

THE EQUIP INSTITUTE

Theme: Baptist Beliefs

Topic: BF&M (2000): Article XI: Evangelism and Missions

Spring 2026

Introduction

The Equip Institute exists to equip members of Taylors First Baptist Church to think rightly about God and his Word for the sake of living rightly before God in his world. The topic this week is Article X in the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), which is on evangelism and missions.

Article XI

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

Key Biblical Texts

¹Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 1:1-3)

⁸And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8)

³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37-38)

¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)

²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Rom. 10:13-15)

Observations

Exposition of Article XI

Historical Context

All three editions of the Baptist Faith and Message have included an article on evangelism and missions. Such an article is uncommon historically in confessions of faith, and the inclusion of the article highlights the value that the Southern Baptist tradition places on gospel advance. The three versions of the article communicate the same basic ideas, with the various minor revisions offering greater clarity rather than correcting errors. The BF&M (2000) added the sentence, "The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations." The revision was approved without debate because it is a clear reference to Scripture and is an uncontroversial claim among Southern Baptists.

Key Ideas

Jesus commands the preaching of the gospel to all nations, so evangelism and missions are first and foremost a matter of Christian obedience

Missions is primarily about evangelism, which is the spreading of the gospel to unbelievers

All individual Christians and every local church are expected to be involved in the task of disciple-making here, there, and everywhere

One of the fruits of being born again (regeneration) is a godly love for others, including the spiritually lost

Thus, love for the lost is an important secondary motivation for missions

The spreading of the gospel is both a duty and a privilege for every believer

First and foremost, we are to regularly share a verbal witness to Jesus Christ by announcing the gospel to unbelievers

Second, we are to live godly lives that are consistent with our verbal witness

Finally, other means of spreading the faith are valid, provided they are consistent with the gospel

Baptists and Evangelism and Missions, Then and Now

Baptists played a key role in the rise of the modern missions movement among evangelicals. William Carey argued in his 1792 treatise *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* that the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is a binding command on every generation of Christians. The British Baptist Missionary Society (est. 1792) became the first global missions organization in the English-speaking world. Carey was appointed as the first BMS missionary and sent to India.

In 1812, Adoniram and Ann Judson became the first American evangelicals to be sent out as foreign missionaries. Though they were Congregationalists, they became Baptists while in route to India. Their colleague Luther Rice also became a Baptist, returned to the USA, and was instrumental in forming the Triennial Convention in 1814, which was the first Baptist missionary organization in North America. In 1832, Baptists founded the Home Mission Society to plant churches domestically and engage in evangelistic work among Native Americans.

In 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was formed when Baptists in the South split from Baptists in the North over slavery. Notably, the specific debate was whether or not slaveholders could be appointed as either domestic or foreign missionaries. The first two acts taken by the new SBC was to establish boards for home missions and foreign missions.

Southern Baptists established numerous financial strategies to fund missionary work at home and abroad. 1888 was the first Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for global missions. The offering has raised over \$5.5 billion over its history thus far. 1895 was the first Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions. The offering has raised over \$2 billion over its history thus far. In 1899, South Carolina Baptists started the Janie Chapman Offering for State Missions. SC Baptists have given over \$2 million to the offering in each of the past three years.

In 1925, Southern Baptists established the Cooperative Program (CP) as a unified budget for all denominational ministries. In 2025, the national CP budget was \$190 million. 50.41% of the money (\$94.27 million) was allocated to the International Mission Board and 22.79% (\$42.62 million) was allocated to the North American Mission Board.

In 1963, Southern Baptists became the largest Protestant denomination in America, and it remains so today. As of 2024, the most recent year for which we have numbers, there were 12.7 million Southern Baptists in almost 47,000 churches. Over 250,000 people were baptized by Southern Baptist churches in 2024. The IMB had over 3600 full-time missionaries and NAMB had over 3300 missionaries and chaplains. In 2024, almost 12,000 Southern Baptists participated in short-term mission trips through the IMB and over 2800 participated in short-term mission trips through NAMB. This is not counting other mission trips that were not connected to one of the two mission boards.

The most famous evangelist in church history, Billy Graham, was a Southern Baptist for most of his adult life. Other famous Southern Baptist evangelists include Vance Havner, Mordecai Ham, Jess Hendley, Junior Hill, Bailey Smith, Rudy Hernandez, Jay Strack, Cliff Barrows, George Beverly Shea, T. W. Wilson, and Franklin Graham. Currently, almost 60 individuals are members of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists.

At North Greenville University, dozens of students make first-time professions of faith each academic year. Dozens of students also participate in school-sponsored mission trips each year, in addition to students who participate in mission trips with their local churches. Many NGU students also join with students from other schools across South Carolina to participate in summer missions opportunities sponsored by Baptist Collegiate Ministries. Athletic teams appoint student chaplains and/or partner with area pastors who share the gospel with student-athletes. Groups of students organically engage in street evangelism in downtown Greenville periodically. Students in the College of Christian Studies take a course in personal evangelism, while dozens of students major in Intercultural Studies. NGU is also a host site for FUGE summer camps, where between 200 and 300 teenagers make first-time professions of faith each summer.