

ILLINOIS IN SIGHT

ESL points newcomers to Jesus

After almost 35 years of teaching English to beginners, Gladys Miner knows how hard it is to speak a different language than everyone else.

She's heard stories of how her students have been mistreated, abused or unable to move up in their work because of their tenuous grasp of the language. Every Tuesday night, Miner does what she can to help by leading a small group of English students through their new vocabulary words for the week.

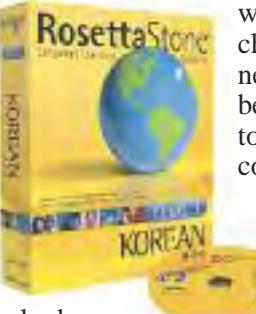
Her class is part of the English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry hosted by Iglesia Bautista Principe de Paz, a church in Springfield, Ill.

Knowledge lifts people up, Miner says; they can get better jobs, their self-esteem improves, and they know somebody cares about them. And there's another, simpler reason why she keeps teaching:

"If I were in another country, I'd want someone to help me."

Near Rockford, Ill., FBC Machesney Park started an ESL ministry six years ago. They initially thought they'd be teaching Spanish-speakers.

"The Lord had different things for us," says volunteer teacher



Novella Luter. Around that same time, the church started hosting a congregation of Karen refugees from Myanmar. The ESL ministry was a perfect way for the church to minister to the newcomers. Since the class began, 10 people connected to the ministry have become U.S. citizens.

Luter's class uses curriculum by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, which works with a network of state leaders to provide training and resources for ESL and several other literacy outreaches, like tutoring and adult reading/writing. The curriculum is based on the Gospel of Mark, so Luter uses the text to teach parts of speech, sentence structure and vocabulary.

The classes at both churches designate time for prayer and reading the Bible, giving teachers a natural way to share the Gospel. Miner has known students from Japan and Turkey who have accepted Christ through ESL classes, as well as a migrant worker in southern Illinois.

"Why are you doing this for me?" she recounts the question students have asked. "I'm doing this because God loves me, He loves you....Let me tell you about my Jesus."

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.

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.

Pray for a new church

Location: Jerseyville, Jersey County

Target: Mature singles and couples live in this small town with rural neighborhoods.

Characteristics: This city of 8,500 is on the far northern edge of the Metro East St. Louis region. Historically, Jerseyville was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Pray: For churches to pray and partner to plant a church in this area.

— From the IBSA Church Planting Team



A series from the *Illinois Baptist* • Vol. 4

BASICS FOR BAPTISTS

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE BELIEVE

HOW WE SERVE

Refugees find a home at Machesney Park

Imagine being pushed out of your home by a civil war and forced to live along the edges of your own country.

That's the plight of the Karen, a minority people group in the country of Myanmar, formerly called Burma. Many have lived for years in refugee camps along the Myanmar/Thailand border. Over the past decade, thousands of Karen have relocated to the U.S. through resettlement programs.

Pastor Eh Say Wah was one of those refugees. He led a church in a Thai camp for nine years before resettling his family in northern Illinois. Wah now pastors Karen Baptist Church, which just celebrated its sixth anniversary.

The congregation got its start when Baptist leaders in the area found out about a group of Karen who needed a place to meet for church. They contacted First Baptist Church in Machesney Park, who made their building available. Karen Baptist meets on Sundays at noon in the church's former fellowship center.

Heath Tibbets, First Baptist's pastor, said the Karen congregation was one of the things that drew him and his wife there last year. Machesney Park had already opened their doors to the Karen, he thought, so they must be willing to go outside the church and do the same kind of ministry.

At their anniversary celebration, the Karen church invited leaders from First Baptist to worship with them. Tibbets described the graciousness and humility with which they thanked them for hosting their church for these six years. They presented the FBC members with traditional Karen church attire, and shared lunch with them after the service at Pastor Wah's home.



We serve in ... Rockford

Karen Baptist celebrated their sixth anniversary with friends from First Baptist, Machesney Park, where the Karen congregation has met since 2008.

