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RTVC documentary  
to air on ABC-TV

FORT WORTH (BP)--"The Street," a Southern Baptist-produced television documentary about Christians' efforts to help meet people's needs in inner cities, will be aired nationally over ABC-TV Sunday, Sept. 22.

Actor Paul Winfield, who won an Oscar nomination for his role in his film debut in "Sounder" and who has a lengthy list of movie, television and theater credits, hosts the hour-long program.

"The Streets" was produced by Radio and Television Commission production staff members on location in Los Angeles county, Chicago, Miami and New York City. Although the broadcast's national kickoff is set for Sept. 22, some stations will air the documentary later. Readers should check their TV listings to determine when stations in their areas will show the program.

"The documentary is not designed to show an overview of inner-city problems in the United States, but rather to focus on a few efforts involving Christians," said Bob Thornton, executive in charge of the production. "We are simply looking at some of the needs and individuals and groups trying to make a difference. Our emphasis is on people more than programs.

"We hope the viewer will be drawn into the picture and see life from the perspective of people on the streets."

Stories include Christian work with gangs and victims of gang violence in the Los Angeles area. Viewers also will see scenes of the work of a Christian physician who takes medical students under Miami's bridges and over passes each week to care for homeless who live there. The physician also started a medical center that provides free help for inner-city people.

Scenes videotaped in Chicago depict the Uptown Baptist Church's work with the homeless, mentally disabled, and people affected by alcohol and drugs. In New York City, the documentary presents a story about the Graffiti Center, a ministry that helps people with a variety of problems. The ministry is operated by Southern Baptists out of a small storefront on New York's Lower East Side.

"The Streets" is one in a four-part series of religious documentaries made for ABC-TV, to be presented by the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission. Other programs in the series, titled "Vision and Values," were produced by the National Council of Churches, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the United States Catholic Conference.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by RTVC

Experiences tumble down walls  
in Jericho participants' lives

By Kathy Fogg Berry

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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Huge Styrofoam boulders pounded the center stage floor at Glorieta (N. M.) Baptist Conference Center when a symbolic "wall came tumbling down."

The falling wall joined a barrage of experiences that encouraged people of all ages to taste, touch and transmit zeal for missions at "Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival," July 27-Aug. 2.

The boulders, which formed a symbolic "Jericho Wall" of barriers to missions, fell during the musical "Jericho," which opened the festival of home and foreign missions. The musical featured a choir and orchestra of New Mexico Baptist ministers of music and laypeople and The Company, a dramatic ensemble from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Company, portraying Joshua and other biblical Jericho Road journeyers, set the mood for leaders to encourage Baptist onlookers to strip away barriers in their lives which stunt spiritual growth, deaden relationships and block response to God's mandate to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

Ensemble performers, directed by Dennis Parrish, also dramatized Jericho activities throughout the week, including an AIR JERICHO global awareness game, portions of the Jericho youth track, daily seminars on "Teaching Missions Experientially in Your Church" and others.

A variety of experiential activities -- interspersed with conferences, speakers, Bible study, worship, prayer groups and contact with home and foreign missionaries -- encouraged participants to get creative in accomplishing missions.

During one seminar, Parrish and The Company cast led unsuspecting participants to a dimly candlelit storage room under the conference center's stage where they simulated a secretive Christian gathering like those held in areas of the world where Christian persecution prevails.

Quietly singing choruses and reciting Scripture verses from memory, this whispering group of Christians overcame their shock and continued to partake of communion and to worship even when its leadership was mysteriously ushered away during a mock security conflict.

Each afternoon, AIR JERICHO "took off" from its makeshift terminal in Glorieta's parking lot and "landed" in simulated missions situations around the world. This adventure in global awareness "is an opportunity to challenge you and me, in the safety of a parking lot, to learn about another country's culture," pretend airline flight attendant DeEtte Rabb, an ensemble performer, barked to the crowd in carnival sideshow fashion.

In lieu of the usual Tuesday evening cafeteria-style food, participants sat on the lawn surrounding Glorieta's New Mexico Hall and ate baked beans, barbecue, French bread and dessert from the Missouri Baptist disaster relief unit. Missouri's disaster relief team served the meal from huge metal pots in their trailer kitchens. When such disasters as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes strike, this and other such Southern Baptist teams mobilize quickly to assist victims.

