

CBF assembly spotlights ministry in Texas and Southwest

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DALLAS—Most Hispanic Baptist pastors have no time or energy to spend debating fine points of theology on social media, because they are too busy ministering to families facing the challenges produced by a flawed immigration system, Jesse Rincones told the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly.

The typical Hispanic Baptist pastor is “trying to figure out how to lead the families in his church to ministry and missions when those same families face the daily threat of harassment, separation and devastation due to the nation’s failure to act on immigration reform,” said Rincones, executive director of the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas.

Hispanic Baptist pastors—many of them serving bivocationally—are too focused on local church ministry to join their privileged Anglo colleagues in “the latest Baptist hashtag battles,” he said.

Instead, they concentrate on the challenge of simultaneous ministry to Spanish-speaking first-generation immigrants, bilingual second-generation Hispanics and their English-only children and grandchildren, Rincones observed.

Those younger generations—Latinos under age 38—represent 58 percent of the U.S. population, he added.

While Hispanic Baptists lack some privileges Anglo ministers enjoy, they have “the privilege of collaboration,” working with the Hispanic Baptist

Convention of Texas and Fellowship Southwest, Rincones noted.

“What a privilege to engage pastors and churches in health connections, free from the political baggage that sometimes marks Baptist work,” he said, offering thanks for the opportunity to be a part of making an impact on the Hispanic community. “We truly are the privileged ones.”

Multicultural ministry and intentional ecumenism



Marv Knox reported on what Fellowship Southwest has accomplished since its formation last year. (CBF Photo)

The opening session of the CBF general assembly highlighted the work of Fellowship Southwest, a network launched last year—just in time to respond to needs along the Texas Gulf Coast after Hurricane Harvey hit the region, said Fellowship Southwest Coordinator Marv Knox.

In addition to helping with recovery and rebuilding after the hurricane, Fellowship Southwest also has helped churches in their efforts to adopt neighborhood public schools, minister alongside Native Americans and serve families in the *colonias* along the Rio Grande, he said.

Fellowship Southwest is practicing multicultural ministry and “intentional, loving ecumenicity” as it builds relationships across cultural and denominational barriers to respond to needs and advocate for the vulnerable, Knox added.

“We intend to help the Fellowship look like the faces and sound like the voices of the people who populate our delightfully diverse region,” he said.

‘Hold one another up’

Jewel London, pastoral assistant at The Church Without Walls in Houston, pointed to the partnerships that developed in her city after Hurricane Harvey. London especially highlighted the close relationship that developed between her congregation and South Main Baptist Church in Houston.



Jewel London of The Church Without Walls in Houston challenged Cooperative Baptist Fellowship churches to provide places where women in ministry can fulfill their calling from God. (CBF Photo)

London emphasized the importance of cooperative Christian work by pointing to the example of the thousand-year-old redwoods in the Muir

Woods of California.

“You’d think those trees would have deep roots,” she said. “But the way those trees stand is that all their roots are intertwined together. They hold one another up.”

Cooperative Baptists need to “hold one another up”—particularly women who feel called to ministry, she insisted.

London called to task CBF churches that profess support for women in ministry but fail to provide ministry opportunities in senior staff positions.

“Only 6.5 percent of CBF churches are pastored by women,” she noted. “That is a terrible statistic. We need to do better, and we need to be better.”

Cooperative Baptists should be “advocates for God’s chosen daughters” by allowing them to fulfill their calling and serve in every ministry capacity, she insisted.

Reese chosen as moderator-elect

During business sessions, the CBF elected former Texas Baptist pastor Kyle Reese as moderator-elect at the Fellowship’s general assembly in Dallas.



Kyle Reese

Reese has been senior pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., since 2006. Previously, he was pastor of First Baptist Church in San Angelo and First Baptist Church in Valley Mills.

He completed his undergraduate education at Wayland Baptist University and earned his Master of Divinity degree from Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary. He earned his doctorate from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"I have received so much from this Fellowship," Reese said. "It is an honor to serve this beloved community, which has surrounded me with support and encouragement throughout my ministerial journey. ... I look forward to walking with the CBF staff, embracing this new day with all its promise and challenge."

Reese and his wife, Amy, have three children—Peyton, 20; Hannah, 19; and Wyatt, 17.

Texans named to key posts

Other Texans elected to CBF posts included Christopher Mack, minister of young adults at Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, as chair-elect of the

nominating committee; and

John Moore, pastor for missions at First Baptist Church in Abilene, and Heather Mustain, minister of missions and advocacy at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, to the missions council.

CBF Texas elected Kelly Burkhart of Houston as moderator, Stephanie Nash of Lubbock as moderator-elect and Judy Collins of Mesquite as recording at its meeting, held in conjunction with the general assembly.

Named to a three-year term on the CBF Texas governing board were Craig Taylor of Houston, Wesley Shotwell of Azle, Patty Villareal of San Antonio, Marcy Mynatt of Temple and Derek Hatch of Brownwood. Matthew Broyles of Abilene as elected to a two-year term on the board, and Katlin McWilliams of Lufkin was elected to a one-year term.

Representatives elected to regional groups were:

- Abilene/San Angelo—Tommy Rosenbald of Rotan, Cody Faver of Abilene and Matt Walton of San Angelo.
- Austin/San Marcos—Aurelia Pratt of Round Rock and Mike Phillips of Austin.
- Dallas/Fort Worth—Michael Mills of Fort Worth.
- East Texas—Mark Newton of Lufkin and Jamie Cortez of Athens.
- El Paso/Midland—Chris Powell of Monahans and Rosalio Sosa of El Paso.
- Houston—David Deulofeu of Houston and Johnny Musquiz of Houston.
- San Antonio/South Texas—Melba Zapata of La Feria and Rolando Aguirre of McAllen.
- Waco/Temple—Sharlande Sledge of Waco and Sarah Elliot of Harker Heights.

With additional reporting by Editor Eric Black.

