

Baptists Now Let Missionaries Pray in Tongues With Big 'But'

The Southern Baptist missions board is relaxing its rules that blocked people from serving as missionaries if they believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Baptist Press reports the goal of the revision is to allow as many missionaries as possible to reach the world.

International Missions Board President David Platt writes that "the practice of tongues and/or a private prayer language" will no longer be an obstacle to serving as a Baptist missionary.

"The ultimate aim of this policy revision is to enable limitless God-exalting, Christ-following, Spirit-led, biblically faithful, people-loving, high-quality Southern Baptist missionaries to serve with IMB through a multiplicity of pathways in the days ahead," Platt said.

Missionaries will still need to share Baptist core beliefs and be members of a Baptist church.

Platt said this is not a complete reversal of Baptist views about Charismatic practices, explaining that missionaries cannot try to compel disciples to practice specific gifts of the Spirit.

"We will continue to have as part of our Manual for Field Personnel allowance for termination of employment for any missionary who places 'persistent emphasis on any specific gift of the Spirit as normative for all or to the extent such emphasis becomes disruptive' to Southern Baptist missions work," Platt explained.