

# THE PARTNERSHIP STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

## An Introduction

When the Partnership Study Committee was appointed, the task before the committee seemed obvious. The committee came into existence at a time when the undesignated receipts for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship were falling below budget. Funding for the organization and for its partners was an issue. With decreased receipts, how would the existing funds be allocated? That question seemed to be at the heart of the assignment given to the committee. While that was a significant task, it did seem manageable. Once our work was underway, we began to sense that the task before us was much larger, and funding was only an outgrowth of a more basic issue of needing to define “partnership” within the life and work of CBF.

As the committee began its work, we requested and received from the CBF staff lists of existing partners. We then scheduled meetings with all coordinators and gathered from them information about the number of partnerships with which they were working and their procedures both for entering into partnerships and for review and evaluation of those partnerships. From the lists of partners provided to the committee by the staff and from the conversations with the coordinators, it became obvious that “partnering” is more than just a word. It is how CBF accomplishes much of its work of providing resources for individuals and churches. Partnership truly is the paradigm of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The committee is pleased both to report this fact and to affirm it.

The lists of partners that we received were long and impressive. It became clear that there were a variety of ways in which we partner. To better understand our relationship with those partners who have a long and important history with CBF and who might be more affected financially by the work of our committee, we invited representatives from some of these partnerships to meet with the committee. These partners included Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Center for Ethics, Baptist Joint Committee, and Baptists Today. In addition, representatives from our committee met with representatives from the theological schools with which we partner. These meetings were insightful and aided us in understanding the significance of these partnerships. These partners, with the exception of some theological schools that came into existence later, have been associated with CBF from its beginning. For lack of a better term, we have referred in our discussions to these partners as “historic partners.” CBF’s relationship with these early partners came into existence at a time in which both they and CBF were seeking to find new footing within the Baptist world. In the beginning, a number of these new entities were struggling financially as we attempted to form new structures that better fit our understanding of the mission to which God was calling. Out of these early relationships came the paradigm of “partnering.” These early partnerships have benefited both the partners and CBF. Without them, CBF would not have become what it is today. While time and circumstances may alter a particular partner’s relationship with CBF or CBF’s

relationship with a particular partner, we are grateful for the part of the faith journey we have shared with these early partners.

Initially, we had anticipated classifying all CBF partnerships as one means of describing particular relationships and as a means of presenting guidelines for funding. The sheer number and variety of partnerships made this task difficult, if not impossible. The variety of partnerships extends from those of our historic partners to other institutional and organizational partners, to a wide variety of mission partners within Global Missions, and to partnerships with churches that are both general and specific. Given the variety and number of partners, we deemed it wiser to write general guidelines that address how partnerships are formed, serviced, funded (when funding is part of the partnership), and evaluated rather than trying to create classifications of partners. The guidelines do call for all partnerships to be assigned to a given coordinator and assigned to one of our existing initiative teams. This does in fact provide one means of classification.

Regarding funding, we are recommending that the level of funding for our partners not exceed 25% of any partner's operating budget. This 25% level should be seen as a level not to exceed. It should not be seen as an automatic level of funding nor as a goal to be sought. A partner's previous year's financial statement may be used to help determine the 25% level. The reason behind the 25% cap comes from the philosophy by which CBF has operated from its beginning. In its formation, CBF, through its Coordinating Council and leaders, stated that CBF would not seek to own or control institutions. Instead, it would work in cooperation (partnership) with others to accomplish its goals. As will be seen in the general guidelines, there is a provision by which the 25% cap may be exceeded. We anticipate that, for example, this need might arise in those cases in which CBF is providing startup money for a potential partner. In those cases, we recommend that there be a plan by which funding would be appropriately reduced over an agreed-upon time frame. In those cases where current funding of a given partner exceeds the 25% cap, we recommend that funding be reduced over a three-year time span.

