Crisis Pregnancy Center Reaches Rural Residents with Mobile Ultrasound Unit

By Angela Lu

(WNS)—On the flatscreen in a darkened room appears an oblong image with a faint flickering. That's the first look of the baby growing inside 18-year-old Sarah.

"See that?" asks ultrasound nurse Kathryn Kangiser, pointing at the flickering. "That's the baby's heartbeat." She measures the baby's image and finds that Sarah is a little more than seven weeks pregnant. Sarah smiles as a friend, also pregnant, takes pictures with her cell phone and squeals, "Aww, baby!"

Sarah—name changed to protect her privacy—plans to continue the pregnancy, but her parents have threatened to kick her out of the house if she does. Only her friend, who brought her to Alpha Pregnancy Help Center after seeing an ultrasound of her own baby, was encouraging her to keep going.

Before leaving, Kangiser asks the girls if she could pray for them, and they agree. Sherry Garrison, Alpha's executive director, then signs Sarah up for a parenting class.

This type of scene occurs at hundreds of crisis pregnancy centers around the nation, and all deserve praise. What makes Alpha special is its location in Merced, Calif., an area in crisis that has had the biggest drop in home prices—62 percent—in the nation, and its innovative idea of reaching rural residents with a mobile ultrasound unit.

Located in California's Central Valley, Merced is an agricultural community with an influx of Hispanics from Mexico and Hmong from southeast Asia. In 2005, the city became the home of the new University of California, Merced, and speculators inflated home prices. Then came the housing market crash and a slower-than-expected growth in the school: Merced's unemployment rate hit 20 percent.

Now, cash-strapped public schools invite Alpha into their buildings for free assemblies and presentations on abstinence, the danger of STDs, and relationships. Since few among the poor in outlying rural areas have the transportation to get to Alpha's clinic in Merced, Alpha plans to bring the clinic to them with a $147,000 mobile unit featuring an exam table, ultrasound, and flatscreen.

Alpha offers pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, a post-abortion healing group, and parenting classes. On a rainy day in April, the clinic bustles with first-time parents watching videos and filling out worksheets to complete the 25-session parenting class: When they're finished, mothers can pick out $150 worth of baby items that an Alpha employee will purchase for them. Fathers get $75 worth of items.

In one room sits Torrey Rigan, 31, and Jennifer Keller, 29, who is 38 weeks pregnant. The two say they've enjoyed the privacy of the classes and the homey feel of the center. "It's not an overt..."
feeling of religiousness, I don't feel judged," Rigan said. "We kind of expected that since they were giving us money, but that couldn't be further from the truth."

For some clients, the relationships developed with Alpha staffers last long after the class is over. Today, Bethany and Julian Ramos, 20 and 23 respectively, drop in for an unannounced visit with their bubbly 7-month-old, Zachariah. "Everyone is so nice here, so we come back to chat with them," Julian says as Garrison plays with Zachariah on her knee. "I feel like this is our second home."

**NAACP Leader Opposes Group’s Same-Sex Marriage Support**

(WNS)--The Rev. Keith A. Ratliff Sr. said he is in prayer about his relationship with the NAACP following its endorsement of same-sex marriage.

Ratliff is NAACP State Conference President for Iowa and Nebraska. He is also one of 64 members of the NAACP’s national board of directors. And he is pastor the Maple Street Missionary Baptist Church in Des Moines, Iowa.

“I’m against same-sex marriage,” he said. “There are a number of issues that the NAACP has to address and deal with, and I certainly don’t think same-sex marriage should be a top priority.” On Saturday, the 103-year-old civil rights group announced it was supporting same-sex marriage because “Civil marriage is a civil right and a matter of civil law,” according to a statement from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous.

He took exception to the NAACP equating same-sex marriage with the civil rights movement. “There is not a parallel between the homosexual community and the struggles of African-Americans in our country,” Ratliff said. “I haven’t seen any signs on any restrooms that say ‘For Homosexuals Only.’ Homosexuals do not have to sit on the back of the bus, as African-Americans had to.”