The meal followed a missions fair during which the five sponsoring Southern Baptist agencies tangibly explained various ministries offered through the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, Woman's Missionary Union and Sunday School Board.

While licking off cotton candy-covered fingers and receiving cheek-paintings from Hapsi The Clown, participants perused booths from which mission-agency staffers told them about such opportunities as volunteerism, church and community ministries, missions education and career missions.

Through these activities and others, Jericho week at Glorieta, and earlier at the Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, encouraged about 2,800 participants at the two locations to "color outside the lines" of traditional approaches as they do missions throughout the United States and the world.

The Company's dramatic approach to communicating missions "is important," claims Parrish, "because it communicates the gospel in yet another medium. We don't replace the pulpit or the preacher, but through drama we can say things that might not be said in other ways or in other places."

"By providing a visual and hearing impact," he adds, "we can be the catalyst to make someone think about missions in a new way."

The two Jericho weeks, where more than 500 people made a missions decision, sought to inspire that kind of thinking, too.

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(Kathy Fogg Berry is a news writer in the news and information office of the FMB.)

WMU leader urges Christians  
to take 'baby steps' toward risk

By Karen Benson

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F-10  
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GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Missionaries shouldn't be the only ones who encounter danger and opposition for the cause of Christ, said a national Southern Baptist leader.

Rather, Christians everywhere need to take at least some "baby steps" toward risking opposition, danger or persecution for Christ, urged Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

O'Brien spoke during "Jericho: A Southern Baptist Missions Festival" at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center July 27-Aug. 2. The week featured conferences, messages, activities, fairs and exhibits on all aspects of missions. It was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, WMU and Sunday School Board.

"Difficult areas are not only found in designated missions spots around the world," O'Brien said. "Perhaps the most difficult place you can serve is just outside your door."

"There are places made difficult because of their lack of response to the gospel -- those places where the message falls on hard, rocky soil, and where new shoots shrivel because of neglect or persecution."

But Christians often appear unwilling to enter such "danger zones" for the cause of Christ, O'Brien said. "Have we lounged so long on beds of ease that risking involvement with the unlovely, the angry, the hostile is unthinkable?"

Wherever the gospel message is proclaimed, only two responses are possible, O'Brien said: "acceptance of the truth, which brings freedom, or the rejection of God's offer of salvation, which results in bondage to Satan."

In trying to spread the message of Christ, Christians today can expect opposition, danger or persecution just as the apostles did in the time of Christ and as other "faithful followers" have in the centuries since, O'Brien said.

Today, as in those earlier times, encountering opposition or persecution should not matter for Christians truly committed to Christ, O'Brien said. "The followers could 'not help but speak what they had seen and heard,'" she said, quoting from the New Testament book of Acts.

"They realized that their commitment was a call to bear a cross on behalf of Christ, and not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him," she said.

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Today there are followers of Christ -- "bold proclaimers of the truth" -- who still experience the danger and anxiety of serving in difficult places, O'Brien said. They serve in areas where war and turmoil are daily realities.

Some missionaries work in countries where "militant religions like Islam make both the sharing and the receiving of the gospel offenses punishable by death," she said.

Such critical situations command extraordinary support from Christians at home, O'Brien said. "As our missionaries are required to face the evils of a world far advanced in sin, we must multiply our prayerful resources for their safety," she urged.

Missionaries on the domestic front often face no less danger than their counterparts around the world, O'Brien said. "Men and women -- our home missionaries -- have followed God's call into dangerous areas of our own 'land of the free,'" she said.

She cited several instances of home missionaries in dangerous places:

-- Emmanuel St. Juste works with the Haitian community in metropolitan New York in neighborhoods where robbery, drugs and shootings are commonplace.

-- Chet and Michelle Cantrell work at the East St. Louis Christian Activities Center. The children they drive to and from the center must lie on the floor of their van while passing through neighborhoods of opposing gangs. Recently nine people in the neighborhood were killed in a gang war. Two of them were children who had been attending the center.

-- Ron Milliken works with American Indians in Rapid City, S.D. According to Milliken, "If you are going to do Christian work in this area, you had better be prepared to do spiritual warfare." The native religion of American Indians is the largest and fastest-growing religion among Indians today. O'Brien related Milliken's observation that "Christians are seen by the medicine man as intruding into the spirit world, causing the medicine men to chant, dance and play instruments to invoke the demons to do harm to the missionaries or to destroy them."

