

CBF pastor says tell stories of why moderates left, not who they left

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TAMPA, Fla. (ABP) - A Truett Seminary graduate said the 20-year-old Cooperative Baptist Fellowship must recast its message for a rising generation.

In order to interpret the movement's history for younger Fellowship Baptists, Kyle Reese, pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., urged the first generation to "commit together to tell more stories regarding why we left than who we left."

Kyle Resse
preaches closing
message at CBF
General
Assembly.

"The time is right for us to share the story of the brokenness and pain of our former life, and yet there was a clear gospel call that called us to leave the comfort, to take a risk and to celebrate the friends that we have made along the way," Reese said during the closing session of the 20th CBF General Assembly June 21-25 in Tampa, Fla.

"Ministry to the least of these has been at the heart of this Fellowship," said Reese, former pastor of First Baptist Church in San Angelo.

Reese was one of several speakers who compared the Fellowship's current stage of life to a teenager moving into young adulthood.

“Compared to our teenage years, 20-somethings seem to offer stability for the first time in our lives,” Reese said. He said moving into maturity “creates a tension” for Fellowship Baptists who “on the one hand have been at our best when we have been willing to take the risk for the gospel, who on the other hand are going into those years of stability.”

“If we are willing to take risks, I think our history tells us that we are going to attract new generations of women and men who are drawn to our way of being Christian in the world,” Reese said.

Reese said one challenge facing the Fellowship in the years ahead is how to remain on the cutting edge of risk taking.

“One way, I think, is to remember that we are a fellowship not only of individual Christians but a fellowship of local churches,” he said. “Local churches are doing amazing things, taking risks, seeking to live and proclaim the message of the Risen Christ. In our life together we must remember the local church, and we must be a resource for them. We must be a friend to them. We must walk alongside them, and we must tell their story.”

Registration reached 1,664 as the General Assembly approved a budget and elected a new slate of officers. The two-day total given to the CBF Offering for Global Missions was \$29,134.

During the Friday morning business session, the Assembly approved a \$12.3 million budget for fiscal year 2011-2012, which begins Oct. 1. The Fellowship’s new officers were elected during the session. They include moderator-elect Keith Herron, pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo., and Renee Bennett, counselor at Classic Equestrian Assisted Family Service in Dublin, Ga.

Moderator-elect and Colleen Burroughs, vice president of Passport Inc. in

Birmingham, Ala., ascended to the moderator position at the conclusion of the Assembly. This year's moderator, Christy McMillin-Goodwin, remains on the leadership team another year as past moderator.

In the budget discussion, Randy Parks, a hospital chaplain and member of Metro Baptist Church in New York City, expressed concern on behalf of more than 600 CBF-endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors for the reduction of a full-time staff position in the budget relating to endorsees to a part-time contract position. Finance chair Bill McConnell said he would bring the concern to the CBF Advisory Council so that it could be discussed and acted on at the October Coordinating Council meeting.

Bob Allen is managing editor of Associated Baptist Press. Some information in this story is from CBF communications staff.