

# Yee urges Fellowship to become fully intercultural

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**By Marv Knox**

*Editor*

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship must transcend mere multiculturalism to become fully intercultural, CBF Moderator Joy Yee told participants at the group's general assembly in Atlanta.

The fellowship of traditional, progressive Baptists can be multicultural simply by gathering people representing various ethnicities, races, geographies, ages, genders and classes in the same place, Yee noted. But to be intercultural, it must dynamically involve each group with all the others, she explained.

Yee, pastor of 19th Avenue Baptist Church in San Francisco, embodies interculturalism. She is the first female senior pastor and first Chinese-American to lead the 15-year-old Atlanta-based CBF. She lives on the West Coast but is the highest elected leader of CBF, an organization primarily associated with the Southeast. And she is a relatively young mother leading a movement founded by the preceding generation.

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CBF  
Moderator  
Joy Yee

“I am encouraged by the work CBF does. ... Barriers are being broken and diversity is being modeled as we seek to work interculturally,” Yee said.

Under God’s leadership, CBF is becoming intercultural—transcending ethnicity, class, geography, generation, gender, economics and other human barriers, she said.

“To be intercultural implies a mutual respect, communion and unity that does not demand uniformity,” she added. “When we are together, God brings all these cultures into a whole— if we will let him.”

Yee illustrated her call for interculturalism by describing musical harmony.

“Producing beautiful music does not always mean we are singing the same notes or in chords that sound beautiful,” she said. “There is a different richness that comes from adding harmony.”

Sometimes, the harmony is dissonant—sounds that at first appear to clash, but which add richness and texture to the song, she reported.

“Together, we do not all sing the same melody,” Yee said of CBF’s intercultural diversity. “But there are interesting and breathtaking harmonies. Even in dissonance, the song can be more beautiful (because it is) woven around and anchored upon the melody written by God.”

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