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FBC, Euless, Fights Abortion
In Pregnancy Testing Center

By Toby Druin

EULESS, Texas (BP)--James T. Draper, Jr. gave his church the facts about abortion in a sermon last January. The results of that message bore fruit with the recent opening of the "Crisis Pregnancy Center" in the Euless Town Center.

Staffed by 35 to 50 volunteers from the First Baptist Church of Euless, the center will offer counseling to girls with problem pregnancies--unmarried teen-agers or any woman faced with having an unwanted child.

The center is a part of the church's evangelism ministry and the principal reason for its existence--the "bottom line," according to business administrator Gary Phillips--is to "lead the girls who come there to Jesus Christ."

But along with leading the girls to salvation, they also hope to lead them away from the decision to have an abortion.

About 85 percent of girls who go to a similar center in Georgia, after which the Euless center is patterned, have decided against abortion, Phillips said. The center, operated by Edgewood Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., sees more than 90 girls each week, and last year was credited with helping cut the abortion rate in the Georgia military town by more than 50 percent, he said.

Charles Thornton, minister of evangelism at the Euless church, will oversee the center operation, but heading it will be Betty Crumpler, who was particularly burdened by stark facts on abortion Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1982-83, shared with his congregation last January.

A group began to meet about the possibility of a center after Draper's sermon and Thornton and Phillips began gathering information. Andy Merritt, associate pastor and director of the center in Georgia, was brought in to explain their program and lead a training session for volunteers. Crumpler visited the Georgia center to see firsthand what they were doing.

The Euless center, in a "neutral" location, a shopping center away from the church, will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and staffed by the volunteers. Crumpler will be the only person on salary.

The center will be advertised as offering free pregnancy testing. No mention of it being pro-life will be made in the advertising, said Phillips, but persons who inquire will be told the nature of the service. The center will be advertised in local papers and shoppers at first, Phillips said. Yellow Page advertising, where abortion clinics carry large ads, simply is too expensive--hundreds of dollars a month, he said.

If they take the pregnancy test, during the half hour the girls are awaiting the results, they will be shown a slide presentation on fetal development and what actually occurs to the baby during various methods of abortion.

"It is important we give the girls the facts about what is going on in the womb," said Phillips. "The abortion clinics tell them that it (the baby) is not alive, that it is just a mass of tissue. What we do is present the gospel and expose them to the fact that what is inside them is a baby--a human being."

If the pregnancy test is positive the girls will be referred to a physician--one who is pro-life, Crumpler said. No medical advice will be given at the center.

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The girl will be encouraged to tell her family about her predicament. "We feel we have a responsibility to the family," she said.

If the girl chooses not to tell her family and needs a place to live, "shepherding" homes among the Eules congregation have been arranged where she can live until giving birth. Several such homes are ready, said Crumpler. This has been typical of the church's response to the establishment of the center.

"Everybody is aware it is needed," she said. "They are excited about it and many have said, 'Let me help.'"

If the girls who come through the center decide to keep their babies, they will be assisted in finding jobs and clothing and other needs will be provided. If a girl decides to place the baby for adoption, the church will work primarily through the Buckner Baptist Benevolences adoption services (affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas) Phillips said.

"And all through the process," he added, "our counselors will be building a relationship with the girl.

"The bottom line is to lead the girl to Christ. Of course, we are concerned about her physical well-being and the baby, but if we can lead the girl to the Lord and get her growing spiritually, we can turn her from the lifestyle that got her into this predicament in the first place."

Phillips cautioned any church entering such a ministry must recognize that the majority of the girls who come to the center will have been involved in pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relationships. "You have to hold a hard line that what they have done is sin," he said, "but that God is redemptive."

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BSSB-N

Piland Said 8.5 Million
Enrollment Is Attainable

By Linda Lawson

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--A net gain of 500,000 persons in Southern Baptist Sunday schools during the 1984-85 church year not only can be achieved, it should be exceeded, according to Harry Piland.

Piland, director of the Sunday school department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, spoke in two sessions during the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

After four consecutive years of enrollment gains totaling 497,000, the one-year SBC goal for 1984-85 was 500,000, which would bring the Bible study enrollment to approximately 8.5 million by Sept. 30, 1985.