"I think that they bless us more in the way that they encourage us," Tibbets said, "than we would ever bless them in what we do for them physically."

Machesney Park's Doug and Robin Price serve as liaisons to the Karen congregation, communicating their needs to the mother church. Leaders from the two churches meet periodically, and the Karen church is working toward increased independence, Tibbets said.

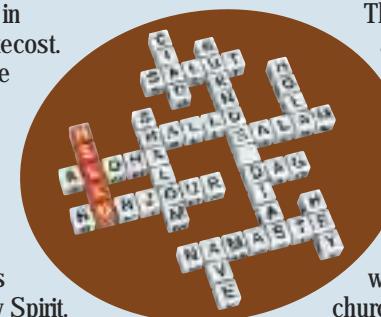
The older church is also changing, he said, as their view of missions expands through the process of getting to know the Karen church.

"My hope and prayer is that they will say, 'Wow, how much more can we do for people groups around the world?'"

— Meredith Flynn

MANY TONGUES, MANY LANGUAGES

People from all over were gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost. Originally marking the first fruits of the harvest, it was one of three major feast times when pilgrims journeyed to their spiritual capital to offer sacrifices. Fifty days after Passover when Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead, and one week after he ascended into heaven, the promise was fulfilled that God would send the Holy Spirit.



The first evidence of his arrival was the sound of a rushing wind. Next there appeared over the heads of the people gathered at the temple something that looked like flames. Then the disciples preached. People of all different languages heard and understood the Gospel. (See Acts 2.)

Soon thousands were saved. From many nations and languages, all they had in common was new faith in Jesus. That was plenty. The church was born.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT...

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read: Article 3 of *The Baptist Faith & Message (2000)* at www.IBSA.org/B101

The Holy Spirit is God, not a ghost. God has revealed himself as an eternal, holy tri-unity. He is three persons, and at the same time he is one. This is one of the great mysteries of God.

God is Father – our life originates in him. God is Son – our life is saved through him. And God is Spirit – our life is eternalized by him. The Holy Spirit is God, not a “part” of God or metaphor for God, but fully God in every attribute and action.

Some people focus a lot on the Holy Spirit. Others almost ignore him. Our praise of God cannot ignore the Holy Spirit. The Spirit deserves our praise and thanks and worship. While the Spirit reveals and exalts Christ, this action is motivated by love and does not indicate a subordinate status.

What some consider overemphasis on the Spirit is usually a lessened reverence for the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, Son, and Spirit are not in competition. The Holy Spirit is not a junior partner. For believers, the Spirit is not optional.

It may be helpful to picture the Father seated on the throne of heaven (kingship) and the Son seated at his right hand (a sign that

his mission was accomplished at the cross). God’s presence in the world is the indwelling Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit convinces us of truth, convicts us of sin, and empowers us for service through his gifts (such as hospitality, leadership, teaching). As we walk in the Spirit, our capacity to live out the character of Christ and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit increases (see

The Spirit of the Living God who comes alongside us is a mighty wind and inside us is a fueling fire.

the list in Galatians 5:22-23).

The Holy Spirit also dwells in the Church to prompt worship, stewardship, and discipleship. He enlivens our congregations to demonstrate our worship as a life of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

As pastor, I recall how we experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in unexpected ways. “The Holy Spirit showed up” is the way some of us explained what took place. His fresh wind caught our attention and his fresh fire brought us to our knees in confession and

recommitment. We experienced true awe. Immediately, singing changed from three choruses about God to 30 minutes and more of songs of praise sung directly to God. Meetings that began with a polite prayer now started with asking-seeking-knocking prayers that pushed the agenda back and often changed the agenda completely. Prayer times became prayer meetings; we knew we were meeting with God, empowered by the Spirit to know and pray the mind of Christ to our Father in heaven.

Just as Christ has been misperceived by some as weak and mild, the Spirit has been misinterpreted as merely a helper (if and when we think we need one) and a comforter (a kind gentleman who feels bad that we feel bad). The Spirit of the Living God who comes alongside us is a mighty wind and inside us is a fueling fire. He is the one who released the power to reshape a planet without form and void of life.

