



-- FEATURES
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Runaways--Why
Do They Run?

By Liz Skillen

THOMASVILLE, N.C.(BP)--The door slammed. "You never listen to me," Shella screamed over her shoulder. Her parents, used to the screaming by now, didn't answer. They figured she'd come back. She didn't.

In 1940, white suburban teenagers on the run numbered less than 100 thousand.

Last year, the same national runaway estimates bordered on 1 million.

And today, at least half of them are girls.

State and national runaway centers, shelters, counselors and hotlines are cropping up to meet the needs of this mobile generation.

Why do they run?

William Springs, psychologist for the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) of North Carolina, says the majority of runners take off because they are unable to verbalize feelings in their home situation.

"As the ability to verbalize decreases," Springs said, "the need to act out one's feelings increases."

According to Springs, individuals may have one of three basic predispositions--a child can react to a problem by fighting back, might decide to throw a monkeywrench into the home or school system, or escape.

"The psychologist's word for running is psycho motor acceleration," Springs explained, "Actually, this form of flight is no different from escaping through drugs, sex or drinking.

"But there are different kinds of runaways," he added. "Not all of them desire to escape."

In his thesis, a "typology of runaways," Mike Lantz, a graduate student in social work at the University of North Carolina, divided runaways into four categories--driftaways, marginal runners, non-runners and the crisis kids.

The driftaway, Lantz explains, is the child with no close family ties; he just gradually moves out.

The marginal runner is the youngster who takes his bike to the corner and waits for someone to come get him.

The child who "runs into himself," who withdraws from those around him, is the non-runner.

The crisis kid puts distance between himself and home.

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) in Chicago adds to the list. Funded by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office of Youth Development, the hotline received 200 calls last year from "throwaways."

Kicked out of the house by his parents, the throwaway is cut off. His only alternative is to start moving. Lantz's crisis kid, then, is the one who actually takes off with a purpose.

The purpose, however, can be confusing. Is he running from something or to something?

"I don't think any child wants to disappear from the face of the earth," Springs said, "but I think in a lot of cases, the child runs to get out of an intolerable situation at home."

Perhaps, also, the psychologist adds, the runner has a fantasy about the place he's going to.

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Springs cites as an example the heyday of the hippie, when large numbers of young people congregated in places like San Francisco. They were simply moving into another society, he says, hoping for the love and acceptance they couldn't find at home.

Lantz supports this. "Running is a fad," he stated. "It's the cool thing to tell your friends that you took off one day. It's also becoming a culture. I think a whole underground runaway society has developed. How else can a North Carolina child, inexperienced and without money, disappear for months and be living in California undetected?"

The NRS toll-free number serves 48 continental states. Last year North Carolina ranked 14 in number of calls from runaways to the switchboard. Sixty-two percent of the NC callers were from somewhere in the state. Only eight other states had a higher percentage of internal runners.

Reaching these teenagers is not easy. The state's Baptist Children's Homes operates four emergency homes where a runaway can check in for the night. However, the child must agree to let a BCH social worker get in touch with his parents within the next 24 hours. After that, with his parent's consent, the child may stay at the home up to ninety days while a plan is worked out for his future care.

Andee Gable, supervisor of the Charlotte Emergency Youth Care Center, notes that the majority of children staying at their home have had a history of running.

"Generally, things haven't been going well at home or at school," Gable noted. "Their parents don't know good ways to handle them, so when the pressure is on, an argument blows. That's when the child splits; he can't communicate, so he leaves."

Gwen Phillips, housemother at the Burlington Emergency Care Home, remembers teenagers that have come to their door.

"Most of the time they are scared inside," Phillips said. "But the majority of them are willing to talk about themselves and their lives."

In one situation, a runaway's mother came and signed her in for a few weeks. "She didn't want to," the housemother noted, "but the girl wouldn't stay home so there wasn't much else for her to do."

In situations like these the Baptist Children's Homes encourages family counseling.

"To get the child and parents or parent living together in an improved situation is always our goal," Springs said. "It may take some time to work this out, but I've seen it happen and I know it's a realistic goal."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

Liz Skillen is a staff writer for Charity and Children, biweekly publication of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc.

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**Baptists' Bold Mission
Needs 'Bold' Funding**

By James Lee Young

NASHVILLE (BP)--A 20 percent increase above the average annual increase in Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program unified budget receipts is necessary "immediately" if the denomination is to finance its missions programs in line with projections through the year 2000, a "Task Force on Bold Mission" was told here.

