

# 2009 Illinois Missions Offering and Week of Prayer

## Churchwide Mission Study

By Marty King

### Prepare

- Pray for God's direction as you prepare and lead your church in studying how God is working through the cooperation of 1,000 Southern Baptist churches in Illinois to reach our state for Christ.
- Locate the 2009 Illinois Missions Offering Planning Guide that was sent the first of August to every IBSA pastor's office. It includes the missions DVD and lots of information about Illinois Missions and the missions offering. Read through the Guide and note those things that would be of interest to your members.
- Determine the date, time and location for your study. The suggested emphasis week is Sept. 13-20, 2009, but your church or mission group can plan your observance at a time most convenient for your church.
- Promote the date, time and location at least one month in advance. If space in the bulletin or church newsletter allows, include a brief description of the study such as:  
*Did you know nearly 100 Southern Baptist missionaries serve right here in Illinois? Our church (or mission group) will be studying Illinois missions (date/time/place). Plan to attend to learn about and pray for our Illinois missionaries.*
- Arrange for equipment you will need including a DVD player to show the mission video, copies of the video listening guide (at IBSA.org), extra pencils and pens, and a map of Illinois for the prayer time.
- Obtain copies of the 2009 Illinois Missions Offering Prayer Guide and offering envelopes which were also mailed to churches the first of August.
- Also obtain enough copies of a road map of Illinois to enable you to give one map to every prayer group of 3-4 people. Free copies are available from the Illinois Department of Transportation and members of travel clubs such as AAA can obtain free copies as well.
- Following are two options for the missions study:
  1. You can use the study outlined below that centers around one of the mission videos and concludes with a prayer time for Illinois missions.
  2. You can invite an Illinois missionary or staff member or your director of missions to come and speak to your church/group about their ministry in the state. Call the IBSA Missions Team at 217-391-3138 for names of staff and missionaries or call your associational missions office at least a month in advance.

## Welcome and Introduce the Program (5-10 minutes)

Greet people as they arrive. Welcome the group and have an opening prayer for the study, for each participant, for those in Illinois who do not know Jesus and for the churches and missionaries in the state who are telling others about Him.

Remind church members of this year's Illinois Missions Offering and Week of Prayer. Call attention to the \$390,000 goal and to your church's goal. Briefly highlight any special activities planned for the remainder of the week or the state missions observance.

Explain that the purpose of the study is to highlight the ministries and missionaries supported by the Illinois Missions Offering and Week of Prayer. It is estimated that over 8.2 million people in Illinois do not have a saving relationship with Jesus. More than 1,000 Southern Baptist churches in Illinois work together through The Illinois Baptist State Association to share Christ with them.

Use the *Q&A about Illinois Missions* included in the *Planning Guide* to highlight the purpose of the offering and week of prayer, what was given last year and what the offering is used for.

## Study Option #1 (20 minutes)

If you are showing the missions video, have someone distribute copies of the Listening Guide for the missions video "Illinois Missions" available at [www.IBSA.org](http://www.IBSA.org).

*I'd like to begin our study by showing you a video from IBSA's Executive Director, Nate Adams. Dr. Adams is a native of Illinois, having lived in both southern Illinois and the Chicago suburbs. Some of you may have known his father, Tom Adams, who was a pastor and Director of Missions in the state, and wrote a column in the Illinois Baptist for many years. Dr. Adams served as vice president of the SBC's North American Mission Board in Atlanta for nine years before returning to Illinois nearly four years ago to serve as our state executive director.*

*In the video Dr. Adams explains the state association's four primary tasks. Listen carefully and fill out your guides. We will discuss them at the end of the video.*

After the video, read each question and ask for responses. Then use the additional questions to discuss how it relates to your church.

1. Illinois is a mission field because there are more than 8 million people to do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

*That's more than 2 out of every 3 people in our state. Do you think that's true? Is it true of our area? What is our church doing to reach the lost in our area? In our state?*

2. How many Southern Baptist churches cooperate together to reach Illinois for Christ?

1,000.

