



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 28, 1972

**Franklin Owen Elected
New Kentucky Executive**

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Franklin P. Owen, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., for the past 18 years, has been elected executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, effective Sept. 1.

Owen, elected to the post in a called meeting of the Kentucky Convention Executive Board, will succeed Harold G. Sanders, who is retiring in August after 11 years in the convention's top executive position.

Owen will become executive-secretary elect on June 1, and spend three months working with Sanders in an orientation period, and in visiting associations and churches in the state.

Owen was recommended to the post by a special committee of the board as the committee's unanimous choice, but the action by the full board was not unanimous.

Opposition arose from the floor to his nomination at two points--the salary proposed for the position, and Owen's stand on the question of baptism.

Terry Sills, pastor of Sinking Springs Baptist Church near Murray, Ky., objected to the baptism policy of Calvary Baptist Church where Owen is pastor, pointing out that the church accepts as valid the baptism of a person by another denomination, if that person was baptized by immersion following a profession of faith in Christ.

David Elliott, pastor of Blue Spring Baptist Church near Madisonville, Ky., read a passage from a 1968 issue of the Review and Expositor in which Owen expressed his views on baptism, and asked that the board delay any decision for at least 15 days. Elliott said it was unfair to vote on a nominee about whom no information had been given prior to the board meeting.

John Huffman, chairman of the committee to nominate an executive secretary and pastor of First Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky., stated that Owen told the committee that he accepted wholeheartedly the Baptist Faith and Message statement on baptism and other doctrinal matters, and that this was good enough for the committee.

Richard De Bell, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bedford, Ky., made a motion to amend the committee's recommendation by reducing the proposed housing allowance for the executive secretary to the same level currently allowed, but the amendment failed 84-3.

Vote on the committee's nomination passed by a margin of 73-14, which Huffman said was "about as much unanimity as possible for any person to receive in Kentucky at this time."

Owen, pastor of the 2,500-member Lexington church since 1954, is a former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and a former chairman of the board of trustees for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He also was president of the seminary's alumni association in 1967.

Before coming to Kentucky, Owen was pastor of First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Ga., and was president of the Georgia Baptist Pastors' Conference while in that state.

During World War II, he was a chaplain in the U.S. Army and received the Bronze Star and letter of commendation for his service in Europe.

Immediately before and after the war, he was first director of religious education and later associate pastor of Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham.

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Owen is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State College in Cape Girardeau, Mo., and Southern Seminary in Louisville. Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., has conferred on him an honorary doctorate.

Sanders, who retires from the position at the end of August, was pastor of First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, Fla., prior to accepting the Kentucky executive secretaryship in 1961.

Previously, Sanders was a chaplain in the U.S. Navy, serving during World War II in the Pacific theater. Sanders was pastor of churches in Alabama, Kentucky and Indiana before his service as a chaplain.

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CBS Responds to Resolution
By SBC Executive Committee

2/28/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--An official of Columbia Broadcasting System, in a telegram to the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee here, has denied that the television network plans to show X and R-rated movies on television.

The telegram came in response to a resolution adopted three days earlier by the Executive Committee expressing opposition to reported plans by the network to carry such movies on late night television.

"You and your Executive Committee have been sadly and grossly misinformed," said John Cowden, vice president for information services at CBS in New York in a telegram to Porter Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee.

"CBS has not--repeat--not made any announcements that it has 'purchased a large number of X and R-rated movies' because CBS has made no such purchase and has no intention of doing so," the telegram said.

"On Monday night, Feb. 28, on 'The CBS Late Movie,' we will be showing a severely and heavily edited version of 'The Damned.' This motion picture was given an X-rating for its original theatrical release, but the portions to which you refer which earned the X-rating have been either totally edited out or so minimized as to be only implied," Cowden stated.

"The edited version is well within restrictions of the television code to which we subscribe," the telegram said. "More than that it is within CBS standards which are even more restrictive and stringent in many areas than the industry's code.

"We assure you that this network will continue to adhere to the high standards we have maintained over the years," the CBS official concluded.

