



CBF General Assembly moves to online-only format as COVID cases climb

NEWS MARK WINGFIELD | AUGUST 13, 2021

BEING RENEWED FROM THE INSIDE OUT 2021 CBF GENERAL ASSEMBLY



The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's attempt to plan a hybrid General Assembly in late August has fallen victim to the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic across America.

What had been planned as a virtual gathering with three regional in-person options now will be entirely virtual.

"Because those state/regional gatherings in Atlanta, Charlotte and Louisville were going to involve travel for large numbers of people from across a region to a central location, we have reached the collective decision that it is best to cancel those events," said CBF Executive Coordinator Paul Baxley. "We believed we had protocols in place that would make those gatherings as safe as possible in compliance with CDC guidance. But, in an abundance of caution and in reflection of the rapidly changing situation, we believe this is the right decision at this time."

Christianity
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250

This BNG series of articles on Christianity and democracy led toward the July 4 celebration of America's 250th birthday. The series was curated by Carol McEntyre, senior minister at First Baptist Church of Greenville, S.C.
[See the series here.](#)

“While we believe this is the right step, it is hard for us,” he added. “We were looking forward to inviting Cooperative Baptists to in-person gatherings for the first time since the summer of 2019.”

Last summer’s General Assembly was to be held in Atlanta and had to be canceled on short notice due to the nationwide lockdown put in place beginning in mid-March. This year’s assembly was to be held in Washington, D.C., but the contracted venue closed during the pandemic, leading to the hybrid option as an alternative.

Now, the Aug. 26-27 assembly will be entirely online with no in-person elements, just as last year. However, some local congregations may host in-person events or watch parties during General Assembly, Baxley said. “We also affirm this decision because those locations involve less travel and many will be of a different size. In those cases, we ask that if you attend, you respect the protocols of the host congregation.”

The virtual assembly will operate on a scaled-back schedule that does not include evening sessions either day. Three keynote speakers will anchor the sessions: Emily Hull McGee, pastor of First Baptist Church on Fifth in Winston-Salem, N.C.; Daniel Martino, senior pastor of Church of the City, in New London, Conn.; and Antonio Vargas Jr., associate pastor of Church of the City.

A variety of one-hour workshops will be offered in three slots across the two days.

Full information about the General Assembly may be found [online](#). Advance registration also is requested via the same website.

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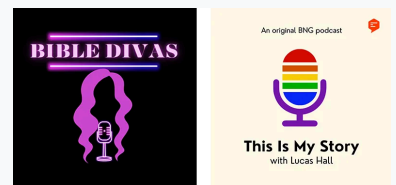
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