

INTERVIEW WITH HERMAN BURNS

Keegan: This is Marian Keegan, archivist at the Sunday School Board interviewing Herman Burns the first artist employed by the Board. He came to begin his work here in 1928, and in 1944 became the first head of the Art Department of the Board. Mr. Burns, we're awfully glad to have you here this morning and appreciate your taking the time and thought to prepare this interview for us and we really look forward to it. When you came in 1928, I know there was a lot of background building up any service any big thing like the Art Department and art services has become at the Board and talk with me and tell me something about this whatever or however you want to start it.

Burns: Thank you. My father, Reverend H. F. Burns was a pastor in the Nashville area around the turn of the century. He knew Dr. Frost and all the others that were at the Board. In 1891, the year the Board was authorized by the Convention, he was a theological student at Union University and was a messenger of the First Baptist Church to the convention and voted for the establishment of the Sunday School Board. He said that he did not know whether Southern Baptists should have a publishing or not, but he trusted Dr. Frost and followed him and voted for it. And at the 50th anniversary in 1941, my father was among those who were photographed as the few who had voted for the Board at the time of its establishment. As for my own part, I liked to draw and have pictures colored before I can remember. So I begged my parents into letting me take the old Lambden Correspondence Course in cartoons. I did not have any way to distinguish between cartoons and just drawings I thought cartooning was the thing in those days.

Keegan: Now you are a naaaaaative of Nashville.

Burns: Yes, I was born in Nashville. I finally finished the correspondence course and then began another correspondence course with the Art Instruction People of Minneapolis, at which I worked all through high school. It was traditional in my family to have liberal education then pursue professional training so I entered Vanderbilt University in 1922.

Having gained some proficiency from correspondence in the study of art, the first drawing I ever had published was for Dr. Prince E. burroughs at the Sunday School Board. (This is your transcriber, and this tape was improperly erased and bits of previously recorded information keeps inserting itself into this recording. This is very, very disconcerting.) A missionary promotion. Four little girls stood with large cards suspended front and back from their shoulders. Large letters made of blossoms spelled go ye in front and when they turned around they became the word "give." The Board had no artists and during college years I did some free-lance work for

the Intermediate counselor, Miss Virginia Lee, editor. Illustrations for the story paper working with Mr. Noble Van Ness and Mr. George Card in the Advertising Department. So it became my deep desire to work for the Board and I could see clearly the need for an art service. I knew I was not well enough prepared and I feared the Board would employ an artist before I could qualify.

Keegan: So you really wanted to be here. That's great.

Burns: Yes, and I went through apprehension for a period of time. Upon graduation from Vanderbilt, I enrolled at the Chicago Academy Of Fine Arts in September of 1926 had a fine year of achievement but was forced to seek employment instead of returning to school in the fall of 1927 which I considered a mild disaster at the time and which increased my fear that I could not compete for Board artist. I obtained a job as staff artist in the Art Department at the Capital Printing Company, maker of most of Nashville's printing plates. It turned out that this company produced much art used by both the Baptist and Methodist so my progress was greatly set forward because a printing plate company is the best possible place to learn reproduction processes for a commercial artist. I can now see clearly the Lord's hand guiding toward my goal. At night I did all sorts of overtime work and saved enough money to return to the Chicago School for the summer session in 1928.

Just before I left, Mr. Noble Van Ness, managing editor of the Board sent me a message to come and see him but I missed him. When I returned at the end of the summer, Mr. Van Ness proposed that I come to the board as staff artist. But the time took so long in process that I seriously considered a job offer in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Board appeared very reluctant to initiate an art service, but finally on October 1, 1928, I began work in the editorial department under Dr. Hite C. Moore, editorial secretary and with Mr. Van Ness at about \$2,000 per year but on a temporary six month trial basis. Dr. I. J. Van Ness was then executive secretary at a salary of \$6,000 a year.

Keegan: Oh my. Well this is a very interesting background. I suppose the Board realized they needed more art work but the matter was whether or not to hire someone to do that? The cost of paper and printing as well as paying the artist.

