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## Tried & true: Heeding the call

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# Heeding the call

Throughout his four years at Furman, **Ethan Friddle**, who graduated this spring with a degree in religion, worked in a variety of intern and volunteer programs in preparation for a career in the ministry.

His assignments took him to the Billy Graham Training Center in Asheville, N.C., the Safe Harbor Shelter for Battered Women in Greenville and the Palmetto Emergency Boy's Shelter. He pursued a number of other internships through Furman's Church-Related Vocations program.

One CRV internship took him to United Ministries of Greenville, where he counseled prostitutes, drug addicts and troubled teen-agers, some of whom had been kicked out of their homes or removed by the Department of Social Services. Friddle found that one of the main difficulties in this internship was gaining the trust of those he tried to counsel: not everyone was interested in his advice or his attempts to minister to their needs.

Friddle also worked as a chaplain intern at the Palmetto Baptist Medical Center, where he counseled patients and family members. Many patients had no family — and again, some were more receptive to his offer of help than others. "You never knew what to expect," he says. "Many of

them were very ill, and sometimes I would return the next day and enter a room only to find an empty bed."

Friddle was one of two Furman students chosen for a Duke Endowment internship in the summer of 1999. After working for a time at Endowment headquarters in Charlotte, N.C., Friddle moved to an urban Methodist church in Charlotte, where he served as a youth minister for a racially mixed group of children, adolescents and young adults. The program provided the residents of the area a safe, secure place to play and to grow. Friddle describes himself as a role model and, in some ways, a father figure for the younger boys and girls, many of whom had no father.

The group included a number of Cambodian-Americans who exposed Friddle to a different culture — and to the Buddhist faith. Of these young people, for whom he felt great admiration, he says, "They had a strong sense of honor and shame. They did not want to offend anyone." He says this was especially evident when, even though they practiced a different faith, they attended the Methodist church services each Sunday.

Friddle encouraged his charges to become involved in their community and to participate in service projects by arranging for them to work on old houses

or distribute canned goods. To him, this was an opportunity to have a positive influence on young people at an impressionable age.

Friddle says his internships introduced him to many different perspectives on life and the ministry, while increasing his understanding of people and heightening his interest in helping the less fortunate. As he says, "You can't help others if you don't know or understand where they are coming from."

The son and grandson of ministers, Friddle, a native of Black Mountain, N.C., describes his internships as "motivational, because I dealt with these experiences in the present, not as some future activity. I could keep preparing myself for the ministry through personal study, but without being engaged in these activities, I don't think I would be able to succeed."

After returning to Black Mountain for a year, Friddle hopes to enroll in Princeton Theological Seminary and pursue a Master of Divinity degree. ●

— Lori Helms