

Practical Ways to Introduce CBF to Your Church

By Larry Hovis, Coordinator
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Many pastors and church leaders are sympathetic with the values, goals and ministries of CBF, national and state. They would like to lead their churches to have a closer relationship with CBF but they aren't sure how to begin the process. Here are some practical ways to educate a congregation about the mission and ministries of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, in North Carolina and around the world, and equip your congregation for effective missions and ministry in the process.

- **CBF Gatherings** – One of the greatest strengths of the CBF movement is the quality of our fellowship. Our meetings are inspiring, educational, and enjoyable to attend. A great way to introduce church members to CBF (especially those who are used to attending associational and convention meetings) is to take them to a CBF gathering. Here are a few of the types of gatherings we offer:
 - CBF State General Assembly – The annual CBFNC General Assembly is usually held around the third weekend in March in a North Carolina church.
 - CBF National General Assembly – The National assembly is usually held at the end of June in a convention center in a large city.
 - Regional Fellowships – Some parts of our state have regional fellowships which meet at different times and places, often monthly in restaurants. Consult the CBFNC office (888-822-1944) or website (www.cbfnc.org) for a schedule of regional meetings.
 - Retreats, Conferences, etc. – CBF and CBFNC offer retreats, conferences and other events throughout the year. Check the website (www.cbfnc.org) newsletter or e-newsletter for upcoming events.

- **CBF Speakers** – Invite a CBF speaker to come to your church. Speakers will work with pastors and church leaders to deliver a message or provide a program to meet your church's needs. Whether a sermon for Sunday morning or a program at another time, CBF speakers enjoy being in churches. We offer several types of speakers:
 - CBF State Coordinators
 - CBF National Coordinators
 - CBF Global Missions Field Personnel – Invite a missionary to come to your church to tell how CBF is sharing the Gospel of Christ in word and deed “in a world without borders.”
 - “Face to Face” – This is the CBF Speakers' Bureau. It is the best way to schedule speakers from CBF National, including missionary speakers. You can reach “Face to Face” through the CBF website, www.thefellowship.info, or (770) 220-1630. CBF state coordinators can be scheduled through the CBFNC office.
 - CBF Volunteer Leaders – Sometimes the leaders of other congregations in your area, including pastors, church staff and leaders, who are also active in CBF and CBFNC leadership, are available to speak in sister congregations.

- **Missions Education** – Most churches have a missions education program, either the traditional WMU and Baptist Men structure, or something of their own design. CBF produces missions education materials for all ages, from preschool through adults. A good way to educate congregations about CBF, especially CBF Global Missions, is by starting new groups which use CBF missions education materials or by supplementing the materials used by existing groups

(Mission Friends, RAs, Gas, adult groups) with CBF missions education materials. These materials may be ordered from CBF through the website, www.thefellowship.info, or by calling 1-888-801-4CBF (4223).

- **Global Missions Offering Promotion** – Most churches collect special offerings for missions, either the traditional Christmas offering for international missions and Easter offering for home missions, or some other method. CBF missions education and support can be included by either adding a new emphasis for CBF Global Missions, or including CBF Global Missions as an offering option when receiving a missions offering at Christmas, Easter or other times. Some churches give members a choice regarding where to direct their offerings. Others determine a certain percentage to give to CBF. Whenever you choose to have your CBF Global Missions emphasis, be sure to publicize CBF Global Missions ministries through posters, bulletin inserts, offering envelopes, videos, missions speakers, etc. These materials may be ordered from CBF through the website, www.thefellowship.info, or by calling 1-888-801-4CBF (4223).
- **Mission Trips** – Missions is a major focus for CBF, both state and national. Many churches are becoming involved in missions, not just by praying for and giving to missions, but also by becoming involved in “hands on” mission action. When planning your next church mission trip, for youth or adults, consider partnering with CBF state (www.cbfnc.org or contact Linda Jones, 1-888-822-1944) or national (www.thefellowship.info, click on “Global Missions, Volunteer Opportunities,” or contact Timothy Wood, 1-800-782-2451).
- **Christian Education Materials** – Many churches are discovering that the days of securing all of their Sunday School literature and Christian education materials from one place are over. They are looking to multiple outlets to provide materials to help them teach disciples of all ages. As your church plans its Christian education ministry, consider supplementing existing curriculum with offerings from CBF (www.thefellowship.info, click on “Congregational Life”) or one of CBF’s partners, such as Smyth and Helwys (www.helwys.com).
- **Teach Baptist History and Heritage** – Many Baptists are woefully ignorant of their history and of the foundational principles that emerge from that history. Therefore, they have no context for analyzing the vast changes that have taken place in Baptist life over the past twenty-five years. A solid process for educating congregations in Baptist history and heritage over the past four hundred years, including the past twenty-five, will help them understand why the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship movement is essential for a healthy Baptist witness in the twenty-first century.

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