

Center for Christian Educational Ministries Enters its Third Year at Mars Hill College

New ways of helping churches, an idea which Sue Fitzgerald nurtured for several years while serving as Director of Christian Education at the Mars Hill Baptist Church, has become an en-

couraging reality through the Center for Christian Educational Ministries at Mars Hill College.

A native of Gretna, Va., Miss Fitzgerald conceived her plan not long after she came here in 1963; she began edging

it toward reality by compiling a small resource facility for local ministers while she served the Mars Hill church.

Then, in 1975, officials at the Baptist-related college were searching for new and effective ways in which the college could be of assistance to area churches. The college's president, Dr. Fred B. Bentley, convinced Miss Fitzgerald that she should join the college staff and expand the modest program she

had begun into a Center for Christian Educational Ministries.

That fall, she moved her collection of books, pamphlets, slides, recordings and similiar materials into space formerly occupied by the college bookstore and officially began operating the Center. It was unique; no other college was doing anything similiar, and there were few helpful guides on how to proceed. The Meredith College educated, Andover-Newton Seminary trained woman, herself an ordained Baptist minister, had to rely heavily on her own experiences as a director of Christian education and on her instincts as to what would be helpful to pastors, deacons, Sunday school teachers and other workers in local churches.

studies which Miss Fitzgerald conducts in local church. Such programs range from one night to eight weeks in length have covered such topics as pastoral counseling, leadership training, and family life forums.

Suitable leadership is made available to churches which have asked for it. Usually, this means that Miss Fitzgerald will visit the church and assist in various aspects of Christian education, ranging from finding qualified leaders to conduct special studies to enlisting the aid of college students to serve internships in the church.

The directors of missions in the 14 Baptist associations in Western North Carolina have been extremely helpful to Miss Fitzgerald in the development of the Center.

"Without their cooperation and support," she explains, "the Center would not have reached nearly as many churches as it has."

Help has also been received from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. They have provided both guidance and financial aid for new materials.

Among future plans for the Center is a traveling library which will visit individual churches for a period of three months. Miss Fitzgerald will also help each association in the region start their own resource program.

To help spread the work about the Center and its materials and programs Miss Fitzgerald will soon begin publishing and distributing a newsletter. Meanwhile, anyone who wishes to utilize the resources of the Center or learn more about its activities may contact Miss Fitzgerald by writing to her in care of the Center at the college or by calling the Center at 704/689-1322.

Editorial

Student Employment Cut-Backs

Many students have been worried and upset over the recent cutback in student labor. In fact the cutback was a big 44% which includes all areas of the campus including the cafeteria, library and the College Union. The Union has been able to rearrange work schedules, therefore, not quite as many students were cut-back too drastically. The Department of Labor of the Federal Government has increased the minimum wage from \$1.96 to \$2.26. Much of our federal money also was spent on the PACE program in High Schools in our area. The money we had has run short, therefore the financial aid department is asking for more money soon from the government.

This is all fine and good, but the question is raised as to why this seems to have happened so suddenly. What is to be done about the work/study students who really need this money for their education? Is there any other supply of funds if the government decides not to give us any more money? Also, will any other additional cut-backs be enacted before the end of the spring term? Many of these questions are vital to the security of several Mars Hill students and should be investigated with concern.

Dr. Bentley in Africa on Accreditation Visit

MARS HILL COLLEGE president in Africa on accreditation visit - Dr. Fred B. Bentley, president of Mars Hill College, spent most of January in Africa as a member of a three-man team inspecting Baptist schools which are affiliated with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

The other members of the team were Dr. Gordon Sweet, executive secretary of the Commission on Colleges, a division of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Dr. Badgett Dillard, assistant to the president of Southern Seminary.

The three visited schools in South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria. On the return leg of their journey they made another official stop at the European Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruchlikon, Switzerland.

Dr. Bentley was selected as a member of the inspecting team because he is a graduate of Southern Seminary and is also a member of the executive council of the Southern Association's Commission on Colleges, the two agencies which are cooperating in the professional inspection.

During the first year the Center provided direct assistance to over 150 area churches. In the second year that figure doubled. Now in the third year of her "dream operation," Miss Fitzgerald is continuing to push her ministry to still other churches. Eventually she hopes that the Center can reach all of the 600-plus churches in the area - Regions 9 and 10 of the Baptist State Convention.

The use of the Center has been brisk and encouraging in recent months. In November for example, 130 items were checked out by persons representing 25 different churches. During the same period, Miss Fitzgerald visited other churches, set up displays, and conducted workshops.

The services of the Center, which are available without charge to the users, take three different forms.

Books, filmstrips, music, and similiar

resources are available to pastors, church leaders, and laymen involved in all aspects of church life.

Effective ideas are offered for church leadership. These are usually presented through workshops and short-term

The Hilltop



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