



John Peebles,
IBFI Mission Director

Congratulations to the Serugambas!

Psalm 139:13-17

IBFI Missionary Breze and his wife Chantal had a newborn boy Micah on Saturday, May 9th! Bro. Breze writes, "I would love to inform you that God has blessed us with a new baby boy; we have named him Micah. My wife and Micah are doing well. His weight is 3KG and 725g."

We are thankful that Chantal had a safe delivery and that baby Micah is healthy. Please pray for the Serugamba's as they are trying to raise support.

If you would like to write Breze and Chantal, their email is breze74@gmail.com.



Leon George Wambsganss
Feb 25, 1944 - Mar 30, 2020

IBFI Missionary - 1984-2020

Leon George Wambsganss was born on February 25, 1944 in Eureka, Kansas to George and Eleanor Mae Wambsganss. He was born on a farm and in his youth aspired to be a farmer. His father was called into the ministry and their family dynamically changed, but Leon still had his mind set on farming.

In the summer of 1960, the youth group at his church went to a rally in Wichita, Kansas and they were shown a film about the life of William Carey. The story made a difference in his life, and he felt the call of God to be a missionary. That same summer he met and proposed to Mary Rebecca (Becky) Schmidt. The following year Leon enrolled at the Bible Baptist Seminary in Arlington, Texas. On July 7, 1962, he and Becky were married in Grand Prairie, Texas. Upon graduation from Seminary in 1966, Leon and Becky moved to Spain as missionaries with the World Baptist Fellowship to begin their missionary work. They lived and worked in Barcelona, Tenerife, Burgos and ultimately in Madrid. Leon helped in the founding of a church there, built a youth camp, and produced the first Christian radio programs to be aired on Radio España at the end of the Franco era. With the help of Rupert Neve from England and a Cuban refugee and broadcaster named Armando Martinez, hundreds of radio programs were produced. While serving in Spain, Leon also had the historic opportunity to assist with the forming of the religious freedom amendment in the new Spanish Constitution.



In 1977, he and the family returned to Texas where he formed Accent International Radio (AIR) in order to produce and distribute Spanish-language, Christian radio programs - which led to traveling extensively throughout Latin America. He subsequently became heavily involved with the Cambridge Radio Course - spending his summers in Newmarket, England. Leon trained Christian workers from developing countries in the effective use of radio outreach. Through AIR's expanded efforts in coordination with other like-minded outreach organizations; he was able to encourage and support students and missionaries from many diverse cultures and in many countries previously closed to the Gospel message. During this time, Leon joined with the Independent Baptist Fellowship International until he retired from active missionary service.

In retirement, Leon served as a Municipal Judge and also helped create Whispering Creek Ranch - a wedding venue outside of Granbury, Texas. He enjoyed working at the ranch and performing weddings. Leon also was proud to serve as a Trustee of the Bear Creek Cemetery Association. In 2013, Leon suffered a stroke from which he never recovered and was substantially incapacitated until he passed away in Grapevine, Texas on March 30, 2020.

His hobby was hard work—he was funny, caring, outgoing and ready to help anyone in need. He loved the Lord, his family and a host of friends. He is survived by: his wife Becky of 57 years; their three sons - Stephen A. Wambsganss of Friday Harbor, WA, Andrew L. Wambsganss (wife Leigh) of Southlake, TX, and Phillip B. Wambsganss (wife Tiffani) of Mansfield, TX; his grandchildren - Caitlin Bowman, Riley Wambsganss, Walker Wambsganss, Joshua Wambsganss, Emma Grace Wambsganss and Jacob Wambsganss; his brother - William Richard Wambsganss of Leander, TX; and a large extended family of nieces, nephews and many friends.



INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

724 N. Jim Wright Freeway
Fort Worth, Texas 76108

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FT. WORTH, TX
PERMIT # 2182

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

The Searchlight

JUNE/JULY 2020 VOLUME 37 ISSUE 1

Highlights from IBFI's 36th YEAR OF MINISTRY—1984-2020

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2



May Offering Goal Surpassed!
\$60,642.00!

NBBS Classroom Remodeling Project is Finished!

