



Dr. Lee Roberson

1909-2005

Dr. Lee Roberson is known and respected for the more than 40 years he was greatly used of God as pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church and president and chancellor of Tennessee Temple Schools in Chattanooga, TN.

He was born near English, IN on November 24, 1909. The family soon moved to Louisville, KY where he graduated from the University of Louisville and then finished his degree at Southern Baptist Seminary. When Lee was 14 he attended Sunday School, and there Mrs. Daisy Hawes gave the gospel to the boys. Two weeks later he received Christ as his Savior!

At age 18, God called him into full-time service. He served as pastor in Germantown, TN; Temple Baptist Church in Green Brier, TN; and First Baptist Church of Fairfield, AL before becoming pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church in 1942. During the time of pastoring in Green Brier he met with a famous music professor at the Nashville Conservatory of Music, Gaetano Salvatore de Luca. When Professor de Luca heard Dr. Roberson sing, he offered him music lessons and a contract; however, Lee decided not to accept, convinced that pursuit of a music career was not God's call upon his life.

While in evangelistic ministry in Birmingham, AL, he met Caroline Allen and they were married October 9, 1937. They had four children: Lee Anne, Joy, John and June. Baby Joy was just nine weeks old when she suddenly passed away (in 1946). That heartbreaking time for Dr. and Mrs. Roberson led to his taking Romans 8:28 as his life verse and became the inspiration for establishing Camp Joy. Highland Park Baptist began providing free camp for boys and girls. As many as three thousand would attend each summer, and through the years many thousands were saved. The theme for the camp was "Where Boys and Girls Begin to Live."

On July 3, 1946, Highland Park voted unanimously to begin a school to train preachers. Tennessee Temple Schools had begun.

He served as pastor of Highland Park until April of 1983, thus completing more than 40 years as its spiritual leader. Dr. and Mrs. Roberson then traveled to churches around America until her death in 2005.

An email with the subject, "Dr. Lee Roberson, home with the Lord" was sent by his son John. "This morning, April 29, at 4:45 a.m., my dad, Dr. Lee Roberson went home to be with his Lord and Savior."

This man of impeccable character, strong convictions and powerful preaching became a model for Christians everywhere. To God be the glory!

THE FOLLOWING WAS WRITTEN BY THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF DR. LEE ROBERSON, FOLLOWING THE DAY HER DAD WENT HOME TO BE WITH THE LORD.

My Dad's Hands

I woke up very early this past Saturday morning and my Dad's hands came to my mind. His hands were very strong and always clean and full of character. Let me share my insight on what his hands meant to me. My hands look like his, which makes this all the more significant to me.

When I was 2 years old, these were the hands that held mine and allowed me to jump up and down every night on his bed, and held onto me just in case I were to fall. These were the same hands that through the years never really fixed anything, this he left up to Mother! But these were the hands that were always willing to give a big wave to many as he went across the campus. These were the hands that could give a warm handshake and made you feel very special as he said, "God bless you". Years ago, when he would travel on Monday's and Tuesday's, Mother and I would walk him to the gate at the airport. He would board the plane and Mother would always say we needed to wait. When he would get to the top step, he would turn around and with his hand would wave good-bye. Then we were ready to leave. These were also the hands that I would love to hold when walking through the dark church. These hands so lovingly held my Mother's hand too many times to record! These hands were all to welcome to open a door and usher someone ahead of him.

After a busy morning at church or school, be it speaking in chapel, or seeing those in his office, and eating in the Dining Hall, he would come home for the afternoon. The same hands that performed various duties all morning would now proceed to carefully reach into a big can and pull out corn to feed his favorite pigeons! They seemed to just gather around him in one accord. He would talk to them and care for them. Also, these were the hands that took the time to give our dog a special lunch. I never understood, but he would fix their food in a stainless-steel bowl—a mixture of dry food, water and can dog food...he would then mix it all with his hands. It seemed pretty disgusting—but he assured me the dog liked it that way. The best German shepherd we ever had was named "Doc". He seemed to understand that special hands had fixed his lunch. My Dad would put the food down and the dog would look up at him as if to wait for permission to eat. My Dad would say, "Go ahead Doc" and he did! Every morning at 6:30 he would have breakfast. He would then carefully save a portion of his breakfast and take it out to share with the dog. How many dogs got sausage and eggs every morning?

Now these hands did other things too. Through the years he was given boxes of Russell Stover candy. It was fun to see him take out his pocket knife and rip open that annoying plastic in a flash. He then would open it and if he wasn't sure which kind he wanted he would just stick his finger a couple of pieces! Now I realize this does not seem too dignified and probably not a great example, but it always made us laugh. We could open that box later and find a few pieces smashed in the box. I just figured those were the ones he didn't like!

I could not fail to mention his strong penmanship that he had. We all have seen his famous signature and his life verse of Romans 8:28... he always used the same type of

felt tip pen—which made that signature bold. And should that pen not be quite bold enough, he would cut off the tip with his pocket knife! This knife had many uses. These hands loved to hold a good cup of coffee. He taught me early on not to fill the cup too full—you must leave room for the cream. One of his favorite things to do was to stir his coffee and take the hot spoon out and very slyly put it on the back of Mother's hand. Sometimes he would get me too, but I did learn to watch for this trick. Mother seemed to fall for it every time much to his delight.

I think of the hands that jingled his keys in his pockets. Those keys had a certain sound. He also jingled his loose change---this may have been sometimes noted as impatience and need to move on with the moment. These hands could always locate a piece of paper to jot down a note. These notes were not lost or forgotten, but something he would tend to later. Countless times we may have been in a restaurant and he would be making notes on the napkin or placemat—usually noting something special he was planning for. He told me variety was important. That has stayed with me.

I think of the thousands of sermons penned by these hands and the many letters he signed. He was always so gracious. If you wrote him, met him, gave him a gift you would be sure to get a thank you letter. I know once he thanked me by letter for my thank you note I gave him...I wondered if I responded how long we could keep that up! And I couldn't forget the countless Bibles he so willingly signed and each one got his full attention.

These hands turned the pages of the Bible every day. Whether it was to read God's word or lead someone to a verse that would change their life or with his small Testament would visit someone in the hospital and read scripture and pray with them. I have seen these hands raised many times in a message to make a certain point and emphasize the need of Christ in our lives. I use one of his Bibles and have so enjoyed reading his notes and remembering different preachers he would hear and so mark with their name and date in the margins.

Hands are amazing and often taken for granted. I will always remember my Dad's hands knowing they served him well for many tasks for 97 years. Sunday has always been a special day for both my parents. The Lord chose to take Mother home on a Sunday, and He also chose this Sunday to be the day when He reached down and took my Dad's hands in His and said, "It's time to come Home."

By: Sunday June Ormesher

Dr. Lee Roberson's youngest daughter

Written on the occasion of his homegoing

Sunday, April 29, 2007