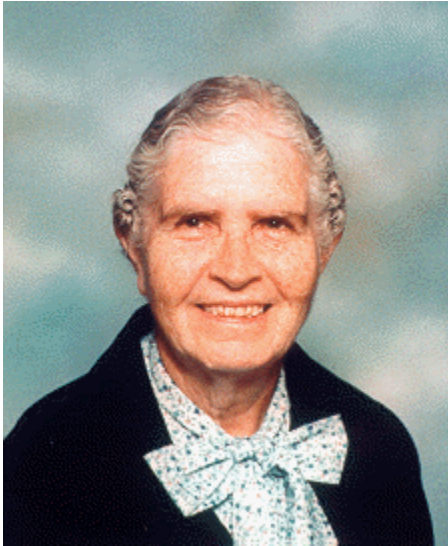


**BESSIE LEE MILLICAN**  
**May 31, 1924 – August 8, 2006 (Age 82)**



**Bessie Lee Millican was born in Dallas, Texas May 31, 1924. She passed away in Gonzalez, Mexico August 8, 2006. A service was held in the church where she faithfully served for many years. She was buried in the Municipal Cemetery in Gonzalez, Tampico, Mexico.**

**A PRECIOUS SAINT AT HOME WITH HER LORD**  
**“The Fundamentalist” September-October 2006**  
**by Tommy Raley**

**Just as we were beginning services August 8, 2006, on the second night of our Annual Missionary Family Retreat, I received a phone message from Miss Gayle Sparks in Gonzalez, Mexico that Miss Bessie Lee Millican had departed from this life to be with her Lord. As soon as the services were ended, we left the camp in Oklahoma and drove to Arlington. I caught a plane early the next morning for Mexico, arriving in Gonzalez in time for a service at the church there on Wednesday night. On Thursday, August 10, I was privileged to preach the funeral service for Miss Millican. The church building in Gonzalez was filled completely, with people looking in the doors and windows and spilling out into the street in front of the church. In addition to the members of the church, there were Christians from other churches in Mexico and Texas, businesspeople, government officials, doctors and lawyers and many, many people who had known and respected Miss Millican through the many years she served in Gonzalez. It is the custom in Mexico to walk behind the casket to the cemetery and there was a huge crowd that followed her to her final resting place. Another service of about an hour’s length was held at the cemetery. Many people heard the Gospel proclaimed at those services, and many of them were unbelievers who may have heard a clear presentation of the Gospel for the first time in their lives.**

**Bessie Lee Millican and her twin sister, Mary Lee, were led to the Lord by their Sunday School teacher at the age of twelve. At age 15, Bessie surrendered her life to the Lord to be a missionary after hearing a missionary from the Philippines speak at the church. She began to prepare her life by attending evening classes at the Bible Baptist Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas and at the age of 18 she moved to San Antonio, Texas where she worked in the Spanish ministry under the leadership of Dr. Manuel C. Ortiz. She arrived on the field of Mexico on August 8, 1948 and soon after arriving moved to the city of Gonzalez to work with Bro. Isaías Rodriguez. A work had been started previously in Gonzalez but had been abandoned. The building was in a run-down condition and no services were being held. Bro. Rodriguez and his family, along with Miss Bessie, began a ministry that has resulted in a vibrant and growing church that has reached many souls for Christ during the years. I met grandparents at the church who had been led to Christ as children by Miss Bessie.**

**When Miss Bessie first arrived on the field in Mexico, she had the promise of financial support from only the Youth Fellowship of Dallas County. She did not know about deputation**

and raising support; she only knew that God had called her to Mexico. For the first several years she had little or no support and suffered deprivation, but she would not allow anything to deter her from her desire to serve the Lord and win Mexican souls. As a young lady, she had a fiancée, but he did not feel called to be a missionary and she broke off their engagement. Her first love was the Lord and her calling.

Dr. F. E. Baughman of the Rolling Hills Baptist Church in Lancaster, Texas heard about Miss Bessie and introduced her to the WBF. She was approved as a WBF missionary and churches began to take her on for support, which allowed her to do a greater work in Mexico.

When the work in Gonzalez began to grow, there was no one who could play a musical instrument. Miss Bessie bought a music instrument. Miss Bessie bought a music book and taught herself music so she could then teach others. She taught them how to play the violin, guitar and piano. Today the church in Gonzalez has a string orchestra that is outstanding and almost every member was taught to play by Miss Bessie.

When she became ill a couple of years ago, she dogmatically refused to return to the U.S. She insisted on staying in her beloved Mexico and wanted to die and be buried there. She was cared for in her illness by Miss Gayle Sparks and two Mexican ladies who have known Miss Bessie since they were small children. They saw to her every need and gave her round the clock care during her final illness.

Now Miss Bessie's labors are ended and she is at home with her Lord and Savior. She left behind a wonderful example of a dedicated Christian life. I wonder if there are some young men and young ladies in our churches who are willing to follow her example and dedicate themselves to serve the Lord as foreign missionaries?

