhood and by Harold Maxwell, president, as well as by trustees of the church and their wives.

Members of the pulpit committee who will introduce guests to the **Rev. Dr. Roberts** and his associate ministers, Marion L. Hayes, George Starke, and their wives, are Dr. Doak S. Campbell, Mrs. Lewis Bevis, Wilson Connerly, Clark Durrance, Edward Henderson, Frank O'Kelley, Mrs. Marion Pichard, and Curtis Tedder.

Members of the hospitality committee are W. V. Hicks, chairman, Sunday school superintendent; Harold Massey and Mrs. Massey, Baptist Student Union President; Davie Talley, and Mrs. Talley; Baptist Training Union president, Roy Rhodes.

Mrs. Ernest Cason, general chairman of the reception, is being assisted by Mrs. Raymond Berry, Mrs. J. Lewis Hall Sr., invitations; Mrs. Edwin Clark and Mrs. R. F. Lee, decorations; Miss Helen Frazee and Edward B. Henderson Jr., music; and Mrs. Greene S. Johns-



NEW PASTOR AND FAMILY—The **Rev. Dr. C. A. Roberts**, new pastor of the First Baptist Church, and Mrs. **Roberts** with their children, Caren, Camille and Cynthia, will preach his first sermon at the church today.

RELIGION IN THE NEWS

Beatniks And Religion

By GEORGE W. CORNELL
Associated Press Religion Writer

SOME MINISTERS are saying that part of Christianity is knowing what it's like to feel "beat," in a crass and constricting World.

That's just what happened to Jesus' followers, the ministers say—except that they found heart and hope beyond all the seeming futility.

"Jesus would have had compassion for the beatniks if he were here today," says Rev. C. A. Roberts, a Baptist of Altus, Okla., who has spent a year studying them firsthand. "Jesus would have understood because He was a non-conformist, too."

Numerous other clergy lately also have cited close parallels between problems bothering the beat generation, and the problems dealt with by Christianity from the outset.

THE TENDENCY "is by no means new," says Rev. Merrill C. Tenney, dean of the graduate school of Wheaton College. "Jesus encountered the same attitude as He stood with his disciples in the upper room just before going to the cross."

Specifically, the dean says, Peter, Thomas and Philip showed in their remarks the same obtuse defeatism that robs many young adults today of incentive in the face of the World's frustrations, and makes them consider all effort as useless.

"The disciples were plunged into an abyss of despair," he says. "The whole situation did not make sense, and they protested loudly. They felt beaten by the wall of

irrational injustices that confronted them."

THAT, HE SUGGESTS, is the kind of protest and nihilism that besets the so called beats, who in an era of wars, armaments and gross materialism see no point in life—except just existing for the physical moment.

However, he writes in the weekly, Christianity Today, Jesus had the answer for their bewilderment in His resurrection triumph over hopelessness, summed up in His words: "I am the way . . . be of good cheer, I have overcome the World."

"Jesus' attitude toward the 'beatniks' among the disciples sets a pattern for our attitude," Dean Tenney adds. "He did not excuse their failures but He prayed that they might come to share His victory."

SEVERAL MINISTERS have made a speciality of becoming acquainted with the beat crowd, with their beards, berets, poetry and coffee house idling.

Rev. Pierre H. Delattre, who runs a store front "bread and wine" mission for assorted artists and Bohemian iconoclasts in San Francisco's North Beach, with support from the Congregational Christian Churches, says:

"I found that at its best the community is engaged in a profoundly religious quest for more spiritually intense and personally authentic grounds of existence.

"The fact that the quest so often ends in grotesque failure only emphasizes the desperation leading its members to undertake it."

REJECTING conventional so-

ciety, they seek an individualistic mode of living, he says and their dominant philosophy is anti-intellectual, emphasizing instead direct experience and sensation—of form, rhythm, color, emotion.

Although on first acquaintance, they're inclined to sneer at Christianity and morals, and "pretend that nothing matters," their real search for good eventually comes out, Rev. Delattre writes in the United Church Herald.

"I have become strengthened in my conviction that the Protestant church must be more willing to listen to the voice of the protesters," he adds. "Christian prophets may well emerge from the so called avantgarde groups . . ."

REV. ROBERTS spent a year in research among beats in Dallas, San Francisco and New York's Greenwich Village. He says the church has a solution for them, but won't get it across with "the same old sermons." He says the church itself must learn new means of communicating. He'll lecture next term on the subject at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

For one thing, he says that in an age of hypocrisy, status seeking and conformity, the same forces which sent Christ to the cross, the church has minimized the element of suffering, a reality of which the beats are keenly aware.

"The tragedy is that the churches have taken the cross out of preaching," he says. "Young people are crying out against the innocent suffering they see all around them. And the church has failed to challenge them with the innocent suffering of Christ."

What ever happened to the **Rev. C. A. Roberts** of the First Baptist Church?

Dr. **Roberts**, former chaplain of the Florida House of Representatives, is teaching philosophy at Stephen F. Austin College in Nacogdoches, Tex., according to Associate Pastor Philip Lykes of the First Baptist Church. Before that, according to close friends, the former pastor was with Word Publishing Co. in Waco, Tex., and before that, had a fellowship at Harvard. He still preaches when time permits.

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Rev. Roberts Among Harvard Merrill Fellows

Rev. Cecil A. Roberts Jr. of Waco is one of five Merrill Fellows enrolled at the Harvard Divinity School in a program for post-graduate training for ministers.

The Merrill Fellows are enrolled in regular courses of the Divinity School and in addition take reading courses and participate in seminars arranged for their special needs.

Rev. Roberts, religions editor for Word Recording and Publishing Co., is former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Tallahassee, Fla. He has also served as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Altus, Okla.

Rev. Roberts received the **B.A.** degree from Baylor University in 1953, and the B.D. and Th.D. degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In Tallahassee he served as chaplain for eight sessions of the Florida House of Representatives.

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Rev. C. A. Roberts to Hold A Weekend Revival For The Seventh Street Baptists

Rev. C. A. Roberts, Fort Worth, Tex., will conduct a weekend revival at the Seventh Street Baptist church beginning with services Friday at 7:30 p.m. It will continue through the Sunday evening meeting.

An outstanding youth leader in the south, **Roberts** has conducted religious meetings throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Texas.

Roberts was born in Waco, Tex. and reared in Fort Worth where he received his public school education. He is a graduate of Poly high school in Fort Worth where he starred in basketball and track.

He is a graduate of Baylor University, receiving a B. A. degree in 1953. He received his B. D. degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth this past spring. At his graduation he was chosen by the faculty of the School of Theology to receive the Albert Venting, Jr. Award, on the basis of scholarship, preaching, and possi-



REV. C. A. ROBERTS

bilities for the future. In the fall of 1956 he began work on his Doctor of Theology degree.