



December 12, 1968

Former London Tough Now
Ministers To Roughnecks

By Robert O'Brien

DALLAS (BP)--Vic Jackopson, a former London street gang leader with scars to prove it, has some very definite ideas about teenage "roughs" and how the church is failing them.

The 27-year-old Baptist minister from England, currently on a tour of churches and student groups in the United States, believes the church fails when it doesn't get outside its four walls and "get down where the people are and listen to what they are saying." It fails, he says, when it becomes more interested in numerical success and organization than in people.

"The only way a church can fulfill its ministry," he says, "is to relate to those who are disenfranchised with it; those who wouldn't come to it on a bet."

Vic's experiences of witnessing to young roughnecks armed with "flick" knives, and to prostitutes in Soho (London) indicate that he practices what he preaches.

"I preach and I believe in preaching" he said, "but sometimes I have to give up preaching and listen. Half my work seems to be sitting with kids and listening--and preparing myself to give answers to the questions they are asking. Too many ministers are prepared to answer without listening."

If a person is to preach, Vic believes, he must do so in modern language that people won't tune out "like a TV commercial."

Vic feels at home with the unfortunates of London's Soho District--because he was one. "I love those people and I believe I understand them," he says with a faraway look.

Vic's background in London uniquely qualified him for this kind of understanding. Before he became a Christian he led a life of house breaking, booze, fights with knives and broken beer bottles, jail, and loveless orphanhood.

Now as pastor of a 50-member church in the Wandsworth area of downtown London, the muscular, articulate young minister delights in working with youngsters who might never be as fortunate as he was when he read Matthew's gospel in a prison cell and accepted Christ.

His "kids" number three times the membership of his church, and the "roughneck group" alone numbers about 60. Some of the kids are reached by organized youth groups in his church. But the freewheeling, hard-to-discipline roughnecks are another matter.

"I hang loose with them" he chuckles, "and try to reach them in any manner that seems most effective wherever they are--in a pub or a Wimpy Bar" (hamburger stand). The kids "jolly well know" they can't "con" him and they respect him, paradoxically, because of what he used to be and what he is now.

"I never consciously try to attract the roughnecks to a worship service," he emphasizes. "First, I try to show them--out in the neighborhood--why Christ should become the center of their lives. Then, when friendship is built up and they know and respect the purpose behind my life, they come along to the church and make it their 'pad.' As the kids come, their parents begin to take an interest and ask questions."

Vic is a very convincing young man--whether he's talking to a sophisticated group at the 15,000 member First Baptist Church of Dallas or to a gang leader bent on his annihilation.

His closest call came once after he'd helped a 17-year-old girl break free of a life of prostitution. Her pimp--a young gang leader who had been making 30 pounds a week off her earnings--looked Vic up in the company of 20 others to "do him over."

Timing his moves perfectly, Vic went out to meet them. Before his surprised foes could react, he grabbed the leader, hustled him into a side door and locked it.

"If you want to have a go at me," he said, "have it now."

"Let's talk," wheedled the once swaggering bully. "Wot do you think uer doin' messin' aroun' with me girl?"

Vic talked.

A half hour later, the boy came out the door in tears and sent his gang away.

"I never knew before that Christians really cared," he said emotionally.



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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

REGIONAL OFFICES

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 1350 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Billy Keith, Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,
Telephone (615) 254-1631

December 12, 1968

SBC Membership Estimated
At 11.3 Million in 1968

NASHVILLE (BP)--Statistical projections based on an early profile analysis indicate that 1968 Southern Baptist Convention church membership will be 11.3 million, Southern Baptist leaders were told here.

The statistical projection, was based on the first 25,368 church letters received and processed by the research and statistics department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here.

If the unofficial projections are correct, church membership would have increased about 180,800 over the 1967 total church membership.

Possible decreases were projected, however, in Sunday School, Training Union, Brotherhood, and Woman's Missionary Union enrollments, and also in the number of baptisms compared to 1967. An increase was projected in music ministry enrollments.

"The churches involved in this estimate are not completely representative of all Southern Baptist churches--some church size categories and state conventions are over represented due in part to the sequence of associational meetings," said Martin Bradley, secretary of the research and statistics department.

"However," Bradley said, "in arriving at the projections, statistical adjustments were made to effect proportionate representation of churches according to size and location."

"For instance, most meetings in Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri are held in August or September. In a number of other states, meetings are held during the middle and latter part of October. Receipt of church letters is closely related in time to the associational meetings.

The estimate disclosed a possible decline in number of baptisms from 378,937 to 370,726. This would be a decrease of 8,211 from the 1967 total.

The system of reporting Training Union enrollments was changed this year, but the ongoing Training Union enrollment for 1968 was projected to be 2,514,165 compared to 2,451,914 in 1967, a decrease of 62,251. The new system of reporting will be further explained when final figures are released in February.

Sunday School enrollment was projected as 7,532,215 in 1968, a possible decrease of 46,888.

Woman's Missionary Union enrollments were projected to total 1,401,244 for 1968, an estimated decrease of 43,220.

Brotherhood, the men's and boys' mission education organization, was projected to decrease by 7,881 with a total possible enrollment of 449,889 for 1968.

