

Interview Between Howse and Grice

Howse: . . . 1971, and I'm at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Homer L. Grice, 3509 Pleasant Valley Road here in Nashville for an interview regarding some of Dr. Grice's early experiences at the Sunday School Board. He served the Sunday School Board and Southern Baptists for approximately 28 or 29 years as secretary of the Vacation Bible School Department. He was at the Board when many of the decisions were made which have been formative in the life of the Board and significant for the developments of the present day, and so at my request, Dr. Grice is answering a number of rather significant questions with the objective of throwing light on some of those early day happenings and reasons back of it. Dr. Grice, it's a pleasure to be here and do this, and I have a few questions, now, that I would like to pose for you to answer. I think one of the first questions I'd like to raise is, what developments brought about the merging if different departments into a Sunday School Department?

Dr. Grice: Well, that would be or require a number of answers. You mean there that when we came to have the Sunday School Department organized as a department.

Howse: As a department. In other words you had young people, adult, Intermediate and so on. What brought about the merging of all of these into one cohesive department?

Dr. Grice: Well that was the result of the gradual growth and expansion of the Board's work. When it began in 1891, it was a very small and simple organization. There developed, as time went on, a need for editors which they got first and then for field workers. And they had to have men at the Board to care for the different phases of the work as it expanded and diversified. Dr. Spillian, I think, of North Carolina was the first field worker, and then Dr. Riley of Oklahoma, Dr. Beacham of Arkansas and E. E. or Hot Dog Lee of Georgia. Those were the four field men. Dr. Beacham gave a good deal of his time to architecture. And so they were out on the field.

There was a great need for the training of teachers. The schools were small. They were not graded, not even graded and departmentalizing hadn't even been thought of. So Dr. Prince Burroughs was brought here about 1910 to develop books and carry on field work for the training of the teachers. And they gave him the title of secretary of education. And he kept that for many years. Now that was a very limited field. He decided to get out study course books or whatever were needed for that day and issue a diploma, and then have a place on there for seals for each book studied. And a red seal when a certain number of the books had been studied and a blue seal when more of the books had been studied.

Howse: Dr. Grice, let me interrupt ask didn't Dr. Burroughs come to the Board from the pastorate of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth?

Dr. Grice: I think that is correct. yes sir.

Howse: I served in that church and I had the

Dr. Grice: Yes, he was pastor at Fort Worth. Now, while we're on the study course, I'll go ahead and explain about its development. When I came to begin the Vacation Bible School work in 1924, I had out a Vacation Bible School Guide in 1925, and I felt that I ought to have a number of books for the teachers to study that were not in the Sunday School course. So I went to Dr. Burroughs and asked him to include these books in his teacher training course. He was a very gracious, friendly, and polite man, but he said, "Brother Grice," said, "You just make your own study course." So I put seven books in it, and I do not have a copy of the guide in here and I cannot recall all of them.

Howse: I have that at home, Dr. Grice. I have it ,in fact the library has it now.

Dr. Grice: We needed a book on story telling because the people hadn't had training in there, and we wanted to have a book on story telling related to teachers. And we needed a book on the dramatization of Bible stories because I wanted them to have that in their programs. We needed one on handwork. And the one on handwork was, Handwork in Religious Education by Miss Wardle a teacher in Columbia University.

Now we never thought of it in those days in terms of whether it was creative or not. Of course handwork is anything you do with your hands. It may be just a busy activity or it may have a lot of teaching values and it may become creative. But we just used the title of her book, Handwork in Religious Education, the dramatization of Bible stories, and other books like that. And so we offered a seal for each one and then we had a place on there if they had the red seal and the blue seal in the normal course diploma so that it would all tie in. And we promoted that on the field, and it was very successful and had far ranging effects on the life of the denomination beyond just those of the Vacation Bible School.

Then Arthur Flake who had charge of Sunday School administration and had no responsibilities beyond that saw

Howse: Were you located in his department when you first came there?

Dr. Grice: No sir, no sir.

Howse: You had your own.

Dr. Grice: Dr. Van Ness asked me when I came if I would be willing to be in his department and I told him no. I knew Mr. Flake was a man of very positive opinions and that he would not have a background for understanding all of the things of the Vacation Bible School and that if he turned me down on something I was helpless. So I just told Dr. Van Ness that I wanted full freedom to go ahead with everything and I preferred to be alone and I don't think I would have come if it hadn't been that way because I'd have come with my hands tied. Well, Mr. Flake saw how successful this course of mine was and came to me to talk with me about it, and he went to see Dr. Burroughs and Dr. Burroughs graciously declined to receive his books and suggested that like I he started a course of his own.

Howse: Well what did Dr. Burroughs have in his course? Was it just the training of teachers?

Dr. Grice: Well yes, the training of Sunday School teachers and all of his books had to do with that. Some of it might relate indirectly to church or Sunday School administration. So Mr. Flake, then, got out his study course. Well later on Dr. Burroughs got out an advanced course so the Sunday School Board was offering all those different courses and the people began to complain about there being so many courses and eventually it was all merged into the modern program of Sunday School development. Now that was a broad way was the way that was developed.

Howse: Now as I understand it, these various departments came into being and remained pretty much independent of each other.

Dr. Grice: Altogether.

Howse: You had Mr. Flake over here with Sunday School administration and then you had Phillips and the adult, young people's and extension department and Virginia Lee in the intermediate. Then you had another department with Andrew Allen is that right? He wasn't the first was he?

Dr. Grice: No he wasn't the first one.

Howse: What brought them all into one package?

Dr. Grice: Well I think it would be better first to just take a little bit about the order in which they came about. Now, there was Mr. Flake with the Sunday School Administration the general oversight direction of the Sunday School. Well they elected Mr. Strickland, the Alabama Sunday School secretary as secretary of the Adult Department, and he died from blood poisoning in December of 1924 and a little later Mr. W. P. Phillips came to succeed him. Then Mr. Harrell came to direct the young people in that department. Yeah, W. A. Harrell in Mr. Phillips' department. And he brought in Miss Mary Virginia Lee to handle the intermediates in that department. It was too much to put them under one. I mean she had Intermediates. So, a little later the young people's department was made separate with Mr. Harrell as its head. Miss Lee was made secretary of the Intermediate Department and they came out from under Mr. Phillips and they ranked right along with him. Then the younger children were in the Primary Department and there were two field workers for the Primary Department--Miss

Frost, the daughter of Dr. Frost and Miss, what was the woman from Birmingham? I can't call her name. And they went all over the South working with the children. And that led to the organization of the Elementary Department and Miss Forbes was the first one in there, and she had, you see, the Beginners and the Primaries and the Juniors. And as time went on, then, she got workers for each of those departments or these age groups in her Elementary Department. Later on the Cradle Roll Department and the Nursery were added. Now when Miss Forbes retired, Miss Leatherwood succeeded her.

