

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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APRIL 8, 1971

**Seminary Student Plans Return  
To Help Ghetto Girl Drug Addicts**

By Don Hepburn

FORT WORTH (BP)--Four years ago, Mary Ellen Earls left a comfortable middle-class setting and moved into one of New York City's most vicious ghettos where she worked with young girls addicted to heroin and other drugs.

Today, the 26-year-old native of Mulberry, Ark., is studying at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here, making preparations for future ministries with the girl drug addict.

She has heard the call of the ghetto, and plans to return.

Soon after graduating from Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., in 1967 with a degree in sociology, Mary Ellen went to New York City in response to reading a book by David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

She said that the book was a personal challenge "to share the gospel with drug addicts of the inner city."

Joining the Wilkerson ministry in 1967, Mary Ellen was assigned to the CURE Corps, a Christian rehabilitative and drug prevention mission to the people of the ghetto. Her mission was to reach the girl addict.

Living in a Bronx ghetto was quite an adjustment, compared to her previous life at Mulberry, Ark., with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl B. Earls.

First, she had to become a night person. "Everything happens in the ghetto at night," she said. "The addict-prostitute is out walking the streets. We had to be available to minister to their needs."

Another adjustment was settling into the brownstone apartment where she lived. It was replete with everything imaginable for ghetto housing--rodents, roaches, and general dilapidation. Through the months that followed, there were thefts of food, clothing, and almost anything that could be carried away.

Mary Ellen, however, felt her mission was God-directed, and despite the adjustments, was determined to remain.

She and her fellow workers established "New Start" schools for pre-school ghetto children. Through these efforts with the children, the ghetto Christian workers were able to reach many of the parents with the gospel message, she recalled.

Having established a foot-hold in the ghetto community, the CURE workers began to concentrate on trying to reach the drug addicts.

"We were trusted as teachers and as trusted persons, we could enter the homes and share the gospel message." Mary Ellen said. "In time the addicts grew to trust us as the community trusted us."

Mary had majored in sociology at Ouachita, but ghetto sociology was, something else. She began to understand how the despair of the ghetto forced many to turn to drugs.

Even more disconcerting was the girl addict. In order for her to finance her drug habit, the vicious cycle of life had forced her to become a prostitute, Mary observed.

Mary's ministry became a 24-hour demand. But it did not phase her, because, she said, "We went into this area to be their friends and not just hand them a tract. In time we were able to present Christ to these girls. But we did not stop there. We trained them for an on-going ministry."

Mary's work for 2 1/2 years with the Wilkerson organization may not have changed the entire ghetto, but it did make an impact on the once-empty lives of several people in the Bronx.

Reflecting upon her experience, Mary Ellen said, "I came away even more convinced--when all sociological attempts to change lives of despair have failed, God's power can work miracles."

To that kind of ministry, Mary Ellen Earls plans to return following completion of her seminary studies.

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300 Students Share Faith  
With Vacationing Students

4/8/71

By Marie Nagle

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Because of the meaning of Jesus Christ in their own lives, about 200 students from colleges and universities across the nation came here to share their faith in Jesus with an estimated 70,000 students on spring vacation.

Most of the Christians involved are Baptists, working under the direction of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in one of three week-long sessions planned annually by the board to correspond to the spring invasion of Florida beaches by college students.

The estimated 70,000 young people came from as far away as Canada, many of them seeking rest in the sun away from the grind of studies. Some just come to have a blast.

A steady rain throughout the first day put a damper on the vacationers' plans. Some of the Christians, however, took advantage of the weather and picked up the rain-soaked vacationers, sharing Christ with them on the trip back to their motels.

The Baptist students operated from a beach-side base called "The Rap Room" where they hold morning sessions in Bible study and evangelism training.

In the afternoon, they spread onto the beach, meeting and relating to as many different students as possible.

In addition, the Rap Room offered free food and opportunities to talk about almost any topic--including the faith of the Christians present.

Daytona officials gave the students permission to use a band shell on the world-famous Daytona Boardwalk. Here, the individuals and groups would perform and share personal testimonies with the crowds that gathered.

The students also distributed more than 4,500 copies of the Gospel of John, printed in novel format with a psychedelic cover. Last year, more than 2,500 were placed in the motel rooms, with more than 200 decisions reported as a result.

Most of the Baptist students stayed in private homes arranged by the local coordinator Ed Allen, associate pastor of First Baptist Church here. Area churches provided picnic lunches for them.

Students came from colleges in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Texas, and Virginia.

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## Baptists In Indonesia Expand Radio-Television Facilities

SEMARANG, Indonesia (BP)--After three years in a remodeled bomb shelter, the Baptist radio and television ministry in Indonesia will soon be housed in a new studio.

Thanks to 1970 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering receipts, the studio should be ready by the end of this year, reported Southern Baptist Missionary William N. McElrath.

Radio-TV work had been headquartered in a former bomb shelter at the rear of Baptist Student Center property here. The new studio will have 2 1/2 times as much floor space for recording, and five times as much for control booth and maintenance.

It will enlarge the ministry of the first two Baptists assigned to work full-time in mass media in Indonesia, Missionary G. Barry Nelson and National Pastor Mulus Budianto, who began working in February, 1971.

Missionary William R. O'Brien pioneered Baptist radio-TV work in Indonesia, but he was unable to give it full-time because of duties as a teacher, music evangelist and student worker, said McElrath.

Indonesian Baptists have 10 slots per year on government-run television: six broadcasts from Djakarta, the capital, and four from Jogjakarta, cultural heart of the nation.

These Sunday evening programs feature dramas, choirs, soloists, and ensembles--groups playing handbells, native bamboo rattles and percussion instruments. Dancers perform classical Javanese ballet with Christian interpretation. There are also interviews and regular worship service programs.

Prerecorded Baptist programs are beamed from radio stations on three major islands of Indonesia and from the Far East Broadcasting Company's transmitters in Manila, Philippines.

A part of pastor Mulus Budianto's new job is helping to answer hundreds of letters from listeners. He and missionary Nelson will also produce tape cassettes and train Indonesian Baptists in the evangelistic use of audiovisual materials.



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