"Urgency" and "commitment" were repeated again and again as some 50 leaders from a cross section of local, state and national Southern Baptists called for a major thrust in commitment and stewardship to begin immediately.

The task force was drawn together by the denomination's Stewardship Commission, on direction from the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting in Norfolk last June in a resolution on missions challenge.

The 20 percent increase in Cooperative Program receipts is vital and needed, participants were told, even though Southern Baptist's giving during the last fiscal year amounted to a 13.65 percent increase over the previous year. The 20 percent would be above the average 7.5 percent annual increase which the SBC Cooperative Program has experienced over the past 20 years.

A statistical analysis of anticipated receipts and financial needs, according to projections, indicates that by the year 2000, eight times more money will be necessary to fund mission programs than is being given by Southern Baptists at present.

This could bring the SBC Cooperative Program needs to over \$400 million by 2000, according to projections.

Previous calls for major stewardship and mission challenges have come from national "Bible study" groups who dealt with the need for Southern Baptists to give greater emphasis in the areas of stewardship, biblical teaching and preaching, stewardship, commitment and such related emphases as education.

But the task force meeting here was the first SBC-approved, denomination-wide group to meet specifically to suggest needs, and methods, relative to Southern Baptist plans through 2000.

The group expects to meet again to begin detailing specific areas and programs to implement the major thrust participants said was vitally needed involving all areas of Southern Baptist life.

Where the task force goes from the first meeting would be affected by any action the SBC Executive Committee could take in its February, 1977, meeting in Nashville, participants noted.

The Executive Committee, according to 1976 Convention action in Norfolk, is to work with the two mission boards, with the Stewardship Commission, Sunday School Board and the six seminaries "to secure full implementation" of the recommendations of a "Missions Challenge" report approved by messengers and "to coordinate denominational missions goals and action plans looking toward the 21st Century."

The Executive Committee is to report "periodically for the next five years on progress made in achievements in missions," according to the 1976 SBC Annual.

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While no resolutions or any group recommendation were made by the task force, participants in three study groups generally agreed that the proposed major stewardship thrust--to include all areas of Christian living--should also involve every program of Southern Baptists.

Suggestions included step-by-step planning with annual and five-year goals that involve all phases of the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust--an effort to increase Southern Baptists' mission forces and to reach every person in the world with the gospel by the year 2000.

Cooperation in the effort by local churches, associations, state conventions, educational institutions and national agencies of Southern Baptists, was called for, including teaching the "biblical revelation of Christian stewardship" through Sunday School curriculums.

Participants also suggested that Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings emphasize the proposed stewardship-missions thrust to give it greater exposure to Baptists.

They stressed the need for immediate action because the time lag between getting the information to the local churches and ensuring commitment and implementing a major emphasis could be five years or more.

Among speakers was Richard A. Jackson, pastor of North Phoenix (Ariz.) Baptist Church, who was recently elected president of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

"Commitment is more important than programs," Jackson noted. He called for Southern Baptists to be "sold out to a purpose"--of Jesus Christ. "Great works are performed, not by strength," Jackson said, "but by steadiness, everyday."

The program of a New Testament church, he said, "is a threefold ministry of the Word--in proclamation, education and confrontation."

As the meeting drew to a close, SBC President James L. Sullivan of Nashville commented that Southern Baptists will act responsibly and join in if they are given the "handles"--information and tools--to do so.

Brooks Hays Wants Carter
To Have Pro-amnesty Article

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WACO, Tex. (BP)--Brooks Hays, former United States congressman and former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president, plans to present President-elect Jimmy Carter a copy of an amnesty editorial he published in the Baylor University Journal of Church and State.

Hays' request followed an announcement that Carter is preparing a blanket pardon for resisters of the Vietnam military draft. In Hays' editorial, he applied the biblical parable of the prodigal son to argue for amnesty for Vietnam draft resisters.

James Leo Garrett Jr., journal editor and director of the Baylor Church and State program, said Hays asked for a reprint of "Thoughts on Amnesty: A Parabolic Application," which appeared in the autumn 1974 issue of the Baylor journal.

Hays was a congressman from Arkansas from 1943-59, special assistant to the late President John Kennedy, and SBC president from 1957-59.