

View collegiate ministry as a mission, workshop leader urges

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DALLAS—When income decreases at a church or Baptist state convention, collegiate ministry may be one of the first areas cut in the budget, but Wanda Kidd wants to see that change.

Kidd, collegiate ministries specialist of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, told a workshop at the CBF general assembly in Dallas college ministry should be viewed as a mission worthy of investment.

A church might be tempted to cut collegiate ministry because students do not contribute financially or because the church does not view them as a permanent asset, since many will move on after graduation, she noted.

Since a significant number of churches do not see college students as an important investment, most Baptist state conventions—with the exception of a few like Texas, Tennessee and Virginia—no longer have a strong college ministry, she added.

‘The world has changed’

Perhaps the problem lies in the expectations churches have of college ministry, rather than the fruit that work brings, Kidd observed.

Organized Baptist college ministry began in the 1920s, and for the most part, it has not significantly changed in its approach in decades, she said.

“We still do pretty much the same things as the college ministries in the ‘50s and ‘60s,” Kidd said. “The world has changed since then.”

Other organizations are involved in college ministry now, such as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ and Young Life. A finite number of students are on any campus, and “we’re all competing now for those students,” she said.

The way churches see college ministry must change, Kidd insisted.

College students do not need just one more Christian organization in a society where Christianity no longer is the norm, she said. Rather, churches must see this work as their mission and devote their best resources to it—including placing seminary-trained ministers in campus ministry roles.

Provide community

Cooperative Baptist Student Fellowship ministers Jaime Fitzgerald and Michael Sizemore joined Kidd in presenting the workshop. Fitzgerald is campus ministry intern at West Carolina University and the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and Sizemore is campus ministry intern at UNC Chapel Hill.

Many students feel no sense of community, Sizemore noted.

“Some of them have told me, ‘I do not know who my people are,’” he said.

Churches can help provide that missing ingredient, Fitzgerald noted.

“We have to help in the vulnerability” they feel, she said.

Another major issue for college students is identity. Before students can move on to the next stage of life and become who they want to be, they first need to figure out who they are now, Sizemore added.

Kidd noted a major change that has occurred in recent years is the increased involvement of parents in their students’ lives. [Reports](#) have

shown parents today are deeply involved in the decisions college students make, and some even move to the same new town as their children to protect them as much as possible.

The current generation of students has been so shielded by hovering parents, they do not know how to cope with changes, and college is a major change, Kidd said.

College students need proactive ministers who will be there when they ask the hard questions, Kidd said. When students finally ask those hard questions, trained ministers need to be available to answer them, she added.

“If we begin to sell it as mission, then they will hire missionaries to work on campuses, not just campus ministers,” Kidd said.

Campus missions continues to be an important investment, but to get good fruit from that work, the investment needs to be taken seriously, she concluded.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After the article originally was posted, the 16h paragraph was edited to correct the attribution of a quote.