

## ASBCM AT TWENTY

by

Jane Poster

What is ASBCM? The answer is part of an on-going twenty year dream, debate and discussion. From the dreams of the founders to the current struggles, countless groups have tried to define it, but just as the students we work with change so does ASBCM. From the birth pains to the crisis in Indianapolis to today, ASBCM has tried to provide support and direction for those in campus ministry.

Get up and go look at yourself in the mirror . . . .  
There is no one else quite like you. That's because you are involved in campus ministry. Working with students requires a multiplicity of skills and a juggler's ability to balance them. You are on the cutting edge of ministry techniques and must be aware of rapidly changing conditions on the campus. Others involved in ministry and wonderful laypersons sometimes have a hard time understanding what we do . . . . No matter how much I tell the story of campus ministry, it remains a mystery to most people I know . . . . **THAT IS WHY WE NEED EACH OTHER!** You are the only ones who understand me, my needs, and my ministry. I know what you are experiencing. ASBCM exists to support and encourage you . . . . ASBCM expands my network of support and growth. The journal, membership on committees, the newsletter, and annual meetings have

## *The Campus Minister*

expanded my world and developed new relationships outside my state. I have grown personally and spiritually . . . in ASBCM.<sup>1</sup>

Klemcke's statement in 1992 reflected the accomplishment of some of ASBCM's initial goals. The concern for the support and growth of campus ministers guided the founders along with the desire for increased professionalization among campus ministers.

The discussions about the formation of a professional group began during Student Week at Ridgecrest and Glorieta in August, 1975. While many people participated in the discussions, two campus ministers, Dick Bumpass of the Naval Academy and Don Gurney of the Air Force Academy, took the initial steps toward organization. Bumpass invited twenty campus ministers to be part of a Steering Committee in late 1975, and fifteen agreed to serve along with him. They were: Ron Brown (VA); Paul Larsen (NC); Meredith Moore (VA); Bryan Edwards (GA); Kirk Lashley (VA); Gary Oliver (CO); Don Gurney (CO); Bill Lee (TN); George Simms (AR); Dennis Hamm (VA); Glenn McCoy (NM); Jim Sparks (TN); Jamie Jones (AR); Geneva Metzger (NC); and John Tadlock (AL).

The beginning purposes were: 1) the gathering of information about student ministers and the situations in which they worked; 2) a central office to keep current and objective information about positions available; 3) the setting of minimum standards for campus ministers; 4) serving as a resource to

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<sup>1</sup>The Colleague (Nacogdoches, Texas), Summer, 1992, p. 2.

## *The Campus Minister*

seminaries on curriculum development; and 5) resourcing an information file on speakers.

Three committees formed out of the steering committee to take the Association from a dream into reality: Constitution and By-Laws chaired by Geneva Metzger and later co-chaired with Ron Brown; the Location Committee by Jamie Jones; and the Data Information Committee by Meredith Moore.

The Constitution Committee met on May 4, 1976 in Danville, Virginia to draft a tentative constitution. This was followed with an organizational and planning meeting prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Norfolk, Virginia June 15-17. Materials put together in this meeting would be presented at the Directors' National Workshop in Clinton, Mississippi in July and followed with meetings at Student Week at Ridgecrest and Glorieta. The report of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee included five tentative guiding purposes for the organization.

1. To promote the fraternal spirit among local directors.
2. Attempt to raise the level of competence in each director.
3. Discover areas which should have recurring emphasis in Southern Baptist student work.
4. Encourage professionalism of local campus director, setting forth educational, experiential, and personal criteria for recognition.