Music ministry continued upward with an estimated total enrollment of 1,038,612, a projected increase of 19,482.

Total mission gifts were projected to be \$129,697,138 for 1968, a projected increase of \$9,242,269.

Final statistics based on church letters from more than 34,000 SBC churches will be released by the research and statistics department in February.

The preliminary statistical projections were released here during sessions of the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference.

CORRECTION

Please substitute the following for paragraph 9. The 1968-1967 figures above are reversed. Correction follows:Training Union enrollment for 1968 was projected to be 2,451,914 compared to 2,514,165 in 1967,.....

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Psychedelic Drugs Give Religious
Experience, MIT Professor Says

MURFREESBORO, N.C. (BP)--Psychedelic drugs can give users a uniquely religious experience, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology told students at Chowan College here.

Huston Smith, professor of philosophy at M.I.T., told the students at the Baptist school of his own experiences in using psychedelic drugs in a scientific experiment at Harvard University.

Smith said that the experiences are basically "religious" when the drugs produce a sense of ultimacy, have implications for the living of life, and help people gain a deeper perception of truth.

When asked about the harmful effects of L.S.D. and other psychedelic drugs, he replied: "We don't know" what the harmful effects really are.

He pointed out that more than 300 injections to Timothy Leary, leader of a psychedelic religious cult, produced no detectable physical, mental or emotional damage, but seemed to give him a type of charisma that he desired, making him a leader with a large following.

He did not comment on reports that serious birth defects have resulted in children born to women using drugs, and reports of emotional and mental disorders.

Answering another question from the audience, Smith said that marijuana is actually less harmful than alcohol.

Smith, famous educator and author of several books dealing with bridging intellectual gulfs between east and west and science and humanities, delivered three lectures at the Baptist college on "Science and Human Values," "The Coming World Civilization," and "Psychedelics and Human Values."

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Southwestern Seminary
Elects Patterson Prof

(12-12-68)

FORT WORTH (BP)--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees have elected Farrar Patterson as assistant professor of preaching and oral communications.

Patterson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Columbus, Tex., will specialize in oral communications as it relates to radio and television, joining the seminary in January.

He is a former pastor of Baptist churches in Collierville, Tenn., and Weatherford, Tex., and former Baptist Student Union director and Bible instructor at East Central State College, Ada, Okla. He is a native of Tennessee.

Patterson is a graduate of Southeastern Bible College, Birmingham; Baylor University, Waco, Tex.; Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, and Southwestern Seminary where he earned the doctor of theology degree.

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Georgia, Kentucky Baptists
Called To Prayer For Peace

(12-12-68)

ATLANTA (BP)--Georgia and Kentucky Baptists have been asked to observe Dec. 22 as a day of prayer for peace.

The call to prayer for Georgia Baptists was issued by the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Earlier, a similar plea went to Kentucky Baptists from the Executive Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The Georgia recommendation also asked for prayer for "all of those in positions of leadership" and for "cooperation among men in the establishment of a world society respecting human dignity, guaranteeing liberty and justice, and in eliminating the ancient forces of the human family--hunger, disease, and the lack of knowledge."

In other actions, the Georgia body approved a record state missions body of \$991,943, and instructed its administrative committee to give special attention to three major matters---creation of a counseling service for ministers and their families, "vigorous salary increases" for state mission employees, and auditor's studies of the financial plight of Norman Junior College which faces a \$221,261 deficit in current operations.

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Evangelism Secretaries Hear
Plans for Crusade of Americas

NASHVILLE (BP)--Let there be no let-down in evangelism in 1970 following the Crusade of the Americas, state secretaries of evangelism were told during their group sessions at the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference here.

Jack Stanton, associate director in the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's division of evangelism, revealed plans for an evangelistic film ministry, a magazine for non-Christians designed for distribution in places like waiting rooms at doctors' offices, and materials for special thrusts in evangelism in ghettos, poverty centers, academic communities, youth groups, and industry.

He also said a seven-week "Strength for Living Emphasis" blending both old and new methods, will be available for use by churches in 1969-70.

Plans for three nationwide color telecasts in March and April were explained by Stanton. Scheduled for prime evening time, the telecasts feature Billy Graham, commentator Paul Harvey as narrator, The Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, and The Tuneclippers, a youth group.

The evangelism division of the Home Mission Board is underwriting the costs of purchasing time in 39 metropolitan areas across the United States--representing 75% of the viewing audience. Some state conventions plan to secure additional outlets. Southern Baptists' Radio and Television Commission produced the telecasts.

In addition to reports on Crusade-related activities, the state leaders in evangelism received information on advances in campus and metropolitan evangelism.

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Baptist Church Choir
Featured On NBC Radio

(12-12-68)

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--The adult choir of the First Baptist Church here was featured on the "Voices of Christmas" radio program broadcast over the National Broadcasting System network (on Dec. 11).

It was the only church choir, and the only Southern Baptist choral group chosen this year among the 12 groups performing on the 30-minute annual choral series.

The taped presentation of the Christmas music by the 50-voice choir has also been made into a recording by Century Records.

William E. Jarvis, minister of music at the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, is the director of the choir. Jarvis previously was minister of music at churches in Greenville, S.C., and Jackson, Miss.

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