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December 14, 1981

81-191

**Mission Pioneer Replants
Life Where Husband Died**

By Bill Webb

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Wimpy Harper would be proud.

His widow, Juanita, will return to the east African mission field she and Wimpy helped pioneer for Southern Baptists 25 years ago.

Winfred O. "Wimpy" Harper, affable missionary evangelist, drowned while swimming in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1958. Jesse C. Fletcher preserved his memory in a biography, "Wimpy Harper of Africa," published in 1966 but currently out of print.

Now, 23 years after returning to Corpus Christi, Texas, to rear their three children, Juanita Harper has been reappointed a foreign missionary.

The 61-year-old grandmother of seven will be stationed in Nairobi, Kenya, as assistant to James Hampton, associate to Davis Saunders, area director for eastern and southern Africa.

Her children--Bill, Richard and Beth--all have their own families now. Richard, just 6 months old when Wimpy and Juanita began their missionary career in Abeokuta, Nigeria, is himself a missionary, assigned with his wife, Kathy, to Sao Paulo, Brazil.

In 1956, when the Harpers moved to Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika, to begin new work, no other Southern Baptist missionaries worked in eastern Africa.

Today, she joins a force of 465 missionaries in an area now embracing 16 countries in eastern and southern Africa.

Thirty years ago she went to Africa primarily as a missionary homemaker, sometimes living in bush areas. Soon she will be a secretary, administrator and hostess in a modern African city of nearly a million people.

Foreign mission service this time comes on the heels of a rewarding career of 22 years with the Corpus Christi Baptist Association and its recently retired director, W. H. "Bill" Colson.

Hired as Colson's administrative secretary, she helped him compensate for poor eyesight by reading and driving for him. She continued to work closely with him when she became Christian social ministries director for the association in 1969 under Home Mission Board appointment.

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Her position gave her opportunities to participate in World Missions Conferences and accept other speaking engagements; her testimony always began with foreign missions, she said, and went into home missions, "the story of my life."

Through the years, missionary friends urged her to consider returning to east Africa, particularly on her visits back there on the 10th and 20th anniversaries of the work in that area.

"But as I prayed, the greatest need was with Bill Colson in Corpus Christi," she said. "Up until his retirement (Nov. 1), it was still the greatest need I could fill."

As his retirement neared, she prayed and began to rethink her future.

When Saunders, another of the east Africa pioneer missionaries and still a close friend, called Sept. 30 to ask her to consider returning to the field, "It just knocked the breath out of me," she admitted.

Prayer assured her that God was indeed leading her back to the continent where she had buried her husband and once before had planted her own life.

"I know Wimpy did not die in vain," she said, holding a worn copy of "Wimpy Harper of Africa."

The undertow that took Harper's life in 1958 threatened to claim his wife; 15-year-old son, Bill; and Martha Brown, the daughter of missionary Lorne Brown. A good swimmer, Brown helped Mrs. Harper and his own daughter back to shore, and Bill made it back on his own.

A band of grief-stricken missionaries buried Wimpy Harper the next day in Dar es Salaam.

Several missionaries now in Africa have told Mrs. Harper that after hearing her husband preach about Africa on furlough, they were challenged to give their lives there. Others say the news of Wimpy Harper's death brought east Africa to their minds.

Juanita Harper is a little frightened at the prospect of returning to the mission field, but, flashing a winsome smile, she confides, "I'm very excited, too."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Missionaries In Libya
Make Decision to Leave

Baptist Press
12/14/81

TRIPOLI, Libya (BP)--Southern Baptists' only missionary family in Libya has decided to leave as urged by the American government.

Harold and Dorothy Amos Blankenship, from Tennessee and Alabama, reported by telephone Dec. 14 that their departure would be dependent on when exit visas are approved. Unless they are able to get their residence visa renewed, they will be required to leave by Dec. 21, but they hope to stay until the first week in January in order to spend Christmas with members of their church. They are planning a Christmas luncheon in their home.

The Blankenships plan to transfer to another middle eastern country when they leave Libya.

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"We count on the prayers of people back home," said Mrs. Blankenship, adding that everything was normal and quiet in Libya. Her husband had reported earlier that about 50 people, a normal crowd, attended regular services of the English-language Baptist church in Tripoli Friday, Dec. 11. The church, which he serves as pastor, meets on Friday because that is the Moslem holy day when offices and businesses close.

Mobil Oil Co. people were leaving Dec. 14, said Mrs. Blankenship. But some companies had decided to stay in Libya and others had not yet made a decision.

The Blankenships, the first Southern Baptist missionaries to work in Libya, have worked primarily with Americans living there. The English-language Baptist church was organized by a group of American oil company employees and military personnel three years before they arrived in 1965. American military personnel pulled out of the country in 1970, but American oil company personnel have remained.

The youngest of the couple's three children, Franklin, 14, is in Libya with them.

