

(BP)---FEATURES

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

produced by Baptist Press

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

September 6, 1968

"The Salvage Room" Gives Alcoholics Needed Help

By Adon Taft
Religion Editor, Miami Herald

MIAMI (BP)--They called it the salvage room. It was a messy 20 by 40-foot space in the basement of First Baptist Church here where broken and worn out furniture, scraps of lumber, odds and ends of all sorts of things, and just plain junk had been stored for years.

Today they call it The Salvage Room. It is clean and neat as a pin, comfortably furnished with the renovated couches, chairs and tables which once were stored there.

It is not, however, the change in the furnishings and their surroundings which has given the place its capital letter name. It is the transformation of the lives of the men and women who frequent The Salvage Room.

They are alcoholics and dope addicts. They include bankers, lawyers, housewives, and bums. But all are hooked on a habit they want to kick.

At almost any hour of the day or night you might find two or three of them at their special place in the basement of the First Baptist Church. As many as 17 of them have been there at one time. A recent count showed 62 visits (some of them were repeats) in a week's time.

They go there to drink--coffee, that is; to talk--to those who understand their problems; and to pray--to the God they're told "loves them enough that he paid for all the drinks they ever had. He paid for them on the cross."

Passing on the message is Clarence Hord, a 47-year-old painting contractor who for 30 years fought a losing battle with alcohol and "the pills." He knew from personal experience the need of The Salvage Room, so he started it and is mainly responsible for keeping it going.

Hord was a 14-year-old boy in Indianapolis when he had his first drink. It was home brew served by his grandparents before meals.

The effect of the drinks made Hord want to experiment more with alcohol, and by the time he was 18 he was an alcoholic who started down the path which took him to skid rows from one end of the country to another.

It took him through a marriage with and divorce from another alcoholic. It took him through several successful businesses to ruin as he repeatedly fell off "the wagon." It took him out of churches where he sought the straight and narrow path for a time with his present wife, whom he met after coming to Miami in 1947.

Then, a little more than three years ago, he woke up in New Orleans in the worst shape he had ever been in after an almost continuous three-year binge.

With the help of a Christian landlady he turned to God in prayer and found what he is sure is "the only antidote to alcoholism." He found special strength in Psalms 32:5 and Mark 1:15.

He returned home, found a friendly congregation at First Baptist Church, and finally reunited with his family. He left his alcohol and all that goes with it behind him, but he soon found that God wanted more than that from him.

"The pastor (Charles Stanley, who recently resigned to take a church in another city) was preaching a series of sermons on making yourself available to God," recalls the thin, sandy-haired man whose body always will bear the marks of his hard life. "And it had me wondering about what I could do for God," Hord said.

Then one of the deacons of the church asked Hord to go with him to see a man with a problem. "I didn't think anybody at the church knew I was an alcoholic," said Hord, "so I was surprised when the deacon told me the guy was an alcoholic."

That was the beginning of Hord's visits to jails, bars, homes, and hospitals to pick up men and women who somehow got word to him that they needed help. He would take them to "sober clubs," to drug stores, or restaurants where they could drink coffee and talk over their problems.

Then one of the struggling alcoholics who had become a special friend of Hord's told him, "Clarence, I just wish that we had a place to go to, that we could go to any time of night, a place that we could just more or less call our own." He noted that it was "embarrassing to go to the restaurants and drugstores in a drunken condition or to talk over problems."

So Hord talked to the pastor about using the salvage room. He got an okay and began, with the help of some of the men of the church and some of the alcoholics, to transform the place into The Salvage Room.

He made it look like a big living room, but with a couple of unusual items in it. At one end is something like a big window display. It is a simulated grave with a tombstone that reads, "It leaves you breathless - breathless means dead."

There also is a huge bottle beside which a dummy hangs on a rope, signifying that the alcoholic is at the end of his rope. And on the wall is a picture of Christ, offering His peace to the alcoholic.

Next to the display is the coffee bar, on which is written John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Above the bar is the inscription, "I can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens me."