Now all of those departments were responsible directly to Dr. Van Ness just like I was and just like Dr. Burroughs was. And Dr. Van Ness gave us all all the freedom we needed. He never interfered or bothered. He did not want any of his workers to get him in trouble out on the field. He wanted us to have judgment enough to know how to do our work without provoking antagonism. And so we did not have any regular times for meetings just whenever he decided to call us all together.

Howse: Did you just go your own ways, Dr. Grice?

Dr. Grice: We all went our own ways and did our own work. Now there was conferences between the workers in those departments and we planned study courses and enlargement campaigns when they came in that involved all of the workers.

Howse: Let me interrupt and ask a question here, Dr. Grice that crosses my mind at this point. Maybe this is not true, but let me say it anyway. From the very beginning you seem to have related Vacation Bible School to the Sunday School. Now you must have had a real job trying to relate the Vacation Bible School to this many separate departments. How did you go about getting them to assist you or did they?

Dr. Grice: They did not.

Howse: I see.

Dr. Grice: Now this is interesting and it's not a matter of history, but I think it's worthwhile. They were all worked to death. All of them had more to do than they could do. And in all the years that I was editing and writing and Mrs. Grice was writing Vacation Bible School textbooks, I never succeeded in getting a single Sunday School worker to read any of my manuscripts. I wanted to have the approval and the advantage of their reading. But not a one of those ever read a manuscript for me.

Howse: Well Dr. Grice, you evidently achieved this by your own promotion program and getting the churches to do it. The churchessaw to ?????????? Is this right?

Dr. Grice: Yeah. Now I realized that the Vacation Bible School was in a way an extension of the Sunday School into the weekdays of the vacation time, and that it would be much easier to establish it and keep it going to have it where the people were familiar with the

people were familiar with the processes. So I started with the beginner and the Primary and the Junior and the Intermediate departments and followed the grading that Mr. Flake had worked out. And built those department books on that basis. Now this was I figured a three hour program. That's what I had in mind for the schools, three hours a day and we had them for four weeks--volunteer teachers. Well you were faced with the fact of how are you going to get teachers and how were you going to name those? Well, we planned for the teaching to be done by departments and not by classes, and that the superintendent of the department would have charge of it, and we put the first year boys at one table and the second year boys at another and the third year at another and fourth in the Junior and Intermediate and the same way with the girls. So in the Junior and Intermediate departments we had eight tables and over each table we had an assistant or helper, and so when the superintendent told their story she told it to the department as a group and they listened. Then, when she had the memory work she had it as a department at the tables. And when they were doing other things like that in there she told a therapy story or a Bible story. Now when she told those, somewhere in the morning in an informal way at the same time those eight tables were retelling the story, repeating the memory work and doing those things under the guidance and direction of the helper or the assistant. That got the pupil participation, you see, in the comeback.

Now we had to have a flexible program because some teachers would get through earlier than others and some would spend the entire time, maybe, on one thing. So we put into the program an approximate time schedule about so many minutes so that it enabled them to get through with their program. Not in order to be strict and confining, but to make it flexible. Now that was the process of the teaching in the departments.

Now we suggested to the country, to the little rural schools, the village schools everywhere that they grade them on the basis of their age. And that was the first time in the history of the Sunday School Board growth that out in the country and rural churches they graded the country and village churches for their teaching. And I went on to say if necessary suggested how they could put up curtains in their auditorium and break it up into departments and they could go out under a tree and hang up some sheets and make a department out there. And if they had (I emphasized this) if they had four or five beginners that was not the beginner class that was the beginner department. So we featured the department in it.

Howse: It seems to me, Dr. Grice, that that kind of teaching was evolutionary back then.

Dr. Grice: Of course it was.

Howse: And that should have helped Sunday School teachers in those days.

Dr. Grice: Yeah, I'm sure it did, and as you can see later on. Now we had those Vacation Bible Schools in homes. We had them under brush arbors. We had them out under trees. We had them in little tiny one-room houses where they maybe couldn't have all the departments. Now some of them just had three, but we pushed for the Intermediates and I'll come back to that a little later on why we stressed so the Intermediate Department. Now the result of that they had such marvelous success with it and were so happy they got such results that there strung up all over the South the building of sheds or leantos to those one-room churches where they could have their beginners and primaries. And that led on out in the course of a few years till it had immeasurable effect on the creation of department Sunday Schools, you see.

Howse: I can see how it would.

Dr. Grice: That's where a great deal of the growth came and revitalized the church building departments you see to create that.

Now getting back to show you another angle to that, in one of our Intermediate textbooks we had a drawing for the building of chairs I think they were 14 inch chairs, 12 inch anyway so that a child would not have to sit on a chair and dangle his feet up in the air you see, you get them down on the floor. So, all over the South, the year they had that book the Intermediates built those intermediate chairs. Now I'll show you how that was creative activity time. They went me one or two of those chairs that they made. They made those chairs all over the mountains of Western North Carolina and East Tennessee and places like that. And introduced into a lot of the churches the need for chairs for the children. Now that was just an illustration, you see, of how you had the outgrowing effects of that type of work.

Howse: Of course what you did, too, for the mission offering and the Cooperative Program I think was a tremendous teaching effect.

Dr. Grice: Yes, I'll be glad to tell you about that a little later. Now while we're on the handwork in my school in Washington for the Intermediates I had the boys to make flytraps.

Howse: Now that's Washington, Georgia.

Dr. Grice: Washington, Georgia, they made flytraps a trap like the room of a house with a floor to it and a place for the flies to get in. Well a person would wonder today what in the world would that mean. You know they took a lot of interest in that and they got some teaching in sanitation as a result of it and they put those flytraps all over Washington to catch the flies that were everywhere before the days of gathering up the garbage and things like that. Now I made that approach to getting it out into the churches. I felt that if God called me to have a Vacation Bible School for any church he wanted one for every church because He plays no favorites with children. He wanted them everyone. Now that was the way we developed our departments and some of the things that came out of that.