## *The Campus Minister*

5. Locate and identify capable competent speakers for student meetings.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time the Association was taking its beginning steps, the founders wanted input from the State Student Director's Association. Three state directors provided funds for Bumpass and Gurney to meet with the directors in Denver, Colorado in their December, 1975 meeting. Many were enthusiastic but others were skeptical. Udell Smith, State Director of Louisiana, commented in a letter to Gurney:

The purpose of the State Student Directors' Association was to 'bring cohesion' to student work within the various states and to help the various state conventions in their own indigenous ways form policies and plan programs which would bring order and dignity to student work . . . . One of Dr. Leavell's great dreams was for a person to enter student work and remain until he retired. Many of us have seen this become a reality in our states while for others it remains an elusive dream. But a grand beginning has been made and we have been able to promote policies with the various states which have protected the local Director, given him freedom to promote an expanded student program, and given him dignity and status within and without his own denomination . . . . I sincerely believe that

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<sup>2</sup> Neal Schooley, "The Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers: (A Short History)," The Campus Minister, Spring, 1982, p. 6.



## *The Campus Minister*

if your proposed organization is to 'GO', it must function along the lines of fellowship and sharing. If it seeks to be authoritarian and highly structured, it will have within it the very ingredients which will cause its demise. I wish you well.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the mixed support from the State Directors and some local directors who saw no need for a professional organization, the Norfolk meeting in the Baptist Student Center at Old Dominion University provided the groundwork for a larger discussion at the Directors' National Workshop in Clinton.

Enough interest existed in Clinton that after one discussion meeting, Geneva Metzger, Ron Brown and Don Gurney were asked to develop an application form. By July 15, 1976, there were fifty-two applications from sixteen states. The twenty-one in attendance who had paid the \$5.00 application fee, voted to name the organization the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers. The stated purpose of the Association was to ". . . seek to give a sense of identity to Southern Baptist campus ministers who work on campuses throughout the United States and by appointment of the Foreign Mission Board." Even though many job titles were used in different states, the term "campus ministers" was thought to more clearly define who the group was.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Udell Smith, Alexandria, Louisiana, to Rev. Don Gurney, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 27 February 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Schooley, p. 8.

## *The Campus Minister*

Two issues emerged in the Clinton meeting which would continue to plague the Association in annual meetings almost every year. They were the questions of membership and certification. Many people thought that certification should not be a part of ASBCM while others believed it should when the Association was more established. Most people felt there should be a difference in levels of membership since professional campus ministers had a different interest in the group as opposed to those in academic or church settings. The definition of membership after the first meeting, however, was left open and general. The subject would be revisited.

Setting a time for the annual meeting would also prove to be equally vexing. Campus ministers did not always attend the Southern Baptist Convention, and school schedules frequently conflicted with Student Week giving no clear guideline for a meeting time. Nonetheless, the association voted to hold their first annual meeting at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City the day before the Southern Baptist Convention in June, 1977.

The Association elected organizing officers: Don Gurney would chair the Ridgecrest discussion; Glorieta discussion chair - Jamie Jones; and Treasurer - Dick Bumpass. They would serve until the meeting in Kansas City. Thirty to forty participated in a "lively" discussion at Ridgecrest Student Week, and in a letter to the Steering Committee in September, 1976, Bumpass reported between seventy-five and eighty-five members. ASBCM was off the ground.

## *The Campus Minister*

The first annual meeting at Midwestern Seminary was held June 12-13, 1977. Dr. Lofton Hudson, director of the Midwest Christian Counseling Center, addressed the Association on new issues and trends in counseling. The Association formally adopted the constitution and by-laws and elected the first officers. They were: President: Dick Bumpass, Maryland; Vice President-Membership: Don Gurney, Colorado; Vice President-Publications: Ron Brown, Virginia; Vice President-Programs: Geneva Metzger, North Carolina; and Vice President-Administration: Mike Lundy, Texas.

At the end of the first five years of ASBCM's existence, *The Campus Minister*, the journal of the Association, published a brief history and evaluated the beginnings. It listed areas in which ASBCM had accomplished substantial goals. First, ASBCM had earned credibility with campus ministers and state directors. Secondly, the journal was excellent. Written specifically for campus needs and situations, it added to a field of literature on campus ministry that had very few resources. Third, the annual meetings had fulfilled its purpose of enhancing ministry skills and were being noticed by SBC leadership. The original desire had been to place the Campus Ministers Conference on the same level as the Pastors' Conference and Religious Education meeting. Fourth, in the 1981 meeting, ASBCM began to encourage the creation of an endowment for campus work in new convention areas. The Association was beginning to address wider SBC concerns and needs.

