

A tale of two missionary couples



The Martins and the Joneses graduated from seminary with the same dream: To serve overseas as missionaries.

The Martins prayed about where God would have them go and settled on West Africa. They knew of some missionaries already serving in the region, who had

been sent by a well-known agency. They contacted the organization, set up a time to go through the assessment process, and passed their evaluation with flying colors. They started making preparations to leave their American life behind.

Meanwhile, the Joneses felt drawn to a country in Southeast Asia with very few Christians. They applied through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, were invited to a Missions EXPO conference where they researched potential jobs, and eventually were matched with an assignment in the region they were hoping for.

We want to know our missionaries.

You can. Skype with an international missionary during your church's worship service. Ask how you can pray for them, and do it then.

The couples started packing around the same time, and flew off in different directions. The Joneses headed to the International Learning Center in Virginia for orientation, and then on to their mission field.

The Martins embarked on a year-long tour of churches in their state, sharing about the work they would soon do, and raising the funds that would provide their food, rent, insurance, transportation, and other living expenses.

Over the next few years, the couples crossed paths once, when they were both in the U.S. for a year-long stateside assignment. The Joneses spent the year speaking in churches and at missions conferences, recruiting volunteer teams to serve alongside them when they returned to Southeast Asia.

The Martins did some of that too, but they mostly had to focus on raising the money they needed to live. Occasionally, over the years, they would have to leave their country at a critical time because the financial need was too great to stay.

Great! Your Cooperative Program giving helps facilitate mission trips, and projects in Illinois like Children's Ministry Day and Missions Spectacular.

But our church is really more into hands-on missions.

Both couples did the difficult work of sharing the gospel with people who had never heard it before. They lived with similar cross-cultural challenges, and saw people come to Christ after years of work. But the Martins also lived with the constant pressure to raise money, while their friends were able to stay on the mission field, focused on their work, because of support they received through cooperative missions giving.

Without that network of support, the Martins really never could keep up with the Joneses.



Making a new case for cooperation

When the Southern Baptist Convention considered changing its name a few years ago, one church member wondered whether they should re-think the Cooperative Program too. She wasn't suggesting Baptists drop their historic, proven method of sending and supporting missionaries, just acknowledging that the name "Cooperative Program" may not elicit the same loyalty it used to.

It's true, CP faces some challenges in connecting with younger and newer Baptists. For one, it has a lot to do with percentages that can be confusing. Also, the name is a little cumbersome. And CP is missing a "face"—many have said it lacks a historic champion like Annie Armstrong or Lottie Moon to rally support.

The good news is that young people who may not know much about the Cooperative Program want very much to make a real difference in the world. Emphasis on *world*. They believe the reach of the gospel in their lifetimes can be global. And since 1925, the Cooperative Program has been helping Southern Baptists take the gospel to the world, instead of sending missionaries from church to church fundraising, as they had to under the old societal method.

One young leader recently compared CP to an engine that fuels the missions work of our coalition of churches. As a new generation of Southern Baptists steps up to lead churches in fulfilling the Great Commission, it's their responsibility to keep that engine running, undergirding the work of nearly 10,000 missionaries here and abroad. And it's the local church's responsibility **now** to educate young leaders about CP. It has stood the test of time, after all.

"If we go back to the societal approach," one Illinois pastor wrote recently, "some bright young seminarian will one day say, 'I've got an innovative idea! Let's do cooperative missions!'"

What makes CP so effective?

Our missionaries don't have to fundraise, and we can send more of them to the field. And, it brings our churches together with a sense of purpose.

Who is the face of the Cooperative Program?



Jonathan de la O
Church Planter
Chicago



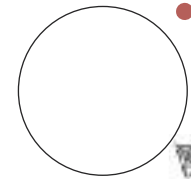
Heather McAfee
Missionary
Ivory Coast



Chase Abner
IBSA Collegiate
Evangelism Strategist



Ara Torosian
Church Planter
Los Angeles



draw yourself here



Your church

How can you help tell the story?

Go to www.IBSA.org/CP for these resources:

- **Mission Illinois** bulletin inserts featuring the Cooperative Program (or, order printed copies by e-mailing MissionIllinois@IBSA.org)
- **CP videos** "The Rant," "From Here to Eternity," and the "CP 1% Challenge for Illinois Baptists"
- **A 4-page CP guide** from the *Illinois Baptist*
- **Free CP e-book**, a great tool for teaching new members about the Cooperative Program
- **Download** this handout, make copies, share them

Clip out this section and share with your:

- pastor & staff
- finance team
- deacons/elders
- missions leaders
- new members

Need a reason to give through CP?

1. **Retro is in.** At nearly 100 years old, CP is still cool because it still works.
2. **CP helps churches stay missions-focused**, instead of giving to one thing this year and another the next.
3. **Mission Illinois.** Some of the more than \$6 million given through CP in Illinois stays in the state to start and strengthen churches, and share the gospel with more than 8 million people who don't know Christ.
4. **Missionaries spend more time on the job**, instead of raising money.

This guy has 7

5. **We can do more together.** Period.
6. **CP just makes sense.** What better way to take the gospel to the ends of the earth?
7. **It makes Jesus happy.** OK, we threw that one in. But us making disciples probably makes him smile, right?

