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**Fire Guts Drug Center
During Sermon on Hell**

HOUSTON (BP)--A Sunday morning fire gutted the Pulpit in the Shadows drug rehabilitation center here apparently starting while a sermon on hell and damnation was in progress.

Arson is suspected as cause of the blaze. No one was injured.

Pulpit in the Shadows is a drug center sponsored by a Southern Baptist evangelist, Freddie Gage, a former drug user and Houston teen hoodlum who entered the ministry in 1951. Gage was leading a revival in Orlando, Fla., at the time of the fire.

"We were having worship service downstairs about 11:15 a.m. when one of the boys smelled smoke from upstairs," said Center Director Gene Palmer.

A volunteer worker who was in the center when the fire broke out said the subject of the sermon was, "the prodigal son and hell and damnation."

Arson investigators were seeking a former resident of the drug rehabilitation center in connection with the fire.

Investigators said the fire was set with gasoline at three locations in an upstairs auditorium.

They were trying to locate what one observer called one of the drug center's own "prodigal sons" who left the center last week after a disagreement.

Palmer said the young man was not really "kicked out," but he was asked to leave because he would not fit in with the program. "We try to teach them (our residents) that God is a better way than drugs."

When he left the center, the young man was quoted as saying, "Okay, I'll go, but you'll be sorry and I mean what I say."

Following the fire, which gutted the wooden structure in downtown Houston at 319 McGowen, the center's 45 residents moved into the gymnasium at the downtown First Baptist Church while center officials seek a new building.

No estimate was immediately available on extent of the damage, but center officials indicated they would seek a new building rather than trying to rebuild.

The drug rehabilitation center had been operating at its present location for about three years, seeking to reach victims of drug abuse, hippies, motorcycle gangs, and society drop-outs. "Pulpit in the Shadows" is also the name of the book telling Gage's life story.

Gage said following the fire that more than 4,000 drug addicts had passed through the center last year.

Mission Volunteers Await Funds for Appointment

ATLANTA (BP)--Enlistment of mission volunteers is no longer the greatest mission problem. Rather, the shortage of monetary mission support keeps volunteers from being placed, Cecil Etheredge, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board missionary personnel secretary said here.

"In the decade of the 70s the appointment of new home missionaries should have high priority; however, the basic need is no longer enlistment, but increased mission support," he stressed.

During 1972, the board made 366 new appointments, 36 fewer than 1971. Although the number of career missionaries appointed increased by 13 and the missionary associates increased by three, the number of US-2ers dropped from 39 to 27. Another big drop was the number of mission pastors receiving pastoral aid, from 140 to 96.

The drops were not for lack of interest. More than 100 young college or seminary graduates applied for the US-2 program for 1972, volunteering to spend two years either beginning new work or continuing work on the mission field. It was the highest number of applicants ever.

Volunteers in all areas of home mission work far exceeded the monetary support making new appointments possible, according to Etheredge.

"Our primary frustration relates to appointment, not recruitment," he said. "How do you realistically encourage candidates for appointment, not knowing if and when funds will be available?"

Although the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering topped its \$6 million goal and set an all-time record, costs were also rising, Etheredge said.

At the end of 1972 there was a joint increase of \$782,611 over the previous year from the Easter Offering and the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

However, there was also a much-needed salary increase granted to missionaries, and an increase in the cost of group insurance, paid for missionaries and their families by the board. Thus salary increases and increased cost of group insurance, totaling \$572,470, accounted for 60 per cent of the combined increase from gifts, he added.

During 1972 the total number of missionaries dropped from 2,237 in 1971 to 2,208. However 155 mission volunteers qualified as mission pastors and home missionaries, but were unable to be placed on the field because of lack of funds.

Twelve qualified as language missionaries. But Oscar Romo, secretary of the board's language mission department, said that is only part of the problem.

"We have 12 waiting for appointment, but we have the need for 50 more," Romo said.

Immediate needs in language missions include work with German groups, work with French along the Canadian border, with internationals at the United Nations, internationals in the Chicago area, work with the increasing number of Spanish groups in the nation including groups in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Georgia, Louisiana and Washington, D.C., and work with Russians in Florida.

The list goes on, including the Servics in Baltimore, Arabs in the Northeast, Indians in Detroit and on the Atlantic coast, Hungarians in Michigan, and deaf work in Missouri and other states.

In many places local people are ready to go, to work, and the state conventions are ready to go, but we just don't have the money, Romo said.

The more than 1,000 language missionaries represent almost one half of the Southern Baptist home mission force.

Paul Adkins, secretary of the department of Christian social ministries, said they need an area director in the Northern Plains area, greater Kansas City and Chicago. Also there is

need of work with aging in Phoenix, Ariz., where there are 200,000 people over the age of 65. The board is also searching for funds to finance a married couple to live in a coop in New York City.

F.J. Redford, secretary of church extension for the board, said his department hopes to begin Southern Baptist work in two state capitals, Augusta, Maine and Concord, N.H. When work is begun in these state capitals, Southern Baptists will have some type of ministry in each capital.

The department also hopes to increase pastoral aid to the more than 400 pastors in pioneer areas now receiving financial assistance as well as the number of pioneer mission pastors.

"Reflecting on Southern Baptists' history, we have consistently concerned ourselves with missions," Etheredge said. "All too often our prayers were only for the missionaries 'over there'. As evidence of our prayers, God blessed the missions on the foreign field.

"But though we dare not minimize the need for missionaries in countries all over the world we are now coming to see the United States as one of the most fertile mission fields in the world, Etheredge concluded.

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Tupelo Layman Gives Tithe
Of \$480,000 Stock to Church

1/16/73

TUPELO, Miss. (BP)--A Baptist layman who believes in tithing his income gave \$480,000 in stock to the Harrisburg Baptist Church here, indicating it was a tithe of stock gained in recent merger of his company.

Lawrence D. Hancock, 56, head of the Hancock Fabric Stores with chain outlets across the nation, asked that the stock be used in the construction of a new church auditorium.

Pastor of the church, Robert Hamblin, said that Hancock was very modest and "doesn't want any credit or glory. He is a tither, and is just doing what God has taught him to do."

It is not the first such big gift to the church by Hancock, who was born in a log cabin and grew up in New Albany, Miss.

Two years ago, he contributed \$350,000 to build a recreation center at the church called the "Family Life Center." His gift paid for the entire building.

The more recent contribution of \$480,000 in stock is more than the entire church budget for one year.

Describing him as a "good church member," Hamblin said Hancock "has recognized that the Lord has blessed him, and he has tried to honor the Lord with his tithes."

Hancock has been a deacon for several years, and is a former chairman of the church's finance committee. His entire family is active in the church, the pastor said.

The new auditorium his gift will finance is slated for construction next fall, with completion in about two years.

Until the funds are needed for the construction, dividends amounting to about \$15,000 a year will be used to benefit Baptist missions work in Montana and Oregon, Hamblin said.

"It's an inspiring thing," the pastor commented. "It inspires me as much as anything I've ever seen in my years in the ministry," he added.

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