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460 James Robertson Parkway
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Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

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Unique Children's Home Gives Youngsters New Start

By Kim Larsen

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--For Lee Whitlock, "family" means a wife and nearly 30 children, and "home" stands for the three converted Sunday School rooms that house his "family."

Whitlock, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and his wife, Joey, both Baptists, work, live, counsel and serve as temporary "parents" at the Emergency Resource Home (ERH) at the Berry Boulevard Presbyterian Church.

The Emergency Resource Home, with one room for boys, one for girls and one room for Lee and Joey, provides not only the physical needs of food and shelter to delinquent and homeless young people, but also offers counseling, friendship and encouragement.

Since the home officially opened in January, nearly 30 young people, ranging in age from 1-17, have stayed at the home, four at a time, for an average of 30 days each.

"The young people who have stayed with us, and the area in general, show great potential," says Whitlock. "Besides that, we're a model situation--the first of it's kind in the area. Hopefully we're the first of many such homes."

ERH was started because of the desperate need in this lower-middle class area for such a home, says Whitlock.

When Senate Bill 171A was passed, stating in part that children could no longer be sent to a juvenile home for running away, truancy or because they were beyond parental control, few places were left to house the young people who fell in these categories. The Emergency Resource Home was started by Berry Boulevard Presbyterian Church, which provides the building, and the local Department of Child Welfare, which offers counseling and placement of children in foster homes.

"The main problem which brings the young people to the home is rejection," says Whitlock. In some cases this rejection leads to auto or bicycle theft, drug abuse or similar crimes, he adds.

Whitlock, 28, has never worked in a similar situation but has found the experience rewarding. "We want to set up a Christian home the young people can really call a home," he says. "We work as a family unit. When Joey and I go to the movies, so do they. When we go out to dinner, they come with us.

"But as things are now, we're only a temporary home for young people. We hope to extend this to the point where we will function not only in a temporary, 30-day situation, but also work on a long term plan, where the young people will stay with us up through their graduation from school.

"When young people are sent back to their own homes, or placed in foster homes, you often have the same problem you had before--rejection," Whitlock says. "Here, we think they at least have a chance."

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Kim Larsen, who served as a 1973 summer intern on the editorial staff of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, is a free lance writer in Atlanta, Ga.

BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist paper editors

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Baptist Students Decry
Misuse of Political Power

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--A petition decrying misuse of political power in the United States was signed informally by 757 persons attending Baptist Student Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center here.

Signatures on the petition did not represent an official vote of the registrants at the student gathering, but they did encompass more than half of the 1,322 students who registered.

No specific mention was made of Watergate or any of its personalities. "We are not attacking Republicans or individuals, but are speaking to an issue," explained Stephen A. Hollaway, 21, a senior at Princeton University and immediate past Baptist Student Union president of the New York Baptist Convention.

The petition was circulated informally by a 15-member Baptist Student Union delegation from the New York Baptist Convention, which encompasses New York state and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut.

Petition drafters included Hollaway, of Nashville, Tenn.; Allen Oliver, pastor of Richboro Baptist Church, Staten Island, N.Y., and Deal Hudson, pastor of Montville Baptist Chapel, Montville, N.J.

Oliver said he will send the petition, along with a cover letter to President Richard M. Nixon, and telegrams and copies of the petition to New York and New Jersey U.S. Congressmen and to the speaker of the House and president pro tem of the Senate.

Citing "widespread misuse of political power among elected officials and their appointees at all levels of government," the four-paragraph statement said, "we must insist that government refuse to continue evading this issue and that it begin an immediate personal and institutional self-evaluation of political ethics.

"The belief that these transgressions may have been 'traditional' in American politics provides no justification for such abuse since the powers entrusted to public officials have never legally exempted them from the law's reprimand," the statement said.

The statement further urged that "the image of servant" replace "the mistaken belief that men of leadership stand above the law.

"By redefining political power in terms of service, we hope that our leaders both meet the needs of the people and submit to their will as expressed by law," the statement said.

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Three Killed in Truck,
Mobile Home Accident

8/29/73

ABILENE, Tex. (BP)--A layman and two teenage girl singers from First Baptist Church here, on their way to a performance in another church, were killed when the mobile home they were riding in crashed and burned.

Harry N. Walker, 38, an Abilene oil executive, was driving a group of singers from the church to a performance in Cross Plains, Tex., when he apparently attempted to pass a pickup truck making a left hand turn.

The motor home hit the pickup, caromed off and struck a tree, then began to burn.

Killed besides Walker were Cathy Merrill and Thyra Margaret Langford, both 15. The injured included Mrs. Walker, her son Paul, 15, and her daughter Pam, 11, and Buddy Fisher, 15.

Fisher was credited with pulling Mrs. Walker from the burning wreckage. He also, along with Paul Walker, attempted to rescue the two girls but the flames became too high.

James Flamming, pastor of First Baptist Church, said his own teenage son was scheduled to make the trip but canceled out due to illness. All the accident victims were members of First Baptist Church, but the singing group was not church sponsored.

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