

The Campus Minister as Missions Educator

By W. Lloyd Lunceford
Associate, Department of Student Work
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The remainder of this century presents probably the greatest challenge to those who have committed their lives to a ministry with college and university students. Since the Southern Baptist Convention introduced and adopted the goals of Bold Mission Thrust in the mid-1970's, the campus minister had been confronted with a greater emphasis on the needs of the world in which we live and the role of Southern Baptists in meeting those needs. We need to be reminded that the persons who will give their adult lives to carry out the tasks of Bold Mission Thrust are now students in the colleges and universities of our nation. This fact challenges the campus minister to be a student of missions and a leader in the field of missions education. The scope of missions education includes missions support (prayer and financial), missions study (personal and group), and missions involvement (short-term, on-going, and career).

The matter of missions support is a primary task for the campus minister. The ministry of prayer through the local Baptist Student Union is a vital part of missions support. The campus minister should become aware of the special emphasis given to prayer support for missions during the different times of the year. Materials are available from the Woman's Missionary Union in each state that will aid students to prayerfully support home missions, foreign missions, and state missions. The campus minister has the responsibility of equipping the student missions chairman in the area of mission support. This would include developing a strategy to involve students in giving money to support student missions, world hunger relief, and other special missions needs. The campus minister should instill in the minds of students the importance of sacrificial giving as the primary channel for financially supporting missions. The development of a concept of stewardship of material possessions will remain with students as they leave the campus and become leaders in local churches.

To become properly equipped as a missions educator, the

campus minister must first become a student of missions. He should develop a reading program to broaden his understanding and awareness of the biblical basis of missions, the call to missions, programs of mission service, the skills required to become a career missionary, service opportunities for college students, and the channels of missions education available to Southern Baptist college students. The campus minister should make sure that his BSU has available for students the latest missions information. Southern Baptist agencies make available excellent brochures and periodicals with this information. No BSU should be without copies of such periodicals as **The Commission** (Foreign Mission Board), **Missions U.S.A.** (Home Mission Board), **Contempo** (Woman's Missionary Union) and **The World Missions Journal** (Brotherhood Commission). These periodicals provide the campus minister and his students with the latest information on mission needs at home and around the world, as well as how Southern Baptists are responding to those needs. **The Student** (National Student Ministries) is also an excellent publication that often features stories about how campus groups and individual students are meeting mission needs. Other supportive materials would include **Seeds** (a publication about the issues of world hunger relief) and materials from Bread for the World, an organization that deals with matters of national policy and legislation in the area of hunger relief.

The concept of missions involvement is not new to those who have been involved in BSU. As early as the 1940's, local and state BSU organizations caught a glimpse of the importance of personal involvement in missions as a primary tool for educating college students about the opportunities of career missions service. Involvement in community missions, state summer/semester missions programs, the summer missions program of the Home Mission Board, and the wide range of short-term missions projects has been a vital part of the total missions development program of the local BSU. There has been an "explosion" of interest and involvement in missions projects during the 1970's. What many sociologists characterized as the "me" decade appears to many Southern Baptists to be the "we" decade. During recent years denominational publications have carried many stories about how individuals and groups of students reached out to meet the needs of persons in their own communities and around the world. In most

cases you will find the campus minister as the planner and encourager leading students to move out to touch the lives of hurting people.

To effectively carry out the role of missions educator, the campus minister must plan a strategy with student leaders to involve the largest number of students in experiencing missions. A program of community missions is a base to begin such a strategy. Ministries to nursing homes, shut-ins, underprivileged children, Christian social ministry centers for the distribution of food and clothing, and ministries to correctional institutions are only a few of the community missions opportunities available to the campus minister and his students. These opportunities provide students with training and experience for seeking God's will in their future involvement in missions.

Vacation breaks from school schedules (Christmas, spring, end of school, summer) provide the needed time to take groups of students to places away from the campus and community setting. The reports of BSU groups ministering in short-term projects in every part of the United States and several foreign countries could fill several volumes. Evangelistic outreach, recreation, construction, backyard Bible clubs, youth retreats, survey, and HELP teams to begin and strengthen new BSUs are a few of the tasks undertaken by groups of students who venture with their campus minister to share Christ in places hungry for the love of Christ. Personal involvement by students and campus ministers will enhance their knowledge, understanding, and awareness of the needs of the world unlike any other channel of missions education. Assistance for organizing and implementing such projects is available from state student departments, the Home Mission Board, and the Foreign Mission Board.

How well the campus minister functions as a missions educator is vital to the accomplishment of the goal of Bold Missions Thrust; that is, to carry the gospel to every person on earth by the end of this century. The ultimate challenge is getting students to be open to planting their lives in places where this gospel needs to be carried. This will call for a new concept of "success" among those of us who are ministers. No longer can we allow students to place the security of home and friends above being in the center of God's will.

I believe that as more campus ministers become personally

involved in missions, many of us will answer God's call to take this Light to all of the world. We must not continue to accept as fact that it is God's plan to keep ninety-five percent of the trained ministers in areas that represent only five percent of the world's population. The role of the campus minister as missions educator is at the very heart of accomplishing Bold Mission Thrust.