

## Theological Education - Foundational to Our Fellowship

by Larry Hovis, Executive Coordinator, CBFNC

*Editor's Note – This is the sixth in a series of articles describing the ministries of partners who participate in the CBFNC Mission Resource Plan (MRP). To learn more about the MRP, visit [www.cbfnc.org](http://www.cbfnc.org).*

When the Fellowship movement was birthed in the early 1990s, the first ministries that we collectively supported were missionaries who were losing funding from their traditional sources of support. Funding for and engagement in Global Missions has been central to our shared identity and ministry since the beginning of our movement.

Close on the heels of Global Missions came support for emerging channels of theological education. Though CBF does not own and operate institutions, from the beginning our movement has embraced a partnership approach to relating to a large network of ministries. None of these ministries has been as foundational to our congregations and our Fellowship as theological schools.

Of the fifteen schools who relate to CBF, four are in North Carolina. The Baptists of North Carolina have been strong supporters of theological education throughout our history, first with Wake Forest College, then Southeastern Seminary. The best of that tradition is carried on through the divinity schools at Campbell, Duke, Gardner-Webb and Wake Forest.

Before the establishment of the Mission Resource Plan, CBFNC included funds in our budget for scholarships for students at the four North Carolina schools, as well as for students from North Carolina engaged in theological studies outside our state. With the advent of the Mission

Resource Plan, that support has grown significantly. The basic version of the Mission Resource Plan allocates sixteen percent of its funding for theological education. In our 2008-2009 fiscal year, CBFNC facilitated over a quarter of a million dollars in financial support for theological education. We estimate that figure will grow to over \$330,000 in the current fiscal year!

Baptists believe strongly in the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. We also believe strongly in the role of educated vocational ministers to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12).

In addition to funding, CBFNC works closely with the leaders of our theological schools. We meet twice a year with the deans of the schools to share ideas and collaborate on joint ministries. A significant number of students participate in the General Assembly and other CBFNC ministries. Many of these students serve on the staffs of North Carolina congregations. Students have provided leadership for CBFNC youth events and other ministries. Our Fellowship is richer, deeper and stronger because of the students, faculties and staffs of our partner schools.

After speaking in a church about the changes in Baptist life and the ministries of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an older lay leader shared a wise insight: “I think I figured out what all this fuss is about. We love our pastor. But some day our pastor will retire or move to another place of service. This is about where our church is going to get our next pastor!”

### Baptist Theological Education Institutions in North Carolina

Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity  
[www.divinity.duke.edu](http://www.divinity.duke.edu)

Campbell Divinity  
[www.campbell.edu/divinity](http://www.campbell.edu/divinity)

Gardner-Webb Divinity  
[www.gardner-webb.edu](http://www.gardner-webb.edu)

Wake Forest Divinity  
[www.divinity.wfu.edu](http://www.divinity.wfu.edu)

Learn more about CBFNC and theological education at [www.cbfnc.org](http://www.cbfnc.org).

## Save the date for the 2010 CBFNC General Assembly!

March 19-20, 2010  
First Baptist Church  
Winston-Salem, NC

Friday Worship Speaker:

**Dr. Cecil Sherman**, Visiting Professor of Pastoral Ministry, BTSR and Founding Coordinator, CBF

Saturday Worship Speakers:

Voices of the Next Generation

*Generations Connected:  
One Family,  
One Faith,  
Many Journeys*

*“Lord, you have been our dwelling  
place in all generations.”  
Psalm 90:1*

### Friday, March 19

Welcome and Orientation  
Ministry Workshop Sessions  
Fellowship Dinner \*  
Evening Worship  
Fellowship Reception

### Saturday, March 20

Vocational & Affinity Network Groups\*\*  
Ministry Workshop Session  
Ministry Celebration (incl. adoption of '10-'11 budget & council election)  
Morning Worship

\* Friday Evening Fellowship Dinner requires a pre-registration.

\*\* New opportunity at the CBFNC General Assembly! More info. coming soon.

Learn more about ministry workshop titles, General Assembly details, discounted hotel options, childcare reservations and registration at [www.cbfnc.org](http://www.cbfnc.org).