

Battered women given asylum

# Shelter aids abused families

By KAREN MCINTOSH  
Reporter

A young woman with four small children walked up the driveway toward the back door of the house. "We went to McDonald's," the woman says. "We played there for a while then we went to the grocery store."

She walked inside the receiving room, followed by the children, and signed her name in the green notebook.

The five entered Phoebe's Home in Bryan.

No, Phoebe does not own the house.

The name comes from the Bible, Romans 16:1-2, where the reader is asked to "help her (Phoebe) in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and myself as well."

Phoebe's Home is an emergency shelter for battered women and their children.

Kathy Stricker, staff member at the shelter, says the women have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by their husbands, boyfriends, siblings or children.

"We had one 65-year-old woman who had been beaten up by her sons," Stricker says.

Other incidents include women being locked in closets, beaten with

broom handles and electrical cords and held by the ankles and dropped to the floor.

One woman reported she was locked in her bedroom for seven days while her husband beat her, mentally tortured her and sexually abused her.

During that time her three children were not allowed to see her except to kiss her goodnight.

The home allows women and their children to stay for up to seven days, Stricker says, but that time may be extended if necessary.

Another staff member, Patton Echols, says that whether the women stay for several days or 24 hours, the majority of them do eventually return to their husbands.

If they choose to stay, the women receive counseling from the home's director, Sherry Blatterwick, and a counseling psychologist.

"The counseling is great," one client says. "I come out a stronger person."

The woman adds that the counselors do not try to turn the women against their husbands.

Yet, Stricker says, "We do try to tell them that if a man hits you once, he is bound to hit you again."

Stricker also says the four staff members advise the women who come to the home and who want to

change their situations.

Echols says, "We help them to get employment, housing and food stamps."

Although the work sometimes is depressing, Stricker says, it is rewarding when you see someone who gets out of the situation and is able to carry on with her life.

Other staff members also say they feel rewarded when there is a successful case.

"I get very excited to see it working," Echols says. "We keep contact with some. They will even come back and show us a new baby."

Battered women can find Phoebe's Home through the police, hospitals and the sheriff's department.

"The support we get from the police and local sheriff is phenomenal," Echols says.

The women are assured they will be protected from their husbands while in the home. As a precaution, double locks are on all the doors, Echols says.

Stricker adds, "The husbands usually don't come because the police drive by every half-hour."

Besides receiving help from police and the home itself, the residents support and advise each other.

"We sit around in there (the living room) and share stories," a client

says. "It's good to know that I'm not the only one this happens to."

Since most of the women work, they help each other care for the children.

Stricker says, "The residents work out baby-sitting schedules among themselves."

The women also cook their own meals and often clean as an effective therapy, Stricker says.

"We had one woman who cleaned this whole house, even the walls," she says.

Twin City Mission Inc. provides much of the money, food and clothing used by the women.

The mission is not the home's only source of supplies.

"We would not function without the support of the local churches," Echols says. She adds that a majority of the money the home receives comes from private donations.

The private donations and contributions from the mission help to make the home a comfortable place to live.

A line in the house rules reads, "there is always room to be yourself."

Yet the clients say they feel at home because of the people who work there.

"There are very special people here," one woman says.

# Self-image key to good relationships

By WADE WILSON  
Reporter

The key to a person's relationship with others is his relationship with himself, Warren Culwell said Wednesday in a lecture sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ at Texas A&M.

Culwell said life is made up of relationships: relationships with self, with people and with God.

"Self-image determines your ability to learn, determines your ability to develop relationships and to love and be loved," the University of Texas graduate said.

Self-image is how a person perceives himself, Culwell said, and is not necessarily based on what is actually there.

"The self-image is developed very early in life, as a little child," he said.

Most people get their self-image from their parents, and how their

parents related with each other, Culwell said.

Self-image is further shaped by society, media and friends, Culwell said.

Very early on, Americans put physical beauty at the top of their list on how to judge others, he said.

"Media is telling you that ugly is out," Culwell said.

People also are judged by their monetary worth.

"Advertising image is not trying to build up self-image," Culwell said, "but to destroy it so you have to go buy their product. Looks, beauty, performance and worth are what media shows as determining self-worth."

He said society dictates the standards to which many people aspire, and therein lies the problem.

"You can never measure up to the

standards society puts on you," Culwell said.

Society always is changing, as are its standards, Culwell said this makes it impossible to measure up to society's goals.

Culwell listed several things that helped him overcome his problems.

"Simply being a Christian did not help," Culwell said.

Positive thinking helped a little, he said, but its effects wore off.

The first thing a person should do, Culwell said, is to accept himself.

People feel inferior in relationships because they can't accept themselves, Culwell said.

If a person does not accept himself, he can't trust what anybody else thinks about him, he said.

A person can't build a relationship if he doesn't trust what the other person thinks, Culwell said.

God accepts everybody as they are, he said.

"If God can totally accept you the way you are," Culwell said, "surely you should be able to also."

After accepting himself, a person must learn to value himself, Culwell said.

"Look at the value God has placed on you — higher than the value anybody else has placed on you," Culwell said.

Culwell said God desired to have a relationship with each person so much that he sent his son to die on the cross.

If God has placed such a high value on the individual, Culwell said, then the individual should place that much value on himself.

Upon accepting and valuing himself, Culwell said, the individual should relax and simply be himself.

"If you accept and value yourself," Culwell said, "it frees you to be yourself."



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