



Discovering & Responding to God's Call Together

CBF launches season of prayerful discovery 'Toward Bold Faithfulness'

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By Jeff Huett and Aaron Weaver

DECATUR, Ga.—Cooperative Baptists are invited this fall to enter an intentional season of prayerful discovery that will lead to a faithful response guiding the Fellowship's future focus and priorities.

The initiative, called "Toward Bold Faithfulness: Discovering and Responding to God's Call Together," was launched Monday by CBF Executive Coordinator Paul Baxley after the Fall meeting of the CBF Governing Board.

Baxley said the time is right for the Fellowship to enter a "shared season of discovering where God most needs us to place our energies so that our congregations can thrive, and Christ's mission can flourish among us."

"The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a community of congregations, field personnel, theological schools, chaplains, church starters and other partners distinctly equipped by the Holy Spirit to uniquely participate in Jesus' mission of love," Baxley said. "We enter this season in hope and confidence, and we will pray and listen in the conviction that our gifts, graces and shared

resources position us for bold faithfulness and an even more significant impact in our communities and around the world.”

The work is based on the prayerful exploration of a series of essential questions that flow from the conviction that calling emerges at the intersection of the gifts and graces given by the Holy Spirit, the needs of congregations and the world, and the opportunities for growth and expansion that are opening before us.

Toward Bold Faithfulness will be coordinated by a Discovery Team co-chaired by Baxley and Carol McEntyre, CBF’s Moderator-Elect and pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia, Mo. The Discovery Team is representative of the breadth of the life of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship—generation, gender, geography, congregation size and location, as well as theological perspective. It includes congregational leaders, representatives of governance bodies with responsibility for carrying out the mission and ministry of CBF, State and Regional leaders and representation from partner organizations.

Members of the Discovery Team are:

- **Carol McEntyre (co-chair)**, CBF Moderator-Elect; Pastor, CBF Columbia, Mo.
- **Paul Baxley (co-chair)**, CBF Executive Coordinator
- **Rick Bennett**, coordinator, CBF Tennessee; incoming convener of Movement Leadership Team (the leadership group composed of CBF State and Regional Coordinators)
- **Karen Birdwhistell**, member, Living Faith Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Ky.
- **Susan Crumpler**, co-coordinator, North Central Region of CBF
- **Megan Turner Doud**, member, CBF Ministries Council; Minister of Students and Missions, Aiken’s First Baptist Church, Aiken, S.C.
- **Pam Durso**, executive director, Baptist Women in Ministry
- **Chris Ellis**, past chair, CBF Missions Council; Minister of Administration, Missions and Outreach, Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.
- **Daniel Glaze**, pastor, River Road Church, Baptist, Richmond, Va.
- **Rachael Johnson**, CBF Florida and Caribbean Islands; member, CBF’s Pan-African Koinonia steering committee
- **Shaun King**, senior pastor, Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga.
- **Christopher Mack**, chair, CBF Nominating Committee; Minister of Young Adults, Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas
- **Daniel Martino**, senior pastor, Church in the City, New London, Conn.; Convener, La Familia steering committee
- **Lisa Rust**, deacon chair, First Baptist Church, Lumberton, N.C.; Past moderator, CBF North Carolina
- **Courtney Stamey**, senior pastor, Northside Baptist Church, Clinton, Miss.

CBF's Moderator Kyle Reese expressed the importance of the Discovery Team's composition.

"We've worked diligently to include as diverse a representation of leadership in the CBF family as possible," Reese said. "We pray that the diversity of our leadership team will translate into broad participation of the entire fellowship throughout the process. We can't be fully who God is calling us to be without listening in every way possible to as many voices as possible. It's going to be a great journey."

In this initiative, the work of discovery is distinct from the work of response.

The prayerful discovery will begin this fall and allow the team to listen intensely and intentionally for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through an online survey, telephone and video conference conversations, in-person meetings as well as a resource, the Discovery Team will actively engage Cooperative Baptists, listening to clergy and laity, as well as those who do not attend a CBF congregation.

By spring/summer 2020 the outcomes of the discovery process will be presented to the Fellowship community and transitioned to appropriate teams to lead the response. The 2020 General Assembly will mark the conclusion of the discovery process and the beginning of the response phase.

The work is based on clear theological commitments and is undertaken in a posture of prayerful discovery seeking to nurture an ongoing culture of strategic discovery and planning in CBF life.

The initiative also seeks to foster dynamic collaboration, not only within the process itself, but in the larger life of the Fellowship. Rooted in the Apostle Paul's description of his "partnership in the gospel" with the church at Philippi, dynamic collaboration is founded on the belief that we absolutely need one another in order to be faithful to Christ. Dynamic Collaboration is a life-giving, community-shaping, *koinonia*.

McEntyre expressed the importance of this initiative in its call for us to pause for discovery and then respond.

"God's work is dynamic and responsive to needs of world that is constantly changing," McEntyre said. "As such, the call of God on the Fellowship is dynamic, and it is essential that we pause and listen to the voice of God, to discover and respond to God's call for this day."

Learn more about Toward Bold Faithfulness and the Discovery Team, and find answers to frequently asked questions at www.cbf.net/tbf.

CBF is a Christian network that helps people put their faith to practice through ministry efforts, global missions and a broad community of support. The Fellowship's mission is to serve Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.