

Dr. Baker James Cauthen

Speaks . . .



*“Southern Baptists and
Missionary Education”*

AN ADDRESS

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AND SOCIAL WORK**

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“Another aspect of missionary education comes in furlough study . . . It is at this point that Carver School faces an unusual opportunity as it looks forward to a program of work as related to foreign missionaries.”

DR. BAKER JAMES CAUTHEN

Southern Baptists and Missionary Education

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Missionary education is a responsibility of major proportions in Southern Baptist life. This is indicated by the growing emphasis on world missions being felt in every area of Baptist activity.

Since January 1, 1946, 1,091 missionaries have been appointed for service overseas. Each year the number of missionary appointments is growing. In 1946 there were sixty-two appointments; seventy-four in 1947; 110 in 1957; and 137 in 1958.

There is a constantly increasing number of young people who are volunteering to go as missionaries. The Personnel Department of the Foreign Mission Board is in touch with more than 1,200 young people in seminary or professional school level who are in some stage of preparation for missionary service. In addition more than 3,350 young people in college and pre-college education are in touch with the Foreign Mission Board, looking forward to the possibility of missionary service.

It is anticipated that by the close of the Baptist Jubilee Advance in 1964 there should be 200 new missionaries appointed annually for service overseas.

In thinking of missionary education there are some basic considerations to be recognized.

For one thing, the objective of missionary service needs to be kept in view. The basic objective of missionary work is to bring people into a personal experience of Christ as Saviour and Lord, fruiting in the establishment and cultivation of New Testament churches, working cooperatively in projecting witness and ministries to our fellowman under the Lordship of Christ.

This objective indicates that our major emphasis is upon winning people to the knowledge of Christ and establishing New Testament churches. Experience shows that under chaotic conditions New Testament churches can survive long after institutions have been closed or paralyzed by government regimentation or other adverse circumstances.

This objective calls for the maintenance of many institutions of training and ministry. When work is projected in a new area church development and leadership

training must proceed simultaneously. Christian work cannot be well established until leadership arises among the nationals of the country who can assume responsibility for witness to their own people.

This also indicates that churches must be indigenous. They cannot remain as foreign institutions, but must be so related to the life of the people that those who come into the work of the churches will find themselves in a homelike atmosphere. This means that all principles of church development must be so applied as to find rooting in the lives of the people who are being served.

Another consideration relating to missionary education is that the world scene in which we labor is becoming increasingly complex.

We are living in an era characterized by a decay of colonialism and the upsurge of nationalism. This is accompanied by an increase in world population unparalleled in previous years. It is estimated that by the close of this century the population of the world will be six billion.

The increase of world population brings many complications to human life and social structure. Amid these complications there is a growing demand for a decent way of life. The misery and distress endured by millions of people throughout the world is one of the major aspects of life in our day.

Throughout the world there is a sensitive attitude toward race. The question of race is not a matter simply of relationships between those who are black and those who are white. The non-white races of the Orient and the Middle East are sensitive to a high degree. Most of the mission work we do is projected among non-white people or among white people whose attitudes identify them with the non-white peoples of the world in sympathy.

Another feature of today's world is the widespread hunger for education. The spectacle of illiteracy in many parts of the world is very sad. There is an eagerness to acquire education that opens many doors for opportunity and creates areas of responsibility.

In today's world we see a vast development of industrialism and growth of great cities. This results in the uprooting of established patterns of life, both in Africa and in the Orient. This is one of the major features of today's scene. People who come from the quietness of village life are caught up in the abnormalities of highly industrialized city life, with consequent decay of morals and readjustment of attitudes.

In today's world we see the influence of ancient hatreds and the pressure of modern fears. Only as we

keep in mind the long histories of the peoples of the Orient and the Near East can we understand some of the drives which are so powerful among them. We also remember the dread of war, and the apprehension of it which prevails among all people. It is generally accepted that the danger of war does not grow so much out of deliberate planning and desiring for the outbreak of hostility as the possibility of war resulting, even though it is not desired by anybody. Such a dire result comes from drives of hatred and fear leading to miscalculation and poor judgment.

Throughout today's world we see a resurgence of ancient religions. Buddhism and Islam have shown new vitality with aspirations for greatly extended influence.

The most obvious feature of today's world is the growing power of Communism. It has already brought a vast section of the world under its control with more than eight hundred million people being indoctrinated in its principles. The sinister aspect of Communism is that it does not await popular desire, but it moves on the basis of a hard core of determined people seizing opportunity amid distress and confusion to impose their will upon nations and people.

No appraisal of today's world would be accurate without taking into consideration vast multitudes of people who have either no knowledge of the gospel of Christ or only the most fragmentary acquaintance with it. There are millions of people who have heard the name of Christ, but it is so strange to them that they have no awareness of the message of redemption.

In thinking of missionary education, another consideration which needs to be borne in mind is that the missionary faces unusual demands in the task he approaches today.

For one thing, there is a demand for a contagious Christian experience. People in other lands are less impressed by splendid arguments and elaborate programs, and are more impressed by the vitality of Christian experience as evidenced in personal life.