Burns: Well, somewhat, but I think on the sideline the realization that they needed an art service was very slight indeed. It was easy to employ somebody at the engraving plant or some free-lance artist just to do this little job or that job and in those days the periodicals had almost no art devoted to them.

Keegan: I notice in lots of ads in them for many different things for a while and then they cut those out and of course, in late years

they did not have the advertisements in there.

Burns: Yes, one of Dr. Frost's sons was an executive in an advertising aaaaaaaagency and he bought this space Mr. Marceluls Frost who is yet living. I remember before I ever came to the Board seeing advertisements of those automobile tires and full-pegged pants that they used to wear and asperin advertisements.

Keegan: All sorts of medicine.

Burns: Finally this became quite unnecessary.

Keegan: Yes, well we knew we were going in a different direction with our periodicals.

Burns: The publications in those days had almost no pictorial materials particularly on the curriculum periodicals for Sunday School and Training Union, no, it was BYPU at that time publications. The promotional magazines such as The Sunday School Guide and The Baptist Student and The Training Union Magazine had a little more in the way of cover decoration and ??? but very little indeed. So I think actually it was a lack of consciousness on the part of the people who ran the whole operation in those days of the need of visual communication. Of course, we're in an era now where

Keegan: They were not just as much adhered to art as you were and some others were they just didn't see that.

Burns: Well, art didn't mean to them what it does today. Art in those days meant something pretty, a pretty picture just for decoration, and they had trouble thinking of it as an integral part of communicative pattern. Whereas today communication is the big word and is emphasized in all present-day advertising, periodical publication and everything of the sort because of the great competition industry???. But not in those days.

Keegan: Well, we've come to a new day of art and appreciation and ??? haven't we

Burns: Yes we have. Back in those days, that is, 1928, all except the shipping of products was then housed in the Frost Building. In the vacant corner of the first room on the left on the fifth floor was assigned to the new artist. The room belonged to the old Survey and Statistics Department, Dr. E. P. Aldrich secretary. Covers for The Sunday School Builder and The Baptist Student are the first assignments I remember. Mr. Arthur Flake and Dr. Frank Leavelle editors, respectively.

Keegan: And those magazines had just been started for a little

while. I know The Baptist Student maaaagazine had only been going for two years so you got in on the ground floor there.

Burns: A special privilege of those early days was the opportunity to work closely with the department heads that were also editors of the various periodicals in their areas of responsibility. Dr. Hite C. Moore, the most Christlike man I ever knew, Dr. P. E. Burroughs, Dr. Frank H. Leavelle, Mr. Arthur Flake, Mr. J. E. Lambdin, Mr. W. C. Phillips, Dr. John L. Hill, Miss Virginia Lee, Miss Willa Jean Stewart, Dr. Clifton J. Allen, Dr. Gaines S. Dobbins, J. N. Barnett, H. E. Ingraham and their assistants became my good friends and fellow workers.

Keegan: Thaaaat's a roll call of famous people there.

Burns: I knew my training was not complete, but the Lord had led me to the opportunity I wanted and I believe He wanted me. I worked a year during which I attended night art classes at Watkins Institute and obtained a leave of aaaaaaaabsence to study at the Art Institute of Chicago. At night and on weekends I did about half of the Board art Workk. Most of the work was periodical cover design since there was no concept of anything but verbal content on the inside pages.

The great depression that struck in 1929 caused discontinuance of the architecture deparatment. So upon my return in June of 1930, I was assigned the drafting room on the north side of the fifth floor of the Frost Building. Continuing my design services and night art classes, I was very busy indeed. I was scheduled for a salary increase almost unheard of during the depression but on the payday it was to materialize a ten percent reduction of all Board salaries was announced. My raise was changed to no reduction in salary a great blessing in itself. The salary reduction came because of the depression and it came laaaaaaaate and was restored early so Board employees never missed a payday.

