



## **Citation for this collection:**

MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## **Contact:**

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library  
181 South College Avenue  
Newark, DE 19717-5267  
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)  
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec>  
[askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

## **Terms governing use and reproduction:**

Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. [askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

## **A note about transcriptions:**

Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. [askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

# Rev. Howard Baxter and Dr. Gerald A. Foster

[0:00:00]

Dr. Foster: I'm Dr. Gerald A. Foster, President of the Board of Directors of Sunday Breakfast Mission, and here with me is Reverend Howard Baxter, who is the superintendent. I understand your interest in a little historical background on Sunday Breakfast Mission. You'll be interested to know that this fall, the mission will be some 78 years of age.

The diamond jubilee was celebrated nearly three years ago, which means that the mission goes back to about 1893. The buildings for many years that were the principal buildings here in Sunday Breakfast Mission are located on Shipley Street, just up the street from where we are seated here, 115 and 117 Shipley Street.

Years ago, this is going back 60 to 70 years ago, there actually were two groups that were involved in mission work. At 117 Shipley Street was a work by a group denominationally today known as the Free Methodist group. Now, there are a lot of Free Methodist Churches and Free Methodist schools and colleges throughout the country, a number of them, but we do not have any in Wilmington, but this was actually under the Free Methodist group.

But going back a good many years near the turn of the century, these two groups merged and the house at 115 was purchased, was known as the Burch House, and they connected the two buildings, and these two buildings, 115 and 117, were our principal buildings until we took on this acquisition a few years ago, Howard, right?

Rev. Baxter: Right.

Dr. Foster: So this is where the work was carried on for so many years. Now, you'll notice that the name is Sunday Breakfast Mission. People today may wonder or just where did you get that name, and it really is a misnomer because – thank you – It doesn't begin to tell the whole story. But as one might imagine, in the beginning, they provided a meeting on the Sabbath morning, on a Sunday morning and they gave the men a meal, and they helped him to find work. Therefore, there you can see the Sunday Breakfast idea how it came in to be.

Well, that has long since changed and you have three meals a day here. And you have not only just a Sunday meeting, you have meetings every

night of the year in the chapel. You'll be interested, just to bring you up-to-date, in 1970, for example, the calendar year, there were about 10,000 plus lodgings, and meal served over 27,000 meals served. You see that's a long step from a Sunday Breakfast only. But through the years, this work has expanded.

But in the last decade, 10 to 15 years, the mission has taken on new significance here in the Wilmington area, and has had a very wide growth. I referred to the Free Methodist folks back in 1966, and it happened to be my lot to negotiate with Free Methodist people. We felt they had a little stake in this place and we came to a resolving of the situation and therefore given some money we purchased any involvement they might consider they have.

Howard, when would we get the white property over here in the corner of Shipley and Front and Orange?

Rev. Baxter: 1954, '54.

Dr. Foster: Is that before you came?

Rev. Baxter: Yeah, that was before I came. I came in '57.

Dr. Foster: Yes, we already have.

Rev. Baxter: You had it when we're starting the renovation then.

Dr. Foster: Yes.

Rev. Baxter: In May of '58, we moved in the present building.

Dr. Foster: Where we are here.

Rev. Baxter: Where we are now.

Dr. Foster: Yes. We are now here on the corner, Front and Shipley Streets. This is the office facility. Down below is a store. We have a salvage program, a number of trucks. And these trucks go out throughout the area to pick up merchandize, furniture, appliances, newspapers, magazines, and we have the stores and outlet, we also have our bailing plant.

And to really bring you up-to-date, just the other day, a very wonderful nearly \$3,500 new hydraulic lift bailer was installed here. This is where the newspapers are bailed and magazines and things, and then they are

sold. And so the salvage program is a very vital part of our ministry. It provides work for the men.

**[0:05:11]**

In the old days, we used to give somebody, made me a cup of coffee and a donut, and made me a place to sleep, but then he was turned loose with nothing to do. Now, we try to couple this with a program of rehabilitation to give a man something to do with his hands and occupies time. And so the interesting thing is that the people who come by way of the mission, transshipment, traveling through, people with one problem or another, but principal will aid the alcohol problem.