Three days previously, the Executive Committee in session here had adopted a resolution beseeching CBS authorities "to exercise moral vision and leadership in promptly reversing their decision to show these highly objectionable films on television."

The resolution declared that "the invasion of America's homes with profanity, vulgarity, adultery, incest, homosexuality, child molestation, nudity and sadism represents a moral challenge of major proportions."

Routh said the matter was brought to the attention of the Executive Committee by the executive secretaries of Baptist state conventions, who had met the previous week. The Florida executive secretary, Harold Bennett, had sent to the Executive Committee a news report from the Miami Herald carried by the Miami Herald-Newsday wire.

The Newsday report said that "The Damned" is part of a 167-film package bought by CBS to replace the Merv Griffin show.

Routh said that he appreciated the concern that CBS has shown to the problem, but added that "only time will tell whether what they construe to be 'acceptable' will actually be in the public interest."

"We still feel it would be helpful for concerned Christians to let their feelings be known to CBS," Routh said. Meanwhile, in Mississippi, the chairman of the Executive Committee, Owen Cooper, told an associational meeting of Baptist deacons in Wesson, Miss., he hoped at least one million religious people in America would write protest letters to CBS.

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Kay Elected President
Of Western RE Association

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Richard Kay, director of the Church Services Division of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, was elected president of the Western Religious Education Association meeting for its 20th annual session here.

Kay succeeds Wayne C. Reynolds, minister of education and music for First Southern Baptist Church, Sacramento, Calif.

President-elect for the association will be Geil Davis, associate professor of religious education at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here, where sessions were held.

With an emphasis on "youth" during the 20th anniversary sessions, the three-day conference featured lectures, seminars and reaction groups which met immediately following a youth music workshop at the seminary. A church building seminar also met during the week.

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Hardin-Simmons Coach
Killed in Auto Crash

2/28/72

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--Glen Whitis, head basketball coach and athletic director at Hardin-Simmons University here, was killed in a head-on collision with a grain truck about five miles south of the Baptist school.

Whitis' basketball team had defeated Abilene Christian College just a little over 24 hours before his death for its 13th victory of the season.

A former star player at Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex., Whitis coached at the Brownwood school for 15 years before moving to Hardin-Simmons in 1970. His Howard Payne team won Lone Star Conference championships three of his last five years and achieved national recognition.

Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church, Abilene, where Whitis was an active member.

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February 29, 1972

Former Race Track Character
Leads Track Chaplaincy Effort

By Adon Taft

MIAMI (BP)--Five years ago, "Salty" Roberts was the kind of tough-talking, rough-living character most churchgoers would regard as typical of "that race track crowd."

Today Horace William Roberts is a changed man who is responsible for what is on its way to becoming a nationwide chaplaincy program serving more than 2 million people associated with 38 horse racing tracks across the country and the breeding farms which raise the horses.

Because of Salty's prodding, the Hialeah First Baptist Church near Miami supplied a full-time chaplain at Calder Race Track this past summer, and as an experiment, the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board hope to put chaplains at all Florida tracks next year, Roberts said.

They still call him "Salty" around the tracks, but there is a new respect for Roberts, not only because of the change in his life, but because of his concern for others caught in the trap of emptiness that surrounds the track. "Salty" put it this way:

"There was an emptiness to the kind of life I was living. I was a walking dead man just going through the motions of living. I had had it all, seen it all, and lost it all."

When Roberts came to the realization that there must be something better to life, he finally "asked God, 'If there is a better way to live, please show me.'"

Roberts, a native of South Carolina who grew up in Miami, said he had always heard about Jesus Christ, but had never known Him personally. Then one day, "I asked God to send Jesus to take over my life and show me how to live pleasing to Him," he recalled.

He testified that this is just what happened. And the hundreds of track workers who know him verify that a real change came over Salty's life.

He not only changed his way of living, but began telling others about his experience. "After about six months of studying the Bible for direction and finding answers to my questions about life, I began sharing Christ with my friends," he said. "I saw what Christ had done for me and I had hundreds of friends in the same vicious circle I had been in, so I figured He would help them too if they asked Him."