After marriage to Robbie Hall of Dover, Tennessee in August of 1933 I obtained a second leave of absence for the school year of 1934-1935. This time working at night six months before leaving to get ahead with cover designs. I entered the Art Student's Leaaaaaaaague of New York for day study and the Grand Central School Of Art for night study concluding the year and returning permanently in June of 1935. The work continued to grow as Board work expanded and the first art assistant was Miss Frances Allen a talented Methodist who worked three years on a temporary basis because the Board employed only Baptists in those days. Then Miss Mildred Shriner, a graduate of the Washington University Art School came in September of 1938 as the first permanent assistant artist and secretary. She is now an art supervisor of distinguished service and great work.

Keegan: My, she is still quite a necessary person around here and a

lovely person.

Burns: During these early years there was a major revision of the graded Sunday School lessons for children which did carry more art work than any other publications at the Sunday School Board. This was under the leadership of Miss Willie Due Stuart, the editor and I as staff artist was greatly involved over a period of I don't know it took three or four years to do this.

Keegan: Now these Bible picture cards, they were never done here, I know that, but maybe others want to know those were done, some of them, by Providence Lithograph Company?

Burns: I don't know just when this began, but probably quite early. The Providence Lithograph Company, in Providence, Rhode Island, was a commercial firm that specialized in offering religious paintings, and they had acquired quite a collection of very fine religious imitations, and you could buy their services, including their pictorial matter, and they used this to get the printing contracts. In other words, if you bought their religious pictures, they also needed to print the periodicals on which they appeared. So for a long period of time the Sunday School Board and most other religious publishers in the United States used these services.

Keegan: And they were mainly for children, right?

Burns: Yes, yes, almost entirely I should say. It was not too many years ago the Board discontinued using them. Oh ten years ago maybe longer, and they are still specializing in this but are drifting more and more towards commercial work and out of the religious publication business as the people who were interested in it finally retire from the organization and it changes. Mr. Randolph T. Oades, the head of the Providence Lithograph Company was one of the most gentlemanly men that I ever knew, a New Yorker, and he married the daughter of the man who started the Providence Lithograph Company and carried it on.

Keegan: Well, that's interesting to hear about that because I knew there was such a real connection with this company for many years here at the Board. That explains a little bit more about that.

Burns: Dr. Holcomb had become executive Secretary in 1934 and the art requirement continued to expand, and W. D. Kendall, an excellent designer and graduate of the University of Oklahoma was employed, and the art staff needed larger quarters. A pent house was authorized by business manager J. O. Williams and built on top of the Frost Building. Two rooms at first and later expanded to three an ideal location except for the 90 degree summer heat. An evaporation cooling system was installed which did a fairly good job except for excessive moisture which curled our illustration boards very badly.

Keegan: And of course all the heat in the wintertime might rise if you had any heat to rise.

Burns: That's quite right. We didn't have so much trouble in the wintertime, but in the summer it was often about 90 degrees on the counter right by my table.

Keegan: I guess we were able to stand all of that because we couldn't do any better than that.

Burns: Well we were used to it, you know, at that time. Just prior to 1940 another major revision of graded lessons transpired, this under the leadership of Mrs. C. J. Allen as editor and this as in the previous case consumed a period of several years and I should say for the first time made elaborate use of pictorial material in both publications. One of my great concerns over a long period of years back at that time was the fact that in a graded lesson all this extra effort and great expense was given to the matter of art and illustrations but the Uniform Lesson periodicals also being used by the same age group, of course, in smaller churches where graded was not focused, had almost no art work. Well almost no art work, period. And it was not until rather recent years that this began to change markedly, and now, of course, everything is rather elaborately illustrated and decorated.

Keegan: They have become very attractive in appearance.

Burns: The reason for this was the fact that in the case of graded lessons they were used over and over and once the printing plates are made you print them this year and then you print them again without any additional expense for art work and plates whereas with the Uniform Lessons each is done one time and then discarded and then the next time it is to do over again, and this causes full expense each time whereas with the Graded Lessons you pay for it original and then use it many times. And this is the very logical reason that the uniform people didn't get in on the program.

Keegan: No, didn't make those more attractive for them.

Burns: That is correct.