Now we had the problem to deal with with costs. People can't understand now, but I had to plan the schools so they wouldn't cost anything or as little as possible because people didn't have the money, and a lot of them if they had the money they wouldn't want to give it. So we took spools and crayons and paper and gathered up anything that was available around in the home and brought it in there, cans and bottles and jugs, whatever there was that we could create. And it was amazing how interested the children were in all the departments of taking that material, making it into something and their little scrap books, how they enjoyed making their scrapbooks with their colored crayons and all like that, and they would exhibit them to the parents on parent's night of the commencement to show what we had been doing in the Vacation Bible School. So we had to plan to hold down the cost. Now that immediately got into the problem of how we were going to use our textbooks. It would have been utterly impossible as time has gone on with thirteen textbooks to print thirteen textbooks every year and sell them at any reasonable price. So we put the books on a schedule and used certain books this year and then other books next year and each department made its cycle. When they went back again why they used the book over. Now that resulted in those books that were not used some of them having to be kept for three years, and we had to play carefully to not overprint. And then when the books came out . . . oh yes, another thing about those books, I knew that if we did not have the guidebook in the textbook, the teachers would not buy them. The superintendents would not buy them separately so we put the guide to direct the superintendent and the training of a faculty right in the textbook.

Howse: Dr. Grice, all the way through here in this conversation it has been very clear that you were very practical. You had something new and different but you were introducing it with simplicity. I guess this came out of your experience with the schools in the pastorate.

Dr. Grice: Oh yes, they were direct outgrowths of the three schools I had at Washington.

Howse: You had only three?

Dr. Grice: I had three, 1922, 1923, and 1924.

Howse: Wait, let me interrupt and ask, where did you get your concept of this. I realize there was a movement on in the country, but.

Dr. Grice: I'd give anything if I knew. At that time I subscribed to the Moody Bible Institute magazine and I took The Sunday School Times and I subscribed to the Watchman Examiner the weekly paper of New York and out of one or more of those three papers I got the idea, and the way I got into it in 1920 we remodeled the building of the Baptist church, and it cost us \$40,000. And we had an architect and one of our men under the direction of the pastor and some of the men of the church we put up that building. But we had to borrow some money on it. That was a lot of money in 1920. But we got the building up in '21, and that was when we departmentalized our Sunday School and went after everybody and had over 500 in Sunday School where we had had only about 110 or 115. Well, reading those articles I recalled why shouldn't

we have a Vacation Bible School in our church and I said the interest on that \$40,000 at 6 percent is \$200 a month. That's \$600 for the three summer months. The children are loose. They're running all over town. There are no organizations to direct them. They've got no where to go and nothing to do. They're largely of idleness why not have a Vacation Bible School for them and that's what led me to having it. And I decided that I would make it available to all the children of the town. Unfortunately from one respect only the white children, but for all the white children, Jews, Catholics, those not in any Sunday School, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. Those were the denominations. So I got one or two workers out of some of the other churches as an indication of the fact that we were not bearing it down. I made sure that I didn't teach distinctive Baptist doctrines. I could do that in the Sunday School. And so the first year we'll just use this as an illustration about 120 from the Baptist Sunday School and about 75-80 from the Methodists and all the children of the town, they all came. And I think I told you once on Commencement Night, this was in the second school a good Methodist woman came down after we took an offering a free will offering with tears streaming down her face and said, Brother Grice, if I had the money, you wouldn't have to take an offering for this school, I'd be glad to pay every cent of it for what it's meant to my little girl. And I think that was characteristically the attitude. Now there was an opportunity to build Christian good will and fellowship. And so when I came on here I incorporated those suggestions about that, you see, and for the first several years why we had large numbers of other denominations in our schools all over the South.

Now there was one other thing I had in mind when I came that I wanted from Maryland to New Mexico which was the extent of our then. I felt like it would be a great aid to the movement if from Maryland to New Mexico on that day the children were studying the same program on that day in everyone of the schools. And that everyone of our Baptists in any of the territory of the Southern Baptist Convention would have a clear, concise, understanding of what a Vacation Bible School was that it was not just a conglomeration of what somebody wanted to think up and do. And I think that had a tremendous affect in stabilizing the school and giving it a definite meaning all over the South just like the Sunday School and Training Union had. And so we did that.

Now you asked about the mission offering. We decided after I got to working (I don't remember not just exactly how we did it in Washington) but when we got here it looked to me like this was a simple in the four textbooks as best we could or the three for the Primaries, but speaking primarily and especially to the Juniors and Intermediates that in the four years as best we could we would cover the entire work of the Southern Baptist Convention--foreign missions, home missions, seminaries, and the schools and colleges. Now some years we had to have more than one program. But in the four years, you see, we would have the original idea we'd have 80 programs, but we found out after we got here that we couldn't have the fourth week. Then we found out we couldn't have the third week. And when we had the third week, those that wanted to have the fourth we just made suggestions that in the fourth week they just review the first three weeks.

But, we would have our mission teaching about whatever it was about and then we'd have the offering that day and help the pupils to realize that that offering was supporting that work. And then tomorrow when we had our joint service under the direction of the principal and the pastor, why in our prayer we'd pray about the mission work we studied about before so we had a program which they learned about it, which they gave for it and then which they paid for or prayed for it, and I thought all of it in terms of habit formation that if they could do that a certain number of times that would become a fixed part of their life and thinking. And we urged the children not to ask money from their parents, but if they had a little allowance to save something or get out and make a nickle or whatever they made let it be their own gift.

Howse: What was very important.

Dr. Grice: And so you see that was the way we developed that program. Well after it got to its maximum here in the Convention you see they were giving a half million dollars a year or something like that and they knew about our schools and colleges.

