

Cultivating Christian Leadership



by Larry Hovis | CBFNC Executive Coordinator

Leadership development has been a priority for CBFNC throughout our 25-year history. In our previous governance structure, we had a Leadership Development Task Force, which became the current Leadership Development Council. For the past ten years, we have invested, on average, \$350,000 annually on leadership development ministries with a majority of those dollars going to theological education. Other leadership development efforts have included our strong focus on ministerial transitions (Reference and Referral), support of Peer Learning Groups (in partnership with CBF Global), and continuing education offerings for ministers (e.g., Elevating Preaching).

As we move into the next twenty-five years of our history, our focus on leadership development will shift even more toward the practicing minister. Thanks to the generosity of the Lilly Foundation, CBFNC is launching “Helping Pastors Thrive,” part of Lilly’s *Thriving in Ministry* initiative. Vocational ministry is under tremendous pressure due to shifts in society and the church. This five-year initiative seeks to help pastoral leaders not only survive, but thrive, in the midst of these changing, challenging times.

This is CBFNC’s first Lilly grant. Such grants typically go to seminaries and national denominational bodies, not state-level organizations. Receiving this grant is a testimony to CBFNC’s demonstrated capacity for cultivating Christian leadership and Lilly’s confidence that CBFNC can make a significant contribution, not only to the pastors in our fellowship, but also to the learning that will take place on this topic in American Christianity. This initiative has the potential to re-shape CBFNC’s leadership development ministries beyond the stated five-year time frame.

Leadership Education at Duke Divinity (Dave Odom, Executive Director) is providing significant coordination to the *Thriving in Ministry* initiative. Their signature publication, *Faith and Leadership*, published a series in 2009 entitled, “What’s Christian About Christian Leadership?” They posed this question to several

nationally recognized leaders whose responses were recorded on video. They are worth watching: www.faithandleadership.com/series-what%E2%80%99s-christian-about-christian-leadership.

In the introductory article to the series, Duke Divinity School Dean Greg Jones, argues:

Helping Pastors Thrive

A Program of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina
Funded by the Lilly Endowment’s Thriving in Ministry Initiative

...it is the end -- the goal, the purpose, the telos -- that shapes Christian leadership and makes it most distinctively Christian. Our end is to cultivate thriving communities that bear witness to the *inbreaking reign of God that Jesus announces and embodies in all that we do and are. This should shape the way we think about our lives, our institutions, and the way we lead our institutions.*

CBFNC’s leadership development efforts have involved various expressions throughout our brief but significant history. They will continue to evolve in the years to come. They have been and will continue to be a major way we strive to accomplish our mission.

Ultimately, it is “the end,” the inbreaking reign of God described by Dean Jones, that will shape CBFNC leaders, their churches, our state, and our world. To pursue less is to forsake the calling of the one who gave us the ultimate example of Christian leadership...

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

—Philippians 2:6-8

Annual Gathering Offering

CBFNC is celebrating 25 years! We could not have made it this far without your prayerful, energetic, and financial support. At the Annual Gathering, a special offering was taken to provide resources for the next 25 years. 100% of the Coordinating Council and the CBFNC staff came on board with gifts and pledges. To date, \$16,462 has

been pledged. We invite you to join your CBFNC family in giving toward this offering. An offering envelope is inserted in this magazine.

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