Keegan: Well, we're glad to know about your professional training and what attracted you here to work at the Board and the fact that you worked under three of the executive secretaries at the Board was very interesting, you know, Dr. Van Ness, Dr. Holcomb, and Dr. Sullivan.

Burns: Oddly I worked under Dr. Van Ness six years, under Dr. Holcomb eighteen years, and under Dr. Sullivan eighteen years, retiring in 1970.

Keegan: Do you have something else you'd like to tell us?

Burns:

Well, with the coming of Dr. Holcomb, there came the divisional structure of board organization, and the tower building was completed but prior to this in 1943, the art unit was granted department status. Dr. Hite C. Moore had retired. Dr. W. R. White had come as editorial secretary as they called it in those days, and then under the divisional structure he was head of the editorial division. And it was during Dr. White's tenure that the Sunday School Board granted the Art unit department status.

Keegan: So that at first it was under the editorial department. You were first under the direction of Dr. Moore, then, Dr. Hite C. Moore?

Burns: Oh yes, definitely, and at one point had an office within his suite of offices on the fourth floor of the Frost Building. That was prior to the pent house just prior to the building of the pent house.

Keegan: They didn't put him up there in the hot spot or the humid spot did they in the pent house?

Burns: Oh no. That was an ideal location. We were able to build it like we wanted, and it was just perfect and also had some privacy off from other things. People didn't come unless they needed to. Our outreach and art staff at the Board continued to expand as periodical circulations grew. New publications were started and departments began to serve more promotional, merchandising, and book design needs. Virginia Doss was employed as the first Board photographer in the Art Department followed by Bryce Finch and later Robert Jackson as assistant. Under the divisional structure Dr. H. E. Ingraham who was the head of the Services Division became our boss, and for ten years we were under his guidance, and when the tower building was erected, the art department was assigned the excellent location of the entire tenth floor, and on February 3, 1953, we moved in. For the first time really adequate space was available and the art personnel was divided into sections. a supervisor and a few staff artists were assigned to serve specific areas of Board art needs. Mildred Shriner, Haskel Richardson, Charles Miller, Robert Shields, Fred Crossman, and Robert Jones as supervisors. There was even space for a gallery in which to display biblical paintings and to have an art library to serve all the customers. For thirteen and one-half years the Art Department occupied these best-ever quarters and was transferred to new quarters on the second floor of the Operations Building on October 12, 1962 under Mr. Herman King, head of the Publishing Division. Art Service is scheduled to move to the new West Wing edition under the Management Services Division which will be the sixth location and the fourth division since the Art

Department was created.

Keegan: Now when is this to be, this move to the West Wing?

Burns: I do not have definite information. I don't know whether it's known exactly. The building is in progress, and when the building is completed and ready for occupancy. . . .

Keegan: One of these two main floors?

Burns: Yes, I presume that it will be on the top floor. This would be the logical thing because of light requirements, but either floor would be wonderful.

Keegan: That would be a more central location for people to come for consultation to work with the artists.

Burns: Yes, I think the one big difficulty which we pointed out to our management at the time it was about to happen in moving to the Publishing Division in the Operations Building was the fact that the daily contact the Art Department individuals have with the editorial people with whom they work so closely should be made easy by not being too far from each other, and to move the Art Department from the tenth floor of the Tower Building to the second floor of the Operations Building was really just putting them as far away as they could get. But of course, all such things follow organizational changes. It was decided that the art services should be under Mr. Herman King who was the division head of the Publishing Division and he was located there and of course, naturally those things are assembled with the director.

Keegan: Ever so often we've had a little change of regrouping and reorganization here to try to improve the organizational structure and functioning of the Board.

Burns: Yes, as organization grows, different concepts of management emerge, and in following these management is willing to spend the money that it takes to move people and build new quarters and change things around which, of course, is just a part of the normal development that should take place in any such change.

Keegan: Now at present, aren't some of the artists that used to be all there together in the Operations Building out as part of some of the departments?

Burns: Yes, as the Art Department gradually grew the concept was to provide a full art service for all phases of Board work. This included, especially, the periodical publications and the merchandising, the design of books all of this needs advertising along with it, and then the whole area of promotional work. Each of

the sections was delegated the design of the periodicals that belong to each department and also delegated the responsibility for doing the promotional work of the department which we considered a great improvement in organization.

When we moved to the tenth floor, it made possible, and I believe I've already mentioned this, to have a sectional organization. And this is, I think, an attempt to good organization.

Keegan: You've come a long way, then, with trying to place the artists along with their work in different relationships so that we could improve art services.

Burns: Oh yes. On this point, it has been a source of pride with me that to the best of my knowledge the Art Department has had a number of firsts at the Sunday School Board.

Keegan: Tell us about these.

Burns: It was the first art department for any Southern Baptist agency. They all have art departments now and even some of the state offices such as the one in Texas and others have art needs to serve their promotional and publication purposes, but ours was the first of any Baptist agency. It was the first centralized Art Department offering a complete art and photography service to all areas of the organization. It was the first, of any Baptist agency, to have layout and design applied to inside pages of periodicals, and then some other interesting little things . . .

Keegan: The use of color, of course.

Burns: Oh yes. One of these and this is a business or an organization type of thing which you wouldn't expect in an art department to be first; but I think we did, this is my memory and I think this is true, when we moved to the tenth floor of the Tower Building, we had this beautiful foyer out at the elevator, and so we set this up with a receptionist and the desk that is commonplace now in all of these areas.

Keegan: Yes, on all the floors.

Burns: As far as I know, we were the first at the Sunday School Board to have this kind of traffic control in the elevaaaaaator foyer.

Keegan: Well this is even news to me, I didn't realize that.

Burns: I was interested at the time to be advised by my division head that he thought this was a very unwise thing to do.

Keegan: Unnecessary?

Burns: Well he told me he thought this would just be a cold drafty place out there and nobody would want to stay, but everybody uses this method of traffic control and organization at the present time.

Keegan: It's very helpful as one gets off of the elevator to find out where you are and be directed to where you want to go.

Burns: This is rather technical, but we were the first in Nashville to use split fountain printing. This is a method whereby on the press the ink fountains are divided so the rollers can merge two different colors of ink and in one impression you can get two different colors, and of course on two impressions you could get four different color-printing. And this was something we made great use of back before we were permitted, because of cost, to have full-color printing which is common today. I have already mentioned the air conditioning unit we had up on the roof. This was the first at the Sunday School Board. And I think our department was probably the first among religious publishers of the nation to offer a complete service. The methodists had an editorial art service before we established ours. Theirs was in Cincinnati that was when it was Northern and Southern Methodists, and I'm not familiar with what the Southern Methodists had I don't think they had an art unit until after ours at sometimes later. Later it was moved from Cincinnati when the two Methodist branches merged and it was moved from Cincinnati to Nashville and they have had some very distinguished art directors here.

Keegan: Yes, it's just a few blocks away from us, isn't it?

Burns: And their Art Department and our Art Department are very comparable in size and in the work they do which is natural because the needs are the same.

Keegan: Well this is very interesting. You are informing me a great deal, this is good.

Burns: The objective of the Art Department has been to provide a complete consulting, producing, and procuring art and photography service for all layout, design, illustration, and photographic needs of the advertising, books, curriculum, education, marketing, and promotions programs of the Board. The Art Department participates directly in six major programs--church literature publishing, Broadman book publishing, Broadman film production, Broadman music publishing, Broadman supplies production, and Convention Press publishing and indirectly in sixteen other programs. The major effort of the Art Department is the layout, design, and illustration of the more than one hundred church literature items, Broadman and Convention Press items and for advertising of products in Board and

other denominational and secular media. The approximately 18,000 art and photography jobs that were done in the year, 1968-1969 gives some idea of the scope of the work done by the Art Department. The greater part of this work served six major Board programs for periodicals, books, films, musical, and supplies production but contributes, also, to all except three Board programs. Art sections are unusually well-staffed for the great responsibilities of the immediate future. The Art Department now employs 39 people. That's wrong, that's wrong.