Now I was faced with the problem of how are you going to get that material to them. They would not buy it in individual pieces. So I conceived the idea of a Principal's Package that in that package I'd put whatever the superintendent needed to get out. Now for example that little guidebook in the textbook I put in extra copies of that so that they could carry revisions and could be put in the hands of some of the assistants. We put the record book and the report blanks. Then, for example, I wrote to the Foreign Mission Board the year we were going to have foreign missions and asked them if they would send me a folder or two to put in that package, and they were cool to the idea. They thought I was selling it to make a profit on it. They didn't see why they should do that. So I explained to them what this Principal's Package was and what we were trying to do for missions and that we wanted one of those for the Junior Department and one for the Intermediate Department. Well, when they saw the point why they were just happy to do it and so the Home Board and the other boards were that way and in that way we were able to carry to these 30,000 Vacation Bible Schools every year to Juniors and Intermediates that material and they got to where they would prepare it with that in mind.

Howse: Well Dr. Grice, let me ask this, coming back to the totality of the Sunday School Department. All the time that your work was going on and work of the Sunday School departments was going on was there an editorial division or department here at the Board that was separate producing Sunday School literature?

Dr. Grice: It was not a department. They had an editor, and they had the office of editorial secretary, and they had a Well Dr. Burroughs, you see, was the secretary of Sunday School training or whatever they called it. And then he took charge of the rise for church buildings and for a while he was secretary of the Architectural

Department, and then they organized a Church Administration Department, and he was the secretary of that and he had three or four different departments and was working in all of them.

Now as time went on, that got woefully inefficient.

Howse: Was Dr. Burroughs a good organizer?

Dr. Grice. Pretty good. He was a genial good-natured man. He was a large man and he was full of energy.

Howse: I knew him.

Dr. Grice: He was full of energy and he had a heart throb.

Howse: It seems that he had some unlike things pulled together that were hard to manage it would seem like to me like your teacher's training, your architecture, your church administration and maybe other things.

Dr. Grice: Yeah, yeah, he operated them separately, but his heart failed to give attention to all of them. Now I think I told you once when we were talking maybe mentioned this morning that all of us came together only when Dr. Van Ness called us together. Well as he got older and got feeble he didn't do that. And so here we were by the thirties we'd gone a long ways from 1891, and we just needed reorganization.

Howse: The work was growing wasn't it?

Dr. Grice: The work was growing. The churches were growing. The variety of work in the churches was growing and they began to have diningrooms in their churches. They began to put parlors in their churches for the reception. They had rooms for all these departments. Had rooms for big classes. The church staff was growing. Back in those days it was just the pastor. He was the only paid worker. They paid a janitor \$10 or \$15 or \$25 a month whatever was necessary. The bigger churches had a secretary, but our church did not have any paid treasurer. he was a member of our church and he did his work free. Well, there seemed to be that whole field of the stressing of stewardship. That was not stressed way back yonder. So the stressing of stewardship and how to handle the money and what to do with it, and then the seventy-five million came along in 1919 I believe it was somewhere about there, 1919 to 1924 and that enormously complicated things because a lot of those back in those days, you see, they had to depend, and Mr. Flake saw to that, that they had to depend on the Sunday School to get these things done as the situation was then.

Howse: Well now, Dr. Grice, in pulling this whole Sunday School Department together, I've been interested in trying to discover why it was that the editorial work was not brought in. Was it because of that this was not seen as a vital part of the Sunday School?

Dr. Grice: No, I don't think so. You take Dr. Dargan was editor when I came here and then Dr. Hite Moore. Dr. Moore was especially an outgoing, congenial hearted, lovable man. He and Mr. Flake and Dr. Burroughs they just had individual conferences planning things and of course Dr. Moore in editing his material he knew how Mr. Flake had graded the Sunday School and they prepared the lessons, you see, for the Primaries and the Juniors and Uniform Lessons back in those days they were not graded by years, you see, and when the graded lessons came in they did the same thing.

Howse: Now you seem to have had a different concept because you developed the organization and materials and the whole promotion. Dr. Lambdin had the same concept. He had the organization, the content, and everything. You handled all that, but now the Sunday School didn't seem to have that concept.

Dr. Grice: No, well there wasn't anybody at the head of it to do it. There was nobody at the head of Sunday School. Now it would be interesting to know historically how that came about.

Dr. Van Ness was executive secretary for 17 years. He was editorial secretary for 17 years before that. He spent about 35 years with the Board. He was born in 1860, and he was 70 years old in 1930. The Board had no retirement limit in those days. They had no compensation for a man when he went out. When he retired, he just retired and he was on his own. We can't think back of that as late as 1930. And as I have said, Dr. Van Ness expected us to do our work and he called us together on rare occasions. And this is no reflection on him in any way whatever, but he started to becoming senile that early in his life in those ages around 70. I had been here six years and I saw evidences of him not being all there from different things. I'll not go into details on that. And he was not giving us the leadership. He was drifting.

Howse: How long before he retired was that. Well, that was five years. He retired in '35 at 75 years of age. And I was greatly distressed not only for him but for all of us that he was not able to guide us, and I had no idea what the Board was doing or anything. How long they were going on. So when one of the Board met I believe in 1932, I believe it was '32, Dr. Millard Jenkins, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Abilene, Texas who was a former Georgia pastor and a friend of mine on the Board. I felt free to talk with him about the need for something to be done that didn't look like it was going to be done. We were going to drift. So he brought the matter to the attention of the Board in discrete ways I'm sure I don't know how, and out of that they created the office of business manager. And Dr. McGlocklin, pastor of the church in Anniston, Alabama, a member of the Board was elected business manager. And so from that day why the Board had an executive secretary and a business manager.

Howse: Now that was prior to '35?

Dr. Grice: Yes sir, and he was with Dr. Van Ness and they appointed a committee to study the situation then at the Sunday School Board and to bring in a report on what ought to be done. And Mr. Graham, a minister from Illinois was chairman of that committee. Now when that committee made its report, the first report well I don't know what all the committee did, but that was the time I wrote Dr. Graham, you know, at his request and made suggestions as to what I thought ought to be done. But now out of that came the report of this committee which was adopted by the Board. The reorganization was proposed with the executive secretary, business manager in charge of the entire business work as it was at that time, sales, production and sales. The editorial department was for the preparing of all teaching materials and the Administration Department under which would be the Sunday School and its correlative agency the Vacation Bible School and the Training Union and later the Student Union. And then as time went on the further breakdown of that to what we have today and the subsequent reorganizations took place based on the experience of what they'd had the continued growth.

Now Dr. Glocklin lived only a year or two and died suddenly from a stroke. The Board then elected Dr. Jerome Williams who was a member of the Board I believe pastor at Bowling Green to succeed him, and he was business manager I believe till his death. He died while he was in there. Then after him Mr. Harold Ingraham was transferred from the Department of Sunday Schools to be business manager. So that was what was involved in the reorganization that took place at that time.

