



identity: cbfnc and young adults

by Wanda Kidd, CBFNC Collegiate Engagement Coordinator

Identifying with the CBFNC is rarely achieved solely by publicity or branding. Identity is best achieved by shared experiences and common goals. Many young adults are jaded and exhausted by requests to join various groups and causes. TED Talks, YouTube videos, tweets, and media challenges try to engage them in someone else's ideas and dreams. It is a very crowded information highway that is hyper-focused on young adults, so the CBFNC question is, "How do we reach out to them and invite them into something that is life-giving and authentic?" The question is bigger than, "How do we get young people to come to our church?"

We know that young adults stand at the crossroads of many life choices and callings. Standing with them while they make those choices is not just a worthy endeavor for CBFNC, it is imperative in shaping and empowering them to have a vital and growing relationship with Christ. For that to happen, we need to be present and clear about who we are and why it is important for college students and young adults to join us in following and serving Christ.

CBFNC identifies with young adults in many ways. We provide a campus presence at several state universities through Cooperative Baptist Student Fellowships (CBSFs). We partner with historically Baptist chaplains for community and mission opportunities. We provide funds for the "College Sessions" at the Global CBF General Assemblies, and we have pastors and CBFNC coordinators who faithfully build relationships with college and seminary students.

Recently, CBFNC partnered with Baptist Women in Ministry at Hayes Barton, Raleigh, to have a conversation with young women who

are exploring a call to ministry. It was so gratifying to see that not only did many of the young attendees know the leaders of the retreat, but they also brought friends with them to the event because they identified with CBF and CBFNC as their faith partners. That is a sacred trust we take very seriously.

There is a trend in CBF life to avoid talking to young people about the CBF movement's identity, but that needs to change. Young adults regularly ask, "Who is CBF and why should I be a part of this group?" They want to belong to something that has import and gives their life value. We at CBFNC need to boldly share our story of "who we are" and not "who we are not," with all who will join us.

Many of us have found young Baptists hungry to belong to a group that is a Christ-serving community. CBFNC strives to be that body, and we yearn to provide them with a place to serve and grow in Christ. Engage the young adults in your workplace, your congregation, and your family with the gospel of Christ, and then invite them to join our CBFNC family. We will all be richer for it.

Another area of leadership and identity that CBFNC offers students is our annual **Mid-Winter Retreat**. For eight years, this student-led retreat has provided a place for students to gather and relate with other students across NC who are identifying and serving with CBFNC. This year's retreat is January 30-31, 2016, at Camp Caraway. Guy Sayles is speaking during a time of reflection, worship, and challenge. This retreat is open to any student over 18. Please consider inviting your college students to gather with us this year. It provides a place to deepen some conversations with your college students and launch opportunities for further discussions in the future. The cost is \$49 per student.