But it's these men and many of them with very fine minds and very talented and many of them skilled, but the alcohol road has put them on the so-called skids. And so they come this way and they find a security here, they find compassion, and interest and concern, and they feel more or less safe here, and many of them with stay and continue to stay here, but they man these trucks, they drive these trucks. They pick up all these things, they work in the store, in the yard, in the kitchen, in the buildings, and so forth.

So it does two things. It provides revenue, but, again, it provides something for the men to do, and these men are given a very modest wage. They have a place to sleep, they have three meals a day, and they have a little pocket money every week. Now that's the one side of the story.

On the other hand, Sunday Breakfast Mission is definitely a Christian religious institution. It's founded with that goal in mind, is to minister to the whole man and realize that man needs food and needs a place to sleep. But we believe before going to be true to our mission, we want to minister to the whole man. And if we can minister to the spiritual dimension of man, we believe we can help very much in all of these other aspects.

So I relate that to say that in our chapel at Front and Orange Streets, services are held every night. And the men attend regularly. Some of them don't have to go to all the services, but they've taken many of these services and various church groups will come in and sponsor a given night per month, et cetera.

And it's here in the chapel service that you try to relate to the spiritual dimension of men's life and get a man in right relationship with God. And

we believe and we've seen that men's life can be changed and they can go forth to make a valuable contribution to society and to their Lord. This is the real ultimate goal of our ministry and everything else must work toward that goal.

Now we're very happy to say -- let me bring you up-to-date in our plan. We talk in the early days and for so many years, up until 15 years ago, give or take, we were at 115 and 117 Shipley Street, just up the road here now. But with the exception of some property at Orange and 2nd Street which is a Diamond Printing Company.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Dr. Foster: Yes, which is a very clean corner as such. Other than that, we now own, Sunday Breakfast Mission owns the complete square block, and these properties are paid for. And we are supported by the voluntary gifts of people. We are not in the United Community Fund, but through voluntary contributions.

This work is maintained and I think it speaks for itself, the interest of people, the fact that these obligations have been met and cared for. Furthermore, Sunday Breakfast Mission serves individuals and also serves other agencies of our city. Howard, you just tell the agencies that look to the mission and for whom you perform a service.

Rev. Baxter: We deal with Travelers Aid, Department of Public Welfare, and different social agencies of this city. We also work in conjunction with all the churches in the area. There is no man turned away. We try to discourage the different organizations and the different church, the ministers in other churches not to give them money, but to send them to the Sunday Breakfast Mission.

We could also say here too, another phase of our work we began in 1957, was a work among the children in our area. And I'm proud to say each year the number has increased. Until this past year, due to the urban renewal going on in the area, we've lost quite a few of our children, but we thank and praise the Lord for those that are still coming.

Each year, we've increased our number in sending children to camp. And this year we had 39 eligible to go to camp, somewhere in camp right now, and next Monday, which will be August the 16th, we have our teenagers going down for two weeks to camp. Here too is a different phase of our work that people don't know that goes on.

[0:10:07]

And if you've never visit the mission, we would encourage you to do so. The door is open 24 hours a day and there's no need for any man to look as they say has a tramp or has a bum because the facilities here that a man can get cleaned up, a place to stay, and something to eat. For this, too, we thank and praise the Lord for without him, none of it would be possible.

Dr. Foster:

Howard, did you mention the police authorities? They all know that Sunday Breakfast Mission is a place where people may come and have lodging. Let me also say we have also been a bridge house. Just yesterday, I saw a man who several years ago we arranged to come here from Delaware State Hospital. Now this has not been our prime ministry, but we knew of these cases.

He wasn't quite ready to make his way back in the so-called society, but this was a place for him to kind of get his bearings, to get his feet on the ground. And after spending some time here, he was able to get back into the swing. He's been employed for several years and doing a good job and has a family life, and just saw him yesterday, for example, came in.

At the present time, there's another man down to Delaware State Hospital, who has spent considerable time here. He is down there now getting care and treatment, but he knows when the time comes, here's the place he can come and he can do as he is able to do and feel somewhat inclined and go on from here if this is the road.

So we don't try to make this a dead end street. We try to minister the man and equip him so that if he wants to get out and do society and take other employment and so forth, he can. Now there are those who feel more secure and safe here. There's something about it, and we have a number of people who stay around for several years, and they make a very positive contribution to the work.