Howse: Dr. Grice, let me ask a question or two which is related to this but it's on a different line. The field program of the Board in the past seems to have been overly simplified in terms of the wholeness of the program. For example, Arthur Flake has been reduced to the five points of his formula for Sunday School enlargement. Each field worker in the past seems to have emphasized what appealed to him most. Now I'm giving you impressions that I have. Would you say that those are correct statements?

Dr. Grice: Well in part. Sometimes just one worker went to a church. Of course, the policy of the Board was and has been all through these years for the field workers of the Sunday School Board to work in a state upon the invitation of the state Sunday School or Training Union secretary and to participate in his programs. Well back in the 1915-1920's a state Sunday School secretary would go to a church and spend the week there in a training course, and he'd either cover some certain part of the Sunday School work or try to give a picture of all of it. Of course, he'd be primarily concerned with grading the Sunday School, departmentalizing the Sunday School, and getting interested in the study course and things like that. Then as time went on he would only go into a bigger church and carry a group of workers and so you'd have a worker there for each department of the Sunday School--the administration, the adults, young people, Intermediates, Primaries, Juniors, Beginners. Then later on even the Cradle Roll.

Howse: So you had an age group approach?

Dr. Grice: So that in the larger churches it was an age group approach.

Howse: Well I really think my statement I'm glad you brought that out because that helps me. But I think my statement was more of these men who went out without faculties and I know they held up the standard of excellence. And that gave the wholeness.

Dr. Grice: That was the goal they set for the church was the Standard of Excellence. If you can get this you'll have a good Sunday School. And then they had the Advance Standard for those that could go beyond it.

Howse: That's right, but in their field promotion so many times their thrust was not the whole program.

Dr. Grice: Oh no, it couldn't be. It couldn't be in the week they were there. And that was the thing that was most needed.

Howse: I see, in other words, you think they selected the thrust of the thing. Did they think they ever prevented or?

Dr. Grice: No, I don't know. Let me give you an example of the Washington, Georgia church. I went there the first day of September in 1915. The building had been erected in 1884. The pulpit was in the center and back of the pastor to his left was a room and to his right was a room. The children or Primary and Beginner ages met in that room on his left. I do not know what group met in that one on his right. There was a gallery that had been put in there for the colored people that were members of the church in 1884 when it was built. A good many of them did not go out when all the colored people went out, they stayed on and died off one by one. And a class met up there. Now there was a . . . when you went in the door of the church on either side there was a big stained glass window in the center. And under that balcony above was a foyer, and one class met out there in that. One met under the winding stairs that went upstairs. There were eleven classes, no departments when I went there in 1915.

Howse: All meeting separate.

Dr. Grice: Now that was a good town, one of the best churches in Georgia. So I had to start from there to what I was going to do with the Sunday School, and when we got our new building in 1921, in 1922, Mr. Flake carried in his magazine three or four pages of pictures of the 555 that were in Sunday School and fully organized in graded departments that had come between 1915 and 1922. Now I think one reason I can say that is that something like it or similar to it more or less was going on all over the South at that time developing in that time, you see.

Howse: Well maybe what I'm talking about came somewhat after this period in other words this may have come on say in the '40's and '50's. I hear so many people today talking about Mr. Flake, but they're talking about his five point for Sunday School enlargement. And they're not talking about the whole Standard of Excellence. They're not talking about the whole program.

Dr. Grice: Well, he talked about all of it, and they talked about all of it out on the field. Yes, they had to. They had to sell the folks on that or they wouldn't take the Study Course books that were related to it. They had to talk about the course as a whole.

Howse: Now I notice in his chapter in that first edition of Building a Standard Sunday School his chapter on Baptist literature stresses how important it is for Baptists to study the Baptist literature. Now it seems that this doesn't matter so much. We have a lot of our churches that feel that they can study something else they're a little more sophisticated and advanced.

Dr. Grice: One thing back in there, when the Sunday School Board was organized in 1891, the American Baptist Publication Society did everything it knew how to do to kill it. They had a book store in Atlanta and they had one in Dallas, I think and then the one in St. Louis. And a large number of our churches, you see, before this Board was organized that had a Sunday School, they used the Sunday School literature of the American Baptist Publication Society. Now that's a long chapter. We won't go into it here, but you see those now I was a member of the Capital Avenue Baptist church of Atlanta from 1902 till 1909, and we had a Training union in there and they used the literature of the American Baptist Publication Society. Well, that was not a part of the Sunday School Board's work at that time. It had a separate organization. It was in 1917, I believe at Little Rock, at Hot Springs the Convention transferred the work of the BYPU to the Sunday School Board. Then it had to start from scratch there and it had to win away from other sources that literature. So you see you had all those complicated problems to deal with.

Howse: Dr. Grice, I'd like to move to another area if you're willing and I'm quite interested in the early developments that brought the Church Administration Department into being the first time. And I think I'm right that the Convention voted twice instructing the Sunday School Board to do it. They instructed them in one convention and it was either the following year or the year after that that the Board had not acted on this. I don't know why and you may have some idea. But then they instructed them again and told them they really meant it and to get the department going. It came into being and lasted only about three years or something like that and went out of existence. Now I'm interested if you can give me any insight into what brought the Church Administration Department into being was it largely Dr. Burroughs responding to what he thought was an interest on the part of the churches? Did he have anything to do with bringing it into being?

Dr. Grice: I don't know whether he did or not. I wouldn't know about that. All I know is that when they created it, they asked him to take charge of it which raises a question, why would they keep putting work on him? Did he try to get all those jobs or did they just keep loading him down? My feeling is that they, when they were faced with that, they didn't know anybody out in the field that would do that work and they just kept adding to him here. That would be my own feeling about it.

Now he brought Mr. Faye Hudson to be his assistant, and he died in office after a few years, and I imagine the larger part of the details of the work and the field work developed on him and Dr. Burroughs back then as the general planner and guider of the thing. Of course, I can understand why that desire on the part of the Convention for a department. They saw what Sunday School administration was doing for Sunday School. There was just as great and maybe a greater need for the churches to be organized on a sound basis, and so the Church Administration was a testimony to the effectiveness for that day of the Sunday School administration to just move on now and get out into this larger area and organize it like you've organized the Sunday School and get out into the churches and get them going.

