

B4101

A series from the *Illinois Baptist* • Vol. 3

BASICS FOR BAPTISTS

- WHO WE ARE
- WHAT WE BELIEVE
- HOW WE SERVE

Illinois churches field teams in secular nation

Bob Shelton's life is split into halves: 30 years in the U.S., starting in Mt. Vernon, Ill. And 30 years in Canada, serving as a church planter and strategist. "When God called me, I think I brought my heart to Canada, and I never felt a release from that call."



Shelton started his ministry at Logan Street Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, where he had become a Christian years before. He also pastored First Baptist in Zeigler before heading to seminary in Texas.

Then, he went to Canada, where 90-95% of the population doesn't know Christ, he said.

"There's a great harvest field here."

Shelton is the city coordinator for the North American Mission Board's "Send" initiatives in Calgary and Edmonton, two cities in the province of Alberta (directly above Montana). The cities are about 180 miles apart, but both have been affected by an influx of people coming to work in the oil and gas industry. Together, the cities are home to almost 2.5 million people.

"Ultimately, the world has come to these two cities," Shelton said. To meet their spiritual needs, Send Calgary and Send Edmonton will help start numerous new churches over the next several years.

The task is particularly challenging because of the multiple types of churches needed. In Calgary alone, there are 240 ethnic groups represented and 140 languages are spoken.

Shelton and the Send strategy teams in each city are seeking to mobilize partners to help planters reach different city segments, called "communities." One of those partners is Gateway Baptist Association, headquartered in Edwardsville, Ill.



We serve in ... Canada

Bob Shelton connects church planters in Calgary (shown here) and Edmonton with potential partner churches from the U.S.

The association has entered into a three-year partnership with the Send initiatives in Calgary and Edmonton, and will send their first mission team this summer.

Richard Newcom, pastor of Whitelaw Avenue Baptist in Wood River, Ill. will lead that team as they work with Vertical Church, a new congregation in the Calgary suburb of Cochrane. Newcom and Greg Gomez, Gateway's missions coordinator, took a recent "vision trip" to Alberta to meet with church planters and explore needs the association can help meet with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

For more, go to www.namb.net/Canada.

— Meredith Flynn

OH, CANADA: TOLERANCE AND FORGETFULNESS

Canada prides itself on multiculturalism. The vast varieties of peoples that immigrated there after WW2 transformed the Anglican and Catholic landscape to a pluralistic patchwork including Muslim and Eastern religions.



New laws enforcing "tolerance" have had a cooling effect on evangelical witness. For many Canadians, the outcome is no religion at all.

"Now, we're raising up a generation that has no religious memory," said missionary Bob Shelton. "They have no idea whenever you talk about faith and Christ, you might as well be talking about Mohammed or Buddha, because seeds of the Gospel have never been sown in their life." A nation with a rich religious heritage now has little faith in faith.

Read: Article 2, Section B, of *The Baptist Faith & Message* (2000) at www.IBSA.org/B101

How do you experience an invisible God? Many people struggle with that issue today, just as they did in the time of Moses. The Israelites saw God as cloud and fire leading them to the Promised Land, but even so, God Himself was still unseen. And in the days of the prophets, God was known in their holy proclamations. He was in a word from a messenger, and a still small voice, but he was considered still largely unknowable.

And today, people want evidence of God. What evidence is there?

The Gospel of John opens with spectacular assertions of Christ’s preexistence (“In the beginning was the Word”), the parity of His status with the Father (“and the Word was with God”), and His deity (“and the Word was God”). Jesus was fully God. But from his position as God, equal with the Father, he chose to become a human being. He was on a mission.

The Baptist Faith & Message states, “Christ is the eternal Son of God” who came to us by “identifying Himself completely with mankind.” This is demonstrated through the anticipation of His coming, His unique conception and birth, His sinless life and obedience, and His resurrection, exaltation and future return in power.

As one who is fully God and fully human, Jesus is the only one who can explain God to human be-

ings. He did it by becoming one of us. Jesus’ own disciples wanted to see something: Show us the Father, they said. Jesus replied, If you’ve seen the Son, you’ve seen the Father (John 14:7-9).

There are many biblical passages that attribute divine titles to the Son; for example, Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Son of David, the Lord, and, on reserved occasion, God.

And the Bible also lists His divine prerogatives; for example, forgiving sins, receiving our prayer, being the joint source with the Father of grace and peace, exercising power over the physical world and demonic powers, and even raising the dead.

But the Gospels also show Christ’s full humanity through His birth, hunger and thirst, exhaustion and suffering, and ultimately His agonizing death.

Both the implicit and the explicit testimonies form the incontrovertible foundation to His deity and humanity. Or, to put it another way, only the Son of God could be so completely human that he weeps and thirsts like ordinary people, and yet is so above the created order of things that he can overcome death. The Bible says so, and the evidence is clear – in Jesus, the Son.

When the movie “The Passion of the Christ” was shown in theaters, the audience watched a man getting beaten to a pulp and the movie came to an abrupt end. What wasn’t clear to the uniniti-

ated was the implication of His death. While the Gospels narrate mostly the fact of His death, the epistles unpack the significance of His death. As *The Baptist Faith & Message* states, “in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin.”

People in Old Testament times understood that God rightly held an unrelenting wrath against them because of their sin. Only after the crucifixion of Jesus do people begin to see how God provided his own Son to satisfy that wrath.

The apostle Paul illuminated the significance of Jesus’ death by employing a dizzying array of legal, religious, commercial, relational, familial, and betrothal metaphors:

- the judge who justifies the guilty
- the priest who atones for the sinner
- the benefactor who redeems the prisoner
- the friend who reconciles with the enemy
- the father who adopts his children
- and ultimately the husband who betroths the bride.