I might say in regard to all of these properties that we have, the whole square block, the question may wonder what do you plan to do with them, you say. We're trying to keep in step with the city and its plans for development. And as you know, it's a slow and somewhat uncertain road. You'll be interested to know that right where we are now may be demolished in the not too distant future if present plans are executed.

And I refer to the connector that's coming in from I-95 that you read about so much and there's a lot of debate and controversy. But if the

plan that is recommended by the Department of Transportation is approved, it will come right down Front Street here, and it's going to slice off quite a bit other mission.

Now, you might say, what was your reaction to this? We're for what's ever good for Wilmington and for the city. And if this is the thing to do, all right, then we can adjust accordingly. We've got plenty of property here. Our plan is to demolish all these old buildings and put up new ones that would serve effectively. We want to fit in with the plans of the city. It could even be that relocation might be the answer. But we feel we have a very clean package here to negotiate with the city or whatever might be best in the development of downtown Wilmington.

So, at the present time, we're having to keep ourselves just a little flexible and we cannot project into a capital improvement program until we see how all these other things gel and are brought in to being. But this is where we are at the present time, ministering to people who come our way, with food, with lodging, and other ways, and as I say with a spiritual needs of men through our devotion or religious services, et cetera.

Now, perhaps you have some questions?

Interviewer: And I suppose the mission originally started out as primarily concerned with the spiritual welfare of these people.

Dr. Foster: Yes. This would be in the beginning and I think probably missions in general, Howard. This was the approach. They used to talk about the three Ss; soup, soap and salvations, the three.

I think if there's been any change in our thinking, and the superintendent here may comment on this, but out of my own observation, yes, we have always been interested in the spiritual needs, and, perhaps, in the earlier years, missions were interested in the spiritual needs at the exclusion of the other situations, the church. And this has been true of the church often. We never got too much involved in these other things.

**[0:15:03]**

But I think we have come to the place where we realize our first objective, which is still the same as it always was. But I think we realize that we want to minister to the whole man and that he has physical needs and he has temporal needs. And so we minister to people. We're not trying to cram down their throats, we cannot, our particular brand of religion in quotes. We believe that Christ is the answer and preach this so we get

people opportunity to make decisions and commitments. But we don't cram it down and if they reject it, we don't say we're through with you at all, we don't.

We minister to them because they are people. And I think this is the thing that we're learning more and more in the world which we live today, the fact that a person is a human being. This is reason enough to minister to him. If he's hungry, feed him; if he needs a place to sleep, give him something to sleep, even though he may reject the part of what we may try to offer, yet we will minister to him.

Interviewer: Do you know the names of the people who were the founders of the missions?

Dr. Foster: I have here, and I think I can give him a copy of this, Howard. Well, we've got extra copies of these.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Dr. Foster: Why don't I give him here, because here I'm taking you back to 1893 and some of the people who were officers, in what lead up to the work, and here's 1894, the president, the vice-president and so forth. And that's taking you up into the 1895s, until you'll get into the – then, actually, this jumps very much, Howard, from about the 1900 on. But this would take you back in those early, early years. And then in more recent years, we have records.

There's probably a period in there when we don't have the most informed records, except through some of those magazines that we read.

Rev. Baxter: Especially here in *[inaudible] [0:17:10]* because we were trying to come up with some, but so far we haven't been to. When we inquire in different people, trying to find out if they have any information on the missionary. In the process now, we're trying to compile a complete data on it, but so far we haven't had any luck.

Dr. Foster: But I notice here in 1897, this Mr. Albert Sargent, S-E-R-G-E-A-N-T, he was in-charge of the work at 117 Shipley Street and he was the one I referred to of the Free Methodist group and the group with whom I negotiated back in 1966, just about five years ago in resolving this situation.

Interviewer: Does the Sunday Breakfast Mission have any religious affiliation per se?

Dr. Foster: No. This is interdenominational in its scope. You will find...