Our nation and the world needs the Gospel of Christ, and the Christ of the Gospel, as never before. May the greatest days of our fellowship, church ministries, and preaching be yet ahead. SEE: 1 Timothy 2:1-6

NBBS Scholarships – New Ones Started and Previous Ones Reorganized

NBBS - Nearly 60 Monthly Supporting Churches and Individuals!

Recent NBBS Graduates Who are on Deputation are Doing Well!



IBFI Mission Agency
Helping Independent Baptist churches get their missionaries to the field

With local church sent missionaries serving in

- Africa
- Brazil
- Dominican Republic
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- U S A

Help us expand to reach around the world!
Visit us on the web: www.ibfi.us email: missionoffice@ibfi.us



There is a place for you at NBBS! School starts August 11th.

NBBS
Seizing the Opportunity!
For a great door and effectual is opened unto me
1 Cor. 16:9

TO EXCEL IN BIBLE TEACHING & PREACHING

TO EXCEL IN CHURCH MINISTRY

TO EXCEL IN PRAYER

TO EXCEL IN EVANGELISM

The Searchlight

A publication and ministry of the Independent Baptist Fellowship International

724 N. Jim Wright Freeway | Ft. Worth, TX 76108 | Phone: 817.367.3422 | Fax: 817.246.4884 | Email: info@IBFI.us | Website: www.IBFI.us

IBFI Board of Directors: Pastor Willie Weaver, Dr. Raymond Barber, Mission Director John Peebles, NBBS President Jonathan Stewart, Pastor Glen Anderson, Pastor Barry Bedwell, Pastor Phillip Blackwell, Pastor Mark Brown, Pastor Eric Crawford, Pastor Tyler Gillit, Pastor David Grice, Pastor Dale Harris, Sr.,

Pastor Heath Hogue, Pastor Charles Pugh and Pastor Charles Wetherbee

Opening Day Rally and Graduation - Tuesday, August 11
Rally: 9:00-12 NOON (Lunch to Follow) • Commencement - 7:00 PM

MORE OF WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS:

The BRIGHT and MORNING STAR

Dr. Raymond W. Barber, IBFI President Emeritus



Everybody Seems to Speak for Something.

- Teachers speak for education.
- Pastors speak for churches.
- Lawyers speak for law.
- Bankers speak for finances.
- Politicians speak for government.
- Scientists speak for technology.

But Who Speaks for the Dead?

In a chapel service some years ago, the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, said to the student body:

“The independent movement that began right here in Fort Worth under the leadership of J. Frank Norris. . . today is weak and dying.”

This is certainly an unfair critique of the independent Baptist movement and school that Dr. Norris began in 1939. **But Who Will Speak for the Dead?**

In a 1980 issue of Southwestern News published by Southwestern Seminary, an Arizona pastor said in effect that the work of J. Frank Norris had failed. **But Who Will Speak for the Dead?**

A MOVEMENT SPEAKS

The **Independent Baptist Fellowship International**, composed of scores of pastors across the nation and missionaries in several foreign countries, speaks. The movement speaks loudly and clearly in its declaration of the lasting efforts of the man who dared to challenge the “ecclesiastical machine.” He launched an independent movement of Baptists whose influence is being exerted far and wide that has earned the approval of many fundamental leaders in America.

A SEMINARY SPEAKS

The **Norris Bible Baptist Seminary**, named in the memory of J. Frank Norris, speaks unapologetically of the memory and world-wide influence of this leading fundamentalist who, with Louis Entzminger, started a school in 1939, free from denominational control, and whose philosophy of “Teaching the Whole English Bible” and training of preachers. This philosophy continues in the school that bears his name—The Norris Bible Baptist Seminary!

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE DEAD?

Anyone who mistakenly thinks that the movement of J. Frank Norris is “weak and dying” or has “failed” should:

- Ask the members of the more than 2,500 churches whose origin can be traced either directly or indirectly to Norris.
- Talk to the members of the largest churches in America whose founding or former pastors are graduates of the Bible Baptist Seminary (Fort Worth) founded by Norris.
- Talk to a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Bailey Smith, whose father graduated from the school Norris founded.

YOURS TRULY SPEAKS FOR THE DEAD!