Howse: You would have, then, a wholeness in your church program that would be comparable to what you are getting in the Sunday School.

Dr. Grice: Now one of the things that we've got to keep in mind in reference to all that is that when the Sunday School Board was organized, less than half of the churches had a Sunday School. When that Church Administration was organized, a vast percentage of the churches were churches with once a month preaching. The pastor would come in on Saturday and have a conference and then preach once a month. And the vast percentage of those churches were untrained, themselves. They didn't know what a Sunday School was or how to run it. They didn't know anything about the VBS. They didn't know anything about the Training Union I mean practically nothing. They didn't go to the Southern Baptist Convention. The bulk of them didn't even go to the state Baptist Convention. They were farmers or they were doctors or they were lawyers or they were school teachers or whatever they were. They generally made most of their living some other way and preached one Sunday a month in each church and had four churches. A twice a month church was very seldom. Now very few of them had a high school diploma. They didn't have any libraries. They didn't have many books to read and there were a lot of books not available for them in any of those fields. If they wanted to they couldn't get hold of them. So, you see, what was involved there when you started on your setting up of an administration department to get your churches organized with the adequate support for the pastor and to build a pastorium for him and have preaching twice a month and have preaching morning and night. And a lot of the Sunday Schools, you know, were not evergreen. We had the expression evergreens Sunday School they quit in October or November and didn't

open again until April, really. In other words the bad winter months and the bad roads and the scattered population having to travel in ox carts and walk and all, they couldn't get together. It's just almost impossible for us today, unless we sit down to realize the difficulties that were in the way.

Howse: Do you have any information as to why the Church Administration Department lasted such a short time?

Dr. Grice: No I do not. I don't know why.

Howse: The things I have picked up are primarily that it didn't last because we went into the Depression. Along in the late twenties and early thirties.

Dr. Grice: Well the Depression knocked out lots of things.

Howse: And it was just eliminated because of the lack of funds.

Dr. Grice: Now that's another thing for you to keep in mind that the Stock Market collapsed in October of '29. Tyirty, thirty-one, thirty-two were years of depression. They got worse each year. The seminaries, for example, couldn't pay their professors their salary. Schools and colleges couldn't pay their teachers. I went for over three months while I was a professor of English in Ouachita College in the session of 1914-1915 without getting a cent of pay. And the only thing in the world that saved me--My wife and I boarded we had a room furnished us by the college and we boarded and ate our meals in the dining hall in the girl's dormitory there, and so we got our meals and board and that's all we got for three months. Well we went on through that.

And when Roosevelt came in, you see, inaugurated in 1933, why he closed all the banks a moratorium.

Howse: I remember that well.

Dr. Grice: Well, of course, the churches had to grapple with all of that situation, too.

Howse: How did Mr. Flake and Dr. Burroughs relate to each other?

Dr. Grice: As far as I know, they got along all right. They never had any trouble. They may not have been particularly congenial friends, I don't know.

Howse: Mr. Flake seemed to feel there was just one way to do something. Dr. Burroughs . . .

Dr. Grice: Was more flexible.

Howse: That's right, he offered optional plans. I wondered if that had anything to do with it.

Dr. Grice: I think Mr. Flake's indomitable will about all that grew out of several things. He was born right at the close of the Civil War. He did not have the privilege of a high school education because there were not any high schools. He got into business and became a merchant, and I think he was a successful merchant and you can well imagine that a fellow had to have a pretty good backbone to have made good in those days. He got interested in Sunday Schools and with his spirit and manner and upbringing, he almost had to be seemingly dictatorial to get anywhere. If he hadn't, if he'd have given in here and given in youer, why there would have been just a hodgepodge all over. But the folks that did believe in him and did with him, he had them scattered all over the country and that trait of his character I think was providencial at that particular time in which he lived.

Now a man growing up like that could not help but be limited in his outlook by the environmental conditions that caused him. And he said a college education unfitted a man for educational work at the Board. He said that to Mr. Frank Leavelle, and Frank told me. And Frank said, "What about L. Q. Leavelle, Leonard?" He said, "Oh he's an exception. So he had and out of his background and his experience he was skeptical of the educated man. And you have to take that into consideration in evaluating his work.

Howse: Well, did that lead him to get men with limited education about him?

Dr. Grice: Yes sir. Mr. Ingraham I reckon he had finished high school I don't know whether he did or not. He did not go to college. Mr. Jasper Barnette went through hunior college and majored in music. He was a music teacher in the country. He was a farmer and music teacher and taught country music, you know, the old fashion singing schools all over the country--a marvelously gifted man. And he got interested in Sunday School and did such a good job Mr. Flake brought him here. Now Mr. Barnett was a genius. he perhaps made, if not the greatest, one of the greatest contributions that was made to the development of our Sunday School work, and he came along in 1935 I think that is when it was. He had done associational work, and he realized that if we were to ever get anywhere with reaching these 30,000 churches and more as they had become, that we had to take them by groups and that the natural group was the district association. So he wanted the district association to be organized now in Sunday School work just like the Sunday School--a Sunday School superintendent, a superintendent of training, an age group superintendent for each age and train workers for each one of those age groups, and that superintendent of that association, Sunday School training with his group they would organize training schools in all of the churches in that association and go from association to association.

Now then in addition to that he conceived no I'm getting ahead of the thing a little on that. Well when he recommended that, Dr. Dr. Holcomb was our superintendent and he made it possible for Mr. Barnett to do that work, and so we had our first Southwide meeting of these associational groups for training for inspiration and for training and they met in Mobile and they met in Charlotte. They met for several years. And of course, the Vacation Bible School were on it. And I saw at once that that was the thing that would put the Vacation Bible School over. Now as an illustration, we had a meeting in North Carolina at I believe it was Hickory in February. And the workers from all over North Carolina came in there, and I went there, and a man in a country church out seven or eight miles from there walked through a foot of snow in there and came to my conference.

Howse: My, that is motivation isn't it?

Dr. Grice: That was motivation, and all of that set me on fire and committed me 100 percent to the use of the district association for the promotion of our Sunday School Board work.

