

J. Frank Norris—Preacher & Traveler

(Continued from last issue)

By Dr. Raymond Barber

Norris - the Preacher

The preaching of Norris was one of his finest assets, and in it he excelled more than in any other area of his many-talented life. Possessed of a God-given ability to speak, his messages held his audiences spellbound, motivating them to yield to the moving of the Spirit. Knowing what he wanted to say and saying it with authority enabled him to reach the masses with dynamic, spirit-filled messages that declared the truth and denounced error. When asked on one occasion by a young preacher how long he prepared for a particular message, he answered in his own inimitable way, "Forty years and five minutes."

Norris was unsurpassed in eloquence. His message appealed to the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the good and the bad. In speaking of Norris's preaching ability, Rev. I. E. Yates, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, wrote in the *Baptist Standard*:

Dr. J. Frank Norris leads First Baptist Church of San Antonio in the greatest revival meeting ever held in Texas, and as far as I know, in the south. I never saw a campaign in my life that has produced so many results. We had more than six hundred additions to the First Baptist Church alone. Most came by baptism, while hundreds of others joined other churches.

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I was not prepared to appreciate his coming, but I never heard such gospel preaching in my day. Dr. Norris is the greatest preacher that I ever heard. He is familiar with every book of the Bible and can quote more scripture in every sermon than any man I ever heard. He made all his evangelistic appeals on the Word of God. He preached one whole week on hell until I could hear the wails of the damned and smell the smoke of their torment. And upon his first invitation on Sunday night, one hundred seven people joined the church. I never heard such sermons on hell.

Norris - the Traveler

In the course of his fifty-year ministry, Norris's influence reached worldwide proportions. His engagements carried him, not only to the extreme borders of the United States, but to the four corners of the world – Egypt, Israel, Greece, Italy, Germany, Scotland, England, Canada, China, and France.

Norris's personal contacts included interviews with such notables as priests, prime ministers, popes, and presidents. He spoke the languages of the commoner and the king, feeling equally at ease with both. In the archives are autographed pictures of Norris and Churchill together with letters from Truman and Speaker Sam Rayburn. Whether he was in the office of the grand Mufti in Jerusalem, the Pope in Rome, or the Prime Minister in London, he was capable of leading the conversation in political and religious topics of international interests. Whether he was preaching in an open-air meeting in Detroit or the spacious Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London, he spoke with the same clarion voice, and he preached the same glorious gospel. Whether he stood in a courtroom or a state legislative hall, he was listened to as a man who knew his subject and sensed the needs of his audience. Crowds sat in rapt attention to hear the man who "came from the farm" to the forefront of American



religious life. In a few short years, he rose from the status of "most despised and defeated preacher" to pastor of the largest two churches in America.

A Bit of Potpourri

To write of all the incidents, involvements, events, accomplishments, victories, defeats, and activities of J. Frank Norris would drain the inkwells of an army of writers, exhaust the vocabulary of a Solomon, and tax the strength of an Hercules.

As time marches on, the impact of Norris's ministry will be felt more and more. His influence reaches beyond the realm of his own group. Thousands of people in many denominations hold him in esteem. There is no gauge that can measure the extent of Norris's work. And when the souls who have been saved as a result of his preaching and the preachers who were trained under him are registered in eternity, it will be a record to behold. Whatever else Dr. Norris did, he won souls, and soul winning was his business.

The future thought, practices, and principles incorporated by preachers all over America and around the world will bear resemblance of "Norrisism," and wherever Baptists are gathered there will be whisperings and shoutings, both complimentary and derogatory about Norris and the Norris era. Who knows how the final chapter will read?

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27TH ANNUAL SPRING FELLOWSHIP & GRADUATION HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Tom Sexton, speaker at the J. Frank Norris Memorial Banquet



Johnny Leslie, Missionary to Croatia spoke at the Wednesday meeting



Crown Southwest & Fort Worth School of the Bible Graduates



Andrew Johnson, Music Director at Worth Baptist Church led the music



Joshua Childress received a B.B.S. in Pastoral Ministry



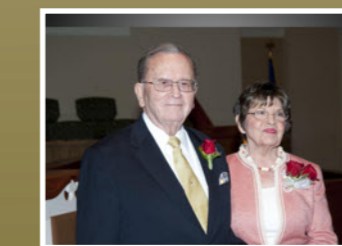
Kyle Morgan received a B.B.S. in Youth Ministry & Preacher's Award



Kyley Hampton & Ashley Hall return home to work in children's ministry



Dr. Terry Riggsby received a Doctor of Divinity from Crown College



Dr. and Mrs. Barber were honored for their 60th wedding anniversary



Thank you to Dr. Don Gregory who taught the missionary seminar



Missions Store - Thank you to all the churches who gave, you are a blessing!

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A Word from the President

News & Events

Missionary Spotlight