## *The Campus Minister*

Still there were issues to be examined. Briefly stated, Neal Schooley, author of the brief history, listed these questions.

1. How can such an organization serve its constituency in a professional manner . . . ?
2. Will *The Campus Minister* continue to mature into a truly scholarly and professional journal . . . ?
3. Will the purposes of the organization be developed more clearly . . . ?
4. Will the organization become more influential in the lives of the campus ministers or will it continue to make its voice heard mainly at the annual meeting . . . ?
5. Will the organization be able to "sell" its dream to a new core group of campus ministers that are coming on the scene . . . ?<sup>5</sup>

These are hard questions and while there are no complete answers, they do provide a vehicle by which to examine not only the dreams of the founders but also the reality of ASBCM as it reaches "maturity" at twenty. In order to answer these questions, we will look at several of the issues ASBCM has faced in the last fifteen years.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership issue has been revisited many times. It was the desire of the founders to promote a "professional organization" which recognized campus ministry as a distinctly

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<sup>5</sup> Schooley, p. 12-13.

## *The Campus Minister*

separate ministry specialty with its own special skills, qualifications, and calling. The tentative draft of the original constitution and by-laws defined membership very clearly with qualifications, but the group meeting at Clinton left the definition of membership very general and open. In 1978 and 1979, the annual meeting voted to limit full membership to persons who ministered full time and had a graduate degree or five years experience. Associate or non-voting members were campus ministers who served part-time or as volunteers. The '79 meeting included as associate members, students preparing for campus ministry and other persons interested in campus ministry. Officers had to be full members.

Another issue for debate has been the status of church workers whose primary responsibility was the college campus. Both in 1987 and 1989, extending full membership to church workers was denied. A proposed membership amendment in 1994 would have given full membership to bi-vocational campus ministers and those who had completed "a course of study in preparation for ministry." Discussion centered around whether or not bi-vocational meant church ministers to students and what constituted an "acceptable" course of study. It was amended to a "satisfactory" course of study to be defined by the membership committee. It passed, but the question of the difference between part-time and bi-vocational was referred back to the committee. The 1994 officers discussed the need for maintaining high standards but agreed to develop a "more inclusive definition of

## *The Campus Minister*

membership." The following amendment was presented and adopted in 1995. Full membership is open to:

. . . those who minister full time, or *by necessity, bi-vocationally* on the campus and who have completed an *accredited* course of study in preparation for ministry, or who have five years experience in campus ministry.<sup>6</sup>

In other areas of discussion, emeritus membership was extended to retired campus ministers who served full-time for at least twenty-five years and who maintained membership in ASBCM for at least five years. They are continued as emeritus members with "privileges and responsibilities" for life. Retired campus ministers with at least five years experience can be full members at half price. This was approved in 1990. The Association has also discussed developing a new membership category, the "Fellow", for those who intentionally take part in continuing education. This status was to be reviewed and renewed every five years, but no action has ever been taken.

The membership numbers have always been a concern. Up some years and down others, the high point seems to have been in 1990 when there were 297 active members. Forty new members signed up after the '89 annual meeting in Las Vegas. Other years have had higher numbers, but when the inactive members and

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<sup>6</sup> Book of Reports for the Annual Meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers, 16-18 June 1995, Atlanta, Georgia, 5.

