

## ILLINOIS IN SIGHT

### God gives us opportunities

Street evangelism is way out of my comfort zone. During a recent mission trip to the Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans, I was not excited to be sent out into the city. But someone else had already volunteered to bake cupcakes.

As our group walked along the levee, we noticed a young woman sitting a little more than halfway down toward the water. There was a small fire burning beside her and she appeared to be weeping. We had already passed her and then something (Someone) told me to go back and greet her.

Linda\* said it was “memory day” in her country of China and she had come to the river to remember her mother who died this year. She brought coffee, fruit, and flowers, and threw some petals on the water as is the custom in China. Linda was a graduate student at the University of Illinois-Chicago who had come to New Orleans to get away from the cold for a few days.

As we talked, Linda said something about “trying to do right and to be a good person.” I told her about the separation between perfect God and imperfect us. But God made a way for us to be perfect. Another member of our team inched down over the rocks to give Linda a tract, and I asked her to open it so she could see John 3:16. She clutched it to herself and thanked us for sharing it.



**Helping hand:** One of the WMU ministry team prays with a homeless man while on a mission trip in New Orleans.

When Linda told me she took the #151 bus to school in Chicago, I asked her if she was familiar with Sheridan Road. I told her there was a church – Uptown Baptist – at Sheridan and Wilson that could tell her more about what was in the tract we had given her.

Back in Illinois, I e-mailed Mindy Cobb and Mark Jones from Uptown about Linda. Mindy connected with her, and Linda attended church there on Easter Sunday. She knew it was a Christian holiday, so she took muffins and chocolate. She said she had toured some churches, but the service at Uptown was the first she had ever attended.

Of all days to hear the full Gospel message, certainly Easter was that day.

– Becky Arnett, FBC McLeansboro, Ill.



## mission illinois

### Pray for a new church

**Location:** Oak Park

**Target:** Singles and families in this village due west of Chicago

**Characteristics:** Oak Park has a population of 52,000 and is a popular destination for tourists who come to visit several homes and buildings designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

**Pray:** That people living here will be open to the truth of the Gospel.



– From the IBSA Church Planting Team

### Clip and Share B-101 with

- Pastors
- Church staff
- Discipleship leaders
- Missions leaders
- New members

### ABOUT B-101

This is a 20-part study on the basic beliefs and missions of our denomination. It is designed for new believers, new Baptists, and those who want a refresher. Clip it out of the newspaper, fold into a four-page leaflet, and share with the people who would benefit from the information. You might even lead a study.

B-101 can be used for:

- New members classes
- Study on missions in Illinois and around the world
- Exploration of doctrines in *The Baptist Faith & Message*

Make as many photocopies as you need for study groups, church members, and worship attenders. Or download the PDFs at [www.IBSA.org/B101](http://www.IBSA.org/B101).

Produced by the editors of the *Illinois Baptist*: Eric Reed, Meredith Flynn, Lisa Sergent. Designed by Kris Kell.

### Look for B-101 in every issue!

### COMING SOON Resources for B-101

- Leader's guides for study groups
- Self-guided tutorials on SBC missions, Baptist beliefs, distinctives, and the Cooperative Program
- The whole 20-part series will be available for download in time for fall discipleship classes and small groups.

Available soon online at [www.IBSA.org/B101](http://www.IBSA.org/B101).



## Mission trips have a ripple effect

Broadview Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago's west suburbs has forged a missions connection in West Africa over the past five years, sending two to four teams each year and planting churches in The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

It all started with one mission trip, and one taxi driver.

In 2008, Broadview sent a team to The Gambia to explore how they might do missions in the Muslim country. They had attended a training session specifically for missions in Sub-Saharan Africa, hosted by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Missions Pastor **Robert Walker** and the Broadview team had identified the Jola people as the group they would try to share the Gospel with, and on their way out of their hotel, they ran into a taxi driver who said, “I know where many Jola are.”

He drove the group to the neighborhood he knew, where they prayer walked and told Bible stories. The next day, he took them to another community. “By the time we had told the story four or five times, he said, ‘I think I want this Jesus you’re talking about,’” Walker shared.

The cab driver was a “man of peace,” a first point of contact who serves as a catalyst for the Gospel. He now pastors Broadview Baptist Church of The Gambia.

