



MOBILIZING MISSISSIPPI MISSIONARIES IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

When Greg Massey, associational missions director for Lauderdale Association, saw a need for mission work in the Dominican Republic, he put a team together. The Dominican Republic, nestled to the right of Haiti, is a country fighting a spiritual battle. Less than 2 percent of its residents are evangelical Christians, and in many of the provinces, there are no missionaries to be found. The first team that Massey sent was made up of seven people from six churches in the area.

“We prayer walked and met missionaries there who shared our vision,” Massey explained. “We went place to place praying. We’ve been going for three years so far and keep going back and following up on work.”

This project in the Dominican Republic currently involves 22 churches in Lauderdale Association, and they try to send a team every month of the year. So far, they have seen over 200 people make a profession of faith. Stephen Williams, a student at the University of Southern Mississippi, was one of the volunteers sent by Massey for two months last summer. Williams helped translate for volunteer teams, and coordinate their activities. “Prayer walking opened my eyes to what the gospel was up against in the Dominican Republic,” he said. Having experienced their culture firsthand, he now has a specific prayer in mind for the people. He prays “that the people learn the difference between what the Bible says and what they’ve been told to believe, that they know the truth and that the truth will set them free.”

Christians who are unable to go can still help make mission efforts like this one possible. The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering partnered with Lauderdale Baptists to send Stephen to the Dominican Republic and to send over 3,000 mission volunteers around the world last year.



REACHING INTERNATIONALS ON MISSISSIPPI CAMPUSES

“The Margaret Lackey offering helps provide the vital resources for us to have an international intern on the three largest campuses in Mississippi,” said Weaver McCracken, director of the collegiate ministries department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. “These campuses (Univ. of Mississippi, Mississippi State Univ., and the Univ. of Southern Miss.) have the largest populations of international students in our state and the interns give us a more effective ministry on each campus.” Over 400 internationals have participated this past year.

For two years, Ashley Taylor, BSU assistant director and coordinator of the international ministry at Mississippi State, has filled that role.

“Ultimately I hope we would help facilitate leading international students into a relationship with the Lord. If we could help change a life or bring one person to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, then they can go back to their home country and live it out there on a daily basis,” Taylor said. “When you look at it that way, if your program here is successful in helping draw others into relationship with the Lord, you can have an impact on the entire world.”

Michael Ball, BSU director, said being able to have an international ministry on a university campus is like “missions in our own backyard.”

“It is the ability to impact different nationalities that will be returning to their homes and sometimes to places that are closed or hard to reach,” he said. “Yet we have the opportunity right here, while they are students, when there’s no limitations on the freedom of sharing the gospel.”



BEHIND BARS WITH CWJC AND THE GOSPEL

Everyone needs a job, but often jobs are hard to come by. That's exactly why the Margaret Lackey Offering funds a ministry called Christian Women's Job Corp/Christian Men's Job Corp. There are currently 18 job corps centers in Mississippi that are working with participants, the most sites per capita of any other state in the convention.

Mary Callahan, a Mission Service Corp missionary serving as the Executive Director of CWJC & CMJC of Rankin Baptist Association, uses a curriculum called "Jobs for Life," to teach basic life and job skills. While in the program, each participant is assigned a mentor or a Christian friend for a year. During this time, their friend helps to tell them about Jesus and shows them what it means to walk with the Lord.

Callahan, who has a passion to help those struggling with addictions, also has a recovery ministry in the jail and prison system.

"One day, as I stood outside the Rankin County jail, I heard someone say, 'Pretty soon the whole world will be on drugs and in jail or prison.' Those thoughts stayed in my mind for many days after that. I found out later that more than 22 million people need treatment for addictions, and the problem continues to escalate," she said. "Addiction is now the number one public health issue in the United States. Currently in Mississippi, 1 in 38 people are in jail or prison or on probation. Something has to be done," she said.

Callahan knows that, with the help of God, these people can overcome addictive behaviors, which is why she has brought CWJC and Jobs for Life behind bars. Margaret Lackey funding provides leadership development, resources, and promotion for the ministry of CWJC/CMJC.