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BBI Gains Accreditation,
Mid-America Turned Down

Baptist Press
12/14/81

DALLAS (BP)--Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, Fla., has received full accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Joseph P. DuBose, president of the Florida Baptist Convention-supported Bible school, was notified accreditation had been granted while attending the annual SACS meeting in Dallas.

To be accredited, a school must meet stringent guidelines concerning academic requirements, fiscal policies, the governance of the school and the institution's physical plant. Once accredited, its students may transfer course credits to another accredited school.

"We're elated," said DuBose, noting the accreditation will be "a boon to the school." DuBose said the seven-and-a-half year quest for accreditation has already "been a process which has strengthened our entire program."

Accreditation will help the Bible Institute reach more students, said DuBose, and has already "lifted the moral of students and faculty--recognizing the quality of their work."

At the same SACS meeting, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary of Memphis, Tenn., an independent seminary with strong ties to several Southern Baptist churches, was turned down for full accreditation by the association's Commission on Colleges.

John Floyd, academic vice president of the seminary, said he was "aghast" that the commission refused to endorse the school's request for accreditation.

The seminary has been in candidate status--an intermediate step to full accreditation--for five years. After making application for full accreditation, the school was visited by a valuation team appointed by SACS. "They seemed well pleased," recalled Floyd.

Officials of the seminary were then invited to appear before the SACS Committee on Standards at the Dallas meeting. Expecting an affirmative response to their application, the seminary officials instead received notice of the denial of full accreditation by the Commission on Colleges.

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"We feel we met all the standards of accreditation," said the disappointed Floyd. "We responded quickly and effectively to all the requests made by the visiting team."

The Commission on Colleges, comprised of several representatives from each state of the Southern Association, has not yet informed the school as to why they turned down the request for accreditation.

"We understand there were some (on the commission) who spoke out against us," said Floyd.

The seminary has chosen to make an appeal to an Appeals Board to be appointed within the next 30 days. After the board is appointed, Mid-America will have 60 days to argue its case.

"We should know something by next spring," said Floyd, adding, "We feel they will let us know why we were turned down so we can respond."

If the appeal should fall, the seminary will remain in candidate status and will reapply for full accreditation next year, said Floyd.

At the same SACS meeting, several Baptist educational institutions received "reaffirmation" of their accreditation: Houston Baptist University, Louisiana College, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Stetson University and the Stetson College of Law.

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Polish-American Baptists
Call for Prayer for Poland

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
12/14/81

CHICAGO (BP)--Frank Wloch, pastor of The Church of Our Savior Polish Baptist Church, appealed to Southern Baptists to "pray for wisdom for Poland's leaders" as martial law was declared and many Solidarity union leaders were arrested.

"We are really depressed and concerned that no blood be shed," Wloch said, as the stand-off between workers and the Polish communist government seemed to reach a crisis over union demands for free elections and government reactions.

Wloch described Solidarity as a "very strong movement" and predicted the Polish government will find it "hard to push them into a corner." He expressed fear that "Soviet soldiers in Polish uniforms" would fire first in quelling an uprising, and that Russian-educated General Wojciech Jaruzelski, chief of Poland's communist government, would invite Russian troops to crush any civil war.

Noting that Pope John Paul had called for peace in Poland, Wloch acknowledge Roman Catholics' strong influence in his native country and the necessity for government leaders to "pay attention" to their appeal for peace.

In Cleveland, John Kasa, pastor of the Polish Baptist Church, said his small congregation is "waiting to see what happens." Expressing doubt that "there will be any peaceful settlement," Kasa claimed "the communists will say anything to justify what they do in Poland."

A woman who recently arrived in Cleveland from Poland reported that "everyone is hungry and the stores are completely empty, even of shopping bags," Kasa related. His church, as well as the 74-member Chicago congregation, have mailed food and clothing to Poland, but are unsure if their packages have been delivered.

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Kasa also urged prayer for "our 5,000 Baptist brothers" in Poland. Wloch, who has an 89-year-old mother, one brother and two sisters still in Poland, said recent letters have held news of "terrible suffering" as Poland's economy has disintegrated.

Wloch, who also is president of the Polish Baptist Association of North America, asked Southern Baptists to respond to Poland's emergency by sending nonperishable foods. Soap, toothpaste, laundry powder, deodorant, vitamins and aspirin to the Baptist distribution point in Warsaw. Packages labeled "DAR" (meaning "gift") may be mailed to:

Mrs. Zena Stankiewicz
Polski Kosciol Baptistow
Ul. Wallcow 25
00-865 Warszawa
Poland

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Colorado's 'Golden' Cards
Reach Retirement Together

By James Lee Young

Baptist Press
12/14/81

DENVER (BP)--Doris and Phil Card have been impressing Colorado Southern Baptists and the rest of the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 25 years.

Combined they have 50 or more years in service to the Colorado Baptist General Convention. They retire Dec. 31, after a career in which they literally helped to birth fledgling associations of churches in Colorado and five-and-a-half states.

The Cards were the first employees of the new convention, begun 26 years ago in Denver.

Phil, now church training, recreation and media director, in the first year of the convention's life, was director of every area of responsibility a state convention normally has in its structure --with the exception of Woman's Missionary Union and executive director-treasurer.

Doris is secretary to the director of cooperative missions where she has been since 1960, and has done double duty as convention recording secretary since 1967.

Phil may be best known for a weekly cartoon-caricature feature he has drawn for the Rocky Mountain Baptist since 1964. Many a person has felt he or she had finally arrived when Phil's drawing of them appeared in the "People Who Impressed Me" column of the newspaper.

The Cards found denominational life both exciting, challenging and enjoyable, also frustrating at times.

"The part I have enjoyed is getting to know the pastors and the church people all over the state," Doris said. "I feel that I have been of service to all of them."

Card recalls his first trip around the five-and-a-half state field in his own plane: "I felt like I was flying on the edge of the world."

But Card found Colorado only a scenic backdrop for the drama of working in and through the lives of individuals.

"The 14,000-foot peaks have been topped by men of character who reached further into God's heavens and spiritual mountains," he noted.

A licensed commercial pilot of 41 years and an instructor 33 years, Card's list of student pilots reads like a "Who's Who" in Southern Baptist life. He taught Reginald M. McDonough,

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ow assistant executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee; Jimmy Crowe, in the forefront of the new MasterLife program of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Maines Rawles, recently retired from the Sunday School Board's church recreation department; Val Prince, church training director for California Southern Baptists; and Harry Stagg, retired executive secretary for the New Mexico Baptist Convention, among others.

For 24 years Card was state student director and he helped start work in more than 30 places in the five-and-a-half state area. The convention originally sponsored work in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota and western Nebraska.

Doris recalls, "The greatest satisfaction I have had has been to see Colorado Baptist Student Union members graduate and take positions of leadership in Colorado and around the world."

"Our dealing and associations with international students over 21 years of retreats and personal contact have resulted in lasting friendships around the world," Phil noted.

In retirement, the Cards plan to do the "same thing" they're doing now--art work, helping churches in religious education, flight instruction and supply preaching.

"I can't think of any other thing that I would rather have been doing the past 25 years," Doris noted with a twinkle.

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(P) illustration mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

Another Payoff of Partnership:
1,282 Accept Christ in 'March'

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press
12/14/81

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A door-to-door evangelistic thrust in Venezuela recently led 1,282 persons to make professions of faith in Christ in the bustling capital city of Caracas.

That thrust--an annual event called an evangelistic march--is a prime example of the vitality that has characterized Baptist work in Venezuela the past 17 years.

It's hard to believe that for six long years, from 1958 to 1964, the National Baptist Convention of Venezuela and the Southern Baptist mission were bogged down in a formal reach in relationships.

Though they had no official connection with the national convention during the six-year division, missionaries continued to work with individual pastors and churches. Isolated attempts to re-establish a working relationship with the convention failed.

J. Bryan Brasington, the board's director for western South America, credits Charles W. Bryan, then field representative and now vice president of overseas operations, with bringing Venezuelan Baptists and missionaries back together.

"One of the best day's work Dr. Bryan ever did was working to bring the mission and the nationals back to the 'one work' relationship," Brasington says.

The "one work" relationship that has revitalized Baptist work in Venezuela since 1964 calls for Venezuelan Baptists and missionaries to work as partners in strategic planning and in determining how personnel, funds and other resources will be used.

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Today, that relationship and a dynamic emphasis on evangelism have made Venezuela an often-used model for other Latin American countries. The benefits of such a relationship to the work are many, Brasington says.

Venezuelan Baptists involve themselves more enthusiastically in programs they develop themselves; the evangelistic march illustrates that dramatically.

The brainchild of national evangelism director Francisco Aular, the march involved almost 200 volunteers in personal witnessing. They converged on 5,000 homes and shared their faith with more than 3,000 people in a two-week period.

For the first full week before they started, the volunteers participated in an intensive week-long training period. After the march, they worked with 570 of the converts who came to discipling groups.

Statistics confirm that national giving increases when planning and initiative for the national program are placed in the hands of national Baptists. Venezuelan Baptists doubled their 1980 Christmas offering goal with total gifts of \$197,674, or \$39.35 per Baptist. That offering supports home missionaries in Venezuela.

The strategy also places greater emphasis on "trusting one another," Brasington points out.

Missionaries may feel at times that money budgeted for one purpose might be better spent for something else, but they must ultimately trust nationals to make their own decisions and be willing to work within that trust relationship. Missionaries assume a servant role.

Missionaries and national Baptists in each of the other five western South American countries--Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru--are either moving toward "one work" or are already functioning in some stage of a unified work.

An obvious advantage of the "one work" approach is that if missionaries are ever forced to leave a country, the work will already be in the hands of national Baptists and should continue with a minimum of interruption.

Missionary evangelist Roy Hawkins, from Oklahoma, believes Baptist work is stronger in Venezuela because of "one work."

How much stronger?

"Strong enough not to split," he answers, smiling.

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