## *The Campus Minister*

those six months or more behind in dues are taken into account, the 1990 figures seem to be the best. But it is noted in the Membership reports of the early '90s, the high numbers of members not renewing. The SBC controversies took their toll on ASBCM as budgets were cut and members became dispirited. Still the average number through the twenty years has been between 80 and 120. The most recent report, February, 1997, showed 61 members with current dues and 57 others who were paid through August 31, 1996.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

One of ASBCM's beginning dreams was to help campus ministers improve their skills and increase their professionalism. Initially carried out through the annual meeting and through recommendations given to NSM about the directors' track at Ridgecrest/Glorieta and the Directors' National Workshop, it has remained an active topic of discussion. ASBCM attempted from its earliest days to gain recognition through co-sponsorship of programs with National Student Ministries by enlisting speakers such as Dr. Mahan Siler and Mr. and Mrs. David Edens for the Directors' National Workshop in 1981. The President's Report for 1985 stated that consultants from three seminaries, Dr. Ronnie Prevost, Dr. Bruce Powers and Dr. Tom Kinchen were working with the Association to develop continuing education which would be accessible and affordable. When Golden Gate Seminary began the second track of their Campus Ministry Doctor of Ministry program in the summer of 1991, the ASBCM Continuing

## *The Campus Minister*

Education Committee was asked for input. Support for the continuing education of campus ministers came from many sources.

*The Campus Minister*, journal for ASBCM, focused the Fall, 1987 issue on "Continuing Learning in the Campus Ministry." State convention study leaves were compared along with reports on continuing education opportunities and a rationale for participation in a doctor of ministry program. Almost anything you wanted to know about continuing education was included. It is easy to understand the focus on continued learning when you realize that the University campus itself is about change and continued learning. Professors have study leaves and sabbaticals to upgrade skills, and it only makes sense to realize that it is essential for campus ministers to stay current as well.

Some of the prime movers in Continuing Education, such as Bill Stroup, Florida, hoped that "CEUs" (Continuing Education Units) could be obtained at Ridgecrest/Glorieta, regional workshops and other opportunities. Stroup wanted to develop a "curriculum approach" for all future conferences which would set up tracks for new, middle-tenure, and veteran campus ministers. Stroup had many concerns which he expressed in his 1990-91 Continuing Education Report.

In light of continuing denominational uncertainty, the need for Continuing Education of Campus Ministers is perhaps more crucial than ever before. We must encourage one another to train for our profession beyond the denominational model. We must familiarize ourselves with what is happening



## *The Campus Minister*

in higher education and seek to minister to that changing system. . . . We must make every effort to sustain the opportunity for a Baptist Ministry to students in spite of unavoidable or capricious denominational decisions . . . . We need to polish our skills for multi-campus and even bi-vocational positions to provide market-based ministry in an increasingly pluralistic and diverse setting.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, National Student Ministries has asked ASBCM's assistance in planning the leadership tracks at Ridgecrest/Glorieta Student Weeks and enlisting the leaders. Currently, responsibility for that has now been totally shifted to ASBCM. The constitution of the Association was changed in 1996 and the Vice President of Administration became the Vice President of Continuing Education with instructions to relate to NSM, the seminaries, etc. One of the ASBCM officers remarked in a planning meeting at Mission 95 that continuing education may be the significant niche ASBCM finds for itself.

### **NEW WORK**

Just as campus ministers have encouraged their students to be involved in mission work, ASBCM itself has been concerned about the lack of student ministry in "newer" Southern Baptist Convention areas. In 1981, Don Gurney introduced a motion to establish a task force to work with the State Director's Association in creating a permanent fund for campus ministry in new SBC

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<sup>7</sup> Book of Reports, June, 1991, Atlanta, Georgia, p. 8.

## *The Campus Minister*

areas. The task force has through the years become known as the New Work Committee, and its work has taken several forms which have met with varying degrees of success.

One of the most logical ways for ASBCM to support new work was for the members to encourage their Baptist Student Unions on the local level to "Adopt-a-Campus," to assist with financial and prayer support and by sending "Help Teams" of students to minister on campus. Students could meet at national meetings for fellowship and encouragement while state directors provided the coordination. ASBCM could also help by encouraging students to begin their careers in the new work area and assist campus ministry as volunteers. Even though there were attempts to establish and later revive it, the idea seems to have faded away.