There are two television sets in the room because, Hord explained, "people will sit in a tavern and get stupefied drunk watching a football game or other sports on TV. So we wanted them to be able to come here to watch TV without drinking anything but coffee."

A record player and two tape recorders are in the room along with records and tapes of religious or "mood" music, sermons, and testimonies from Hord and others. There is a speaker which pipes in church services from upstairs to those who don't feel in condition to mingle with other worshippers.

All around the room are mirrors with messages like "Do you know yourself?" or "Are you ready, and where are you going?" on them.

Scattered on the tables are numerous Bibles and religious books. There is a bulletin board listing people who need prayer. Another one is full of newspaper and magazine clippings on alcoholics and their problems.

On the floor from the basement entrance into The Salvage Room are painted footprints and a message which declares: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Every evening either Hord or Winston Campbell, a nurseryman who never took a drink in his life, is in The Salvage Room to read the Bible and pray with any addict who comes in.

They go out looking for others when they know it is their "bud" time (a period in a seven-to-nine-week cycle when the alcoholic gets the urge to drink) and they need to be busy among non-drinking friends.

They figure about half the people they've worked with -- or about 20 -- are "going straight." Their most recent victory is an alcoholic couple in which the man frequently beat the woman severely.

Both have "accepted Christ as their Savior," reported Hord, and have begun to live right. They have been persuaded to marry to legitimize their years of living together which has produced three children.

Even after such a decision for Christ, alcoholics sometimes fall, Hord pointed out, because they live in continual temptation from drink. But the end result is sure, he feels.

The life of a converted alcoholic "is not easy, but it's simple," declared Hord. "You have to keep telling yourself, 'you can't, but God can.'"

And if there ever is any question about it, all you have to do is drop into The Salvage Room for reassurance.



BAPTIST PRESS
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, 161 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, Telephone (404) 523-2593
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

BUREAU

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

September 6, 1968

J. B. Lawrence, Baptist
Executive, Dies At Age 97

ATLANTA (BP)--J. B. Lawrence, famed Baptist leader of yesteryear who headed the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for 25 years, wanted to live to be 100. When death came during the night of September 5, he was less than three years short of that century mark.

He was 97. It was one of the few major goals he missed in life.

He had retired in 1953 after nearly a quarter of a century of service as the executive secretary of the Atlanta-based Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Lawrence assumed the leadership of the agency in 1929 when it was disgraced by the scandal of a treasurer's embezzlement and a staggering debt of \$2½ million.

At retirement he was recognized as one of the outstanding leaders of Baptist missions and history has only strengthened that assessment, according to the present executive, Arthur B. Rutledge.

By the time of his retirement, the debt had been paid, a strong national missions program had been developed that later would lead Southern Baptists into every state in the nation, and a headquarters building had been purchased in downtown Atlanta. In 1953 the annual budget for the agency was nearly \$3 million, supporting 937 missionaries.

Lawrence's administration at the mission agency fell into two contrasting parts. The first 15 years were given to paying the debt, permitting only a minimum of mission work. The remaining 10 years were given to rebuilding the board's missionary outreach and influence, Rutledge said.

"Few men who have the qualities of frugality and firmness to guide an agency through an arduous period of debt payment also have the qualities of vision and aggressiveness necessary to project a program of advance. Lawrence had these qualities," Rutledge observed.

Before coming to the mission agency, Lawrence had been a pastor, an editor, a college president (Oklahoma Baptist University, 1922-26), and the executive secretary of three Baptist state mission boards--Louisiana Baptist Convention, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and the Baptist General Association of Missouri. During his lifetime he wrote 22 books.

He was editor of the Baptist state paper of Louisiana when it was called The Baptist Chronicle (it is now the Baptist Message) from 1908-1912. He was also editor of Home Missions magazine for several years.

He was the top executive for the Mississippi Convention from 1913-21; the Missouri convention from 1926-29; and the Louisiana Convention, 1907-1909.