Piland noted in 1954, the year of the Million More in '54 emphasis, a net gain of 596,000 in Sunday school was registered. In that year, Southern Baptists had eight million members and a Sunday school enrollment of 6.3 million with a United States population of 163 million.

In contrast, in 1984, the U.S. population is 229 million and Southern Baptists have 14.1 million members with 7.8 million enrolled in Sunday school.

"Would I hear you say God's hand is so short he could not do in 1984, when Southern Baptists have greater resources, what he did in 1954?" Piland asked. He said the constant transfer of members from one Baptist church to another has lulled people into thinking the denomination is winning the world to Christ.

"There are some adult Sunday school classes and departments in which people would be shocked if a lost person came into their group on Sunday morning," Piland said. "We must present the gospel, not just re-sort converts."

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He said if each of the one million Sunday school workers committed themselves to enrolling five persons in 1984-85, a total of five million would be enrolled. Allowing for attrition and transfers, the one-year net gain would be approximately 623,000, said Piland.

"Your pastors can't do all the reaching and winning in your church," said Piland. "The hope of the church lies not in pastors alone but in a lay army mobilized and vitalized."

He urged workers to emphasize two kinds of growth: reaching unchurched persons and ministering to the needs of members.

"It is absolutely unthinkable a Sunday school class would go after the people outside and not take care of its members," said Piland. "It is equally unthinkable that we would not go out into the world to carry out the Great Commission."

When a church stops trying to share the gospel with people who are not Christians, it starts dying, said Piland.

"I think the entire future of this nation rests exclusively on what we do in Bible-believing churches," said Piland. "We are on the precipice of the greatest victory or the greatest defeat we can know."

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BSSB-N

Baptist College Students
Put Attitudes Into Action

By Frank W. White

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8/27/84

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--As nearly 200 college students participated in 11 one-day mission projects in western North Carolina, "Missions: Attitude to Action" became more than just a summer student conference theme.

Directors of missions in the three-association area were skeptical during planning stages of the missions projects that enough students would volunteer to complete the projects. But more than 150 students were turned away because project needs were met.

Kay Huggins, director of missions, division of youth and campus ministries, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, challenged the students on opening night to get involved in missions. "The proof is in the pudding of taking what is learned here back home," he said.

Huggins coordinated the 11 missions projects.

"We tried to get a variety of mission projects," Huggins said. "The primary purpose was to expose the students to missions and help them experience different types of missions."

The projects included visitation at a senior citizens meal site; odd jobs at a Baptist maternity home; a people search in a small community; visitation at a nursing home; a happiness retreat with mentally handicapped persons; work projects and visits at two children's homes; visits to students at a juvenile evaluation center; education about police chaplaincy; odd jobs at a thrift store and food distribution center, and repair work at an elderly couple's home.

"We wanted students to develop an awareness of need," said Nell Magee, national student ministries consultant who was chairperson of the conference.

"Maybe their lives were not changed very much by our being there, but mine was," one student said after visiting a nursing home.

"I remember their faces with looks of surprise when they opened the door," Glenn Miles, a University of Alabama student, said about the people search project.

The people seemed to wonder why the church cared now when it had not cared before, he said. "The reason our churches are so small is because our efforts are small too," Miles concluded.

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Students visiting the juvenile evaluation center were concerned before going because all the center residents had committed felony crimes. "It was just like going into a youth group at church after they opened up to us. They are people, too, no matter what they have done," said Kip Barbour, a Fulton, Mo., student at the University of Missouri--Rolla, after the visit.

"God blessed us when one girl accepted Christ," said Beth Owen, a Columbia, S.C., student at Winthrop College, Rock Hill, S.C.

A senior citizen at the meal site told the visiting students that their visit had made the day "the greatest day I can remember in a long time," said Bob Fort, campus minister at Jackson State University, Jacksonville, Fla.

The Asheville area was selected for the projects not because it is the most needy place in the world but because it was accessible, Huggins explained. "The same situations exist where you are," he told the students.

The mission action session was on the fifth day of the six-day conference where the more than 2,100 participants had been challenged by conference speakers to become involved in missions.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

BSSB-N

Awareness Of Ethnics
Called Critical Need

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches that are ministering with ethnic persons have been given an excellent rating, but there is a critical need for more churches to awaken to the ethnic presence in their communities, experts say.