Interviewer: ***[inaudible] [0:18:02].***

Dr. Foster: Originally, yes. Originally and through the years, yes. As I said, the Sunday Breakfast Mission as such, the one aspect of it, the one aspect there in the beginning was kind of a Free Methodist who do not have a church in this particular community, as such they're many of them in the country. But let me see here.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah. I noticed in your folder that you're looking at, the name Neo Connelly ***[phonetic] [0:18:34]*** who is one of the earlier founders of the Sunday Breakfast Mission. It might be noted here that the first international body of the IUGM that was formed was formed in the New York City in 1930. He was on the original board, also, in founding the International Union of Gospel Missions. So he's quite known.

Dr. Foster: Yes. And I might say that going back to around 1897 and 1898, which were just a few years after we really get started, this is were the group of Mr. Sergeant, under the Free Methodist in 117, he was forced to give over the work, I suppose, for health reasons. The property was deeded entrust to the Sunday Breakfast Mission, but we didn't get much, I'll call, a fee simple title back here until 1966. And then plans were made to establish the operation at 117 Shipley Street, and services were transferred there. This is around 1898.

So as I said, for the most part, see, for well over 70 years you see the very definite interdenominational flavor. And if coming up to the current time, we have people represented on the board of directors from most of the denominational churches that you could mention here in the city, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Christian, Missionary, Alliance, Baptist, Mennonite, yes, Orthodox Presbyterian, I think this pretty well covers it, but as you can see it's a wide representative spectrum.

**[0:20:25]**

And I'm happy to say that the mission has commanded the respect of the citizenry of our city, and this is shown by their response and interest, financial and otherwise, and doing the things that have been done. We feel it has made a vital contribution and is making to a very specific area. I think perhaps it would be of interest to you to know that a work of this nature, there are some changes. We have become much more of a welfare state than back in the days when Sunday Breakfast Mission started.

And so, there is a sense in which the times don't call as much for this type of place as it did some years ago. When a person can get a nice little health welfare check every month, you see, he's not too much interested in a mission. And may I say he is not – some are not interested in working. There's all we say the plus and minus to anything in life that's good, and I think one of the unfortunate weak points in our humanitarian welfare system.

And I know where I speak here that I could take you over and show you people, able-bodied men who could this afternoon be out working on the salvage trucks here and helping to produce income, and making a positive contribution, not just for the cause, but I think for themselves they would be much better off as individuals. But no, they don't have to work then get a welfare check. And so, they're over here on Washington Street.

But with time, time, time on their hands and a liquor store not very far away, this is I think an unfortunate situation, but I know it's one of those things you have to deal with and no system is completely perfect even though our motives are good. But somewhere along the line, I think perhaps people who are able-body and the opportunity for working is there, I think it's unfortunate, a little unfair to burden the taxpayers with supporting this type of thing, but this is part of it.

What I'm trying to say is the very welfare picture that we have today makes our job a little harder, you see, in getting people to man the trucks and do the work that needs to be done, because if people don't want to work today, they don't have to work.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Interviewer: What is your connection with the state and how long has that been with, particularly, Department of Labor and how long has that been maintained?

Dr. Foster: Maybe you make your question maybe a little – I'm not too sure I understand exactly what you're saying, our relation with the state and the Department of Labor.

Interviewer: With the Department of Labor, *[inaudible]* [0:23:14]. There was some connection. I think I believe he said the Department of Labor, the state Department of Labor.

Dr. Foster: No, Howard. No. You were mentioning the various social agencies that look to us like the Travelers Aid and perhaps the Welfare Department and the police, and some...

Interviewer: Correctional counsel.

Dr. Foster: Correctional counsel. They know they can turn here to find something about, not the Department of Labor.

Rev. Baxter: They work with all the inner city agencies.

Dr. Foster: Wherein we can help a person, see, and providing for a man a place to sleep and some meals and a degree of rehabilitation as we may be able to offer him.

Interviewer: There is no connection between...

Rev. Baxter: No.

Interviewer: Like a person coming here looking for plumbing and you might turn them over to the...

Rev. Baxter: Well, we work in conjunction along that line. We do it like man power, handy labor, what they consider spot labor, day labor. We work with the different ones on occasion. If a man comes in, then he says we'll work and I'll find a job. And if there's one not available at the mission staff, we send them to these different agencies. I knew the foreman personally that was up at manpower. The fellow that's in-charge now, I don't know too well, but we have a working relationship. I'll give him a call and say I got two men down in here, do you have any openings and he will say send them up. Well, we send them up. We work that way with them.