Missionaries such as these regularly push themselves to exhaustion and burnout, but they also "establish islands of spiritual response," O'Brien said.

"But are they the only few select saints God has called out specifically to encounter danger or difficulty? Is there a higher echelon of extraordinary children of God whose ministry is earmarked for hardship?"

All Christians can experience the same joy career missionaries have found as they serve in difficult areas, O'Brien said. "How long has it been since we experienced the joy of trials?"

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World Changers involves 1,200  
youth in six national projects

By Tim Yarbrough

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Looking toward the sky at a passing cropduster, Louise Smith's voice cracked as she spoke of the high school youth who worked several yards away re-roofing her home.

"I love it," Smith said. "I don't know how I'll ever thank them for what they've done. Why, I couldn't have afforded to buy one bundle of shingles."

The 78-year-old Cape Charles, Va., widow lives on a fixed income. She is one of the many elderly, disabled and low-income individuals and families whose lives were touched this summer during World Changers National World Projects held in six states and Mexico.

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In all, more than 1,200 youth and leaders from 17 states, representing 80 churches, participated in the projects. World Changers is an eight-day coeducational missions project for high school youth sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission. States participating were California, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Arkansas, Georgia, Nebraska, Virginia and Indiana.

Once youth arrive at a World Changers project, they are divided into various work crews and given names such as "Square Feet," "Brush Bunch" and "Hammer Heads." Their evenings are devoted to crew meetings and worship services.

In addition to re-roofing and cleaning George Savage's home, the "Bone Crushers" crew left the elderly Exmore, W. Va., resident with much more -- a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Savage, 72, accepted Christ after observing youth work during the week, said crew chief Charles Scott of Memorial Baptist Church, Beckley, W.Va.

"I came early one morning and began to ask him questions about whether he had a personal relationship with Jesus," Scott said. "He was real concerned about his eternity and asked to Jesus to become his Lord and Savior."

On the Eastern Shore of Virginia July 27-Aug. 3 more than 220 youth did home renovation and repair at more than 20 project sites stretching from Cape Charles to Hallwood. During the same week, about 240 youth worked on 15 projects in South Rio Grande Valley, Texas, doing painting, re-roofing and renovation work.

With tears in his eyes, Pablo Lovera, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nativida in McAllen, thanked the group that had spent the week replacing the flat roof of his home with a gable roof.

"I can't find the words to express my gratitude to the Lord first and to these youth for the work they have done," Lovera said.

John Bailey, minister of youth and recreation at First Baptist Church of Memphis, said World Changers is the "best marriage of youth ministry and missions" he has experienced.

"The Southern Baptist missions spirit is alive and well in the lives of our youth," said Andy Morris, World Changers director. "World Changers gives youth the opportunity to express that missions spirit by doing missions. They become "doers" rather than just "readers."

"World Changers has dramatically impacted many communities across the country, but perhaps just as significant is the dramatic impact the projects have had on the 1,200 lives of youth who participated," Morris added.

Kelli Broughman, 16, of Trinity Baptist Church of Cayce, S.C., said she agrees.

"Seeing the people in the U.S. hurting is really incredible," Broughman said. "It really hits home. We're definitely not only changing other people's worlds by helping them, but we're also changing our own world by seeing what other people go through."

Wendell Green, 18, of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Independence, Miss., said World Changers helped him to realize their joy in helping others.

"As a Christian, we're all called to work for the Lord. Christians are here to change the world for the good ... for the coming of the Lord," Green said.

The work youth do during the World Changers project helps them develop physically as well as spiritually, said David Sweet, 36, assistant pastor of Leesburg Baptist Church in Leesburg.

"They're learning that they do have that strength and that God gives them that strength," Sweet said. "It's a next step to their spiritual growth."

In addition to Virginia and Texas, World Changers National Work Projects were held in Los Angeles; St. Louis; Briceville, Tenn.; and Birmingham, Ala.

World Changers is expected to expand to include 10 project sites in the United States and two international sites in 1992, said Morris.

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Tim Yarbrough is editor of World Changers materials at the Brotherhood Commission.

(BP) photo available upon request from the Brotherhood Commission