**Thin Red Line**

*Chen Guangcheng expresses optimism tempered with realism about his homeland during a press conference in New York*

By Jamie Dean

(WNS)--In Chen Guangcheng’s first press conference since his dramatic arrival in the United States, the blind Chinese human rights activist walked a thin line: He expressed broad optimism about his homeland’s future and blatant realism about conditions for millions living in China’s troubled present.

From a packed room at the Council for Foreign Relations in Midtown Manhattan on Thursday morning, Chen talked about his troubles. The self-educated attorney arrived in the United States
on May 19 after enduring a harrowing escape from brutal house arrest in his home province of Shandong.

Chen had endured years of imprisonment and arbitrary house detention for exposing thousands of forced abortions and sterilizations in Shandong. The activist—blind since childhood—eluded dozens of guards, scaled several walls, and walked many miles before hitching a pre-arranged ride to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing on April 26.

After three weeks of tense negotiations, Chinese and U.S. officials reached an agreement: Chen and his immediate family could travel to America to study at New York University.

Now that Chen is safe, he is worried about his extended family in his home village in China. The activist told the Manhattan crowd that Chinese officials are exerting “intense pressure” on his brother, and that his nephew remains imprisoned without access to an attorney.

Those realities grieve Chen not just because they involve his own family, but also because they’re illegal under Chinese law. For nearly an hour, he spoke about what he sees as the central problem in China: “China does not lack laws, but the rule of law.”

Chen said his own activities in China—including defending the rights of disabled Chinese citizens—centered on asking courts to enforce Chinese law. He said corrupt local officials often ignore the law and abuse their citizens, including his own family: “The moral standards are rock bottom.”

Even the forced abortions that Chen protested are against Chinese law. But those prohibitions haven’t stopped the government from coercing thousands of citizens to undergo forced abortions and sterilizations in pursuit of the country’s one-child policy.

Chen didn’t speak about forced abortions during his press conference or in a New York Times editorial he penned for Wednesday’s edition of the newspaper. But that work was central to his activism in China, and extensively documented by fellow attorneys.

Despite his own ordeal, Chen expressed optimism about China’s future. He said the dissemination of information via the internet and other media makes it harder for Chinese officials to hide things from its citizens, despite ongoing attempts to block internet access to controversial sites. (For example, simple internet searches for information on the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 yield few facts about the actual massacre.)

Still, the number of citizens protesting government abuses continues to rise each year, even in the face of serious reprisals. “The government thinks if they put a lid on problems, they don’t exist,” said Chen. “But the more you put a lid on problems, the bigger they get.”

Chen said he expected to see significant progress toward democracy in China during his lifetime, and that he planned to return to home country after completing his studies. He also said he hoped Chinese officials would keep their pledge to investigate the abuses he endured, and publicly punish anyone responsible: “They made a promise. … I’m waiting.”
If those expectations seem like wishful thinking about an entrenched communist government, even Chen moderated his optimism in his Times editorial: “The government has often failed to fulfill similar commitments.”

For now, Chen said he’s eager to learn more about what’s happened around the world over the last seven years. (The activist received very little information about the outside world while in captivity.) And he’s eager to continue to recuperate from an ordeal that has been grueling for his entire family: “For the last seven years, I haven’t had a weekend. … I need some rest.”

Black Pastors Want President to Rethink Same-Sex Marriage

(WNS)–A national group of black clergymen is asking President Obama to reconsider his support for same-sex marriage. In a formal letter issued on May 22, the Coalition of African-American Pastors (CAAP) wrote, “We cannot and will not remain silent while marriage, the most fundamental institution in our — and any — nation, is undermined by our own President while using Christian language and relating it to civil rights.” CAAP also is taking issue with the “unacceptable” way gay activists continually link their issues with the Civil Rights movement. “For activists, politicians — and now the highest office in the nation to link sexual behavior God calls sin to the righteous cause Martin Luther King gave his life for is abominable in and of itself,” Rev. William Owens, Sr., CAAP’s founder and president, wrote in a statement. “There is no civil right to do what God calls wrong.” Owens, who was a leader in the civil rights efforts in Nashville, Tenn., in the 1960s, also pointed out that the president may find reduced support among black voters this year: The coalition’s own informal poll found 13 percent of blacks said they would “absolutely not” vote for Obama based on his support of same-sex marriage.