Keegan: Now I believe the figure that has been said is that in 1970 there were over fifty employees in seven sections.

Burns: That is correct.

Keegan: Does that sound right?

Burns: That is correct.

Keegan: It is a marvelous growth and a marvelous diversification of work. It staggers me to think about that.

Burns: During a two-year period, just before the new printing contract was let to the Western Publishing Company, there was a period during which the Art Department had to do double duty. It had to be on schedule with the designs for the latter portions of the periodicals to be published before the new printing contract and then do the ones that were necessary for the beginning of the new printing contract, and this accounts, partially, for the large number of jobs done, but the art staff responded beautifully to this extra need for help and although we fell behind a few times on some schedules there never was any serious difficulty and we never did fail to publish.

Keegan: That's tremendous. They must have been following your example of hard work of your early years and all of your years that I notice your early years with night work and work on weekends. I think some of them still do that in order to produce what is necessary.

burns: Yes, they do, and hard work just happens to be necessary in accomplishing the things you want to do when they are somewhat technical. These professional areas are all very technical. One of the concerns in this area has been to employ people who are professionally trained. amaaaaateurism has no place in the practice of professional art for publications. And instead of just employing nice people who are capable a little with art we try very hard to find those people among Southern Baptists, who have prepared themselves in good art schools for this kind of work. And I really take great pride in the quality and the number of finely trained people that we were able to find.

Keegan: I've wondered, just how do you contact your artists, where do they come from, how do they hear about it to come here to the Sunday School Board?

Burns: Well, notice that people who are pointing in this direction come to you in many ways. For a great many years, I tried to operate a one-man service of advising prospective artists on how to get the proper technical education so they could qualify for Board work at the time they were ready and we were ready. In a few instances I followed people from high school through college years and through art school years advising them to change schools, even, and where to go if they can so as to get to the good schools. We have employed people from a great many of the best schools in the country those in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Sarasota, and our scope in finding these people has ranged from Connecticut to California and from Oregon-Washington to Florida.

Keegan: That is about as far as you can go in the United States except now that we have included Hawaii and Alaska.

Burns: Well, we've never had anybody from those two but I'm sure they'd be welcome if they could qualify.

Keegan: Did you have something else you wanted to bring up?

Burns: Well yes, a little bit, but may I hear your question whatever it is?

Keegan: I was going to ask about the biblical paintings you mentioned a while ago, something about have they been commissioned to be done, where are they kept, or something about the biblical paintings.

Burns: The biblical painting library is kept in the Management Services vault and is very carefully preserved and you have to be authorized to get in in order to work with any of these.

Keegan: Yes, what are they were used for and why were they commissioned?

Burns: Well, it started out as a collection to be devoted mainly to the graded lessons literature; but after we were able to expand our color printing into the other curriculum periodicals, it is now just a general library of more than five hundred child-experience paintings of various biblical illustrations for use in the periodical publications mainly for the teaching area. These are commissioned by learning who the best people are in this country who are doing such things. There are a number of outstanding free-lance biblical illustrators, and we have used some of these people for as long as

twenty-five years gradually buying a few more from them each year, and we were always alert to try to discover new ones, and many of these paintings are not only biblical illustrations but they relate to child experience situations. We had a committee of editors who established those situations both for the New Testament and for the Old Testament that would be the most needed in the area of teaching. And we gradually, over a period of years, as these situations would come up for use, would have these situations painted so that actually there is a good coverage of most of the biblical situations that are needed in the teaching.

Keegan: Then those can be brought out and used again.

Burns: That is correct.

Keegan: Since it is a pretty complete situation coverage.

Burns: Right, and as some of these seem to go out of style or begin looking old, they are discarded and new ones are obtained in their place, and there is always the progressive need for more illustrations especially in the child experience area because these change and grow and continue, and so this is studied as best we can there.

Keegan: Do you ever have special exhibits of these?