Growing up in the Baptist Tabernacle, Danville, Virginia, the church founded by my father, Dr. R. J. Barber, Sr., it was my privilege as a boy to hear Dr. Norris preach in Bible conferences and in our church. His messages stirred the hearts of the people of Danville and regions beyond. Dr. Norris spent time in the Barber home sharing his ministry experiences with our family.

At age eighteen, I entered the Bible Baptist Seminary and sat at the feet of Dr. Norris in special classroom lectures as well as chapel services. On May 20, 1951, Dr. Norris united Mary Helen and me in marriage, and we just recently celebrated our sixty-ninth anniversary.

We have hundreds of printed sermons by Dr. Norris, as well as a number of his sermons on cassette tapes. I also have every original book of sermons and lectures—*Lectures on Daniel, Isaiah, and Romans*, plus original copies of *Inside the Cup, The J. Frank Norris I have Known for 34 Years* by Louis Entzminger, and original transcripts of the Norris-Wallace debate and the Norris-Martin debate.

At his invitation, my father, my wife, and I spent time with the great man in his home on Eagle Mountain Lake (Fort Worth). I feel qualified to speak for him, who *“being dead, yet speaketh.”*

A FINAL WORD: PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

Our constituency should never forget our heritage and the “*rock from which we were hewn.*” We must preserve our illustrious history that will inspire generations to come should Jesus tarry His coming. The one thing, as much as anything, that will cause the collapse of a movement or a country is to separate it from its past.

The lives and ministries of J. Frank Norris and Louis Entzminger must be kept in memory. Without them and their contribution to independent Baptists all over our nation and around the world, we would have no Independent Baptist Fellowship or Norris Bible Baptist Seminary. Let us all rise up and **sound the trumpet** that will keep alive the voices of those who pioneered the path we follow today!

LET US ALL SPEAK FOR THE DEAD!

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY



Dr. Willie Weaver, IBFI President

The May meeting in 2019, ended with a great spirit of unity in the Independent Baptist Fellowship International (IBFI). The graduation exercise of the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary (NBBS) was excellent and encouraging. June, July, and August quickly went

by with Church Camps, Vacation Bible Schools, short term missions trips, and vacations. The new school year was kicked off with a great Opening Day Rally that was exciting and well attended. Those students who were already enrolled in NBBS were glad to be back for the fall semester. The instructors were geared up and ready to teach their classes. There were new students enrolled, which made the opening day rally even more exciting. The first semester went extremely well with a great student body. There were many improvements to the classrooms and grounds thanks to the leadership of our NBBS President, Dr. Jonathan Stewart, and the pastors and individuals who helped fund those projects.

The October IBFI meeting at Pensacola Baptist Temple was well attended with great music, fellowship, and preaching. Pastor Glen Anderson, Bro. Kenneth Ralph, and the church members were outstanding hosts. It was a wonderful time of fellowship.

It seemed that time went by quickly, and it was time for the Opening Day Rally for the second semester of NBBS. The rally was well attended by pastors, evangelists, missionaries, folks from area churches, as well as returning and new students. It was an encouraging day.

Then, around the middle of March, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit us. Needless to say, it changed our lifestyles, calendars, church services, and the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary. It became a challenging time for all of us since we had never had anything like this before. Of course, we had to change our plans concerning the Annual May meeting of the IBFI. It was a difficult decision to cancel the meeting.

The NBBS classes continued with the innovation of video and live streaming. It was different, but Dr. Stewart, the instructors, and students made it work. The Seminary ended the semester in good shape. Unfortunately, we were not able to have the Graduation, **but the Graduation will still take place August 11, 2020.**

We will have the NBBS Opening Day Rally that morning with two of our students preaching, as well as our Chancellor, Dr. Raymond Barber. Lunch will follow and then that evening, we will have the Graduation ceremony.

It is a special joy for me to announce to you that, even though we were unable to have our Annual May meeting, **our offering goal of \$60,000 has been reached and surpassed.** This is an answer to prayer. I want to thank our churches and individuals who sacrificially contributed the funds for us to reach this goal. It tells me our Fellowship is strong even in the difficult days of the Pandemic. God will bless you for your sacrificial giving.

