

B4101

A series from the *Illinois Baptist* • Vol. 9

BASICS FOR BAPTISTS

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

Searching for truth in Central America

During a mission trip to El Salvador, Paul Sadler shared Christ with a soccer coach as the team ran laps around them. When he neared the end of his presentation, “The guy said, ‘Stop!’” said Tim Sadler, Paul’s son and IBSA’s director of evangelism.

“He started hollering at his soccer team, and got the whole team to run over.” The coach asked Paul to give his message to the soccer players. “I forget how many trusted Christ on that day,” Tim said.

God was moving that day, he said, and it wasn’t the only time. Over the past several years, Tim Sadler has taken mission teams to work with Baptist churches in El Salvador. People in the country are generally receptive to the gospel message, but Christian leaders have to rely on the Holy Spirit to work through generations of religious tradition—much of which isn’t based on true relationship with Christ.

“It’s a very spiritual climate; it’s a very religious climate,” he said. “But many are lost in religion, and are in desperate need of the gospel.”

Religious practice in Latin America (which includes countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean) has changed over the past century. According to 2010 research by Pew, the region is home to 39% of the world’s Catholic population, the most of any region. But the share of Latin America’s population that practices Catholicism has decreased from 90% in 1910, to 72% in 2010.

Protestantism has influenced the culture in Central America, including a widespread Pentecostal movement. Other groups, like Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists, also are present in



We serve in ... El Salvador

Tim Sadler (second from left) leads annual mission trips to Central America to partner with Baptist churches in the region.

El Salvador, youth pastor **Courtney Hill** from First Baptist Church in Herrin, Illinois, observed on a recent mission trip.

While many Salvadorans are culturally religious, if they make the choice to become Christian—often followed by baptism—they make an all-out commitment. “If you go up to a house and share the gospel, the whole church goes with you and stands in the street, praying while you share the gospel,” Sadler said.

“You knock on the door and say, ‘Are there any Christians in this house?’ The Christian will come to the door and say, ‘My husband’s lost; come in and talk to him.’”

“It’s just different. It’s fun to share the gospel in that context.”

— Meredith Flynn

A BODY, WITH *LIVING* MEMBERS

Many pastors face this dilemma: Someone wants to join the church, but they haven’t been baptized by immersion. They grew up in another tradition and were christened as a child. At some point, they made a public commitment to Christ. But now they want to join a Baptist church, without being baptized.

“Can’t I just join the church?”

No. Sorry. You can’t. Here’s why:

Baptists believe in “regenerate church membership.” The church isn’t a club. You can’t just sign up, like at the Rotary Club or the gym. Everyone who is officially a member of the local Baptist congregation should be a born-again believer, alive in Christ.



Baptism is the ordinance that serves public witness of a person’s salvation. Followers of Christ obey his command to be baptized after they become believers. And to become part of the Body of Christ, the pastors should be reasonably sure the person is an actual believer – not just a well-intentioned person who wants to join the club.

The result is a church body whose members have all been regenerated by the Holy Spirit when they accepted Jesus as Savior.

“The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47 NKJV).

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT... BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Read Article 7 of *The Baptist Faith & Message* (2000) at www.IBSA.org/B101.

Our Postmodern Age has rejected the structure, uniformity, and institutional authority of its predecessor, modernity, according to Stanley Grenz. And Postmoderns have criticized the modernist worldview that emphasizes the individual above the community.

It's no wonder so many of the younger generation have no desire to be a part of the church.

In his 2001 book "Reforming Pastoral Ministry," John H. Armstrong said the church is "in the middle of an increasingly independent society." The notion of "rugged individualism" has dominated western culture since the early seventeenth century and has crept into the church, having an adverse effect on the concept of biblical fellowship. "The church is called to fashion independent individuals into an interdependent body," Armstrong said.

One way the church can answer this challenge is by renewed focus on the ordinances of the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. And we might win back some of the young people who are so hungry for community.

Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolic, but also necessary for obedience to our Lord. *The Baptist Faith & Message* article on baptism focuses on the individual's "faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the be-

liever's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus." Likewise, it depicts the Lord's Supper as a "symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."



Southern Baptist doctrine differs from the Reformed and Catholic traditions but is no less meaningful. There is no sacramental quality associated, meaning it is not required for salvation. Nor is there any transubstantiation; the elements do not transform into the literal body and blood of the Lord. They are not magic.

Baptists, according to R. S. Norman in his book "The Baptist Way," have followed the Zwinglian interpretation holding to a "memorial understanding of the meal," honoring the words of the Lord "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor. 11:23).

The BF&M holds true to Scripture, but it doesn't bring out the communal nature of the cherished ordinances. The Lord's Supper is a shared meal described explicitly in

Scripture as performed within the context of the local church. Paul is clear: when preparing to partake, the saints should wait for one another so that "you all should eat together" (1 Cor. 11:33, NIV).

Baptism not only identifies the believer with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, it establishes one's union with the church. "To identify with Christ is to identify with his people," Norman said. "A believer cannot be united with the head of the body without simultaneously being united with the body."

Lately, at Love Fellowship Baptist Church, there has been an intentional effort to teach the theological link between the ordinances of the church and their joyous effect on the individual's connection to the local community of faith.

It may be coincidental, but we've had an increase in young people ages 18-28 making commitments to Christ, submitting to believer's baptism, and partaking regularly at the Lord's Table.

Perhaps if the church capitalized on these time-honored traditions, accentuating the bond that exists between Christians by virtue of a mutual faith in Christ, we would discover a new means of reaching a generation deemed difficult to reach.