It is this role of the Holy Spirit that is vital for the Church in the rapidly changing 21st century. Until the Church learns afresh how to be “filled with the Spirit” in order to discern how to follow the Spirit’s scriptural leadings, we are doomed to our own plans.

Phil Miglioratti is director of the National Pastors Prayer Network and IBSA’S prayer coordinator.

CONSIDER THIS



For personal study or group discussion

- 1 Baptists sometimes seem skeptical of the Holy Spirit. Why?
- 2 What is the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation (John 16:7-11) and sanctification (Romans 8:13-14)?
- 3 What does it mean for Christians, who have the Spirit living inside them, to also be “filled with the Spirit”? Does that mean the same thing?
- 4 If a church experiences “a move of the Spirit,” what are some things that might happen in that congregation?
- 5 Look up the song “Spirit of the Living God.” Sing it as a prayer.

See the World from a new angle

Our American Melting Pot

2015	2060 (projected)
62%	43% Non-Hispanic white
18%	30% Hispanic (of any race)
13%	15% African American
5%	8% Asian American



38 million people

in the US speak Spanish at home.

The US is the **5th**-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.



SALSA surpassed **ketchup** as our top condiment in 1991.

MEXICAN surpassed **Italian** as the most popular ethnic food in the US in 2013.



► **40.4 million** immigrants were living in the US in 2011, the peak year so far.

► **2 million** foreign-born residents live in Illinois.

Worldwide, Southern Baptist church planters engage 874 people groups. And the Gospel is preached in at least 20 different tongues every Sunday in Illinois.

CP WORKS!

– US census data, Pew Research, shindigz.com.

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

The story is told of a man who was picked on at work. He thought about quitting, but giving up would just let the mean guys win. He thought about standing up the biggest bully in the bunch, but he wasn’t sure if his medical insurance would cover reconstructive surgery. Finally, he decided to pray.

“Lord, how do I pray for these men? What I’d really like to say is ‘Smack ‘em down, Lord!’”

God bless you and wake you up.

That was the answer he perceived in his heart. So each time someone ridiculed him, the man prayed silently, “God bless you and wake you up.”

He pled for their spiritual awakening. One by one, the crewmen were won to Christ by his patient, enduring witness.

At times in our nation’s history, faithful Christians prayed for America to wake up. And God sent fresh waves of his Holy Spirit to bring life to dead souls and stir churches from their slumber.

The First Great Awakening in the mid 1700s roused colonists from their formal and legalistic worship to a new understanding of personal relationship with Jesus Christ. True believers became a force in American politics, and God used their commitment to spiritual freedom in the founding of the United States.

The Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s came ahead of the Civil War. In large cities, thousands prayed on their lunch breaks, and a nation on the brink of judgment was called to its knees. Abolitionists arose from this spiritual kindling, and later the temperance movement.



Moody



Graham

The next Awakenings gave birth to modern denominations and to evangelicalism as we know it. America became a nation of churches and churchgoers. While revivals fanned the flames of faith in Scotland and Wales early in the 20th century, D.L. Moody was calling America to repentance from his base in Chicago. And later, starting with his ministry in suburban Western Springs, Wheaton College grad Billy Graham launched a crusade ministry that presented salvation in Jesus Christ to millions in the second half of that same century.

Across the decades, people were praying, “God bless America, and wake her up!”

A similar refrain is part of SBC history. For 150 years, Southern Baptist churches were committed to week-long revival meetings focused on the salvation of lost family and neighbors. (Some churches still hold the meetings in the spring or fall.) But the driving need behind “revivals” is awakening – prayer for the return of the nation to living faith in Jesus Christ, prayer that produces repentance in people, changes their behavior, and transforms lives and communities.

– Eric Reed

Think about it:

1. What is the evidence that America needs spiritual awakening?
2. Do you see any signs that God’s Spirit is moving in the nation?
3. Are there places in the world where awakening seems to be happening more than in the U.S.?
4. How do you pray for awakening and revival?