*How does our church cooperate with the other 999? (By giving to the Cooperative Program, special mission offerings, participating in training events, doing mission projects in our state)*

3. Dr. Adams said one of the most important ministries of IBSA is strengthening existing churches.

*Do you know any ways that IBSA helps strengthen churches? (training in evangelism, Sunday School, VBS, missions, music, student camps, mission camps)*

4. How many Illinois church leaders did IBSA train last year? 24,000

*Did anyone here participate in any IBSA training?*

5. How many new SBC churches did Illinois Baptists start last year? 34

*And, he said IBSA is supporting another two dozen that were started the previous year but have nearly 60 churches ready to start this year. The goal is 45 for this year. Has anybody ever been part of a new church start? Do you know any areas where we need more churches?*

6. What four mission fields should Illinois Baptist churches be sending missionaries to?

**Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.**

*How is our church involved in missions in our own community (Jerusalem)? Where could our church serve and witness to people in our community? Who has been on a mission trip outside our community? Tell us about it. Where could we go in Illinois to do missions?*

7. Name one of the two publications that Dr. Adams said IBSA produces to help ‘stimulate stewardship’? **The Illinois Baptist and the Illinois Missions bulletin inserts.**

*Does anyone subscribe to the Illinois Baptist? Can you tell us what you learn from reading it? (By subscribing, you could learn about Southern Baptist missions and missionaries and about what other churches are doing to reach people.)*

*Does our church subscribe to the monthly bulletin inserts? ( If not, a free subscription is available by calling 217-391-3116.)*

8. What pledge did Dr. Adams make at the end of the video?

**To use gifts to the Illinois Missions Offering frugally and wisely and to apply them here in the Illinois mission field.**

*...because 100% of the Illinois Mission Offering stays in our state to strengthen and start churches, send Christians into the mission field, and to stimulate stewardship.*

If you are unable to show the video, recruit a volunteer before the study to read the following message from Dr. Adams as members use their listening guides, then review the discussion questions above:

*Illinois really is a mission field. There are almost 13 million people here in our state and it's estimated that over 8 million of them don't yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.*

*There are about a thousand churches here in Illinois that cooperate together to achieve synergy so that we can, working together, achieve more than we could separately in reaching out to the lost people here.*

*There are 4 main ways IBSA uses the Illinois Missions Offering and I would summarize them simply by saying this: we strengthen churches, we start churches, we send Christians to the Acts 1:8 mission fields of the world, and we seek to stimulate stewardship among all the churches here in Illinois.*

*And one of the most important ministries you put in place with the Illinois Missions Offering is the ministry of strengthening churches right here in Illinois. Last year, our missionaries and staff completed more than 2,000 consultations with churches as well as more*

than 24,000 leaders were trained in areas such as Sunday School and youth ministry and worship and music and evangelism.

*In addition to strengthening churches, one of the most important ministries that your Illinois Missions Offering dollars put in place is the ministry of starting new churches right here in Illinois. Together last year, we started 34 new churches in Illinois. We also nurtured to their next step of growth and health 28 churches that had been started in the previous 2 years. Right now, we have more than 60 new churches in the pipeline at some stage of planning or development and just ready for the right planter and the right funds to be available to start those new churches.*

*God's heart is that every church should send Christians into the mission field -- to be the epicenter of a ripple effect into the world that reaches it's Jerusalem, it's Judea, it's Samaria and the ends of the earth. Last year Illinois missionaries and staff helped lead 32 Missions Awareness events to help churches and associations understand what's happening on the mission field here in Illinois and in North America and around the world.*

*In addition to these important ministries of strengthening churches, and starting new churches, and sending Christians to the Acts 1:8 mission fields of the world; one of the important ministries we try and fulfill here at IBSA is to stimulate stewardship among all member churches so that they can understand how God is at work here in the Illinois mission field and in the mission fields of North America and around the world. The Illinois Baptist newspaper and the Illinois Missions bulletin inserts are just two examples of tools to help churches receive regular updates on how God is at work right here in Illinois.*