As a pastor, he led Baptist churches in Greenwood, Miss., Humboldt, Tenn., and the First Baptist Churches of New Orleans and Shawnee, Okla. He was vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1916-17.

John Benjamin Lawrence was born in Florence, Miss., in 1871, and earned his bachelor and masters degrees from Mississippi College at Clinton. Later, Louisiana College at Pineville and Oklahoma Baptist University at Shawnee gave him honorary doctoral degrees. He also was listed in Who's Who in America.

He is survived by his widow, Helen Huston Lawrence; four daughters, Mrs. R. D. Anderson of Columbia, South Carolina; Mrs. Ray Ballard of Detroit; Mrs. Elizabeth Syfan and Mrs. John Blevins, both of Atlanta; seven grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

Funeral services were scheduled at 3:00 p. m. Sunday, Sept. 8, at the Morningside Baptist Church, Atlanta, with pastor James Westberry officiating, assisted by Courts Redford of Bolivar, Mo., who succeeded Lawrence at the mission agency and by Joe Burton of Nashville, a former editorial associate to Lawrence now with the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Protection Program Funds
Exceeds \$200 Million

DALLAS (BP)--The funds administered by the Southern Baptist Annuity Board for members in its protection programs exceeded \$200 million during August, more than four months ahead of a projection made two years ago.

R. Alton Reed, executive secretary of the Annuity Board, announced the achievement at the closing of the books for the month of August.

He called this milestone a "fitting climax for the 50th year of service celebration the board is observing in 1968. The board was founded in 1918.

Reed said the increasing number of Southern Baptist churches and agencies who put their ministers and employees into the protection program and a sound investment program were the primary factors which boosted the funds past the \$200 million mark ahead of schedule.

Reed commended both. "The growing number of churches and agencies which provide the liberal benefits of the protection program for their employees indicates a need is being met," he said.

Reed said dues for the protection of participants usually are paid for many years awaiting a future demand created by disability, death or retirement. Benefits are building throughout their active participation.

Reed pointed out that money sent for dues cannot lay idle. "It must be put to work in safe and sound investments." This is where the investment committee and division takes over.

He said the investment committee, composed of leading Baptist businessmen who are appointed from the board of trustees elected by the Southern Baptist Convention, must approve all investments in real estate, stocks and bonds. "They have done a superb job," he added.

Reed said through the efforts of enlistment and investment the board has been able in recent months to increase benefits and add new ones in the protection program plus issuing a "13th" check to retired members from interest earnings in excess of what the program demands.

He said the funds will continue to grow even more rapidly in the future. Projections call for the funds held to reach \$250 million by mid-1971.

"But the way Southern Baptists are responding to the new program, we expect to reach that figure ahead of schedule just as we did the \$200 million mark," he said.

-30-

Texas Baptist Budget
Reviewed For Churches

9/6/68

DALLAS (BP)--For the first time in history Texas Baptists are getting a scheduled sneak preview of the 1969 budget of the 1.8 million member Baptist General Convention of Texas, as it is presented in 16 cities across the state for discussion and questions.

The proposed \$13½ million budget is the largest ever recommended by the convention's program coordinating committee to the 192-member Executive Board which meets this month. The committee serves as the coordinating committee of all convention programs and appropriations.

Following action by the Executive Board, the budget will be submitted to convention messengers meeting in Fort Worth in November, who make final approval.

The 16 regional pre-convention Cooperative Program meetings were authorized by the Executive Board. They will conclude this month.

Purpose of the meetings, according to Cecil Ray, director of the Texas stewardship division, "is to discuss the 1969 proposed budget to understand the needs and opportunities and to see the type of response required to achieve the missions goals."

The first-of-a-kind meetings are designed for area missionaries, pastors, church stewardship chairmen, treasurers and finance committee chairmen.

-30-



BAPTIST PRESS

*460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

DAVIS C. WOOLLEY 89
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 NINTH AVE. N.
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37209

RECEIVED
APR 9 1968
HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC