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**Missionaries Face Danger  
In High Crime City Areas**

By Dan Martin

**NEW YORK (BP)--Murders, gang fights, drug operations and human tragedy mark the lives of Southern Baptist missionaries who live and work in the high crime areas of our nation.**

Richard Wilson had both eyes blackened and his nose broken while breaking up a fight; Mary Vorsten saw a gang fight erupt on a street outside her office late one night; Sam Simpson confronted a group of angry youths intent on mayhem and possibly murder near his Bronx church;

A young woman was knifed to death and her small children--ages two and four--wer abducted during another gang fight near where Jim Queen and a group of volunteers were conducting a Vacation Bible School in Chicago; Bruce Schoonmaker discovered a \$30,000-a-day drug operation across the street from a vacant lot he and volunteers had cleared for a playground.

These--and other--Southern Baptist home missionaries dally brave personal dang r to confront crime, despair, hopelessness and fear in the brick and steel mountains and wind-swept concrete canyons of the nation's large cities.

But, despite the context in which they work, many missionaries live and go about their lives in an almost normal manner.

"You cannot work here and be threatened all the time," says Ray Gilliland, director of Christian Social Ministries for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association. "If you are going to live here, you can't live that way...in fear."

Schoonmaker, who directs Graffiti Center on the Lower East Side of New York City, says those to whom he ministers have "everyday lives composed of slums, poverty, unemployment and visually depressing sights," and that drugs are coupled with crime and hopelessness.

"There just aren't jobs for most of the people on the Lower East Side," he says. "Most peopl are poor. Unemployment is chronic. Some of the jobs are like watching a flower stand on the street to make sure they don't get ripped off. It pays \$75 a week...not even as much as welfare.

"Money is to be had on the streets. Many people have no ethics and so they see nothing wrong with going onto the streets, dealing in drugs, crime and human flesh. That is where the prestige and money are. They can make more money on the streets than on welfar ."

The whole situation, he says, "just makes you want to cry."

While Schoonmaker attributes high crime to lack of jobs and general hopelessness, Gilliland says crime is high because people are frustrated. "I realize any word I use would be an oversimplification," he says. "But I think many times individuals in cities such as New York do things because of frustration.

"The tenements are what we call 'layered living.' They're constantly surrounded by people, being buffeted. The frustration builds up. If they do not have a vital contact with Jesus Christ, they don't have anyone to lean on, to love them. They want to be recognized as people."

The frustration often erupts into self destruction, says Schoonmaker, telling about a young boy who watched his mother die when she jumped off a tenement building the night he returned from a field trip.

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Occasionally, the frustration takes the form of anger and outward violence and there are gang fights between such groups as the Latin Lords, Insane Maniacs, Imperial Gangsters, Disciples, Latin Kings, Unknowns and others.

The missionaries are careful and they warn visitors to avoid walking by abandoned, vacant or burned buildings "where the muggings occur."

Gilliland says he is not fearful, but cautious and insists on a strict code of conduct for visitors. "We tell women not to carry shoulder bags or any kind of handbags, but to keep their money in their pockets or shoes," he says. "We also suggest the women go in groups and never travel alone. We also tell them to wear grungy clothing...not their best attire."

Graffiti Center has been burglarized, as have apartments of most of the people who participate in the center's programs. "It is the kind of thing that is going to happen eventually," Schoonmaker says. "If you take adequate precautions, you are relatively safe, but at one time or another nearly everybody gets burglarized."

Despite the context in which they work, they continue to witness and minister. Wilson, who directs Rachel Sims Center in New Orleans, says danger has not stopped the Baptist witness even in the roughest areas.

"About four blocks from our center is a federal housing project called Irish Channel," he says. "It is very rough; few single police cars go in there. Usually there are four or five cars at a time because of the danger. We usually go in there in the daytime. We do not go alone and most often go in triples, two to visit and one to watch the car."

Human tragedy stalks the lives of the missionaries who work in high crime areas. Schoonmaker related the story of a boy with whom Graffiti Center had worked:

"They (drug merchants) had taken him on as one of their flunkies...sort of the lowest man on the rung. It was very exciting and glamorous to him, even though he was running errands and washing cars," he says.

The boy came to summer programs and storefront activities although "he was never very active. He was friendly and we had some contact with him. I had hoped to do some individual work with him this year...but if he is making these kinds of contacts (with drug pushers) it will be very difficult to do anything with him now.

"It really tears your heart out because you know how it is going to end. If he gets sucked into drug dealing, his life will not be worth two bits. He is going to end up dead."

The boy, the missionary said, is 11-years-old.

Queen works in Uptown, an area which has been called the "dumping ground of Chicago," and has established a ministry of walking the streets, visiting and talking to people in the deteriorating tenements.

"Chicago is a big metropolitan area with lots of people in it," he says. "Uptown is a forgotten little corner of it. Uptown is a ghetto, which is a place where once you get in, you can't get out of."

Queen maintains Baptists "have to deal with cities in a different way than we have been dealing with them. We have a tendency, as a church grows, to move them out from the center city. We have forgotten that most of the people with heartaches and problems are located in the city. There is massive need in the city.

"The city is where all the poor are...where all of the scrambled people are. I think the church needs to come to the city. If Jesus were here today, I think He would say, 'I have to go through Uptown,' just like He went through Samaria. I think He would make special trips to places like this."

Perhaps through the lives of people like Jim Queen, Mary Vorsten, Bruce Schoonmaker, Ray Gilliland, Richard Wilson and many many others, Jesus is visiting the hopeless, frustrated, despairing people who live in the Humboldt Parks, East Seventh Streets, Irish Channels, and the Bronxes of America.

Harry Piland Elected  
Sunday School Director

By Charles Willis

HOLD FOR RELEASE: MONDAY, F b. 6.

NASHVILLE (BP)--Harry M. Piland, minister of education for First Baptist Church, Houston, since 1973, has been elected director of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department, effective February 27.

Piland, 49, succeeds A. V. Washburn, who retired in August 1977 following 20 years as secretary of the Sunday School department. He had been employed with the board in Sunday School work for 44 years.

Following Piland's election by the institution's trustees, board president, Grady C. Cothen, noted that "a careful and prayerful search has gone on for three years to find a new director for the Sunday School department.

"We know that God has led us in this search to Harry Piland," he said. "He is skilled in growing Sunday Schools and in developing strong leadership. His credentials--academically, professionally, and practically--are superb. He is a skilled administrator and an effective communicator. We are highly pleased to have secured the services of Dr. Piland for this crucial post in Baptist life."

As the national leader for Southern Baptists' Sunday School movement, Piland will manage a department that employs 135 persons in editorial and promotion activities. Currently 73 quarterly and monthly Sunday School publications are produced with a combined circulation of 39,980,100. The nationwide projected enrollment for Sunday School during 1976-77 is 7,421,083.

During his years of service at Houston's First Baptist Church, Sunday School attendance has increased to between 2,400 and 2,500 persons each week. In the early 1970s, attendance had been between 600 and 700 persons each week.

A native of Austin, Tex., Piland has served as minister of education for the Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin; the James Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth; and the University Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

He is a graduate of the University of Texas, Austin, and holds the master and doctor of religious education degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

A frequent contributor to Southern Baptist publications, Piland is active in the Southwestern Baptist Religious Education Association and the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association. He is the president of the Association of Christian Educators, Union Baptist Association, Houston.

He has been a member of the Human Welfare Coordinating Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and has served as president of the Southwestern Baptist Religious Education Association and of the Southwestern Seminary Texas Alumni.

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Charles Willis is news media coordinator, office of communications, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

(BP) Photo will be mailed ASAP to Baptist state papers by the Sunday School Board.

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Board Establishes  
Ethnic-Black Unit

Baptist Press  
2/2/78

NASHVILLE (BP)--Increasing numbers of ethnic and black churches in the Southern Baptist Convention has led to the creation of a special unit at the Sunday School Board to relate to the needs of these churches.

Trustees of the Sunday School Board, in their semi-annual meeting in Nashville, approved creation of the unit along with the naming of Robert M. Boyd as the temporary supervisor.

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Grady C. Cothen, president of the board, said the unit "will represent only Sunday School Board programs to these ethnic and black groups. We plan to cooperate closely with similar operations at the Home Mission Board," Cothen continued, "to provide services for all Southern Baptist churches as they plan their ministries."

Cothen said that "once lines are established, we should get sufficient ethnic feedback to require employment of one person of ethnic background and one black person who will be generalists representing all Sunday School Board interests to the appropriate publics."

Boyd, 50, a Kentucky native, has been director of the conference center division at the Sunday School Board since 1971. Prior to that he headed the board's church recreation department and served as a consultant in the same department. Before coming to the Sunday School Board he was recreation director of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Tex., and associate pastor of Deer Park Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.

He holds a bachelor of science degree from Murray (Ky.) State College, a master of science degree from Indiana University and a master of religious education degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

In his new position as supervisor of the ethnic and black services unit, Boyd also will relate to colleges, universities and Bible schools to represent Sunday School Board interests and programs. The new unit will be temporarily attached to the office of planning.

Persons hired into the new unit will do some field work and maintain contact with state convention persons related to Sunday School Board programs. New ethnic or black workers also will relate closely to other Southern Baptist Convention units involved with ministries to ethnic and black persons.

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Study Pilot Tapes  
Excite Trustees

Baptist Press  
2/2/78

NASHVILLE (BP)--Pilot tapes of a new television Bible study series received strong support after a preview for trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board at the semi-annual meeting in Nashville.

"This concept has a tremendous potential for reaching thousands of people for Christ," said Presnall H. Wood, trustee chairman and editor of the Baptist Standard, newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "It's one of the finest vehicles we've had for some time."

Two separate shows were prepared to provide a choice of styles between two different programs. Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., was the Bible teaching host on both programs. Singing artists Cynthia Clawson and Joe Ann Shelton each appeared on one of the programs.

Trustee Lloyd E. Batson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pickens, S. C., said, "I'm excited about the Home Bible Study programs, especially when you consider the amount of time people spend in front of the television. The idea is great."

Houston, Tex., attorney Jerre H. Frazier said he considered the television programming concept the "most significant program considered since I've been on the board of trustees. It expands our efforts into new areas, with a great opportunity to reach people."

The Home Bible Study Series television programs will premiere nationwide in October. Free curriculum materials also will be available from the Sunday School Board at that time.

The pilots were taped in the studio facilities of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth, marking the first joint effort between that agency and the Sunday School Board. The Sunday School Board is providing all curriculum materials to accompany the television series, while the Radio and Television Commission is providing technical expertise for filming the programs.

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