The Olds-Bonner Fund, established in memory of two state directors, Eddie Olds of Iowa and Bill Bonner of Virginia, aided BSU work in New York as early as 1987. The East/West Challenge presented the need for assistance in BSU work by focusing on two cities, Portland and New York City and later included other areas such as California, Boston and Chicago. Frank Cofer, campus minister in Chicago, testified repeatedly to the help it has been there. There remains, even now, a sense of frustration in the reports of the Committee that the concept of East/West Challenge has never gotten to the local level of director and students. The 1996 annual report stated that the Challenge seemed to have passed its days of effectiveness.

## *The Campus Minister*

Currently, ASBCM has two members serving on the Committee of Advisors of the BSU Advancement Fund. The BSU Advancement Fund created in March, 1992 followed a request from the state directors to several retired campus ministers to help them find a way to support and fund student directors in newer areas. Headed by Dr. Charles Roselle, retired director of NSM, the Advancement Fund developed a council of advisors from across the country. The goal was to raise \$750,000 by 1997, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the SBC's student work program. The goal has been to contact BSU Alumni and build a network of financial support and a permanent endowment. By March, 1997, close to \$248,000 had been given or pledged. This effort is also not meeting the success it had hoped, but directors in new work areas are already receiving the interest off the funds invested. It is making a difference.

The 1996 New Work Report concluded, "The need of many new work areas is itself urgent . . . there are two things that are obvious: there are needs in new work areas; and, there are resources in older convention areas. Now the matter is to get something going."<sup>8</sup>

### **LONG RANGE PLANNING/PURPOSE**

In 1969, there was a National Convocation on Student Work held at Southwestern Seminary charged with studying the

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<sup>8</sup> Book of Reports, 7-9 June 1996, New Orleans, Louisiana, p. 4.

## *The Campus Minister*

broad dimensions of student work and reporting to the SBC in 1970. In 1981 and 1988, Dick Bumpass requested in the annual meetings that ASBCM call for a new Convocation "...whose purpose shall be a study of the contribution which Baptist Student Union has made to the life of our denomination."<sup>9</sup> He brought a motion that the president appoint a committee to explore this convocation with the appropriate SBC agencies. He hoped it would enhance the understanding of future directions which BSU might take. This passed but the Convocation did not happen.

Problems and controversies within the SBC affected ASBCM members, membership and attendance at meetings as well as future plans for campus ministry. Annual reports of ASBCM presidents in the 1990s reflect these struggles and others as campus ministry was restructured in several areas.

Arliss Dickerson, Arkansas, served as chairperson of the ASBCM Long Range Planning Committee which reported at the 1991 Atlanta meeting. Five areas were deemed important for ASBCM to work with. First, the need to expand programs and meetings to involve more people. The committee anticipated a decrease in campus ministers attending SBC meetings and suggested "think tanks" and regional meetings in addition to Ridgecrest/Glorieta meetings and other ideas. Secondly, ASBCM's purpose needed to be clearly defined. Third, members who did not

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<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers, 14 July 1981, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, p. 3; Minutes of the Annual Meeting, 13 June 1988, San Antonio, Texas, p. 2.

## *The Campus Minister*

attend the annual meeting should also receive services. Fourth, allocate a stipend each year to one or more campus ministers who would study and work to enhance the understanding of campus ministry. Fifth, develop the idea of a permanent ASBCM employee who would serve as secretary or executive director and coordinate the work of the Association. The purpose of the association would not only be for fellowship but also a forum for the discovery and discussion of resources. ASBCM should help campus ministers tell the student work story, and issues addressed should be campus oriented.