Our next National Meeting is scheduled for October 13-15, 2020. The host church will be Maranatha Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia. Pastor Mark Brown and his fine folks are looking forward to hosting the IBFI FALL MEETING. Since we could not have the May meeting, I hope you will make a special effort to attend this fall’s meeting. The fellowship, music, and preaching will be a delightful and encouraging time.

SEMESTER IS FINISHED! OFFERING GOAL WAS SURPASSED! GRADUATES READY TO BE GRADUATED! GREAT GRACE ABOUNDED!



Jonathan J. Stewart, NBBS President

CAUGHT OFF GUARD!

It came suddenly upon us as a nation and therefore our churches, seminary, and preachers were somewhat caught flat footed, but the demands of every day life, family, and ministerial responsibilities required that we quickly acclimate as preachers, and lead as the COVID-19 situation settled in upon us all.

At the seminary, our first reaction was to save a school year that we were into halfway, and see to it that our graduates finished. We also sought to be one of the bright spots on the horizon of churches and preachers as they also persevered through challenging times.

THE GRACE OF GOD SEEN IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

We saw it early – an outpouring of the grace of God, and sensed it, but looking back, it is even more profoundly striking.

The grace of God manifested itself in so many ways. It was seen in the lives of our school administration, and in our mission secretary and director as IBFI ministries obviously interconnect (missions, seminary, Searchlight, etc.). It was seen in our faculty, student body, IBFI leadership, missionaries, and our supporting churches and individuals.

In the middle of March, when the health concerns of the coronavirus were just beginning to surface, pastors stepped up in various ways. Students brought their skill sets to the forefront and helped not only me personally, but also the school at-large in various capacities as we transitioned to live-streaming classes and chapel. **Bro. and Mrs. Wambsgans were a very timely help financially in ways that captured the essence of Bro. Leon’s life as a missionary.** They did this at a key juncture in mid-March, in the midst of their own demanding situations related to the health concerns.

Dr. Willie Weaver reached out by letter (via regular mail and email), in conjunction with an NBBS Sunday of March 15, that was suddenly crowded out because of the nationwide health concern. **God moved and people responded.** The result was some \$15,000.00 was received from various directions. Several stand out from it, but another one of our IBFI missionaries also responded and gave a very gracious love offering. Several of our missionaries individually support NBBS, and at times give special offerings.

The NBBS Sunday offering time is key to the seminary because it is seven months from October to May, and one-third of our income is from the two offerings taken at those times of fellowship. The other two-thirds are tuition and monthly church support.

Most of our students came through on paying their school bills, and our **nearly 60 regular monthly supporters (46 churches and 12 individuals), have stayed faithful in their monthly support in the midst of some challenging months for us all!**



Our students were thankful for online classes but much **prefer live classes and the fellowship with the faculty and fellow students.** We look forward to the fall semester! In the meantime, we will be having student fellowships in the summer. Hopefully, the students who are youth directors, will soon also be able to carry out the monthly youth meetings they had planned to jointly conduct in each others’ churches.

By way of livestream we not only were able to conduct chapel, in which we had several pastors and students preach. We also had alumni



in Honduras (IBFI missionary Leslie Priday), Iowa (Assistant Pastor/Youth Director John Lund), Pennsylvania (Pastor Danny Medford), and Florida (Assistant Pastor Kenneth Ralph), preach in chapel at different times. Dr. Barber closed out the school year by preaching online in chapel the last day of school.

In the meantime, Dr. and Mrs. Barber continued to take steps to further undergird the ongoing of NBBS in days ahead by not only making provisions for it in their will, but by establishing an ongoing scholarship. A significant donation of books from his library, as well as historical documents and items were given to the seminary to accentuate its legacy.

Faculty member, Bro. Phillip Sawilowsky of the Jewish outreach ministry Olive Tree Ministries International, who was more available due to churches not having regular services, repeatedly helped fill the gaps in various classes when some faculty members as pastors, or those who were scheduled as special instructors, had their own intermittent church needs to address.

Significant progress was made the last two months of the semester in spite of the challenges that arose because of the epidemic that has dominated our news cycle since the first quarter of the year.

