

**Baptists
for Life inc.**

Holding forth the word of life.

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“BY THE GRACE OF GOD, Baptists for Life will help mobilize and equip the church of Jesus Christ for compassionate sanctity of life ministry and effective Gospel-based outreach.” (BFL Vision Statement)

A biblically sound vision for ministry is essential, especially in the area of pro-life outreach. And that’s what BFL is all about. Despite what anti-life proponents say, abortion and euthanasia are grave spiritual issues that must be addressed with the infallible and inerrant Word of God. And while it’s important that life issues be viewed through the grid of orthodox theology, we must not overlook the destructive impact our culture has on people.

Jesus never missed the forest for the trees. Although He

was committed to the big picture – His mission to conquer sin and death on the cross – He routinely focused on the needs of individuals during his ministry on earth. Perhaps this was best exemplified through His episode with the woman at the well (John 4). This encounter gives us three keys to effective, compassionate evangelistic outreach.

1 Jesus went where the need was great – Samaritan territory – in order to fulfill His divine appointment.

2 Jesus was concerned about matters of the heart –

not just religious arguments – going straight for the woman’s relationship with God.

3 Jesus was obedient to His Father’s will – fulfilling His mission by doing what God required – which sustained His very Being.

What a difference we’d make in sanctity of human life outreach if we all were committed to ministering to the needs of those around us as Jesus did. If only we would serve and share like the Master. Twenty-eight years of abortion on demand has seemingly dulled our senses and pacified our outrage. Only the Spirit of God can revive His church. Please join us in prayer to that end. And, as you read this mid-year report, rejoice with us in what God is doing through BFL.



Ray Paget, BFL
executive director

Training Seminars

THIS SUMMER, BFL MADE GREAT STRIDES toward the goal of helping missionaries establish pregnancy care centers on the foreign field. Missionary Evelyn Stone and BFL’s Ray Paget trained eleven missionaries representing nine countries in PCC development and outreach during the week-long Association of Baptists for World Evangelism Missionary Enrichment Conference. This was the first time such training was specifically targeted for missionary implementation. (Evelyn founded Centro Vida Nueva in Lima, Peru, in 1999 and is currently in the process of opening a second Gospel-based prenatal clinic in another part of the city.)

Over the past months we’ve also been meeting with leaders from Evangelical Baptist Mission to discuss a partnership with Bethesda Outreach, a village for orphans of AIDS victims in

South Africa. In addition to caring for the children, this Gospel-based ministry of compassion plans to make an impact on the surrounding communities with the love of Christ in both word and deed. BFL would assist in the training of staff and missionaries for end-of-life outreach, modeled after our LIFT program.

On the home front, BFL provided training for a new pregnancy

care center in Ellsworth, Michigan, in July, and will do the same for another in Bay City in October. We also organized two days of pregnancy care training workshops for a rescue mission conference in February at Mel Trotter Ministries in Grand Rapids. Over 60 people from all over the Midwest attended.

Leadership Summits

OUR LEADERSHIP SUMMITS bring nationally recognized pro-life speakers, practical workshops, and exhibitors together with PCC directors, staff, volunteers, and board members for two days of instruction, networking, and encouragement. The theme this year was “Shining Brighter,” based on Philippians 2:15-16.

Our Pennsylvania Summit was held April 26 and 27 at ABWE headquarters in Harrisburg. Close to 60 in attendance (representing 19 centers) heard from these pro-life leaders: Sydna Masse of Ramah International, a post-abortion outreach ministry; Bob Foust, formerly of Sav-A-Life; and Jerry Thacker, president of Marketing Partners.

On July 19 and 20, our Grand Rapids Leadership Summit saw its largest gathering ever – more than 130 pro-life leaders from 39 centers in ten states and three foreign countries. Julie Parton, manager of Crisis Pregnancy Ministry for Focus on the Family, was the featured plenary speaker. She challenged us to live holy lives in dedicated service to the Lord.

Baptists for Life does all it can to keep the costs of attending a Summit low, and offers discounts to centers associated with us and



Dr. Miriam Wheeler, missionary to Ukraine (left), and Evelyn Stone (right)

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scholarships to those otherwise not able to come. Your donations helped cover the expenses of bringing a couple from Latvia to our GR Summit. Bill and Donna Schultz (pictured here) minister to about 500 impoverished families and 2,200 orphans through their organization called Mission Pakapieni. They also run a maternity home that helps poor Latvian women avoid abortion and come in contact with the Gospel.