Dr. Foster: But I suppose for the most part, Howard, in addition to this, you can pretty well use any able-bodied man that comes through. He can use right to pretty much in our own operations, you see, yes.

Interviewer: Has there been any connection with the states, state support, possibly, through the years?

Dr. Foster: No, they only...

Rev. Baxter: No, the only...

Interviewer: There's not much you may get from...

Rev. Baxter: From welfare on occasion, we allow our men. If he wants to stay we charge him \$40 a month room and aboard. Now, as a rule, I get \$50 a month from the Department of Welfare. Well, we feel \$40 is sufficient. We charge them 40 and give the man back \$10 so they can have some spend of money.

**[0:25:17]**

Some of the other welfare men, they don't want to stay in the building to eat, but they want to sleep. So we just charge them a nominal fee and we only charge a man if he has it. And here again, I might stress that we don't press this and we don't jingle a man's pocket to see if he has any change in it. But if a man has it, we charge him 50 cents a night, which is very nominal, and this entitles him to his breakfast in the morning.

However, if a man is here at lunch time and he's hungry, he gets fed. If he's here at supper time, he needs food, he gets fed. But we do charge him that nominal fee, if they have it. And for those that work by the day, I found, personally, they want to pay their way. So we don't feel that we're hurting in any respect by this way, charging them a nominal fee, which is 50 cents a night.

I think we ought to put in there too, Reverend Foster, about our medical clinic, which we incorporated a couple of years ago. This was a new face of our ministry here. We have a doctor Jehart Timberland *[phonetic]* **[0:26:13]** our staff that is giving his time and every Friday evening he comes out. Every man that's on the program, any rehabilitation program is given a complete physical.

Any transit man that is in need of minor medical assistant has it and gets it and as needs are attended to by the physician.

Interviewer: When did this change in view of the services of the mission turned about from purely spiritual nature to increasing moral welfare work?

Dr. Foster: In the salvage program, well, Howard, this is all pretty much come after the days of, what, of AB Foster. We weren't doing much salvage back on those days, would we?

Rev. Baxter: No.

Dr. Foster: I mean, I suppose my time goes back a dozen years, 12 or 15 years.

Rev. Baxter: But I think you can really look at the beginning of the salvage and, I mean, in 1954, we really started during *[inaudible]* [0:27:07]...

Dr. Foster: We had that – yes, all right, about 1954. I happen to have had the privileged, I think, of buying every truck that we bought, in one of these new trucks we've put up. And you'll be interested to know that these trucks all have been provided, we found donors. So when we bought these trucks, we paid cash on the line for them and put them to work.

So this is going back to about 1954.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah. And I think we...

Dr. Foster: Around 17 years ago. Then we're getting into more of a real vital salvage program, putting the trucks out and picking up these supplies and materials. You'll be interested also in the times in which we're living. It's an indication, it's an indictment to a degree, we're interested in ecology, and we're concerned about litter and all of this.

We are out to pick up furniture that can be salvaged, that's useful, et cetera. And we have boxes around in some of the communities as you may see, like other organization, shopping centers and malls. The unfortunate thing that we're finding now and, I guess, others had the same experience, instead of putting good legitimate things in there that could be salvaged, people are using it to dump their trash, et cetera.

And if it keeps on the way it's going, they're going to drive us out of the box of business because it's not good for their shopping center, it's not good for anybody else from the whole standpoint of ecology, anything else. But I would say going back to about 17 years, we took on more of this particular aspect.

Rev. Baxter: Well, I think your salvage went top from 1954 until two years ago. I would say about two years ago is my welfare really begin to enter into the picture. That is where these men found out that they can go to any state and get welfare assistance. So, therefore, we had a decline in men willing to work.

Dr. Foster: Yes.

Rev. Baxter: And let's face it, if somebody would give you \$50 to \$85 a month, I think you'd be inclined to take it easy too.

Dr. Foster: And, see, we cannot operate under our present policy. We haven't changed this yet. We cannot operate the trucks unless we have the personnel, but we do keep going. And so, there's still enough need to justify this. And so, unless you notice, Mr. Baxter mentioned the children's work. We try to adapt and be flexible and to take on various ministries.

