

Steps to Starting an Associational BNF Chapter

Baptist Nursing Fellowship

By Debby Akerman

As Christian health care professionals in our Baptist associations, we recognize our need for a professional organization that provides local Christian fellowship, continuing education, and opportunities to be involved in medical missions. A local chapter of Baptist Nursing Fellowship within your association of churches can meet this need.

Ours is a complex, fast-paced world. For Christian nurses and others in the medical field, who are balancing home life with careers and church responsibilities with community involvement, starting a BNF chapter in the association seems too complicated to consider. If this is your situation and you are feeling the nudge of God towards BNF, these steps can simplify the process.

- 1** Pray for God to connect you with two or three others from several churches in your Baptist Association with a shared interest in a local fellowship of nurses and health care providers. This may take a little time, but will be worth the wait for those God will also nudge towards BNF.
- 2** Learn about BNF from the National BNF website and your state BNF organization, found on national and state WMU websites. Officers of National BNF and many from our state WMU organizations are available to talk with you and encourage you. Contact your Associational WMU Director to inform her of your interest in an association-wide BNF. Begin to think about how your future group will relate to these organizations.
- 3** Identify and collect information about mission volunteer opportunities locally, regionally, and globally that could be filled by medical professionals as you look to the future.
- 4** Meet as a core group of 3-5 who now share your interest in BNF and have made a commitment to organize. Determine your purposes and set goals to begin with an initial meeting. This core group may want to write a mission statement and consider together other organizational components to bring to the initial meeting, such as officers, bylaws, dues, and the frequency of meetings.
- 5** Each of this group will commit to talk with nurses and other health care professionals with a goal of bringing one or two others to an inaugural meeting.
- 6** Plan for the inaugural meeting to be strong in fellowship, an introduction to BNF, and a presentation of what the core group would like to offer to members. This might be coffee in a home or a meal at a local restaurant. Ask attendees to bring one or two new people to the next meeting to expand your reach and grow BNF in your association.
- 7** Continue to pray and keep your chapter's purposes before you as you plan for the future of an associational BNF.