Caleb Tang, pastor of the Chinese Baptist Church, Austin, Texas; Eliseo Aldape, associate in the Sunday school division, Baptist General Convention of Texas; Ho Kil Kahng, editor and consultant, and Alcides Guajardo, supervisor, both of the church programs and services language unit of the Baptist Sunday School Board, were conference leaders at the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

"I think there are a lot of English-speaking churches which could be involved in outreach toward ethnics if they would become aware," said Guajardo. "It is just that they haven't seen the need or they don't know how. Those who are ministering are generous with facilities, finances and other resources."

Tang said Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin which sponsored his church "has been very supportive. They want the mission to grow," he said. For example, the church provides classes in sewing and cooking as well as Bible study. Then they have involved ethnic pastors in personal witnessing and ministry. Hyde Park also sponsors Korean and Spanish congregations.

"But I also see a lack of seriousness on the part of some about ethnics. For example, I get tired of hearing ethnic jokes," he said. "That says to me we as Southern Baptists are not serious about ethnic work. If we really want to move on, we need to be serious."

Kahng called for mutual efforts by ethnic and Anglo Baptists to draw close together. "Right now ethnic people are viewed as an extension of the foreign mission field. We need to include ethnic people fully in the life of Southern Baptists," he said.

Citing strong ethnic work in Texas, Florida, California and Chicago, Guajardo said, "I think the future is very bright if only Southern Baptists will continue to respond favorably to the needs for resources so that ethnic churches can get the support they need to stabilize their growth."

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BSSB-F

Students Note Differences
Between Culture, Christianity

By Linda Lawson

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—As the Olympics sent a wave of patriotism sweeping across the United States, four Texas Baptist students were learning to distinguish between culture and Christianity during 10 weeks of summer mission service in Melbourne, Australia.

Three seniors—Edwin Wood, University of Texas-Arlington; Marilyn McCulley, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls; Dawn Holt, Texas A & M University, College Station—and Bruce Prindle, a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, were selected for the mission trip and sponsored by the division of student work, Baptist General Convention of Texas.

As part of the Texas Partnership Missions relationship with Australian Baptists, a four-person team had been requested to lay foundations and build relationships before 350 Texans arrived early in August for simultaneous crusades.

The students worked with the youth of Blackburn North Baptist Church, Melbourne, on the campus of Melbourne University, led devotions and Bible studies in high school Christian fellowship groups and directed an after-school program in a primary school.

They reflected on their summer experiences immediately after returning to the United States while attending the student conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

"I learned we need to make a distinction between culture and Christianity," Wood explained. "We tend to think what is good for America is good for God."

"We have such a Texas Southern Baptist Christianity," said Holt. "There is nothing wrong with that. But I saw a completely different view and I hope I'll be able to bring the best of these together."

"We learned a lot about America and about ourselves. It taught us alot to bring home with us," said McCulley.

The students said they soon learned their ministry was to be behind the scenes rather than standing in front of groups. Their primary task was to build relationships.

"We're so accustomed and motivated by up-front ministry," said Holt. "We learned that ministry may be sitting on the back pew with someone and listening."

"When we ministered the most, we were just talking to people one-on-one," McCulley noted. "I learned that you don't minister by going in and trying to tell people what to do. You go in willing to learn from them. In that context you can still share Christ with them. But you don't have to do it the American way."

While the students encountered some initial skepticism toward Americans, they did not feel they were treated unfairly in having to prove themselves.

"The church invited us and liked us. We were asked to earn our trustworthiness," said Prindle. "In a relationship, that is necessary."

"I think it helped them trust Americans when they saw that we didn't come to take over but to be their friends," said McCulley. Wood added, "Several people said we had broken down the prejudices they had had against Americans."

"We tried to build relationships with individuals and between two countries," said Holt. "We were involved in planting seeds. Hopefully, we will see a crop later on."

Brad Gray, consultant in the Texas Partnership Missions department, said the students "far exceeded our expectations. A lot has to do with their willingness to adapt to the culture. Their sensitivity was an asset as was their ability to draw on the resources from their experiences in Baptist Student Union."

Similar teams have been requested by Australian Baptists for the summer of 1985 and 1986.