Burns: Well, we once were able to do so on the tenth floor of the Tower Building because we were provided a gallery there, and at one time in connection with a Bible celebration we had a marvelous exhibition of paintings including a number of the huge paintings by Arnold Freiburg which were done to illustrate the Ten Commandments motion picture. Mr. Freiburg is one of the best of the biblical illustrators in this country.

Keegan: Well, is there any other phase of the department work you'd like to talk about that we haven't covered recently?

Burns: I don't really believe so unless you have something you want to discuss.

Keegan: Well, let's talk about the pleasant years of your retirement. I know you are enjoying these and doing many things. You retired on June 30, 1970, and I believe someone said that you found out that you were working for half-salary because you were working beyond certain years. Do you want to comment on that?

Burns: Well, I don't know the half salary reference.

Keegan: By working you were just making half or twice of what you would have anyway.

Burns: Yes, I think this is true of almost anyone who comes up to retirement years because the Board would provide.

Keegan: Sixty-five, retirement age, but you could have chosen the 65 or 68.

Burns: Well, I was in the group that were allowed to work until 68, but I worked until I was sixty-six and a half. In other words, I split the difference between sixty-five and sixty-eight and retired at the end of June, 1970. Oh I have no difficulty filling my time. I often tell people who ask this that I haven't yet been able to catch up with my work. I have a number of interests. I like to read and I have several hobbies.

Keegan: One of them is refinishing beautiful furniture isn't it?

Burns: Yes, and in preparation for this particular interview, finishing a cherry corner cupboard that had got in my way and used up some of the time I should have been using in thinking this over.

Keegan: Well, I think you have given a lot of good thought to this, I'll tell you.

Burns: I like to fish but I don't go as often as I thought I would. I don't know why exactly.

Keegan: Maybe you don't have the right companions to go with you.

Burns: Well, I have some good companions, yes, Brother Young over at the church, the associate pastor is one of my fishing companions.

Keegan: I see. Where do you go fishing?

Burns: Well, it doesn't really matter. When my son was young he and I fished almost all the lakes that are available in this area, Kentucky Lake, Center Hill, Dale Hollow, and I like to fish those lakes, yet, but as the ones have been finished nearer Nashville, Percy Priest and Old Hickory Lake and I went to a small lake with my friend who likes to fish small lakes occasionally, Marabaone Lake. It doesn't really matter with me where I fish but I hope to find them. I rarely do, but when I do it is real fun and very relaxing, of course, to have a nice day out with a good companion.

Keegan: I know that you and Robbie have done some traveling.

Burns: We very much like to travel and plan to continue doing so. We went to Europe, the Holy Land and Egypt the summer before last and enjoyed that trip very much. We hadn't been abroad before. Last summer we went to Mexico and enjoyed a nice trip. We haven't planned

one for this year but we do plan to go to Glorieta with the Senior Baptists of First Baptist Church in October.

Keegan: Well, I know in the trip to Europe, seeing some of the masterpieces in the museums there was just a particular joy for you.

Burns: Oh yes, I saw things that I had loved and hoped to see all my life, the Monalisa, the picture of Samo Thrace and Venus Demilo--those all three at the Leuvre Museum in Paris. And then in a number of other places I saw very interesting paintings. In London, especially, at the British Museum. The frustrating part of all that is you'd have to live there to get the time it takes to really enjoy those things as they ought to be enjoyed. You could spend your life time in the Leuvre. It is a huge museum.

Keegan: It certainly is, and just charming. Talking with you about your life, we musn't leave out a very important segment and interest in your life which is First Baptist Church, Nashville. You've meant so much to us in our church functioning as deacon, chairman of the deacons at times and special history interests like your big responsibility in making our 150th anniversary at our church very special. We had this in 1970, so you had a very busy time retirement time and as head of some of the committees.

Burns: Yes, I have tremendously enjoyed working with First Baptist Church. I have been a sort of handyman and have covered many different positions wearing many hats.

Keegan: When did you join First Baptist Church, do you remember the year?

Burns: I don't remember the date. It was sometime soon after I came to work at the Board probably late in 1928. I joined the First Baptist Church and attended Dr. Hite C. Moore's Sunday School class. He was my Sunday School teacher.