At the Atlanta meeting, Tom Logue, retired state director from Arkansas, agreed to serve as the volunteer permanent person to keep records, and be a consultant for the officers. Other suggestions for his job included providing an overview of the purpose of ASBCM, keeping the permanent records and having the books audited, among other things. This would assist in increased efficiency in mailings, membership enlistment, roster updating, and would provide consistency. Since there was no formal job description, the current officers were asked to study the possibilities and report at Indianapolis.

When the association met at Indianapolis, the number was so small, they called themselves "the remnant." The survival of ASBCM became an issue again. When the officers met in Nashville in October, 1992 to plan they discussed the validity of the organization and decided to stop worrying about numbers and concentrate on making ASBCM a worthy and beneficial

## *The Campus Minister*

organization for its members. The role of a permanent staff person, volunteer or paid, was placed on a back burner.

The group who met in Arkadelphia in 1993 was larger but shaken. The structure of campus work in California had been totally changed and in other areas across the nation, the future of Baptist student work was in serious danger. Kyle Klemcke in his Presidential Report stated that ASBCM had to have a reason to exist to survive the 90s. Many felt ASBCM had no purpose and had dropped their membership, but he questioned that. He went on to say that ASBCM does have a purpose: collegiality which needs to be expanded to include families; continuing education opportunities which will enable campus ministers to keep up with changes in student work; and the development of campus ministry in new work areas. He closed by stating, "The future of ASBCM is bright if we keep our focus. That focus may change from time to time but we must keep moving." Evaluations of the 1993 program showed a desire for programs to meet practical needs as well as provide more time for fellowship and the sharing of concerns.<sup>10</sup>

The 1993 meeting spent a lot of time sharing concerns especially with the shift in California from a campus-based ministry to a church-based ministry. Several present had written position papers on the issues and the group decided to develop a statement representing the Arkadelphia meeting. Roger Matkin, Texas, had written a paper addressing a specific issue in his

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<sup>10</sup> Book of Reports, June, 1993, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, p. 1.

## *The Campus Minister*

association which he volunteered as a framework for the statement. He and Jane Young Poster, South Carolina, were asked to write a statement for the group and present it the next day. After much discussion from all present, it was given the title "Our Call to the Campus" and affirmed the historical position of student ministry as a combination/connection of church and campus as well as the campus as a point of mission with a professionally-led ministry. The long term benefits of BSU ministry to the church and the denomination were also mentioned. Bill Stroup, the new president, distributed the statement through Baptist Press and the Spring, 1994 journal focused on "The Future of Campus Ministry."

Although not much response was noted to the statement, the association seemed to regain some of its focus and the following meetings in Winter Park, Atlanta and New Orleans have gone well. The abrupt downsizing of NSM in 1994 and the restructuring of the SBC provided additional causes for concern. The Association created an appointed position of historian in 1994 and added the position to the Executive Committee in 1995. This action was in response to restructuring changes related to the Historical Commission and the desire to be sure ASBCM records were maintained properly.

The time of the annual meeting remains a problem with a Task Force appointed which will report at the 1997 meeting in Ft. Worth. As always, the issue is the time and place of the meeting--with the SBC or away. With the diverse group who belong to ASBCM, there probably is no good time. After Indianapolis, the

## *The Campus Minister*

good news was that the members of the Association still wanted a time to meet.

ASBCM's purpose is reflected in many statements published through the years. In a discussion of purpose, perhaps it is good to note some of these comments. Woody Hammett's 1991 Presidential report says, "It meets needs that run deep. The stimulation of fellowship, discussion, and worship weave a tapestry that repairs minds and refreshes spirits and bodies that are tired." In 1993 Charles Lillard stated, "It was refreshing to see the diversity of individuals held together by a common calling. Perhaps our association can model to our convention unity in diversity?"<sup>11</sup>

The recurring theme of ASBCM is support and the intentional development of relationships with people who share the calling of campus ministry. But it is more than that too.

... who else but ASBCM has as much at stake in helping the denomination keep its vital enclaves on campuses? Who else will be an advocate for the uniqueness of on-site contact with seeking students ... ? If we abandon our mission field and many who count on us, the 'God-less campus' will become even more of a reality.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>11</sup> Book of Reports, June, 1991, p. 1; The Colleague (Jacksonville, Alabama), Summer, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> The Colleague, Summer, 1993, p. 2.