Interviewer: How long has this work been going on?

Dr. Foster: Well, the children's work, not so long. Howard?

Rev. Baxter: Yeah. That started in 1956, the latter part of '56.

Dr. Foster: *[inaudible] [0:29:49].*

Rev. Baxter: Right.

Dr. Foster: Usually, the usual form is a Saturday morning.

Rev. Baxter: The usual form is Saturday morning. We have a Saturday morning, we have it from 9:30 until 11:30 and, of course, the children are given bible instruction, bible verses.

**[0:30:05]**

Dr. Foster: And the bible school in the summer.

Rev. Baxter: And bibles, and then we have the daily vacation bible school for two weeks in the summer. And then children learn their way to camp by tenets and...

Dr. Foster: By performance.

Rev. Baxter: By performance and the memory of a certain number of bible verses. And it's amazing the way that they really adapt their self and catch on.

Dr. Foster: We get some of the incentive to learn and try to absorb and, again, concentrate on what is at hand. Now, this is a very interesting thing itself, is that down here at Front and Orange Streets that children would come, not just from the community, but from out considerable distance, out considerable distance, and they would come here. And yet to get them into the churches and so forth is sometimes a little different.

There's something about the neutrality of this place. The fact that it isn't the typical institution or church, you see, as such but they come. Now this is almost a 100% black, isn't it?

Rev. Baxter: Nowadays, yes.

Dr. Foster: It is now, it is now. And I think too. I think this is significant too. I think they probably, though, they feel a sense of identity here and this is their place, this is their school, and so forth. They're not just a sprinkling in some other situation as a case might be. But it's interesting and I say that being a pastor, myself, just a few blocks away at the so-called Institutional Church, which happens to be a Methodist Church, which has been around for good many years, there seems to be more of a homeness or something desire that would draw people here than to our so-called churches on the corner, you see.

Interviewer: Well, I'm just curious about -- personally, I'm interested in the Depression. Would you know of any of the work done during that period in time, imparities?

Dr. Foster: No. In the depressions I was -- of course, the work kept going, but I don't know that we have any files that I know of to tell us just what was going on in the 30s. Howard, have you heard anybody say?

Rev. Baxter: No. I think that in that area, it was more or less what it was when I first started in the Sunday school class. And I think it was after the '30s is that they got into men's work.

Dr. Foster: So, in other words, we're saying here we do not know the extent of the lodging and feeding.

Rev. Baxter: During that area.

Dr. Foster: During the depression days. Because undoubtedly, there would be a tremendous need for food. But I don't know whether some research would help us in those early days, see. And yet, that isn't so far back, Howard. There are people around that should know something about that, yeah? But they're not around here anymore.

Rev. Baxter: Not around here. And as far as I know superintendents, previous to my coming here, I think there's only one and he was in the same area that I was. I think the rest are all gone, they all passed on.

Dr. Foster: It would be. I'd be interested to know myself just what was going on during the days of the depression. In fact, I'd like to know when it really did swing over to a three meal a day operation. I'm not too sure back here on Shipley Street, did we? I don't think we were serving years ago that, were we?

Rev. Baxter: Oh yeah.

Dr. Foster: Three meals a day?

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Dr. Foster: We did in the old operation.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Dr. Foster: But, again, we don't know how far this went back.

Rev. Baxter: We don't know how far. I can't get much further than '56.

Dr. Foster: Yes. Yes.

Rev. Baxter: And from '57 on, they were.

Dr. Foster: Yes. Yes.

Rev. Baxter: And previously that I know Mr. Kiting *[phonetic] [0:33:50]* was here and I know they were feeding and housing men there. And AB Foster was here before him and I know that they were serving and catering to the men.

Dr. Foster: Yes. That takes us in to the '40s.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah.

Interviewer: And this would mean that within sometimes during '40s and possibly the '30s, the practice mission served three meals a day.

Dr. Foster: Right.

Interviewer: But all through this period, they were in the earlier, the mission was probably working, they were...

Dr. Foster: I'm not too sure that there would be much work, Howard, until we really got developed in our salvage program here with the facilities and so forth, you see.

