

DAVID JAMES SCHEMBERA OBITUARY

November 12, 1944 – November 15, 2018 (Age 74)



Celebration of life services were held at Pleasantview Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas November 26, 2018 with Bro. Jimmy McNeil and Bro. Joey Bacon officiating. He was buried in the DFW National Cemetery with military honors.

David James Schembera was born November 12, 1944 in Webb City, Missouri, to James Ignatz and Iva Rene (Foxworthy) Schembera. They lived for a time in Webb City and then moved to Wichita, Kansas. He graduated from high school in Andover, Kansas and attended American Business College in Wichita to receive business training. He received a draft notice from the Army but joined the US Navy instead to see the world. He was stationed all four years at Lemoore Naval Air Station in Lemoore, California and had to pay to tour a Navy ship.

He met Betty (Wuthrich) Schembera while in business college where he sat behind her and aggravated her. We found that was a trait he carried throughout the rest of his life. He showed he cared for you by giving you a hard time. He was not saved at that time, but after visiting Betty's church, the Swiss Mennonite Church in Whitewater, Kansas, he heard the gospel for the first time. He spoke to the pastor in his office after the service and he realized if he died that day, he didn't know where he would spend eternity. Pastor Ensz showed him from God's Word that he could know where he would go by acknowledging that he was a sinner and accepting the free gift of salvation by putting his faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Betty had taken off her engagement ring and placed it on the pastor's Bible earlier, saying she wouldn't marry a lost man, but she didn't say how long he had to be saved. They were married one week later on January 23, 1965. Their first son, Kevin James, was stillborn. Their daughter, Kristine Renee, was born at the Lemoore Naval Hospital just before his discharge from the Navy in June 1968.

They moved back to Wichita, Kansas and looked for a good Bible preaching Baptist Church and the Lord led them to the Messiah Baptist Church. Under the preaching of Johnny Moore, Dave felt God was calling him into the ministry. Dave resisted that call for a time, but after going through some difficult times of unemployment, he finally surrendered to do whatever God wanted, thinking it would be a pastor in the States.

Their son, Brian, was born in March, 1971 and in July 1971 they moved to Arlington, Texas to attend the Bible Baptist Seminary, now known as Arlington Baptist University. They joined the New York Avenue Baptist Church. Bro. Roman Alvarez always emphasized missions and through his influence, Dave felt God was calling them to the mission field of Ecuador.

He graduated from Bible Baptist Seminary in 1974. They were approved by the World Baptist Fellowship Mission Agency to go to Ecuador and began deputation to raise their support. They went to the Rio Grande Bible Institute for Spanish language training. They arrived on the field of Ecuador in February 1977.

Dave, along with the other missionaries, Mel Neill, Charles Bowen, Bill Hendrick and their wives, started the Ecuador Bible Institute to train the pastors and leaders to carry on the work of spreading the gospel throughout Ecuador. Other missionaries, Gary Janky, Ernie Brown, Ben Mock, Carlos Tapia, Jody Davis, Joe Wells, Jim Smith and Octavio Nuñez had a part in their training over the years. That institute is still going on under the leadership of Adan Sanchez and others.

Dave and Betty had a part in organizing five churches in the Quito area of Ecuador, as well as many preaching points and missions throughout the mountains of Ecuador. One of the most difficult and dangerous was a five-hour trip one way to get to a mission on a two-lane, narrow, curvy mountain road that many times was closed because of mudslides, and then return late at night those five hours. But there were lost souls that needed to hear the Gospel and Christians that wanted them to come. They counted it a privilege to serve the Lord for 25 years in Ecuador and to have had a part in seeing souls saved and churches established to carry on the Gospel in their absence.

In 2000, Bro. Tommy Raley asked Dave to consider coming back to the States to be the Assistant Mission Director. After much prayer and consideration, Dave felt that was what God wanted them to do. Dave enjoyed meeting with the missionaries and helping them with whatever needs they had — buying cars for furlough or deputation, buying parts or equipment they needed on the field, taking care of the mission houses and vehicles and training the new missionary candidates. He enjoyed his last assignment of providing Bibles that the missionaries needed on the field. He wanted every believer to have their own copy of the Word of God, as many people in other countries have never had a Bible of their own.

Dave is survived by his wife, Betty, of 53 years of marriage, his son, Brian Schembera, his wife Darla, his granddaughter Cristina Nolte, her husband, Isaac, grandchildren Megan Schembera, Dillon Schembera, Shane Schembera and great-granddaughter, Veronica Nolte, of Mansfield, his sister Helen Clevenger of Wichita, Kansas and nieces, nephews and other family members. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Ignatz Schembera and Iva Rene Schembera, his son, Kevin James Schembera and daughter, Kristine Renee Schembera.

Dave Schembera Home with the Lord

“The Fundamentalist” Winter 2018 Written by Joey Bacon

In 1965, Dave Schembera accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. At the time, no one could have anticipated how he would live this life or when he would leave this life. On

Thursday evening, November 15, 2018, at the age of 74, God's appointed time came for Bro. Dave Schembera to leave this life. Dave and his wife Betty were returning from a trip in Branson with the Senior group of Pleasantview Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas. They stopped in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and after sitting down for dinner, Bro. Dave was called home to heaven.

As word spread concerning his unexpected passing away, people began to testify of how Bro. Dave had lived the life God gave him. Dr. Wendell Hiers, who worked with Bro. Dave at the WBF mission office, described Bro. Dave as possessing qualities of "steel and velvet." He said, "It is not often one meets a man who is hard as a rock and as soft as a drifting fog." Bro. Dave had a tall, strong stature as well as a compassionate, friendly smile. He loved people. And as a believer who had been saved after being raised in the Catholic religion, Bro. Dave had great boldness as well as compassion in sharing the gospel. He surrendered to go to the mission field of Ecuador where he and Betty served for 26 years. They served alongside other great missionaries, establishing indigenous churches and Bible Institutes. After returning to the U.S. in 2000 to serve as WBF Assistant Mission Director, Bro. Dave kept contact with those pastors serving and being trained in the Ecuador Bible Institute. To this day, Dave and Betty Schembera are precious to the people there in Ecuador. For the next 18 years, Bro. Dave served faithfully at the WBF mission office in various areas which included: helping missionaries prepare for deputation, acquiring and shipping special items missionaries needed on the field, assisting in the maintenance of both mission houses and the mission vehicles, and sometimes just taking time to visit with and encourage the missionary. Many in the WBF mission family will treasure the memory of coming in the back door of the mission office, and hearing that "steel," booming voice greet them from Bro. Dave's office. Bro. Dave had also assumed the WBF Bible Ministry after Bro. Mel Neil's homegoing, and he took great care in assuring that our missionaries had all the Bibles they needed as they led others to Christ on the mission field.

Bro. Dave's absence will be felt by many. Life will be especially different for Mrs. Betty and the entire family in the days ahead. But we rejoice with them in knowing that Bro. Dave is in heaven, enjoying a sweet reunion with their first son Kevin who was stillborn, their daughter Kristi, fellow missionaries, friends, and family who have gone home to be with the Lord. At a time like this, we are so grateful for the decision Dave made in 1965 to accept Jesus Christ as His personal Savior. And we are thankful he chose to live the remainder of his life for the Lord, because God used this special servant of the Lord to forever impact our lives. We never know when our appointed time to leave this life may come. As C.T. Studd wrote in a poem: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." As we pray for Mrs. Betty and the family in the days ahead, may we also pray for God to raise up more servants here, as He continues calling more servants home to heaven.