### **TRIBUTE TO BESSIE LEE MILLICAN**

By [Mike Starling](#)

**MEMORIAL SERVICE  
ROLLING HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH  
LANCASTER, TX  
NOVEMBER 12, 2006**

I count it a privilege and quite frankly humbling to be standing here in front of you this afternoon. When Pastor Pritchard called me the middle of August and informed me that Bessie Lee had gone to be with the Lord, my heart sank and was saddened because immediately I knew that I would not be able to go to the funeral seeing I was in Alaska would not be able to get there in time. I thought about the great loss that the missionary world had suffered. I also thought about the great example that had been taken from this life and had been awarded a precious mansion in heaven.

I started scrolling back in my memory banks at all the times I had talked to Bessie Lee and how she had encouraged me and Christie in our missions endeavor. To see this upright and courageous woman, a pioneer in missions giving me, Mike Starling, advice and direction was truly

humbling. Her firmness and resolve was evident in her words and tone of voice, as if she was convinced in what she was saying. Her belief in Jesus Christ was so powerful and driving it made up the essence of who she was. The phrase that came to mind was "Speak softly and carry a big stick" as she spoke and reminded me who I was working for. "You just follow the Lord and he will take care of the rest" she said.

A word that has described few missionaries of our time and times past has been the word "PASSIONATE". This pioneer, as she arrived on the field in 1948 as a single young adult, had a passion for the Mexican people. She had a desire to see Mexico turn to Christ. Her passion caused her pain while at other times caused her rejoicing. This passion she had was not taught by a teacher in Bible Baptist Seminary, nor given by her SS teacher. This passion was given by God almighty who had a specific plan for Bessie's life; and that was to be a God follower and to make others God followers as well. Her passion drove her to give herself to a people, a culture, and a country. So much so, that, she started out sleeping on park benches and ended up living in Mexico for more than 58 years. She also spoke Spanish so much that, whenever she did speak English, which was seldom, it was with a Spanish accent. Her passion was to see little boys and girls get saved. Her passion was to see Moms and dads come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Her passion for an all providing God kept her there in spite of the locals trying to slip poison in her coffee to do away with her. If there ever was one person who had a sincere desire to reach the world for Christ, it was Bessie Lee.

Who would have thought that Bessie Lee, to get to the field, would have to go through the office of none other than J Frank Norris. She told me that she went in there to tell J Frank that she had been called to Mexico as a missionary. He said her place was in the home. She finally told him that she was going anyway and walked out. That takes courage!!! It's no wonder, to our dismay, men, that women outnumber the men on the foreign mission field 7 to 1. It takes courage to make it to the mission field and resolve to stay there. Some see Passion as temporary. I see Passion as faithfulness in Bessie's case. Mt 25 :21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Bessie Lee had a job to do. She did not waver nor falter. Her faith in the risen Savior was enough to carry her from the greatness of America to a land far behind. It wasn't some great paying job that got her to Mexico nor was it some opportunity to make millions. The calling she had on her life and the faith to carry it through was all she had to go on.

As those first days turned to weeks and those first weeks turned into months, the Lord established a ministry through Bessie Lee. This ministry consisted in helping a national pastor rebuild a work which had been abandoned. She had the privilege of teaching generations of people. She saw kids saved, which grew up and had kids that got saved and those kids had kids. Her influence in the community earned her respect amongst the town leaders.

Her humble yet firm stand on the Bible made an impact among her peers. Bessie Lee became loved and respected even with the doctors and lawyers of her town. I believe the love of God and His Word had something to do with that.

**Compassion also comes to mind when I think of Bessie Lee. It means to see a need and then meeting it. Compassion was her every move. The need, whether spiritual, physical, or emotional, she was always moving about with a sense of direction knowing these needs needed to be met and that she would be the one to meet them.**

**Bessie Lee Millican is a hero in my book. I don't want to elevate her to some superstar status, because I know that she would probably whoop me for that, and two, she would not want me to. All that honor and all the glory goes only to one person ... the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. She would never puff herself up or give credit to herself, because she knew that she was nothing save the blood of the Jesus Christ and His amazing grace. And it was for that blood and grace that she was fighting for!!**

**Bessie Lee Millican-one of Gods choicest servants-gone to reap the rewards in her eternal home. I know she is sitting up there close to Jesus and talking to Him. I wonder what they are talking about? I can almost hear her telling Him "we need more missionaries". Of the thousands she was able to reach, along with Gayle, there are still billions more that need the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that if Miss Bessie Lee had to do it all over again, she would not hesitate to once again share the message that changed her life. I just hope and pray that we would be strong, compassionate, and courageous enough to heed the call in our life to reach the lost like Miss Bessie Lee Millican did.**

**Miss Bessie ... we're gonna miss you. Can't wait to see ya in glory.**