

# Christians divided on youth sex-ed course

## Some suspicious of Planned Parenthood Nobody's Fool ties

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For an example of how people who say they share the same Lord can divide themselves into different camps on controversial issues, one need look no further than the congregation of Highland Baptist

Church of Waco.

One family, Mary and Roland Duty, are avid supporters of Nobody's Fool, the annual youth sex education conference of Planned Parenthood of Central Texas, which gets under way today with a parent preview and dinner. She said in a recent interview that they consider it a Christian mission to provide lunch for the participants.

"If the kids don't get this information from us, they'll get it from

the streets, or the Internet or God knows who. It's better to get it from adults who care about them," Duty said.

But a great number of Highland families are upset with their church's name being mentioned in the same sentence as Planned Parenthood and Nobody's Fool.

Mark Wible, associate pastor of Highland Baptist Church, which is not a sponsor of the 15th annual conference for students in grades five to nine, said that the Dutys not

withstanding, the vast majority of his flock opposes such programming. His congregation supports chastity before marriage, and the sanctity of sex within marriage, he said.

Just who should be teaching young ones the facts of life prompts vehement and sometimes venomous disagreement, Wible said. Opponents of Nobody's Fool, in-

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### Plans to picket in the works

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cluding Pro-Life Waco and Waco Right-to-Life have indicated they will picket a number of church and business sites to express their disapproval of Planned Parenthood's allies.

Local houses of worship that are co-sponsors of Nobody's Fool include Seventh and James Baptist Church, Lake Shore Baptist Church, First Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian Church, CrossTies Ecumenical Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, Metropolitan Community Church, Temple Rodet Sholon and Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of

Waco.

Jerry Kirkpatrick, interim pastor of Lakewood Christian Church, said he and his wife, Brenda, will volunteer at Nobody's Fool in memory of her father, a founder of Planned Parenthood in Amarillo. He said that Smallwood made a presentation at Lakewood about the program in the last year and was well-received.

"But we did lose a member over the whole thing, a dear lady the old lady who would not listen to any side but her own and was pretty self-righteous about everything," he recalled.

Because Kirkpatrick believes so strongly in the educational opportunity presented at the event, he added, he has in the past worked as an "escort," shepherding groups past his fellow Christians shouting on the sidelines.

The Rev. Raymond Bailey,

pastor of Seventh and James Baptist Church, said the event provides a service because a great number of area youths have neither a church family or a parent to turn to for reliable information on sexual development.

"Texas leads the nation in out-of-wedlock births," he said.

"There has to be ways of reaching the general public. Ideally, this is a discussion that should take place in the family or at church, but that appetite for information is not being met there."

Seventh and James holds to traditional Christian teachings about the sanctity of sex within the bonds of holy matrimony, Bailey said. But the church also acknowledges the public health concerns associated with young people not having the information they need to make wise choices with their sexual

behavior, he said.

Not every member of his church agrees with co-sponsorship of Nobody's Fool, he added. "I do get critical, sometimes nasty letters taking issue with it. There has been a concerted effort to influence our church" by outsiders spreading disinformation about the event, he said.

"A number of our young people who have gone have not found any conflict with their Christianity and say what they have learned there helped," Bailey said. "Abstinence is the ideal. If this were an ideal world, there would be no divorce, no child abuse, no sexual misconduct; but in the real world we have all these things."

John Pisciotta, co-director of Pro-Life Waco and a member of St. Jerome's Catholic Church, is the leader of a campaign to get

Nobody's Fool supporters to drop their ties to Planned Parenthood. He said many of "the 'educational materials' used in this event have always been pornographic." He has been especially adamant in his criticism of the Robbie Harris books — *It's So Amazing* and *It's Perfectly Normal* — which he describes as "a full-scale assault on Christian sexual morality."

Pam Smallwood, executive director of Planned Parenthood and a member of Lake Shore Baptist Church, said event co-sponsors are given complete information on the curriculum and the supplemental materials offered at Nobody's Fool.

"We have had not one complaint from a parent whose child was given the book last year," Smallwood said.

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