Rev. Baxter: The work program began about 1954, really begin. From what I understand just previous to that, they did have a chair cleaning set up.

Dr. Foster: Yes.

Rev. Baxter: But that wasn't too long. But the salvage division really started during Mr. Kiting's era. That's when they started to go out and get the newspapers, the magazines, and the furniture and stuff like that. But previous to that, I understand it was just a rug making and a chair caning. They had a couple of men that caned chairs.

**[0:35:01]**

Dr. Foster: Yes, you'll be interested here, 1901 and 1902 at 115 Shipley Street and 117, chair caning, carpet weaving, cutting firewood, some salvage, and so forth, were the activities and so forth. And that's when really the foundation of the present missionary program was laid. That takes us right back at the turn of the century, see, 70 years ago. So, it had a very small beginning, on a small scale, but never got into full bloom here until around 1954.

Interviewer: In other cities or other states, are there any societies such as the Sunday Breakfast Mission with which you're connected?

Dr. Foster: Yes.

Rev. Baxter: Yeah. As I stated before, we have what we call the International Union of Gospel Missions. This was founded in New York in 1913. Now the only affiliation that international body has is, it has a body of fellowship. We have a convention once a year where we get together and exchange ways, methods and ideas. They had no control or jurisdiction over any one mission.

Each mission is individually controlled and governed by its own board of directors. So we have missions in 254 cities and throughout the United States. I think you'll find a mission on the one name or another whether it's a Sunday Breakfast, or just Rescue Mission, or some other named to the organization.

In every major city in the United States, plus we have them in about seven different countries, we have in Canada, England, Argentina, Japan, China, and slowly spreading all around, because there is a need and there always will be a need, even with the drop off of men here that we've felt, there still is a need.

Interviewer: Do you have anything else to add?

Dr. Foster: No, I think we pretty well covered the ground. We tried to give you a little bit of history, but especially to emphasize our present ministry and to say that we are in touch with the city and the planning by this of our city, keeping close touch as we try to fit in to the plans for the future.

Interviewer: Is this keeping in touch anything more than just having contact with a particular office or is it nothing with the workings of...?

Dr. Foster: No, except, for example, well, I say we kept really in touch in the planning department of our city. This this position was held as you know by Mr. Peter Larson for some years until he moved on now to a new spot and David Nevel *[phonetic]* **[0:38:05]** is there now. We have spend more than just a talking relation. We had the city planner here on the ground and keeping in close touch because he knows our position, our property wise so that we can together make the right decision.

So we keep very much in touch and right now the connector is a big thing and we have heard again from one of the official bodies and we've gone on record as supporting, I say we – in speaking perhaps for myself and I trust for the mission, supporting the recommendation to present time, even though it means an adjustment for us, et cetera. If it's good for the city, and the planning body seem to feel that it is, if the city is to be revitalized.

This is a great crossroads today. The big question is for the tomorrows, what will be the need for our place such as Sunday Breakfast Mission, with the times moving as they are moving. Thus putting a ceiling on everybody or putting there that you go no lower, a guaranteed annual income and so forth.

As all this comes to plays, what does this do for a place like Sunday Breakfast Mission? If you can be assured of guaranteed annual income, some people aren't going to want to get out on these trucks and pick up papers and magazines, and what have you. So there, again, we have to keep open, flexible and adaptable.

But for the time being, there still is a real need and it calls for updating ourselves and keeping abreast with the social needs of the day and relating all these to man's spiritual need.

Interviewer: Do you view any change in your character, changes in the future although you continue basically as *[inaudible]* [0:40:11]?

[0:40:12]

Dr. Foster: I think as long as the demand is – we feel the demand is there, we will continue, we will continue as we are doing. I'm sure we will continue the religious services for we realize that this was our prime reason for coming into being and we believe this is our prime ministry.

The other areas where we have to be adaptable, the children's work, for example, that came into being several years ago, we found, here was a need. Now, a lot of these children have moved out of the area because of urban renewal, development and people relocating. What the future is here, we do not know.

We're living in a day when many are involved at the so-called drug culture, and our superintendent has attended a seminar and this is something that's got to be reckoned with, even in mission work, and so forth, what this says for the future. In other words, we have to be geared to the times, and if we have to shift gears in some of these programs, then we must be prepared to do it. We have to be flexible at that particular point.

