

the road ahead ... continued

by Larry Hovis, CBFNC Executive Coordinator

How can a church or a fellowship of churches remain faithful to its founding principles yet adapt to its rapidly changing context? CBFNC is seeking to address that challenge through the implementation of an eighteen-month discernment process that yielded new ministry priorities and a refined staffing structure.

The discernment process, led by the Coordinating Council, was a natural follow-up to *The Road Ahead*, the report of the 20th Anniversary Vision Team affirmed by the General Assembly in March 2014. That report outlined three longer-term Overarching Commitments (Transformation, Engagement, and Community) and four shorter-term Areas of Focus (Clarifying Identity and Covenant; Empowering Laity for Missional Living; Nurturing Healthy Congregations; Showing Mercy and Seeking Justice).

With thanksgiving for its first two decades yet seeking to be faithful and effective into its third, the Council knew that several factors will shape the focus and scope of our ministries: the successes and challenges of current ministries; declining financial contributions from churches; future ministry and staffing needs; and improving our ability to tell our story effectively to develop new sources of revenue.

Ministry Priorities

Through prayerful analysis of inputs from Coordinators, Ministry Councils, church leaders, thought leaders, and financial trends, the Council discerned that CBFNC should focus on the following ministry priorities in the next chapter of our life together. Support for ministry partners will continue with emphasis placed on partner engagement in these priorities.

- **Equip Ministers and Churches** – Support and strengthen ministry leaders and the churches they serve by focusing on ministerial transitions, ministerial excellence, and church resources.
- **Embrace Neighbors** – Partner with churches and missional catalysts to embrace neighbors with the love of Christ in our communities, state, and world through culture development, supporting catalysts engaging in ministry to neighbors, Hispanic ministry, and resource connection.
- **Engage Students and Young Adults** – Engage emerging generations of Cooperative Baptists for discipleship and leadership in congregations and our Fellowship by focusing on faith formation, campus ministry, and theological education.
- **Annual Gathering** – Offer a superior general assembly experience that appeals to clergy, laity, and possibly those outside the CBFNC community that includes meaningful worship, enriching continuing education, engaging fellowship, useful resources, and advances CBFNC's mission.

Staffing Plan

With these priorities in mind, the Council turned its attention to developing a staffing plan that would balance financial resources with ministry engagement. For most of its history, CBFNC has relied on a combination of part-time and full-time staff in both administrative and ministry positions. Financial realities as well as ministry needs led the Council to develop a staffing plan with the following priorities:

- **Part-Time Focus** – Moving forward, most of CBFNC's staff will be part-time. Full-time ministry coordinators will transition to 60% FTE (full-time equivalent) over an eighteen-month period and will be compensated on a pro rata basis.
- **Director of Advancement** – To better tell the CBFNC story and secure financial resources to accomplish our mission, the Council established this new part-time position. We were pleased to welcome Vickie Traynum to this role on October 1, 2016. Educated at two historic North Carolina Baptist universities, Vickie brings a wealth of experience in both CBF life and the non-profit world.
- **Director of Church and Minister Support** – We hope to soon fill a new part-time position that will assume the ministerial transitions responsibilities formerly held by Jack Causey, along with additional responsibilities for church relations.

CBFNC has been and continues to be one of the strongest organizations in the CBF community, if not the Baptist world. That strength has been and continues to be exhibited in our efforts to be nimble, flexible, and adaptable to changing circumstances. We have always strived not simply to reproduce yesterday's ministry models and structures, but to anticipate and address tomorrow's ministry needs. This new plan, with its four ministry priorities and a staffing structure to support those priorities, is based on that strength.

I'm grateful to the Coordinating Council for the foresight to point CBFNC toward a new and exciting future, rooted in the past but not stuck in it. I'm also grateful to our staff for adapting to new ways of working and serving, and ask that you pray for them during this time of transition. May God continue to lead CBFNC to fulfill the vision God has given us as we continue to journey together down the Road Ahead.