Christ’s death on the cross represents a “gift basket” full of God’s blessings upon the repentant sinner, available without regard to gender, race, or socio-economic status. It is a gift only possible through the Son.

Jay Noh is IBSA’s Multiethnic Church Planting Catalyst in Chicagoland.

CONSIDER THIS

For personal study or group discussion



- 1** Why do you think Christ had to be both a man and God?
- 2** How does Christ’s full humanity affect your faith in Him? His deity?
- 3** Which metaphor of Christ’s death is the most meaningful to you? Why?
- 4** Paul’s heart was commandeered by this love of Christ (2 Cor 5:14). Was yours?

See the World from a new angle



Canada has

35 million people

1/10 evangelical
39% Catholic
24% no religious affiliation
2% Baptist

United States

316 mil. people

1/3 evangelical
22% Catholic
20% no religious affiliation
16% Baptist



There are **25,000**

GRIZZLY BEARS in Canada



There are **11,500** members of the Canadian National Baptist Convention, which is affiliated with the SBC.

There are **298** CNBC churches, compared to **45,000** SBC churches in the U.S.

Across the globe, there are more than **3,000** UUPGs. Of those, about **230** of them live in the Americas.

Through Cooperative Program, when you give on Sunday every dollar touches the world.

CP WORKS!

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

ETERNITY IN VIEW

If Southern Baptists had saints, Annie Armstrong would be one. While other pioneering women of her generation were campaigning for the vote and against alcohol, Annie Armstrong took up another cause, one with eternal consequences.

"The future lies all before us...shall it only be a slight advance upon what we usually do?" wrote the tall, ambitious, headstrong, and by some accounts, formidable woman. "Ought it not to be abound, a leap forward, to altitudes of endeavor and success undreamed of before?"

Born in 1850, she first was involved in ministries with African Americans in Baltimore. But it was a plea from Oklahoma that crystalized her concern for missions. A ministry to Native Americans asked for help providing clothing, and Annie urged nearby churches to assist. Eight white churches and six black churches responded and packed barrels with 200 new suits of clothes for shipment.

As a result, missions groups emerged in the churches, and eventually a national organization developed. The Woman's Missionary Union, an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, formed in 1888 with Annie Armstrong as its leader.

That same year legendary missionary Lottie Moon asked for more workers. "The only hope for China is through the women," Moon wrote, urging SBC women to raise \$2,000. The head of the Foreign Mission Board (now called the International Mission Board) turned the job over to Arm-

strong. She started organizing volunteers and writing letters.

The women raised \$3,315.26 that Christmas.

Aside from her dogged determination, "Miss Annie" is best known for writing letters. In one year she wrote 18,000 letters urging churches to support missions. She often took a typewriter and a secretary with her on vacation, and if she didn't have those available, she continued writing by hand.

She didn't do it alone. Armstrong's genius is that she built a national organization with groups in every state and most every Southern Baptist church. And she took that undreamed "leap forward" seriously. In 1906, her final year in national WMU leadership, she took a particular five-week trip of 4,830 miles, making 31 stops and 41 speeches. One attendee said she had the gift to make "one see the whole world as one's field."

The Easter Offering for North American Missions was named for Annie Armstrong in 1938. Since then, \$1.1 billion has been given in her name.

— Eric Reed



Think about it:

1. Annie was both headstrong and forward thinking. How do these traits work together?
2. Annie's missions interest started with people in Baltimore, then Oklahoma, then China. Trace yours. What about your church?
3. In what way is the whole world "one's field"?
4. Of all the things you are involved in, which ones have eternal impact?

ILLINOIS IN SIGHT

Servant evangelism opens doors

How can we open doors for evangelism in places that seem closed to the Gospel?

Servant evangelism.

A pastor in Cincinnati named this concept when he started a new church based on the servant model of Jesus. He and his team packed up mops and buckets and went to restaurants and bars offering to clean the restrooms. Seriously.

The Christians found that the people who worked in those establishments who usually had the thankless task of scrubbing toilets were very grateful. And they were willing to listen when those crazy Christians talked about their Servant-Master, Jesus. These are not “random” acts of kindness. They are very intentional.

Servant evangelism has spread across the nation. Some church planters in Chicago made befriending the school one of their tactics when moving to the city.

“I went to the principal and asked, ‘How can we help make your school better?’” said **Scott Venable**, who started planting a church in Chicago’s Wicker Park neighborhood in 2010. “She was taken aback. She never had someone come to her and just say, ‘Wow, we want to serve you here.’”

“Through that relationship we have an amazing children’s ministry. We started coaching their sports teams, tutoring, and built re-

lationships – just by washing the community’s feet and serving.”

Several IBSA ministries use service as a strategy for demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ. More than 1,100 kids and leaders work in locations all over Illinois each spring as part of “Children’s Ministry Day.” Hands-on missions projects help participants develop a love for service. And it shows the recipients of their ministry in tangible ways that God loves them.

This month, “Serving Across Illinois” will mobilize churches to



meet needs in their community through a one-day project.

And “Missions Spectacular” puts faith into service on 40 projects over three days in the summer.

IBSA is sponsoring “back-to-school missions events” that reach out to local schools and families. Contact the IBSA missions team, and they will partner you up with church planters who could use some help with the fall outreach project. E-mail BarbTroeger@IBSA.org.

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!



mission illinois

Pray for a new church

Location: Centralia

Target: Unreached families and single adults

Characteristics: Located 60 miles east of St. Louis, Centralia is a community of blue collar, farming, and working class families living in single family dwellings.

Pray: For church partners to help plant a church in this area



– From the IBSA Church Planting Team

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.