And I suppose, frankly, if the time ever came when we thought we had served effectively our day, then we'd have to act accordingly. And as I said, I don't know becoming more and more a welfare state and a country, I don't know just where this is going to bring us out, you see. I suppose there will always -- the bible says, the poorer you have with you always and there are a certain kinds of people no matter what the times are, you will have.

So I think there will always be a degree of need. It may not be quite as much because of other circumstances, but it's a very thrilling ministry. And let me say this that I have appreciated that my association with the work -- I mean, some people think of missions, they think of people who come to missions as a bunch of bums. We speak of skid row, but I want to say that I've met some very wonderful fine people at the byway of the mission, people with skill and ability, people with great hearts and is concerned.

And it's been an experience for me that I realize that here are men too, and as one said many years ago, they're but for the grace of God may they go, I see. I might be here. It gives us an insight primarily as to what alcohol can do for a person. It's the most unfortunate situation but we see it here.

But I see some wonderful people and the great potential, if we can just find the answer to man's basic need. And I think we're putting into practice here a little bit of our Lord who was interested in all people, whatever their condition or status of life. So it's very, very gratifying, satisfying, fruitful ministry, and we appreciate the interest of the people and the citizenry of the Wilmington, the state of Delaware. And the thing you'll be interested to know too that we are finding, we have friends that we were not fully aware of.

And when they leave this world, they haven't forgotten Sunday Breakfast Mission. And this has been quite a revelation to us to find people have involved us in legacies and trust. And this has been a great boost to us in our movement forward and capital funds, et cetera. So we're glad for the confidence of the community and what we're trying to do.

All right. The question is concerning the need for women's work. We have helped in specialized cases and cooperating and finding lodging, but we've never established the division here. Howard, you might speak in regard to in general today what you find in the International Union in regard to women's work, some missions have a division.

Rev. Baxter:

Well, some missions do have a division because there is a need, but here in Wilmington, a few years back, we looked in to it. In fact, last year, I think on the occasion, I think we assisted five women. We have a working arrangement with the YW, if it's a couple, and they come through and they claim, and most of them do is that they are married and that's why we have to take their word.

Well, we hold the man here at the mission and we call the Y. In general, they have a room available, there is always a room available. So we send her there, we transport her there and keep him here, but they both -- we feed him at the mission here locally. But as I said, last year we had five and this year, so far from January to the present day, the 8th month, I think I've only had two.

[0:45:01]

So you see there really isn't a need. Let's face it and be honest. A woman doesn't have to go sleep out. She can make it, where a guy has to depend on the lodging, but not so with the woman. She can always make her way.

Interviewer: Have you dealt with families?

Rev. Baxter: We deal with families on occasion, especially with our children's work. And this is one of our ministries we are looking forward to the future. We believe that if we have to relocate from here, we wanted to advance our children's work and we believe as we advance the children's work that this is going to lead into family work. This is our potential aim that through these children, we'll be able to reach the home.

But right now with our present setup, we're not qualified or able to do it. But we're trusting that when we do expand that this will be included in the program that we will get into the family service of it.

Interviewer: Does this mean that possibly in the future for the Sunday Breakfast Mission there will be less dealing with men and more dealing with families?

Rev. Baxter: No. I don't think that you'll ever see the men entirely phased out. I think the need will always be there as long as there's alcohol. And if it isn't with alcohol, as Dr. Foster stated, drug is coming in the picture and we find this becoming so more and more. In fact, this past month I've had three men through with a drug problem and they come to Wilmington because they know that they can get the help here, that they had a methadone clinic here where they can sign in and they can get the assistance that's needed.

One fellow I talked just the other day, he left Philadelphia to come to Wilmington because he can get the help that's needed here. I dealt with a fellow and talked with him, and I was thankful that I could point him to the other agencies that are dealing in this area. So I don't think we'll entirely ever phase out of the men's work. I think they'll always be a men's work. But I do believe that eventually we'll be more in family work.

Dr. Foster: If you could get rid of alcohol, you could probably though really give us a knockout blow, you see. But until that time comes.

Rev. Baxter: I don't think we'll ever see that day because even there...

**[0:47:22] End of Audio**