CBF's relationship with its historic partners is unique and significant. With these partners, we have shared common goals for the future of our movement. They have needed us, and we have needed them. As in any healthy relationship, partnerships need to be reviewed and goals need to be revisited to determine if a given partnership remains in the best interests of both partners. Through a process of regular review and evaluation of its partnerships, CBF enhances its ability to provide important resources to individuals and churches that are part of the CBF movement.

For many individuals and churches, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship serves as a funds-receiver to which donors may make a single contribution that is then divided among several partners and/or causes. This will continue to be a need, and it provides CBF with a significant way in which to serve our many partners.

In our "Guiding Principles for CBF Partnerships" and in the "Partnership Guidelines," we have sought to assure that there will be mutual respect and

accountability between CBF and its partners. It is appropriate for CBF to expect those with whom it partners to acknowledge CBF's role and to promote the greater work of CBF. It is also appropriate and expected that CBF will acknowledge and promote the work of the partner within the context of CBF life. How this will be done will vary from partner to partner; however, this mutual respect and accountability is an indicator of a strong partnership.

The committee has focused its efforts on developing policies and guidelines rather than attempting to write procedures for establishing partnerships. The procedures required for the implementation of the policies will be developed by the CBF staff and will include such necessary items as partnership forms, identifying the appropriate contact person(s) to whom forms would be sent, developing specific evaluation points for the various categories and kinds of partnerships, writing covenant agreements, clarifying timelines, etc. Global Missions has long had such procedures and we reviewed their work as one step in developing these policies and guidelines. In addition to establishing the procedures and forms, we expect the CBF staff to periodically review the entire process in order to determine how they are working within its confines, and to evaluate how effective and helpful these are in establishing, documenting, collaborating, monitoring, and assessing partnerships. This periodic review would be reported to the Coordinating Council so that the Council can also monitor what changes may need to occur as time goes along.

Our full report includes the following sections:

- Guiding Principles for CBF Partnerships
- General Partnership Guidelines
- Theological Education Partners

The work that this committee has begun will be ongoing. The dynamic nature of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will require periodic reviews of how we may do the work to which God has called us. We are grateful for the opportunity to be part of the movement and to be able to present this report regarding the relationships between the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and its many partners.

Respectfully submitted,

Partnership Study Committee  
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## **Guiding Principles for CBF Partnerships**

Partnership is the chosen paradigm of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We recognize that partnerships are structured, yet always evolving relationships which need to be nurtured and nourished from all involved. Our partners have been guides as well as fellow sojourners with CBF in creating this chosen paradigm for our work. Together we are committed to discovering and providing resources that will empower churches to fulfill their mission in their particular contexts and equip individuals to fulfill their calling under the Lordship of Christ. Because of this commitment, CBF cooperates in mutually beneficial ways with other autonomous organizations rather than to establish, own, and control our own institutions.

### Principles of Partnership

#### **Voluntary**

Partnerships must be voluntary. Just as individuals must freely choose to respond to God, so must churches, institutions and organizations freely associate with each other.

#### **Shared Mission**

Partnerships are born out of a desire to achieve a goal that cannot be achieved alone. Partnerships flourish when results bring mutual benefits to the involved partners. Partnerships endure when both partners sacrifice for one another for the benefit of their shared mission.

#### **Mutual Trust and Respect**

Partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect. Confidence in one another's motives and integrity is necessary. Respect for one another's feelings and ideals is also required. We may agree to disagree at certain points, but mutual trust and respect are essential for partnerships to exist and flourish.

#### **Commitment and Care**

Anything of value takes time and ongoing commitment and care. Listening is as important as speaking; learning is as important as teaching. Relationships must be nurtured and protected. Communication must be open, honest and ongoing. Cooperation doesn't happen accidentally but requires persistence, patience and planning.

#### **Accountability**

Partnerships function most effectively when accountability is built into the relationship. Having mutually agreed-upon expectations, guidelines and methods of regular communication and review allow both partners to have confidence that common goals will be achieved.

