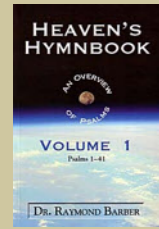
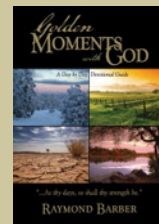


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A Publication and Ministry of the Independent Baptist Fellowship International
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J. Frank Norris—The Pastor

(Continued from last issue)
By Dr. Raymond Barber

A man with a "pastor's heart," Dr. J. Frank Norris excelled in all the pastorates he held and in all areas of the pastorate. Norris' first pastorate was a small congregation of Baptists who called themselves "the Baptist Church of Mt. Calm, Texas." Here he served from 1899 to 1903 while a student at Baylor University. Norris graduated from Baylor with honors in 1903. In 1905, he was called to pastor the McKinney Avenue Baptist Church of Dallas. His first sermon was based in Mark 11:22 and the title was "Have Faith in God."

First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas

Following a two-year editorship and ownership of the Baptist Standard, Texas prominent Southern Baptist periodical, Norris accepted the pastorate of the church that became his "love for life," the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth. This was in the year 1909, and there he remained as pastor until his death in 1952. The growth of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth under Norris' leadership was phenomenal. To this the records testify. By 1928, for example, the membership grew from 900 to a weekly Sunday school attendance of over five thousand. Thousands of people were saved and baptized during more than forty years at First Baptist of Fort Worth.

Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan

In 1935, the Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan, called Dr. Norris to become their pastor. During the intervening years, until 1950, he served the joint pastorate of the Detroit church and the famed First Baptist of Fort Worth. These were stormy years characterized by Norris' fights with the liquor traffic, the gambling interests, the Communists, the courts, and the liberal theologians. Norris was a very controversial figure, and he engendered both love and hate, respect and disrespect, regard and disregard as he wielded the "broad axe,"

cutting at the roots of the tree of evil, not caring where the chips fell. Many attempts failed to destroy Norris and "Norrisism," and the great preacher kept on hammering the truth and preaching the Gospel without fear or favor.

Wide Spread Influence

Norris' influence and ministry were by no means confined to Fort Worth and Detroit. He traveled America and the world "sounding the trumpet" as a fearless fighter in defense of the faith. Whether conversing with the pope, a prime minister, or a president, he spoke the language of his audience, respecting their office and receiving due regard in return for his own.

His conflicts were many, and his controversies not a few. Fighting the good fight of the faith, he encountered opposition from many quarters. He received numerous threats on his life and was the target of political and religious foe alike. But none of these things moved Norris. Norris planted his feet firmly on solid ground fearing not the wrath of man or machine. Few men have carved a place in the Baptist world as did Norris in the almost half of a century that he spent in the pastorate. Men may question his methods, but none can doubt his sincerity, deny his successes, nor forget his courage. We Independent Baptists owe a great debt to the preacher who carved out a place for us to take a stand for the Gospel, the Holy Bible, and the Church of Jesus Christ. *(To be continued)*



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The Searchlight

March/April 2011

Volume 27 Issue 2

Spring Fellowship & Graduation 27TH Annual Spring Fellowship Meeting



"COMMITTED"
Keep that which is committed to thy trust...
I Timothy 6:20

A Life Decision



Flo Martin
Missionary to Guatemala

The story that you're about to read is the result of a decision that made a permanent change in two lives and has influenced many more. Frank and I were born in 1932. Meeting in Levelland, Texas, we fell in love and were married in 1952, the same year we were saved. In November of that year, at a mission conference in our church, our hearts were touched and we surrendered to be missionaries. Completing our studies at the Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, we were approved as missionaries to go where God had called us.

Traveling on full-time deputation to raise our support, we learned to depend on God. As we turned our needs over to Him, He took care of them. After hearing the news of a missionary in language school and of a pastor in the States leaving the ministry, Frank and I looked at each other and said we didn't want this to happen to our ministry. So we prayed and read our Bibles in our devotions separately and together for a week. Then Frank asked, "Has God shown you anything?" I said, "Yes!" And he said, "He has shown me something too." God gave him Psalm 2:8, *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* And God did just that. I said mine is Ruth 1:16-17, *And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: For whither thou goest, I will go; and*

where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. I felt that I was to follow Frank wherever God called him.

God blessed us, and in 1959 we went to Cost Rica taking Brother Ralph McCoy's works and a Bible institute where we continued for 10 years. During this time we started a church in Rio Sierpe (a river work). God wonderfully blessed this work. Other missionaries came, and we felt that God wanted us to go to Tapachula, Mexico, where He had called us. We turned the work over to the other missionaries and returned to the States to give a report and raise support to work in Tapachula. When we arrived *(Continued on next page)*

A Word from the President

News & Events

May Fellowship Information