So we went to work right away to get a VBS team in every association. Well Mr. Jesse Daniel who was superintendent was secretary of the Sunday School Department in Tennessee conceived this idea. He was a big believer in the Vacation Bible School. So he offered each association (96 of them in Tennessee about that) to pay we'll say five cents a mile to the owner of the car for two cars who would bring a team of his workers to Nashville for three days of training or two days of training. They'd get here today, stay here tonight and tomorrow and tomorrow night and go home the next morning. And he provided bed and breakfast for them, and they paid for their dinner and supper. So here came from 96 associations those 96 teams for training. Dr. Holcomb could be there, the Sunday School man could be there and whoever we could have as inspirational speakers and we'd do intensive work. Then they'd go back, committed to getting into each church with their team to present this.

Now, that suggests another thing that ties in with growing. When I came, I'd go to a state Sunday School convention and there wasn't any place on their program for me. I wasn't Sunday School work, but I was doing something closer to it, so they finally got to where they'd give me 10 or 15 minutes, introduce me. Then they got to where they would give me an hour in the morning before the rest of the Sunday School met when I could have those who were interested in Vacation Bible School. And so we went along with that. But after this associational work began, we began to have them in all the states, and it wasn't long to where we were having a bigger attendance in our associational gathering for Vacation Bible Schools than they had in the state Sunday School conventions.

Howse: Isn't that something?

Dr. Grice: And we began to have the people come to ask to get on our program. Now I'm telling you that not to boast but to show what organization and administration means when you've got a program on how to get out to the people and get the thing done.

Howse: Dr. Grice, I know you know this, but right now the alivest thing in the association we do is Vacation Bible School. I have come to feel that this is because we're getting ready to do something.

Dr. Grice: That's right.

Howse: The other meetings just meet. They're not sounding any trumpet, but the Vacation Bible School clinic is for the purpose of getting them to do something.

Dr. Grice: Now, to show you how you have to have a little guts, if you'll excuse the expression. In my Vacation Bible School work oh I'll go back of that, in let me see, 1924,---1929 or 1928 Dr. Van Ness called me in his office one morning and said, Brother Grice, I want you to take a year off and go anywhere in the United States you want to go at the Board's expense to find out what's going on in the field of education. And in the development of the talk he stated that when I got through he wanted me to take over teacher training. And I replied that I did not see any way that I could do that and do my Vacation Bible School work that I was committed first to Vacation Bible School work. So I said let me go out here to Peabody this summer and it's in a block of my home, and I can find out what's going on and then I'll know what to do by this fall. So I went out there in the summer of '28, and that fall I said just let me stay here at Peabody, it's one of the best schools in the country and I can find out here and be of less cost to the Board. I can be in my office and carry on correspondence and make some trips out. So I spent that year at Peabody, and I took a course in elementary education. I thought if he wants me to do that, I want to get above the current. So I took a course in elementary education under their famous woman teacher, I can't think of her name right now, and I wrote a term paper on "Teaching Bird Life to First Grade Children." I took a class in high school education under a man who demonstrated 100 percent what he taught on how to conduct a high school institution. I specialized in psychology, the psychology of education and the various forms of psychology, but I majored in elementary education. Now I took statistics applied to education. When the year was over I said now I've had that in Peabody Teacher's College, let me go to Boston University School of Religious Education one semester and find out what's going on in the field of religious education. So I went one semester in the fall of '29, and I was up there when the panic broke and I took three courses that were in the school of theology, also, on ethics and psychology of education and philosophy of education and I took a course on statistics applied to religious education and I took one or two other courses.

I learned in those courses the value of statistics but statistics are not worth a thing in the world if you just keep them and put them on the shelf. When you get them you've got to take them and organize them so you can use them. So that led me to get up my report blank and the development of my Standard of Excellence.

Now I went to the International Association of Religious Education every year when they met and charged it to my expense account. Some of my folks at the Board thought I was radical. I didn't go except to learn. That was what I wanted and to find what would be applicable and ethical to me. And so I got my ten point Standard from them but I worked one suited to myself. And those ten points that I put in the Standard had to do with things that were involved in the making of a well-rounded Vacation Bible School and I gave so many points for each one on down under it. And that was all broken up. Now I got that onto my report blank. Well, when my report blanks came in, we analyzed that and got it organized and then we printed it for each state--how many were standard, what they were weak on, how many Beginners, Primaries, Juniors, how many children were in no Sunday School. How many parents with no Sunday School. How many conversions they had, how many college students helped them in their work and on and on but things like that.

Then I went to the computer company there on Church Street right at the corner of Church and Eighth and had them to compute my statistics for me, and when I got them computed, I made them up first for the entire South. Then I made one for each state, and then I got to listing the number of the names of the associations and how many schools they had in each association. So when that state secretary came and his folks there he laid before everyone of them just what every church in his state did before and what they were weak in and what they were strong and where to stress their emphasis this year.

Well Dr. Holcomb didn't see any sense in me spending all that money on statistics so I spent it out of my own salary. So one day I was in the office and I needed another field worker mighty bad because Sibley Burnett was the only one I had. And he said, "Well if you want another field worker, you've got to cut out those statistics." He didn't ask me what I did with them or what they meant, he just issued an order and I turned around and went out and went on with my statistics and did without the field worker. I felt that they were far more valuable. And I would say that we wouldn't have ever got off the ground hardly if we hadn't have had those statistics to guide us and to break it down into details so we knew where our weaknesses and our strengthss were and where the work was being done and where it wasn't.

Howse: Now you followed up on that and got that yourself? Of course, that is something we don't do today.

Dr. Grice: No I know we don't. Well when they got their statistical man there, they took those reports away from me and then they began to lose their value for that work because we corrected the reports and went over them and got them in shape so that we'd have reliable statistics.

He just computes what's on there and what's not on there he doesn't correct it. So that was why we got to using those and what they meant. I was the first man at the Board that used the computer company.

Howse: I didn't realize that.

Dr. Grice: And so Dr. Aldrich was up on my floor in statistical work, and he had a battery of workers up there. He had at least three adding machine adders and he got all that together on that. So I said to him one day I said well why don't you use this computer system here to do that for you instead of me, and he did. So he was the second one. Well, our offices were side-by-side for the whole time I was with the Board or he retired and we both worked a lot at night. And so he saw my report blank and how I was getting the schools and he said how can I get the associational secretaries to send me their reports? I said if you want to get one, you make out the kind of report you want and make you a good big blank and then you fill in one the way it ought to be filled in an imaginary one and you mail it to every associational clerk and tell him why you want it and he'll have something to go by. So he built that up and that was when and you can go back and check on your minutes and see when that happened. Now he then hit upon this idea that he would give \$100 to the one that sent in the best report and \$75 to the second and \$50 to the third or something like that. And that soon revolutionized the reports that came in from the associational clerks.