Bryan Price is pastor of Love Fellowship Baptist Church in Romeoville.

CONSIDER THIS For personal study or group discussion

- 1 State in your own words the difference between sacraments and ordinances. How can we make the ordinances more vital in worship, especially for people on the fringes of church life?
- 2 Look up "open communion" and "closed communion." Which does your church practice?
- 3 What would be the impact of more frequent Lord's Supper observances, with a focus on "community" as Jesus and the disciples experienced it in the upper room?



Missions begin here!

100 years ago



there was
1 SBC church
for every **430**
people in the US.

Today it's
1 per 6,194
people.

In Illinois it's
1 per 12,112
people.



Through the North American Mission Board, Southern Baptists support
2,324 career missionaries
and
1,255 student missionaries.

More than **3,500** NAMB-endorsed chaplains serve in the military and in hospitals.



Through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists gave **\$41.8 million** to NAMB-led missions in 2013 (that's almost **23%** of CP gifts!)

and another **\$57 million** through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Every Sunday, every dollar touches the world.



WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

SHARING CHRIST IN THE U.S.

"My dad's a foreign missionary," the girl said of her father's work, "but my mom's a 'home' missionary."

Everyone laughed as the missionary kid from South Korea tried to explain what her stay-at-home did. The term "home missionary" was kind of confusing. "Home missions" has little to do with Korea.

As the Southern Baptist Convention was founded in 1845, leaders organized two missions agencies, one for foreign missions and the other for "domestic" work in the United States.

The Board of Domestic Missions started with three goals: to send missionaries to frontier territories, strengthen churches in the Southern home base, and to evangelize slaves. Ten years later, evangelism of Native Americans was added.

The early years were troubled, even messy. But in 1874, a new era began.

Called the Home Mission Board for over a century, the agency started new Sunday schools and churches, founded grade schools in the Appalachians, and encouraged Baptist-related colleges. Southern Baptists supported hospitals and homeless shelters. In places where Baptists were few, these ministries earned the SBC a good name and opportunity for witness.

"The work of the Home Mission Board has always been cutting edge. Involvement in work with Indians, Blacks, crisis centers, other religions, urban centers and student internships produced a string of controversies," professor Jerry Windsor told the *Florida Baptist Witness*. "Pushing the missions envelope has always been a purpose and appeal of the board."



Fast-forward to 1997 and another renaming. The North American Mission Board added responsibility for Canada (previously Foreign Mission Board territory), and evangelism through church planting became NAMB's main goal.

With its "Send: North America" strategies, NAMB has sought to reallocate funds to underserved U.S. cities, and to forge relationships between large Southern churches and church planters in the North; 2,600 churches have signed up so far.

In 2013, 929 new churches were started in North America; 52% of them were African-American or ethnic congregations. But NAMB reports, "To keep up with population growth and to offset the 1,000 churches we lose each year, we need to start new churches at a pace of 15,000 every 10 years."

There's a lot of work to be done, right here at home.

— Eric Reed

Think about it:

Read Acts 1:8. Which of the four places named would you equate with the U.S. Why?

Why two missions boards? Are international missions so different from missions here?

ILLINOIS IN SIGHT Two great camps

Your next pastor could be climbing a tree at Lake Sallateeska right now. Or paddling a kayak, stitching a leather lanyard, or rubbing sticks together to spark a fire. Or he could be at Streator Camp learning about Jesus, and sensing the call to salvation or Christian service.



Good things happen at IBSA's two camps and conference centers.

Over the years, hundreds, if not thousands, have accepted Christ during events at Lake Sallateeska and Streator. "Last Sunday, two of the 17 children saved at missions camp this past summer were baptized in their home church," IBSA's **Mark Emerson** said in July. "Many of the others were baptized earlier this summer."

IBSA's ability to maintain Lake Sallateeska and Streator Baptist Camps is made possible by Illinois Baptists' gifts through the Cooperative Program. Missions Mobilizer **Carmen Halsey** said the facilities "give us a place to present biblical truths that penetrate into all aspects of camp activity—recreation, devotions, family groups, electives—so the students have time to reflect,

challenge, and apply those truths in a safe setting where they can be disciplined and equipped to live a missional lifestyle."

Both facilities serve as a home base for several IBSA camps each summer, but they also host retreats, church events, family reunions and many other events.

Lake Sallateeska, near Pinckneyville, offers boating, hiking, swimming, and fishing. Accommodations include hotel-style rooms at Sallateeska Inn, and the camp's lodges have 200-plus beds.

Philip Hall has served as Lake Sallateeska camp manager for six years. He and his wife, Stephanie, and their three boys live on the grounds. The camp is special to Philip because he received his call to missions while attending Royal Ambassador Camp in the fourth grade.

Streator Baptist Camp in northern Illinois can accommodate three separate groups simultaneously with their own sleeping quarters, or one group of 150. Swimming, hiking, fishing, and boating are just a few of the outdoor activities offered at the camp. **Nick Candler** recently started serving as manager, along with his wife, Whitney, and their two sons, Elijah and Ezra. Whitney is one of the daughters of retired camp manager Larry Walter.

Go to IBSA.org/IBSA_camps for more info.

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: Chicago's northwest suburbs

Reaching: Multiple generations of recent Muslim immigrants and their U.S.-born children

Characteristics: Very diverse neighborhoods are home to peoples from South Asia and the Middle East.

Prayer needs: To develop first- and second-generation leaders and churches to partner with one another to meet the needs of recent immigrants.

— 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.