It was a joy to reconnect with our Romanian colleague, Rosalia Vrinceanu, at the GR Leadership Summit. BFL donations enabled her to participate in the workshops and fellowship that the conference always provides. Donations also continue to support her and the Brasov PCC. This year we're raising another \$10,000 for that vital work.

It's always delightful to receive Rosie's weekly email reports on how God is using Clinica Pro-Vita in women's lives. An August report told the story of a university student who wanted a free pregnancy test. Living with her boyfriend, she felt the condemnation of her Orthodox upbringing, but had no assurance that God could forgive her sins or even answer her prayers. For the first time she heard the truth about God's love and grace. By the end of the counseling session, she had prayed to receive Christ as Savior and Lord. Her first act as a new believer was to renounce improper sexual relationships.

The Missing Piece

BAPTISTS FOR LIFE WAS PRIVILEGED to serve on the Adoption Coalition to discuss the findings of research into the attitudes of pregnancy care center counselors toward adoption. The study demonstrated that they don't always present adoption as a viable alternative for women who decide against abortion. PCC workers too often cling to misperceptions about adoption and, as a result, are unwilling or unable to effectively counsel for adoption.

The Family Research Council published the findings and now offers practical solutions to this dilemma in a booklet entitled "The Missing Piece." BFL is joining them and other national pro-life ministries to help centers provide better adoption counseling. In conjunction with our next Summit in Grand Rapids (July 2002) we'll host a three-day adoption counseling seminar.

Financial Outlook

EVERY FALL, BFL's director of finance and development (Tom Lothamer, at right) figures out how much gift income we'll need to receive between October 1 and December 31 in order to end the year in the black and give the new year a strong start. This year, he projects a need of \$145,000 for the last quarter. Please pray with us that the Lord will send these funds.



This year's special events con-

tributed greatly to our overall budget of \$469,000. Our March 15 banquet in Grand Rapids raised \$45,000 in gifts and pledges. Seven hundred twenty-five people attended and heard Dr. Al Meredith speak. The following month Jerry Thacker was the featured guest at our banquet in Frankenmuth, Michigan. One hundred seventy-five people attended and gave gifts and pledges totaling \$3,000. Then, on August 20, 25 teams of golfers played 100 holes at Cedar Chase Golf Club to raise \$24,000 for the ministry.

Please mark these dates on your 2002 calendar: March 14 – GR banquet, with Acts of Renewal; April 18 – Frankenmuth banquet, with Dr. Douglas McLachlan; and August 19 – golf marathon.

Ultrasound Ministry

BFL IS RAISING FUNDS for the purchase of an ultrasound machine for use at the center in Lima, Peru. Such technology will enhance ministry opportunities for the center as women learn to love and care for their unborn babies.

Ultrasound has proven to be a very effective tool for pro-life ministry. One ultrasound technician, Cheryl Boodt of BFL associate Alternatives of Kalamazoo, reports the miracle of being able to measure the heart rate of an unborn baby smaller than a grain of rice (two to three millimeters, at 24 days gestation). BFL bought Alternatives their first sonogram machine in 1993.

One young woman who came to Cheryl for a scan was being pressured by her family to abort. On the monitor, up popped a view of her nine-week-old baby's face – eyes, nose, and mouth clearly recognizable. After that, she knew she couldn't continue with her scheduled abortion. She left with a baby picture to show her parents.

Two primary aims of ultrasound programs are to educate the entire family about a baby's life and development, and to promote an early bond with the child so that they will support women in their pregnancies. Clinics that provide or promote abortion – such as Planned Parenthood – only show women a freeze-frame ultrasound picture, while pro-life sonographer's like Cheryl let women and other family members see the entire examination in real-time motion.

An angry father brought his daughter to Cheryl for an ultrasound, thinking they'd learn how far along she was before taking her to the abortion clinic. He stood in the doorway, watching the proceedings from a distance. Thankfully, the sight of his grandchild moving and waving on the screen was enough to melt and turn his heart.

Quick Clips

- Look for BFL editor Michele Shoun's article on stem cell research in the October issue of the *Baptist Bulletin*.
- Over 175 churches place *LifeMatters*, BFL's new quarterly insert, in their bulletins as a tool to educate folks about life issues. Does yours?
- Sanctity of Human Life Sunday order forms will soon be sent to churches. Encourage your pastor to make this a memorable observance.
- Over 500 prayer partners throughout the United States pray regularly for BFL and our associated centers. Six couples also meet each month at our office for prayer.