Howse: Well I didn't realize that your data gathering preceded the Church Letter.

Dr. Grice: The church what?

Howse: The Church Letter reported about what statistics meant. I didn't realize that took place. Let me ask you one more question, Dr. Grice, here. As I have known you through the years and my friendship with you goes back, you know, to the time when I was a junior at Union University about 1925, and you came down and made a speech it was either in '24 or '25 I got acquainted with you. So our friendship spans almost forty years well right at forty years. Soon be fifty years. And all the time that I've known you, you've had a concept of the wholeness of the church and its program. You've not had a fragmented viewpoint, you've had a whole viewpoint, now isn't that correct, you've seen the whole church. Now this concept is still slow in getting general acceptance. I mean by that even the pastors don't accept it. The educational workers don't relish it. People at the Board don't handle it--some do and some don't. Do you have any light to throw on why this concept of wholeness is so slow to be accepted? Do people not think that way? Is this human nature or do they have likes and dislikes or have you given any thought to this?

Dr. Grice: Well, I'd ask one question, like we've been talking here today, have you ever heard all of what we're talking about being presented to preachers and Sunday School superintendents all to much extent the wholeness?

Howse: No.

Dr. Grice: I think it's partly we just haven't been brought to see the significance of it.

Howse: Now that's really what I'm talking about. This wholeness I appreciate very much because I think I see it from the standpoint of the wholeness of it. But there are few people in the seminaries who see it and teach it, and there are few people at the Board who see it and can teach it. They go out with an angle or with a specialty, but they don't go out and start with the church as a whole.

Dr. Grice: I would say two things there. First of all, we're stewards of the manifold graces of God, and somehow there was built into my life, the fiber of my being this characteristic. It's been with me all through, and looking back I can see that it was a gift from God of which I was a steward not only to use it myself, but everywhere. Now, I did not get to go to the seminary. I went to college for teaching and from teaching into the pastorate. And I read and studied Broadus and Sampe and Mulleins and all those fellows, but I remember Dr. Dobbins telling me that he started teaching at the seminary in Louisville, religious education was that preachers and the other professors just made light of what he was doing. Now the preachers, themselves, on the whole did not have this concept. The Sunday School didn't come through the preachers. It came through the laity. It did not come as a part of church life. For many years it was the church just permitted the Sunday School to be held in the building and the Sunday School was an entity that was separate and distinct from the church. It elected its own officers, bought its own literature and everything else. The pastors did not feel any responsibility for it, and I think as I remarked to you one time when we were talking personally that I ran across a statement of a Mississippi pastor in one of our papers he was against the Sunday School. He said, "I'm against it because I don't know anything about it." He didn't know how to go in and organize one. He didn't want to admit his ignorance.

Now I think there's a good deal of justification for the failure of the seminaries to train the pastors to see this because they, themselves, their faculty, came out of that atmosphere and have never thought of the educational work of the church and the business work of the church as of any particular importance. That to preach the sermon and to win souls and they bury the dead and marry their young and all of that is part of the preacher, but to get out here and do all this other that's just not part of his work. Well, if he feels that way he's not going to inspire anybody else to it.

Howse: That's exactly my point.

Dr. Grice: He won't inspire others.

Howse: But now they're not getting it in the seminaries because neither do the younger professors have the concept of wholeness. They've got the concept of their courses. And our problem in the seminaries today is that they come out with two hours of evangelism and three hours of church history and 20 hours of Bible and maybe six hours of theology and things like that and two hours of religious education.

Dr. Grice: Oh for a long time, that was just purely optional.

Howse: That's right, and it's a collection of courses, but it's not built on any conceptual basis. The thing I'm talking about where does this concept of wholeness come from? You say it was a gift.

Dr. Grice, or talent or whatever you say.

Howse: I'm almost at the point of agreeing with you because so few people have it. But how will we ever make progress if we seek only a portion of the Kingdom and don't see it all, Dr. Grice?

Dr. Grice: No, of course you've got to specialize some in some particular department, but there's no certain there's no conflict between specialization in a part of it and a conception that it is part of the whole, and what you do in your specialization field has no particular significance if you don't know how to relate it to all the rest.

Howse: Exactly. Well now you take here's a preschool worker well just concentrating on the first five years of life. Here's a children's worker on the next six years of life. Well now, if you only see that and that is all you see, you don't see the fullgrown man, you don't see the church as a whole . . .

Dr. Grice: Yeah, they ought to see, of course, in the child or the baby we ought to see the fullgrown adult if he becomes what God wants him to be.

Howse: And you've seen this. What I'm trying to do is to get some insight into it because for these years I worked with a group of specialists and they've all specialized either an age group or function. And it seems to me we've got to start with the whole church and the whole gospel and the whole world and the whole person.

Dr. Grice: Of course that raises the question if you go into the seminary and the Sunday School Board and everywhere else, but I came to the Sunday School Board to do Vacation Bible School work. I never had any ambition to do any other. I cannot think of any time when I've ever turned away from it to do any other work. And yet, one of our difficulties today in our setup in a lot of places is that a man or woman works in one field a year or two and they get a bigger salary by going into another field, and they go over there a year or two and then they go into another place. And they do not, as a result of that,

they do not get a conception of the wholeness of their work. I don't know how . . . I'm old fashioned enough to believe that God, just like He calls a foreign missionary calls a home missionary, He calls a Vacation Bible School worker or an adult worker or what have you.

Howse: I agree with that.

Dr. Grice: Now the Lord, of course, does lead a man from one field into another. I don't mean that he is necessarily to be in one field all his life, but he may be. It just depends upon the leading of the Lord in relation to it.

Howse: Dr. Grice, I certainly appreciate this time with you this afternoon. I know I've gotten a great insight into a great many things that have puzzled me and I'm still trying to learn all I can from the past. I do appreciate your insights and your willingness to share them with me.

Dr. Grice: There may be other things you'll think about later on. But I'm glad to share it with you and I hope there don't any of this sound egotistical.