Last year, a Broadview team and the Gambian pastor went to Guinea-Bissau to engage the Kasanga people. There, they found another man of peace who accepted Christ, along with about 20 other men in the village. When Walker and Senior Pastor Marvin Parker went to Guinea-Bissau for an Easter celebration in 2014, they saw “people everywhere,” Walker

said. The church had grown to around 200.

Broadview will send another team to West Africa soon to go deeper into Guinea-Bissau and search for future church sites.

When churches take mission trips, the benefits aren't just seen on the mission field, said **Bob Elmore**, who helps coordinate short-term trips for IBSA churches. “If you can go to another country and share the Gospel, then [when] you come home, you can't help but share.”



### We serve in ... many places

Leaders from Broadview Missionary Baptist Church, including Senior Pastor **Marvin Parker** (back row, right), celebrated this Easter at the church they helped plant in Guinea Bissau.

*IBSA partners with the International and the North American Mission Boards to connect Illinois churches with missionaries and mission trip opportunities. For more information, contact the IBSA Missions Team at (217) 391-3138. Contact [MarkEmerson@IBSA.org](mailto:MarkEmerson@IBSA.org).*

### PEACE, MAN!



When Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs to minister in his name, he told them to look for a “man of peace” in each city they visited (Luke 10:6). This person would provide food and lodging for the disciples as long as they stayed in that city, and he would be blessed for it.

Today church planters and missionaries still look for the man of peace. Wherever they go, it seems someone is open to their work, even if that person is not yet a believer in Jesus. He may not even know who Jesus is, but he is curious. And he can open doors among the people of his community.

A Southern Baptist missionary entered a potential hostile village in Asia, first praying for a man of peace. “I started my stopwatch,” he said. “We walked into the center of the village where the well was. A person approached me out of nowhere and said, ‘Have you eaten?’ We said, ‘Not yet.’ He said, ‘Well, come to my home.’ His name was Li, and he was the person of peace we wanted. I stopped my watch: three minutes, 21 seconds.”

– with info from Baptist Press

## WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT... SALVATION

Read Article 4 of *The Baptist Faith & Message* (2000) at [www.IBSA.org/B101](http://www.IBSA.org/B101).

Is there more than one way to heaven? A lot of people think so, including some Christians.

In his summary of Chuck Colson's book "Lies that Go Unchallenged in Popular Culture," Ken Kelley says, "More than 75% of Americans believe that many roads can lead to eternal life. More disturbing is the finding that almost one-half of highly committed evangelicals believe there are multiple paths to eternal life."

Today many people presume their own goodness will be sufficient to attain God's salvation, or that God can use other means to reconcile lost humanity back to Himself. These beliefs reveal two fundamental flaws: first, the incapability of a finite human being to deal with sin and, second, failure to see the necessity and uniqueness of the substitutionary, atoning death of Jesus, the infinite Son of God, on the cross.

The "Salvation" article in the *Baptist Faith & Message* addresses these two interwoven misunderstandings. In short, our good behavior isn't good enough, and only Jesus' sacrifice is truly good enough.

The word "salvation" is applied to many things in today's language, to most everything but the soul. We first need a to recapture the meaning of the word. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary on Biblical*

*Theology* pictures "salvation" as the idea of rescue. We are overrun with floodwaters without the ability to swim. Our death by drowning is certain. But a rescuer lays hold of us and pulls us safely to shore.

This is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. In Colossians 1:21 Paul states, "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds." In our sin, we are completely spiritually dead. We are enemies toward God and enslaved in our rebellion toward Him. We were born into sin.

David says in Psalm 51:5, "And in sin did my mother conceive me." And Paul declares in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

We are guilty because of the stain of Adam's sin and we are guilty of our own sin against God. So, we are overwhelmingly incapable of dealing with the problem and presence of our sin. Our life is thoroughly stained not only with Adam's sin but our own outright rebellion toward God. We are drowning and in desperate need of a Rescuer. But not any rescuer will do. He must be able to not just disguise the stench of our sin against God. He must be able to break the power of sin and leave us completely clean from any stain of sin.

In Old Testament times, sacrifices were offered to wipe away that stain—again and again. Perfect, unblemished sheep and goats and bulls were hoisted onto the altar by the priests and their

lifeblood was drained from their bodies. But even these sacrifices were not a permanent solution to mankind's sin problem.