*As you consider what the Lord might lead you to give to the Illinois Missions Offering this year, let me invite you to do something. Take a simple map of Illinois and open up that map and just scan your eyes over the cities and towns, maybe regions of Illinois that you're not as familiar with. Think about the almost 13 million people that are there, and about the more than 8 million of them that don't yet have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And as you pray over the lostness of Illinois just ask the Lord to lead you, "What would you have me give Lord through the Illinois Mission Offering? And how would you use my gift in the Illinois mission field to lead people to faith in Christ". Thank you in advance for your generosity, for your sacrifice, for your prayers. We pledge to use them frugally and wisely and to apply them here in the Illinois mission field."*

### **Pray (15-20 minutes)**

Ask those attending to break down into prayer groups of three or four people each, and provide each group with a:

1. A road map of Illinois, and
2. Copies of the Prayer Guide at the end of this study. Instruct each group to select a prayer leader and then follow the instruction on the Guide that will focus their prayer time on two areas: the map of Illinois and the IBSA prayer guide.

Join one of the prayer groups, allowing 15-20 minutes for prayer. Monitor when the groups finish and call the group back together.

## **Study Option #2 (35-40 minutes)**

If you have a missions speaker, introduce him or her with background that you have obtained from them or their office. Make sure they know they have about 20 minutes for their presentation, and then allow a few minutes for questions.

After the presentation, tell the group you want to conclude with a brief video about how 1,000 Southern Baptist churches cooperate in Illinois to reach our state for Christ. Show the missions video clip "Illinois Missions" (4 minutes).

The video concludes with Dr. Nate Adams suggesting viewers use a map of Illinois to pray for the state. Ask those attending to break down into prayer groups of three or four people each, and provide each group with a road map of Illinois. Instruct each group to select a prayer leader and then have the leaders open the road map and ask member of their group to discuss three questions:

1. How would you pray for our town, county and association?
2. What prayer needs would be the same in different parts of the state?
3. What prayer needs would be different?

Ask someone(s) to pray about the needs identified and discussed.

Join one of the prayer groups, allowing 15-20 minutes for prayer. Monitor when the groups finish and call the group back together.

## **Close (5 minutes)**

If your church has not yet distributed the Week of Prayer Guide bulletin insert, provide each person with a copy to take home with them. Point out that it includes seven days of guided prayer for Illinois Missions. Encourage participants to use the prayer guide in their personal or family devotions during this week of emphasis.

Also, distribute Illinois Missions Offering envelopes and remind members of your church goal and specific dates when the church will be collecting your special state mission offering.

Thank the group for coming and close with prayer for each person in attendance and their efforts to help reach Illinois for Christ.

## Illinois Missions Study

### Prayer Guide

10-20 minutes

1. Form prayer groups of three to four people each and agree on one person in each group to help lead the discussion and prayer time.
2. Open the road map of Illinois provided to you and ask members of your group to discuss the following questions:
  - How would you pray for our town, county and association?
  - What prayer needs would be the same in different parts of the state?
  - What prayer needs would be different?

Ask someone(s) to pray about the needs identified and discussed.

3. Using the video Listening Guide, ask someone to lead in prayer for each of the four primary areas of ministry that Dr. Adams spoke about.

- For Church Strengthening, pray:
  - Our church will grow stronger in worship, evangelism and missions
  - For training opportunities next year for our leaders
  - For our pastor and leaders
- For Church Starting, pray that:
  - New SBC churches in Illinois will grow stronger and reach people for Christ
  - More Illinois churches will become involved in supporting new churches
  - God will call out Illinois Baptists to become church planters and will lead effective church planters to come to Illinois
- For Sending Christians, pray:
  - That the ministries of 11,000 SBC missionaries in Illinois, across the United States and around the world will be effective in reaching people
  - For outreach ministries and missions of our own church
  - That our church will continue to grow in mission outreach
- And, for Stimulating Stewardship, pray that:
  - God's people will be faithful and generous in bringing tithes and offerings into the storehouse
  - Those who administer those offerings in our church, at IBSA and across the SBC do so with wisdom and a Kingdom mindset