## *The Campus Minister*

ASBCM at twenty is probably not where the founders hoped it would be, yet it has faced issues within the denomination which could not have been anticipated twenty years ago and like all good campus ministers, the Association has learned some flexibility. It has also learned that there are differences in the way campus ministers process things in the east and the west. Finding common ground comes from our deep love of students and the commitment to our calling. To go back and answer the questions Neal Schooley asked at the end of five years is not easy, yet I think there are answers.

1. Has the organization served its constituency in a professional manner? Yes, it has provided challenging programs which met different peoples needs in different years. You can't expect it all in one year--at least that's what we tell our students. It has continued to hold the challenge of continuing education before us and whether we like or not, it is important. Jerry Buckner, Maryland; Robert Turner, then of Arkansas; and Charles Lillard, Oklahoma, led in the development of a Code of Ethics in 1987. It has helped us know how to be professional and ethical. In addition, the Distinguished Service Awards given every year provide recognition for an outstanding retired and current campus minister(s) whose contributions have benefitted the entire profession.

2. Will *The Campus Minister* continue to mature into a truly scholarly and professional journal? Yes, I think it has. It is noted several times in the reports of the Presidents that the journal has gained wide acceptance in seminary classrooms. While I did

## *The Campus Minister*

not devote adequate time to the journal in this brief history, I read and reviewed all the journals in preparation for this article and vowed to reread them this summer. The various editors through the years are to be commended and there is always room for growth.

3. Will the purposes of the organization be developed more clearly? I know the purpose was clear in the beginning and that those who have continued to be active believe ASBCM has a purpose in the life of campus ministers. We still have a way to go but we are trying.

4. Will the organization become more influential in the lives of the campus ministers or will it continue to make its voice heard mainly at the annual meeting? I think this depends on the member and the use he/she makes of the organization. The annual meeting is great for the renewal of relationships, but I rely on my ASBCM friends for information and support year round. It is very important to note that the fact that ASBCM functions at all is a miracle. All the business between annual meetings has to take place long distance with campus ministers who already have more than a full plate of things to do. The commitment of the founders who turned a dream into reality is commendable because they have made a real difference. The officers and committee members who serve faithfully each year deserve more credit than they will ever receive for keeping the organization going. It does make a difference.

5. Will the organization be able to "sell" its dream to a new core group of campus ministers that are coming on the scene? A lot of the early members of ASBCM are still active professionals.

## *The Campus Minister*

Many new members participate, but the real answer to this question will be seen in about five to ten years as more and more of the original Association members retire. The quicker we define our purpose the more the answer will be yes.

I hope these questions will be easier to answer in twenty-five or thirty years than they are now. Hopefully, we can focus on our task as campus ministers and work together for the sake of our students and those who come behind us. I want to express appreciation to the many past officers who were quick to respond to my questions about their term of office and the events they helped shape. The records are not complete and I apologize for anything which is not correct. The work of the historian is not yet done.

For many years, Chester Swor represented BSU and campus ministers across this nation in a way and with a style we will never forget. In 1986, ASBCM honored Swor with a Distinguished Service Award. Even though he could not attend, he sent the following message which appropriately applies to the work of ASBCM.

My climactic message to you is this: YOU WHO ARE DIRECTING OUR STUDENT WORK ON THE LOCAL CAMPUSES ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF OUR LEADERSHIP PERSONNEL,...So, I salute you with enthusiastic praise and can assure you at my 'end of the tunnel' that, regardless of what your

*The Campus Minister*

efforts are costing you, you will know increasingly the truth of the hymn, 'It Was Worth It All.'<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Chester E. Swor, Jackson, Mississippi, to Southern Baptist Campus Ministers, Atlanta, Georgia, 31 May 1986.