In contrast to that sacrificial system, Hebrews 9:14 says of Jesus' offering, "How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Not any sacrifice would do. Only the perfect God-man, Jesus, would be sufficient.

Paul says in Galatians, "When the fullness of time had come God sent forth His son." Jesus, testifying of himself, said his purpose is not to condemn the world in their sins, but to save the world. (Look up John 3:16-17 and read it aloud. Read it again, substituting your name for "the world.")

Jesus was the sinless Lamb of God. His substitutionary death – taking our sin on himself, then taking our place on the cross – satisfied the wrath of God the Father toward sin.

Only Jesus was good enough to satisfy God's expectations. And that's why he's the only means of salvation, our only rescuer, the only one who can reconcile our sin-broken relationship with the Father, and the only way to heaven.

*Tim Sadler is IBSA's Evangelism Director. He is available to consult with churches on faith-sharing strategies.*

## Where in the World is your church going?

**2,840** people joined IBSA-sponsored missions projects last year

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**24,459** IBSA church members reported personal involvement in missions.

For many churches, their **short-term trips** strategy includes developing a relationship with an unreached, unengaged people group. That requires **long-term vision**, with return visits to the same people group and location.

For example, churches in Rehoboth Baptist Association – headquartered in Vandalia – adopted the **Quechua people group** in the mountains of Peru.

They've sent **5 mission teams** to share the Gospel through Bible stories.

In Illinois, churches make ministry partnerships in **Chicagoland** and **metro St. Louis** part of their Acts 1:8 missions strategy.

**IBSA helps churches plan mission trips that change lives.**

Our churches have been to **Plainfield, Haiti, Uganda**, and all across the globe.

Contact [BobElmore@IBSA.org](mailto:BobElmore@IBSA.org)

## WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

### WE'RE THE UN-DENOMINATION

A teacher of mine used to say, "The Southern Baptist Convention only exists three days a year." He said that back when the annual summertime gathering was three days long.

Now it's been condensed to two days each June, but the point is the same: The "convention" is a business meeting more than a denomination.

Some people might say that's nit-picking, but at the time of the SBC's founding, this new group of Baptists didn't want to be identified as a denomination. They saw themselves as an association of churches. In fact, most Baptist organizations at the time rejected the idea of a church hierarchy that ruled its members in a top-down fashion. Instead, they wanted to emphasize the voluntary nature of partnership among churches.

Like the 7-Up commercials of a generation ago ("7-Up is the un-cola"), Southern Baptists saw themselves as the un-denomination. Especially in the early years.

Over the decades, the "convention" has developed three definitions:

- The annual meeting held every June
- The whole realm of people, missionaries, and congregations that identify as Southern Baptist
- The loose network of missionary-sending agencies, seminaries, publishing house, and financial organizations that further the mission under the aegis of Southern Baptists. Oh, go ahead and say it: the denomination.

Older people may still buck at the word "denomination" because it smells of creeds and hierarchy. Baptists don't have creeds and we won't be

bossed around by higher ups. In Southern Baptist theology, there are no higher ups but the Lord himself. There's Jesus, then next is his Bride, the Church.



The "convention" may meet a couple of days per year, and while in session the convention may approve a budget and pass resolutions, but its actions are not intended to be binding on the member churches.

And there is no such entity as "The Southern Baptist Church." People may talk about "The United Methodist Church" or "The Catholic Church," but there is no Southern Baptist Church with a capital "C."

It's just a Convention. And in a world with many denominations, that difference is still important. It makes us Southern Baptists "un-conventional."

– Eric Reed

#### Think about it:

Where is Southern Baptist headquarters? This is not a trick question. The answer is not Nashville or Springfield.

If the national organization is not designed to issue orders, then what is the seat of authority in the convention?

How does your answer affect the importance of your local church in Southern Baptist life?

## CONSIDER THIS For personal study or group discussion

- 1 Which of these is handed down from generation to generation: sin itself, the penalty for sin, or the inclination to sin?
- 2 What qualifies Jesus to forgive our sin?
- 3 Have you ever needed a rescuer as did the drowning swimmer described here? If so, how did you feel at the time? And afterward?
- 4 How does that feeling relate to your personal salvation experience?

