

Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr.

The Rev. Dr. Joseph L. Roberts, Jr. served as the Senior Pastor of the Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia for 30 years. A visionary and gifted leader, he uses his exceptional skills in addressing major issues of our time, creating an awareness in others, sensitizing them to act in meeting the challenges of today. His messages stimulate the mind, are thought provoking, and get to the heart of the matter. They cause one to think deeply and act compassionately. It is with this type of leadership that Ebenezer continues to be a strong voice for the oppressed and an advocate for justice.

Dr. Roberts is a native of Chicago where he received his formative education in the public school system. He graduated Cum Laude from Knoxville College. His Master of Divinity Degree was received from Union Theological Seminary in New York City and his Master of Theology Degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. Prior to coming to Ebenezer he worked in various administrative positions in the Presbyterian Church, U.S., and was Pastor of Weequahic Presbyterian Church and Elmwood United Presbyterian Church in New Jersey. He is the recipient of numerous honors from civic, social, and religious organizations. He has been listed in Ebony Magazine as an outstanding clergy person. He also is the recipient of five honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees. He was the 2004 recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Awards of both of his graduate schools; Union Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. He serves on several board and committees both locally and nationally.

This multi-talented man of all seasons is a great energetic orator and an accomplished musician. He also is an administrative wizard and negotiated successfully in securing bank financing for Ebenezer's new Horizon Sanctuary. To the casual observer this eight million dollar edifice may be merely a soaring brick building with a magnificent interior. But the structure, dedicated on March 21, 1999, is much more. Everything from construction materials to interior design to the location of the property encompasses the early roots of the Christian religion along with the symbols of our African American heritage.

During the past quarter century of Dr. Roberts' dynamic leadership, many new members have been added (more than 2000) and financial giving has increased more than 300 percent. When he took the helm at Ebenezer, he launched an expansive community outreach program that included the Teenage Mother's Ministry, a tutoring program, counseling, a food co-op and a seniors day care center. He envisioned starting a parochial school that would concentrate on providing a good education and clear role models for youth, particularly young males.

Dr. Roberts' book, "Sideswiped By Eternity", sermons from Ebenezer Baptist Church is now available at Borders, Barnes and Noble, and Cokesbury bookstores and at the Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Dr. Roberts was recently selected to be the Wade Huie Professor of Preaching and the Director of the new Center of Preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Roberts and his wife, Esther Wortham Roberts, are proud parents and grandparents. They have one son, Carlyle (C.J.), and two daughters; Cheryl (Leslie) Richmond, Cynthia (Sonny) Emory and 6 grandchildren.