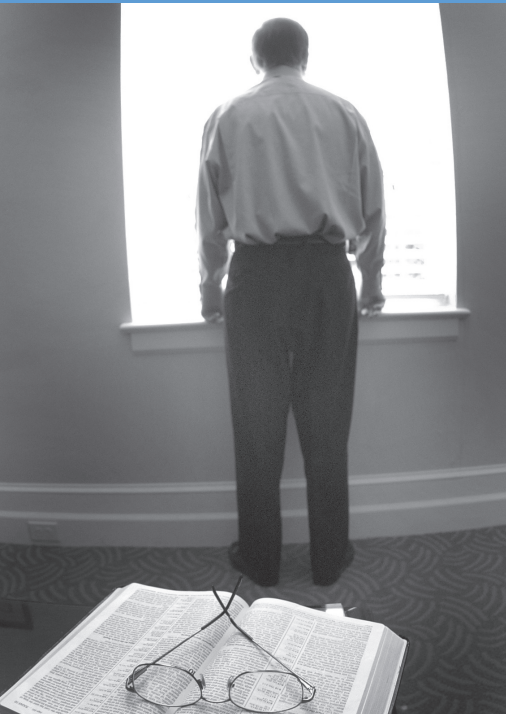


initiative for *ministerial excellence*

*Being the presence of Christ
in the world through the
support of congregational
ministers*



In 2003, the **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship** in partnership with the Center for Congregational Health, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Campbell University Divinity School, McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University, George W. Truett Seminary at Baylor University and Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University, launched the Initiative for Ministerial Excellence with generous funding from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. In 2007, CBF employed a director for this ongoing initiative. The goal of the Initiative for Ministerial Excellence is to influence the culture of CBF, providing an environment that leads to healthier pastors who embody ministerial excellence. The Initiative provides support and nurture for three historic tasks of ministry: proclamation, worship leadership and caring for community. Additionally, the Initiative seeks to support and nurture the ministerial virtues of vision, imagination, discernment and relationship through a Ministerial Residency Program, Peer Learning Groups and encouraging churches to provide continuing education opportunities and sabbaticals for its ministers.

Ministerial Residency Program

Ministerial Residents serve the first two years beyond seminary in a teaching congregation allowing residents to hone their ministry skills and encouraging the rhythms and practices for long-term health and excellence in ministry. The Ministerial Residency Program is the capstone of a personal, spiritual, and educational pilgrimage contributing to the readiness of young ministers to accept the next call. Residents are placed in teaching congregations that clearly demonstrate:

- A level of congregational health that allows for a positive ministry experience
- A commitment to the nurturing and development of calling and ministry among their parishioners
- A clear partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- A commitment to provide the resident with a wide range of ministerial opportunities, under the guidance of experienced pastors

The 2009 cycle of the Ministerial Residency program is open to graduates of residency partner schools who complete studies between May 2008 and May 2009. Residency partner schools are Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Campbell University Divinity School, Logsdon School of Theology, McAfee School of Theology and Truett Theological Seminary. Resident candidate applications are available at each theological school. A completed application and current ministry resumé should be shared with the campus contact person for the residency program. Teaching congregations will schedule interviews during the spring 2009 semester with the help of campus contacts and the residency program coordinator. Up to 10 residents will be selected to begin work in a ministry setting by June 2009.

Peer Learning Groups

Peer learning groups are small communities of CBF ministers who meet monthly to provide opportunities for worship, spiritual growth, study, discussion of ministry related issues and fellowship. Groups are small, generally with 10-14 members, and led by a convener trained by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The convener and group members determine the focus of each month's gathering. The Fellowship provides the groups with suggested resources related to promoting pastoral excellence and congregational health. There are currently more than 80 peer learning groups spread throughout the central and eastern United States with more than 600 Fellowship ministers participating.



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