## General Partnership Guidelines

1. Partnerships may be proposed by CBF staff, the potential partner, or any individual or group.
2. A partnership proposal form must be submitted for each potential partnership. Partnerships may take a variety of forms and some will include requests for funding. But all should demonstrate a spirit of collaboration, name how staff and volunteer expertise can be shared, and name the common vision. Criteria for evaluating potential partnerships include, but are not limited to, viability, timeliness, available resources, and compatibility with CBF's core values. All proposals will be reviewed by appropriate CBF staff. In considering any potential partnership, coordinators are encouraged to utilize all available resources in making their decisions. To that end, staff may submit proposals to the appropriate initiative team for review as needed.

All proposals will be reviewed as follows:

- a. Partnerships that are limited in time, funding, or scope may be initiated and approved by the appropriate coordinator.
  - b. Partnerships that are longer in duration, that involve increased funding, or are more expansive in scope may be initiated by the appropriate coordinator and approved by the coordinator in consultation with CBF staff. When such partnerships are approved, the coordinator will report this to the appropriate initiative team.
  - c. Partnerships that have open-ended time frames or a time frame beyond three years, that require significant funding, or that are broad in scope may be initiated by the coordinator in consultation with CBF staff. Recommendations for such partnerships shall be made to the appropriate initiative team. If approved at the initiative team level, the initiative team shall present the proposal to the Coordinating Council for approval.
3. The contact person identified on each proposal will receive notification when the proposal is approved or denied, or if more information is needed to move forward.
  4. All approved partnerships shall be assigned to appropriate CBF staff and the appropriate Coordinating Council Initiative Team.
  5. Once a partnership is accepted, a covenant agreement between CBF and the partner stating the nature and scope of the partnership and detailing the responsibilities of each party shall be signed by the partner and the appropriate CBF staff person. These partnerships shall be reported to the appropriate Coordinating Council Initiative Teams and copies of the agreements will be made available as requested.
  6. Each partnership covenant shall include an ongoing process for review and evaluation, and shall include a process for termination.

7. All partners are to acknowledge CBF's involvement in their work as it pertains to the partnership and will appropriately promote CBF. Reciprocally, CBF will appropriately acknowledge and promote the partnership within CBF.
8. An annual report for each partner will be submitted for review. This report may be produced by the partner, by the CBF staff, or in collaboration with each other but must include an evaluation of the partnership by both the partner and appropriate CBF personnel. The party responsible for the report will be identified in the Covenant Agreement. The report should include how the partnership has worked, how objectives have been met, how CBF or partner funding (if provided) was used, how each partner acknowledged the partnership within their respective organizations and constituencies and, if appropriate, how CBF personnel involvement was acknowledged.
9. CBF staff persons shall provide annual reports on partnerships to the initiative teams to which partnerships were assigned.
10. In partnerships that involve funding from CBF, such funding shall not exceed 25% of the partner's operating budget. Upon recommendation of the assigned initiative team and the approval of the Coordinating Council, an exception of the 25% can be made.
11. Unless otherwise noted in the covenant agreement with the partner, funding from CBF shall be tied to CBF's undesignated receipts.
12. The Nominating Committee will be responsible for recommending to the Coordinating Council names of people who would fill CBF-designated board positions of the membership partner organizations. The Nominating Committee will seek input from CBF staff, initiative team members, and others who would have knowledge of the membership partner organizations. Any other positions in the membership partner organizations that need CBF representation would follow the same procedures as above.
13. Exceptions to any of the above guidelines must be approved in advance by the Coordinating Council.