Abortion Facility Exposed by Activists Surrenders License

(WNS)–A Birmingham, Ala., abortion business surrendered its license to the state’s Department of Public Health and ceased operations on May 18. New Woman All Women (NWAW) Heath Care came under scrutiny in January after life advocates videoed two women being carried out of the back of the building to waiting ambulances. A review of 911 calls revealed both women had overdosed on a drug administered by the clinic. A subsequent month-long investigation and inspection by the Department of Public Health found many violations — including a third overdose victim — that ran the gamut from lack of properly trained staff to doctors falsifying patient charts to use of equipment that lacked current inspections. “The regulators were able to discern for the first time how horrific this abortion clinic was,” said Troy Newman, president of Operation Rescue. “The number of health code violations [and] drug violations were so numerous that they simply could not be rehabilitated and had to be shut down.” An attempt to reopen under new ownership failed after pro-lifers pointed out a connection between the applicant and owner Diane Derzis – which ran afoul of requirements set up by the state.

Sex-Selective Abortion at Planned Parenthood?
By LaShawn Barber

(WNS)--Live Action, a pro-life advocacy group, released an undercover video yesterday recorded at a Planned Parenthood location in Austin, Texas. The “pregnant” operative tells the employee why she wants to kill her unborn baby.

“I see that you’re saying that you want to terminate if it’s a girl,” the employee said, “so are you just wanting to continue the pregnancy in the meantime?” The so-called counselor informs the operative she can abort up to 23 weeks, and around that time, her baby’s sex can be determined.

Watching the video, I was surprised at this point that the employee didn’t realize this must have been a weird joke or a sting. In its short history, Live Action has recorded Planned Parenthood employees lying about fetal development, advising operatives to lie about their age, and ignoring statutory rape laws. Do pregnant women typically tell the employees they want to abort because the baby is female?

The employee shared some personal details. She got on Medicaid “as if I was gonna continue my pregnancy,” saw an OB-GYN, killed her unborn baby, and remained on Medicaid. Oh, and she’s had two abortions. Nice female bonding moment. Just us girls exercising our right to privacy to get rid of our fetuses!

Counselor “Rebecca,” who represents Planned Parenthood (although the abortion mill might claim rogue employee), advised the operative to see an OB-GYN to get an ultrasound to determine her baby’s sex so she can return to Planned Parenthood and kill her if she’s a girl. “Well, good luck,” the counselor said as the operative is leaving, “and I hope that you do get your boy.”

Sex-selective abortion is all the rage in countries like China and India. According to *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men*, by Mara Hvistendahl, mothers in these countries kill their female babies so often, the sex ratio is 121 boys born for every 100 girls in China and 112 boys born for every 100 girls in India. The natural sex ratio is 105 boys born for every 100 girls.

Sex-selective abortion hasn’t seemed to have caught on in the United States … yet. Three states have banned abortions based on race and sex, and U.S. Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., re-introduced a bill that would do the same.

I’m ambivalent about such laws. In the first trimester, a woman can abort for any reason, and she doesn’t have to share that reason with the abortionist. *Abortion* is the problem, whether based on race, sex, finances, or convenience. Killing a baby because she’s female isn’t worse than killing a baby because you want to spend the summer frolicking on a beach in your designer bikini. A dead baby is a dead baby.

But I’m *not* ambivalent about abortion. I oppose it even in cases of incest or rape. Why punish a baby for the circumstances of his or her conception? That tiny and vulnerable human being is precious, and his life has value, no matter how he was conceived.