The possibilities for counseling were so great among the track people, who faced problems of divorce, alcoholism and bankruptcy with greater intensity and frequency than most other people, Salty recalled. So he approached the pastor at Hallandale First Baptist Church where he was a member about the possibility of a chaplaincy program at the tracks.

At first the minister was reluctant, but when he met the people on the "back side of the track" and saw their needs, he agreed to conduct a weekly service at the track.

After the racing season ended at Gulfstream, Salty went to New Jersey where he tried to get a counseling program started at Atlantic City.

The next summer, things began to click. The Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association in Florida was responsive to Salty's approach, but did not have funds for a chaplain.

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In New Jersey, the American Baptist Home Mission Board agreed to a two-month experimental program. A seminary student worked with Salty for three months. Salty said there were 70 "decisions for Christ" and hundreds of marriages patched together as a result.

This year, the American Baptists are planning to establish a full-time counseling ministry at all four tracks in New Jersey, Salty said.

Back in Miami, the pastor of Hialeah First Baptist Church, Ernest Campbell, agreed to supply a full-time chaplain at the track. Alfred C. Vansant, a mission pastor on the Hialeah church staff, opened an office in the recreation hall at the Hialeah Race Course, thus becoming the first official track chaplain in Florida.

"At first I had some reservations about working at a race track," Vansant said about the experience. "I had to pray about it. But after getting involved at the track, I realized that these men need the Lord just as much as anybody else."

Vansant spends his mornings around the stables where about 1,500 people are employed, half of whom live at the track. He has won the friendship and respect of most of the grooms, exercise boys, jockeys and trainers, Salty said. Vansant leads Tuesday night gospel sings and Thursday afternoon Bible studies.

The minister has found that more and more of the track workers stop him on his morning rounds to talk over personal problems. "I speak to them about the Lord whenever it seems appropriate," he said. "And there have been seven professions of faith so far."

Vansant's ministry is considered non-denominational at the track, and has the full support of the general managers of the tracks at Hialeah, Calder and Gulfstream tracks. A 300-seat chapel has been provided at Gulfstream, and is used by both Vansant and David Krueckeberg, a Lutheran minister who has worked part-time at the tracks but does not maintain a regular office.

Vansant said that the black workers most frequently come to the services. The program also attracts many Catholics and Protestants who, because of the race business, have not attended church since boyhood days.

"These men appreciate someone showing an interest in them," Vansant said. Their attitude toward the church seems to be changing as they see that the church cares about them personally, and their problems.

Roberts agreed and added that "people used to look down on race people. Now I'm finding love from the community surrounding the race track."

This concern has been expressed by the interest of providing a state-wide chaplaincy program by the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Roberts said. If the state experience works this summer, the program could go nationwide later, he added.

Trained chaplains can provide services that are needed to help race track people with the tremendous problems they face, but Salty Roberts, though untrained in professional counseling, continues to lead his personal campaign to help the people he knows and loves. Salty is called upon to counsel drug addicts, persons with marital problems, and those suffering from loneliness. He even has been asked to conduct funerals.

From his own experience, he is convinced that "there is something better in the future for those who come to know Jesus Christ as a close friend who is always there, no matter what the problem or the circumstance."

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Sunday School Board Names
Bus Outreach Consultant

2/29/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--D. Lewis White, a consultant in the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board since 1964, has been named bus outreach consultant for the board, according to Sunday School Secretary A. V. Washburn.

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"Dr. White will plan projects and promotion that will introduce and interpret bus outreach as a major approach in increasing the number of persons involved in Bible study," said Washburn.

"He will work with others in the Sunday School department in coordinating the promotion of bus outreach in such areas as curriculum materials and records designed specifically to support bus outreach," Washburn said.

A native of Louisiana, White is a graduate of Louisiana College, Pineville, and holds the master of theology and doctor of theology degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Before joining the board's staff in 1964, he was pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, Miss. Earlier he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Natchez, Miss., and served as president of the board of trustees of Jefferson Davis Memorial Hospital, Natchez. He served also as a member of the state executive board and of the executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Jackson.



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