## **Theological Education Partners**

We affirm our partners in theological education in developing future leaders for Baptist churches. Each institution makes a unique contribution to CBF, and we value these relationships. Currently our theological education partners include:

### **Free Standing Seminaries**

Baptist Seminary of Kentucky  
Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond  
Central Baptist Theological Seminary  
International Baptist Theological Seminary

### **Divinity Schools/Theology Schools of Baptist Universities**

Campbell University Divinity School, Campbell University  
Logsdon School of Theology, Hardin Simmons University  
James and Carolyn McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University  
George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University  
Wake Forest Divinity School, Wake Forest University  
M. Christopher White School of Divinity, Gardner-Webb University

### **Baptist Studies Programs at Non-Baptist Universities**

Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University  
Candler School of Theology, Emory University  
Duke Divinity School, Duke University

### **Theological University**

Baptist University of the Americas

## **Recommendations**

*The following recommendations are in addition to the General Partnership Guidelines that apply to all CBF partners.*

**1. A Partnership Covenant** agreement shall be developed with each partnering institution. This covenant shall be evaluated every five years. Partnering institutions shall agree to the following:

- To share the mission of CBF to serve Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given ministry.
- To encourage the core values of CBF (Baptist Principles, Biblically-Based Global Missions, Resource Model, Justice and Reconciliation, Lifelong Learning, Trustworthiness and Organizational Effectiveness).

- To provide educational experiences and resources that offer specific support to CBF's strategic initiatives (Faith Formation, Building Community, Developing Leaders and Global Missions).

## 2. Resources shall be offered to facilitate leadership development.

**Relational Resources** may include, but are not limited to:

- Offering the Consortium of Theological Schools partnering with CBF
- Providing reference, referrals, and ongoing support for students and alumni
- Connecting with a national and global network
- Facilitating collaboration on mutually beneficial projects and programs
- Cultivating prospective students

**Financial Resources** Include:

- **Institutional Funding** - Funds given to the operating budget of an institution.
- **CBF Leadership Scholarships** - Funds given to an institution for a specific student who demonstrates leadership potential within the CBF community. Recipients shall be chosen by the school in consultation with CBF Leadership Development staff and initiative team.
- **Collaborative Initiatives** - Grants to partner institutions willing to collaborate with CBF in assisting congregations in addressing specific leadership development issues. An annual evaluation will be conducted.
- **Global Student Scholarships** - Funds given to a global institution for its students.

## 3. Types of Partners

Three types of partnerships have been developed to help define the relationship with different theological schools. Criteria for the defining of these institutions will include factors such as enrollment, the number of graduates in congregational ministry, level of support for CBF, geographic location, willingness to self-identify as a CBF affiliated school, and historical connection to CBF.

**Identity Partners** - Due to present financial constraints and a core commitment to preparing ministerial leaders for CBF partnering congregations, up to six institutions shall be designated as Identity Partners. In addition to the Partner Covenant, Identity Partners will also agree to:

- A relationship in which they would be explicitly identified with CBF.
- Include CBF as a denominational affiliation with accrediting agencies.
- Assist and encourage the strengthening of CBF within the faculty and student body. Examples of this include publicizing CBF events on the school calendar and other information channels, providing CBF newsmagazine *fellowship!* to the entire learning community, promoting an annual "CBF Day," and inviting CBF staff to participate in chapel and classes.

- Participate in and support CBF work on a local, regional, national and/or global level. Examples of this include partnering with state and regional CBF organizations and surrounding CBF connected churches in developing missions work, leading workshops, conducting Bible studies, facilitating seminars, and serving as a resource for CBF clergy, congregations, and other CBF entities.

Identity Partners receive relational resources and are eligible for institutional funding, the CBF Leadership Scholarships, and collaborative initiative funding.

**Leadership Partners** -Leadership Partners provide an educational environment where CBF students can receive a theological education that prepares them to be effective leaders in CBF congregations. Leadership Partners receive relational resources and are eligible for the CBF Leadership Scholarships and collaborative initiative funding.

**Global Partners** - Global Partners are theological institutions that are developing leaders outside the United States or that are developing leaders within the United States whose first language is not English. Global Partners receive relational resources and are eligible for Global Student Scholarships and collaborative initiative funding.