There is also the demand to understand and enter into the aspirations and feelings of other people. The missionary who goes into a field of labor and remains foreign to the thinking and feelings of the people will find himself strangely unable to adjust to his surroundings and his world will be ineffective.

Under these circumstances the missionary finds himself needing to abandon all feelings and expressions of superiority, paternalism, and prejudice. To the surprise of nearly every missionary, he finds that there are

elements of these undesirable qualities which he must overcome. Many times we are not aware of these qualities until they are brought to our attention by the experiences we encounter.

The missionary is also faced with the demand to know how to apply and lead others to use the tested principles of Christian witness and growth. The progress of Christian work in our midst is the product of many years of experience and learning. The missionary goes to the people of other lands, carrying with him knowledge which has grown out of a long background. Those who are won to Christ do not have the benefit of this background. It is unrealistic to expect newly won people to become suddenly aware of all the experience which has been acquired through many years in other lands. One function of the missionary is to help to bring to emerging Christian groups the understanding of principles of Christian witness and growth, so as to help them arise to their major effectiveness among their own people.

There is the obvious demand on the part of every missionary to adjust to a foreign language and culture as well as to relate himself to conditions of work with which he has been previously unfamiliar. The ability to adjust is one of the highest requirements of missionary service.

As a part of this adjustment the missionary must be able to work under unstable and even dangerous conditions. It is frequently said that mission work today must be described as normal work under abnormal conditions.

Under these circumstances, the missionary must be able to stimulate and inspire leadership in others. His purpose is not to build himself up as a leader of people, but rather to cultivate leadership in others. He always keeps in mind that conditions could arise which might force the missionary to withdraw from the field, and he desires to see a strong national leadership able to take care of the work. He also remembers that there are some distinctive opportunities of national leadership which no foreigner can serve. The needs of the people are served best of all when strong leadership arises from their own fellow countrymen.

The missionary who goes into today's world needs to have an understanding of the world scene of our day. Unless he is aware of some of the complexities he is going to face and some of the vast forces that are competing for the loyalties of men, he will be unable to measure some of the problems he will encounter.

It is essential that the missionary be able to bear a clear, faithful witness to the gospel of Christ. He must not become a technician or a specialist in some chosen area at the price of forgetting his distinctive responsibility as a witness to the gospel of redemption. His specialization is effective only to the point that it serves as an instrument to enable him to bear the witness his Lord expects from him. In bearing this witness he must have a sustaining conviction and imperative with confidence of the truth and value of the message, and the assurance of what a living Christ can do in the hearts of those who receive him. Unless mission work is carried out by those who have profound conviction of the truth of the message and the victory of a living Christ, it cannot hope to overcome the barriers that stand in its way.

In view of the demands which are to be faced by missionaries, there are some essential factors which must be included in missionary education.

For one thing, there must be a solid base of general education. The Foreign Mission Board has long expected missionary candidates to have a full liberal arts education including college graduation. Those who go into professional training are expected to have full qualification in these chosen fields.

Upon the base of general education there must be thorough theological training. The missionary must be thoroughly trained in all the responsibilities of witness to his own faith. He must also be prepared to understand the religions and the philosophies of those whom he will meet. Even missionaries who are to be engaged in technical services and specialties need enough theological training to enable them to function with high effectiveness in bringing people to Christ and growing New Testament churches. All specialization is with a view to this purpose, and, therefore, training in the specialty without theological preparation remains insufficient.

There is great value in thorough training in principles of Christian ministry and their practical application. This calls for large opportunity for specialization in many aspects of service. As mission work continues, there will be more opportunities for specialization throughout the world.

Another aspect of missionary education is that of constructive experience. It has been well tested across the years that those missionaries who acquire good experience at the home base are better qualified to begin their tasks on mission fields.

Because of the vast amount of training necessary, the Foreign Mission Board looks to the institutions fostered by Southern Baptists to equip young people who

are in preparation for missionary service for the task that awaits.

After missionaries are appointed there is additional training given by the Foreign Mission Board. There is a brief period of orientation, the purpose of which is to acquaint the missionary with the Foreign Mission Board, the realities of work on the field and the relationships which must prevail. This type of orientation is quite essential and comes in addition to the full range of study which is formally undertaken in academic years.

In addition to the orientation given by the Foreign Mission Board, there is also a brief orientation given to missionaries after reaching the field. This enables them to acquaint themselves with the country to which they go and in many instances programs of guided study are provided by the missions so as to help the new missionary appreciate the culture and background of the people more fully.

Another aspect of missionary education comes in furlough study. Missionaries are given periodic furloughs, and many of them use these years to acquire further training. It is at this point that the Carver School faces an unusual opportunity as it looks forward to a program of work as related to foreign missionaries.

As Southern Baptists experience increasing momentum of missionary advance, we are grateful for the splendid institutions which have been brought into life to provide training for missionaries. The colleges and universities conducted by Baptists make a far-reaching contribution to the missionary enterprise. The seminaries carried on by Southern Baptists have a fervent missionary spirit and a deep commitment to the world task. The Carver School stands in a unique role, and will provide across the years distinctive opportunity for many people to secure training during furlough periods.

It is with great joy that we observe the progress being made at Carver School of Missions and Social Work, and wish for this splendid institution every blessing from our Lord both now and in the days to come.