

# passion for collegiate engagement

by Wanda Kidd, CBFNC Collegiate Engagement Coordinator

Schools across the state and beyond are on a much-needed break. In no time at all, though, homework and backpacks full of school supplies will be headed out the door and conversations about cafeteria food and who is picking up whom after school will fill the air. For those who are sending their college-age children off to campus this fall, other concerns dominate parental thoughts.

If it is their first year, the concerns look something like this: *Will they make friends? Will they get up and go to class? Will they miss us as much as we miss them? Oh, but I hope they will not be homesick and miserable. Did we do enough to prepare them for this transition? I hope they will not do something really stupid.*

Student concerns during the first two years of college focus mostly around relationships, selection of majors, grades, and places they want to go and things they want to do, usually with friends and groups other than family.

The last years are full of angst about what to do next, where to go from here, and how to pay off school debt and fund graduate school.

These life passages are profound and, in many instances, overshadow the education that we send young adults to college to acquire. What we often fail to acknowledge or even realize is that all of these concerns, questions, and hopes are theological in nature and require space with the help of someone trained to assist them.

In recent years, due to budget restraints, mainline churches have too often underestimated and undervalued the importance of ministry and mission to young adults and collegiate engagement. College is not only the transitional time **our** children and students can personally claim their faith, but it is the perfect time to introduce the multitude of students who have never had a church family to a relationship with Christ. Contrary to conventional wisdom, young adults are open to God's engagement in their lives. Increasingly, young adults do not know of a place where it is safe to explore "purpose of life questions" with a Christian lens that gives both space and time to do so. This reality is equally true for those raised in the local church and those brand new to exploring Christian faith.

CBFNC, through Collegiate Engagement efforts, has given young adults the freedom to ask questions that allow them to face complex life issues with a faith perspective. We have done that with a great deal of thought and investment. That is why we have made a significant commitment to ministry with this population, not just for CBFNC students, but for all students on

our NC campuses. These students are the lifeblood of the church that flows through them into today's church and the church's hope for tomorrow.

Collegiate engagement is different from congregational planning. Church ministry is slower moving with time to ponder and blend young adults into the life of the church.

Ministry on campus, however, is like a moving sidewalk full of upheavals, unbounded joy, and heartbreaking sadness, most of which is done separate and isolated from a students' family and church system. That is where we, as CBFNC, want to be present not only with our students but with all students.

CBFNC has seminary trained campus missionaries serving on several of the state campuses along with outreach to some of the community colleges in the area. We also partner with historically Baptist campuses to offer retreats and mission opportunities. We work with local congregations in two ways, assisting them in connecting with students on local campuses and offering ways to remain connected to their hometown students.

Our prayer is that all CBFNC Baptists understand and value the role of campus missions as an integral part of our overall mission and to understand that every church is a campus church. Collegiate ministry looks expensive on paper, but it pales in comparison to the cost we pay by not equipping, calling out, and connecting with the unreached students on our campuses. Collegiate ministry is a mission of grace and hope living into the Christian Gospel by seeing the souls of our best and brightest, and being willing to do what it takes to reach this people group.

Thanks to CBFNC, we have the will and the passion to continue to offer this hope to our future generations.



## How to support CBFNC Collegiate Engagement

Tell others about CBFNC and collegiate engagement;

Pray for the students and the mission of collegiate engagement;

Give to support CBFNC collegiate engagement; and

Share names of students in your family, church, and community who are on NC campuses.