Our IBFI/NBBS Business Manager Danny Frizzell, took advantage of empty classrooms and remodeled a multipurpose room, (used even as a nursery, on Fridays to help student wives attend the ladies classes offered that day of the week), as well as finishing up the repainting of another classroom, and is now making repairs to another classroom due to water damage from the previous window situation. Candy, his wife and the IBFI/NBBS Secretary, assisted him in the painting in addition to her secretarial responsibilities. They both stepped up in other ways the past three months that show their great love for the Lord’s work.



WE SURPASSED OUR MAY OFFERING GOAL!

Having said all this, **the way several responded to the May offering even though we were not able to assemble, has been breathtaking.** Bro. and Mrs. Lowell Spencer, who very often are the first fruit givers to any project we have, again got the ball rolling, with an early proactive contribution toward the May Fellowship offering. Dr. Weaver wrote letters and made phone calls, IBFI Board members and various preachers and churches stepped up dramatically, and yes, we surpassed our \$60,000.00 offering goal!

OPENING DAY RALLY AND GRADUATION

Plan now to be with us for the first day of school and Opening Day Rally, Tuesday, August 11 (9:00 AM to 12 NOON), with a lunch to follow. That night we will have the commencement service for our 2020 graduates at 7:00 PM.

Thank you for your prayers and various forms of support. Pray for the prospective students for the fall semester, that are starting to get lined up for our 37th year!

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!” Patrick Henry



Dr. Terry Riggsby, NBBS Field Representative

UNUSUAL TIMES!

Needless to say, this past semester has been an unusual one with the Coronavirus pandemic happening in the middle of the semester; however, with determination by our faculty, administration, and student body we have succeeded! Another semester at Norris Bible Baptist Seminary has been completed, and we are all looking forward to the fall semester of 2020!

I have especially enjoyed and appreciated my Bible Study Methods class this semester. There were no absentees, and all completed their class assignments on time!

A reminder that the Opening Day Rally for the fall 2020 semester, will be held on Tuesday, August 11, at 9:00 a.m. That evening at 7:00 p.m., we will be holding the graduation ceremonies that were cancelled in May. I hope you are making plans to attend.

May I remind all that I am available to come and present the NBBS ministry and fill the pulpit whenever necessary. Please call me at 817-648-1859.



ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS

Kenneth Ralph, Alumni President

We certainly live in uncertain times, but I am glad we have a God we can rely on even in the midst of these times. I hope you will make plans now to join us for Graduation and Opening Day Rally August 11, 2020. These students have worked hard, and deserve your presence and congratulations.

Since May 2015, at the Alumni Luncheon we have often addressed the physical needs of the seminary. In our efforts to get the school operating singularly as a seminary, God has indeed done great things through our alumni these past few years! At the May 2015 luncheon, some \$80,000 was raised, and since that time, several thousand more dollars has been raised in the same setting. This, and other fundraising efforts, puts us in the position to help the school in other ways. For instance, after talking with Dr. Stewart, I wanted to see what your thoughts were concerning our Alumni Scholarship, by addressing it at the Alumni Luncheon on Wednesday, during the week of the annual May Fellowship Meeting, which obviously we were not able to do.

Tuition cost per semester for a full-time student is \$225 per course. A full-time student is taking at least four courses, and generally up to six courses. Therefore, the tuition cost is between \$900.00 and \$1,350.00 per semester. There is no reason why we cannot go ahead and start the Alumni Scholarship between now and the time that school starts August 11. The criteria has been set in the past for those who would be eligible to receive the scholarship, and my suggestion is to go ahead with the same policy. Whatever amount, as in the past, that can be raised, can go toward the tuition cost of a student or students.

Next May, when we are able to meet again, the Lord willing, in our alumni luncheon, we can further discuss the scholarship to see if we want to make any adjustments to it. At that time, we can also assess if there are any other needs of the school which need to be addressed.

I will be sending out some emails and letters by regular mail, to further encourage you on the matter, and inform you how the scholarship funding is coming along. God bless you as you stay faithful to Him!



America the Beautiful



*O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties Above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea!*

*O beautiful for pilgrim feet Whose stern impassioned stress,
A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law!*

*O beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country love And mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness, And every gain divine!*

*O beautiful for patriot dream That sees beyond the years,
Thine alabaster cities gleam Undimmed by human tears!
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea!*

*“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”
Proverbs 14:34*

*“Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord... “
Psalm 33:12a*