

HCC Internship Program Vision

- Derived in part from Paul House's excellent book – *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision*



We believe church-based internships will flourish in the coming generation. Our program is not the best or the biggest or the most important, but we do not seek for it to become so. We thank God for the diversity and number of internship programs that exist in the US and around the world. We pray God would increase their number. We desire to be a small, local form of ministerial training. Our goal is for interns to learn both the practical and academic side of ministry. We seek to train theologians who know how to put their knowledge into practice for the good of God's people and the glory of His name. Our program has substantial weaknesses as well as strengths.

Weaknesses:

- We cannot provide the extensive academic content a seminary can offer – either in regards to an MDiv or an MA.
 - We seek to overcome this by encouraging seminary-interested interns to take classes through the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary modularly or at the extension campus here in Nashville.
- We are dependent on the funding our church can provide.
 - Thus we cannot take many participants.
- We have an internship that is substantially longer (two years) than most internship programs.
 - This makes it unappealing to many in a technologically driven, immediate age...and we are fine with that.
- We are in no way interested in being a rubber stamp or easy stepping stone for ministry.
 - This is not really a weakness, but could be considered so by some. Our internship is not easy. There is a significant amount of cross-bearing involved in completing the internship. This is akin to what is required of any legitimate ministry.

Strengths:

- We are local, practical, personal, theologically driven, and mentor-oriented.
 - You will not know all there is to know about ministry, but there will be little doubt about what is required, what the joys of it are, and if you might be capable of pursuing it by the time you are finished.
- We seek to make theologians.
 - You will know and love God and his Word far better than you do when you began and you will know why those things matter. Knowing the Word can come in many formats, but love is a virtue that must be cultivated in community.
- We have set things up so that interns live with Jeremy Meeks and thus are part of not only a church family, but an individual family as well.
 - The day to day nature of ministry will be clearly evident – the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- We have developed a program that is both structured and flexible.
 - We do not want to push you through our mold, but see you molded into a capable proclaimer of God's word and user of the gifts God has given to you.
- We will not treat you as a form of cheap labor, but a costly investment on our church's part that will provide dividends for decades to come, most likely in a context other than HCC.
 - Our internship program is one way our church serves the world-wide church, albeit on a small scale.

We are open to taking on (1) interns who have never had a seminary education, (2) received a seminary education, but feel as though they lack the basic requirements of spiritual formation (bible reading, prayer, discipleship), or (3) Students with an MA in theological or biblical studies that now sense the need for focused efforts on pastoral leadership and formation. We are also open to taking on interns who are nearly spiritually dead as a result of their seminary experience (however liberal or conservative the seminary happened to be) and simply want to observe and participate in the life of a healthy church for a few years before engaging in ministry. We want to provide a community of like-minded people who can worship, pray, study, and learn to serve God's people together. We desire for our program to remain humble and flexible and to last for a very long time. Our commitment is to ministry formation that exposes and matures each intern's character, conviction, and competency in ministry. We believe the internship is an irreplaceable key to the recovery of a more helpful ministry training model and the recovery of a healthy Church.