Keegan: That was quite a famous class.

Burns: Oh it was, and he was a teacher of far beyond almost any you could think of. He was a great Bible student and a wonderful teacher.

Keegan: Dr. Allen also appreciated and loved Dr. Moore so much.

Burns: Oh yes. Dr. Allen was our division head for a time succeeding Dr. W. R. White, and he is one of my very best friends and a wonderful man indeed. His service to the denomination continues.

Keegan: That's right. Clifton J. Allen was just a big figure in the Board and denomination.

Burns: Dr. Clifton J. Allen has been a great man in the denomination. Speaking of my joining the First Baptist Church and the privilege of serving there, I have gone through a number of assignments at the church, and long ago I was BYPU director before it's name was changed to Training Union. Also, I have been Sunday School superintendent and have served on many church committees especially the Future Planning Committee in its work toward effecting the building of the last educational unit and also a member of the committee to build the new church which was completed in recent years. I have been chairman of the deacons more than once. I was privileged to be chairman of the deacons during Dr. W. F. Powell's later years and at the time of his retirement, and I suppose because of this when it was necessary to have a pulpit committee appointed to search for a new pastor, I became chairman of the pulpit committee at the same time and enjoyed the privilege of searching for and finding Dr. Paschal.

Keegan: And Kearney Keegan worked with you on that as many others did on that committee.

Burns: Definitely, and Kearney Keegan was one of my best friends at the Board for long years working with The Baptist Student and other things. I treasure his memory very much indeed. I continue on several committees, the Missions Committee last year and currently the chairman of the Lord's Supper Committee and have some other committee assignments.

Keegan: Well we had a big year in 1970 observing the sesquicentennial of the church's founding.

Burns: Yes, I was privileged to be the coordinator of this particular celebration and worked for a period of about two years with planning committees and many other people in the church, of course, to bring about our services culminating in the dedication of the new sanctuary and the celebration of our sesquicentennial. We had Dr. Billy Graham here for the address.

Keegan: That was a big meeting wasn't it?

Burns: We were able, also, in this particular period to do a great deal of work on the history of First Baptist Church, assembling the things that had been preserved and we are still working on this, the Historical Committee of the church with Dr. Kendall as chairman this year is continuing to work on this and there are many things yet to be done before our history will be in good shape to preserve.

Keegan: Wasn't your father related in some way to the Mill Creek Church out of which First Baptist Church here in Nashville was an outgrowth?

Burns: My father was pastor of several churches in this area back around the turn of the century and later along say about 1920. My father was pastor of Seventh Baptist Church in 1898 when he and my mother married, and he brought my mother as a bride to Seventh Baptist Church and one lady, Mrs. Jesse Roach of First Baptist Church still remembers this occasion. When I was born in Nashville, my father when I was about six months old was called to the Mill Creek Baptist Church and then later we moved to West Tennessee, and I did not come back to Nashville until I was ready to enter into college. My father was the pastor of the Goodlettsville Baptist Church during my college years, and his last pastorate in Nashville was the Radner Baptist Church. My family has been intertwined with Nashville and the religious activities of the Nashville churches from before the turn of the century as you see from these things I have just said.

Keegan: It has been our privilege to have as memories for people at the church and shut-ins to remember.

Burns: One of the things I tried to do as an art director of the Art Department at the Sunday School Board was to keep open our personal contact with the art profession in the country. I became a member of the New York Art Director's Club which is the foremost art organization in the commercial art world many years ago and am now a life member of that organization. I was one of the founding group that founded the Nashville Art Director's Club, many years ago, and I served as president of that more than once. Each year we used to take several members of the Art Department to art meetings in New York and to other places to give them the technical contacts with the best in the professional world as far as we could do so and I think this has been of tremendous help in keeping our art department objective at times. I feel that my service has been to finding the Lord's will for my life the opportunity to invest the interest I have in art by working with other people to serve the churches.

Keegan: Thank you very much for this wonderful interview with you this morning this is February 12, 1974.