Watch this short video and learn more at www.IBSA.org/CP.



Cooperative Program works!

Cooperative missions giving is really about percentages. When you give, your local church sends a percentage to the Illinois Baptist State Association. Next, IBSA sends 43.25% on to the Southern Baptist Executive Committee to support missions and theological education. The other 56.75% stays in Illinois to help start new churches, train leaders, and mobilize volunteers for missions.

In Illinois

56.75%

How the cookie crumbles

Pastor **Ben Chapman** asked IBSA Evangelism Director **Tim Sadler** for help reaching out to his community. One of 85 CP-funded missionaries and staff who assist Illinois churches, Sadler toured First Baptist Church of Red Bud, talking about how to greet visitors and welcome families to the children's area. Several ideas stuck.



Last year, Baptist leaders in Illinois were trained more than 23,000 times in worship, discipleship, missions, small groups and evangelism. Giving through CP helped support equipping conferences and zone consultants that provided 78% of IBSA churches with direct training for stronger ministry.

Chapman said their training session was so helpful that "we were all looking at each other like, 'That's a good idea!'" One great outreach idea: Assign a deacon each week to make cookies Saturday night and bring them to church Sunday morning. Then, when visitors show up, follow them home for a quick conversation, and to deliver the cookies. "We can't schedule the Holy Spirit," said Chapman, "but we can make cookies."

Sadler (above) also led more than 300 churches in Choose2 evangelism training, and over 261 churches are committed to Acts 1:8 missions strategy in Illinois and worldwide.



Jarvis James is planting The Body of Christ in East St. Louis, one of 90 IBSA church planters in Illinois.

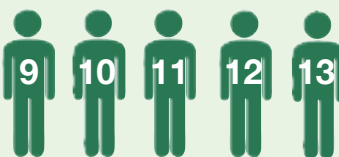
Illinois Baptists gave **\$6.4 million** to missions through CP last year.

322 new churches are needed in Illinois

Much of Illinois is still "frontier territory" where there are many people, but few churches. So CP gifts through IBSA are committed to sharing the gospel here through missions, evangelism, and starting new churches.



Illinois is a vast mission field with **13 million people** and at least **8 million** of them **don't know Jesus Christ** as Savior.



Around the world

43.25%

Southern Baptists spend half of all national CP gifts on international missions. That's a commitment we've kept since 1925.

\$188,000,000

in CP giving is budgeted for the 2014-15 SBC fiscal year.

50.41% International Mission Board

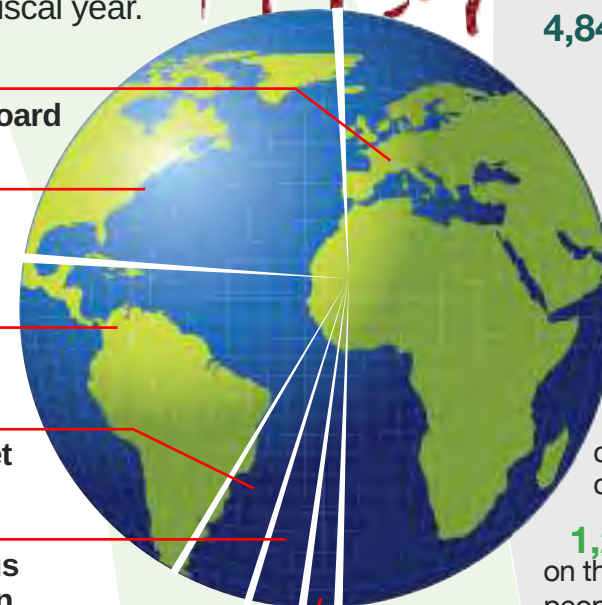
22.79% North American Mission Board

21.16% Seminaries

2.99% SBC Operating Budget

1.65% Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

.24% Historical Library and Archives



The world's largest missionary force

It was on a collegiate mission trip to Uganda in 1993 that Jimmy Bledsoe heard God's call to international missions. Swinging on a rope over Lake Victoria in Jinja, Uganda, he knew God wanted him to be part of taking the gospel to the nations.

Twenty years later, after serving stateside in Indiana, West Virginia and Illinois, Bledsoe and his wife, Diana (right), moved with their three sons to serve with the International Mission Board in Uganda. They live in the same town where

Bledsoe sensed God's call while "hanging out" over Lake Victoria. Bledsoe, former pastor of Logan Street Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, teaches at the Uganda Baptist Theological Seminary and hopes to see a multiplication of indigenous leaders and churches. "If Africa is going to be won to Christ," he said, "it is going to be the work of the Father drawing His children to Himself and through the obedience of African believers."

Of the world's **7 billion** people, **5 billion** have never heard the gospel.

There are **11,235 people groups**.

In more than half of them, evangelical Christians comprise **less than 2%** of the population.

4,842 International Mission Board missionaries currently are engaging **901 people groups** but more than **3,000** are still unengaged with the gospel.

In North America, more than **2,300** career missionaries and church planters, plus

1,250 student missionaries are on the field sharing the gospel with people here who don't know Christ.

16,000 pastors and missionaries are preparing for their mission fields at six Southern Baptist seminaries:

- Golden Gate
- Southeastern
- Midwestern
- Southern
- New Orleans
- Southwestern

