

Junker: I'm Bill Junker, Director of Editorial Services for National Student Ministries. This was the former Student Department at the Sunday School Board interviewing Dr. William Hall Preston who was associate in the Convention Wide Department from 1927 to 1964 when he retired. Mr. Preston, we're interested in talking about your work and also about you and your experiences before coming to the Department and mostly while you were here at the Department. You were for seven years, I believe, State BYPU Secretary in Tennessee. Did you come to that work directly from college or how did you get into that.

Dr. Preston: No, I had several experiences before that time. You see, I'm a preacher's son and we moved about quite a bit from the Northern Baptist, now the American Baptist Convention. I graduated from college at nineteen and took a teaching job for a year. The next two years I spent as the director or superintendent of schools of a small city. I'd never been in that job before. I was always going to jobs I'd never been in before. I happened to do a courteous thing for an elderly lady who I found out later was the wife of the clerk of the board. She ran him. He ran the board. That's why I was elected over 65 other applicants.

Well after that I joined the Navy for a couple of years. Had that wonderful experience. Came to Nashville. I was speaking in my Navy uniform at one of our Baptist churches here and a lady, the secretary to the executive secretary of Tennessee heard me speak. There was a search for a BYPU secretary. I didn't know it at the time, but they recommended me and elected me, and I didn't know what a BYPU was because I'd never been in a Southern Baptist church with a BYPU. Baptist Young People's Union I found out it meant, but I accepted it because I had no other job and for seven years I toiled all over the state of Tennessee, mostly in rural sections because BYPU was new at that time.

I went to Memphis one time and happened to see a very attractive lady the secretary of the city BYPU. Went up and told her how nice her writing appeared. She seemed a little bit embarrassed. I found out what her name was. I worked for seven years, didn't get fooled like Jacob that was Nancy Elizabeth Roebuck. Well, we had a marvelous experience as BYPU secretary, and then later on I dreamed of becoming dean of a college. I got turned down on that very fortunately because as it turned out they got an older man and something happened to disgrace that college. Well anyhow after that they offered me the presidency of Hall Moody Junior College which is at Martin, Tennessee. It was a school that the secretary of the state, Dr. Bryant, told me was in very low financial state. I took it with his assurance that he would guarantee the faculty salaries for the next several years. It didn't last that long just two years. Then the state Baptist Convention decided to coordinate it with Union University. About that time we decided to get the state to buy it which they did and they paid all the

debts and everything and now it's the University of Tennessee, Martin Branch.

After that they offered me the BYPU work again which didn't appeal to me, and so when Dr. Frank H. Leavelle offered me the staff associate work with the Southern Baptist Convention student work I was happy to accept. And until I was "retarded," "retired" they call it in 1964, I had the pleasure not only they call it work but it was really fun going about among the colleges and students.

Now during the time I was BYPU secretary I conceived the idea of multiplying myself through college students. I'd go on the college campuses, gather a group of them together, I would teach the BYPU manual to those folks and tell them that they'd have to go out that summer and teach and organize BYPUs. One summer we organized a hundred BYPUs that way and that's where I got the conception of summer mission work.

Junker: Now when you first came to the department, how many people were on the staff?

Dr. Preston: Well, we had one person besides Dr. Leavelle, Miss Louise Foreman. She was a dynamic personality. Dr. Leavelle was always getting for his staff tall ladies because he said you could see them from the platform. And so we had a series of rather tall young ladies. She was a dynamic personality and we've always cherished her friendship.

Junker: Did you come primarily to organize new work on campuses or what was your understanding of your responsibility when you came to the Department?

Dr. Preston: My responsibility was largely visiting campuses and inspiring young people, as far as possible, in the ministry that I think we need because they have some idea of idealism and Frank Leavelle set the pattern for that or along that line. He was a world invisioned individual I would call him.

Junker: As the years went by and you were associated with the department, of course, you saw a lot of other staff members come and go. Tell us a little bit about those if you would.

Dr. Preston: The first person we added to the list was Miss Ethel McConnel. She was known as "Whistling Dick" because she could whistle, and she would go to the campus with a dynamic personality and actually pick it up in her pocket and take it away with her. And she lasted just four years and then she said she caught a fish. The married Brother Herring, Dr. O. F. Herring and they live now at Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The next person we added was Sybil Brain, a pastor's daughter from Yazoo City, Mississippi. She, I believe, was one of the most unusual personalities that the Baptist Sunday School Board ever sent out. She always lit on her feet, just like a cat, she would light on her feet no matter what the situation was. She would

talk to parents groups and others and be just as familiar as any other subject. She was a gracious individual, is. Well she was the first after three and one-half years to say yes to the Townsend clan and she became Mrs. Carl Townsend. They lived in Raleigh, North Carolina where he was pastor of one of the large churches. One day he accidentally fell out of a tree, broke his neck and died. They had three children, very fine family. Carl was the first and he was the one who recently invented this multitype machine for the IBM. And then another was Timothy Lee Townsend a very fine young preacher now with a family, and the other was Grace Townsend. It seems strange that little girls often come faster than boys into the world and on Sunday morning his topic was, "My Grace is Sufficient" and they all tittered because on Saturday that little girl named Grace had come.

Then after that we had a very dynamic unusual person in Mary Nash Daniel. She came from a South Carolina home where their standards of ideals and morals were especially high and set a pattern. She wrote the book Gone Worldly the South which is really a reflection of her fine ideals. She stayed until 1944 when she married T. M. Rhea. They had two children, one of them passed away with Leukemia. Mary is now a graduate of college and is living in Louisiana at the present time.

Junker: Up to this point it seems that Dr. Leavelle's pattern was to have one male and one female associate, but in 1945 did the staff expand?

Dr. Preston: Well in '32, for instance, Claude Brooch came to the department a graduate of Southern Seminary a very adept person on a platform. At the annual reunions he would always take off Dr. Sampey. Dr. Sampey with his strange ways of talking and Dr. Claude Brooch was very capable. He lasted just two years and became pastor of the St. John's Baptist Church of Charlotte, North Carolina where he is still the pastor.

Then the next lady added to the list was during the war days, Margaret Culpepper, and she stayed a year or so and married T. C. Clark who is now with the National Education Association in Washington, D. C.

In 1945, for the next ten years we were associated with Robert S. Denney who is now the general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance. You see, Dr. Leavelle had international ideals, and his idea was to get the youth of the world organized. He did that very effectively until his illness and then that work came into the hands of T. G. Dunney and then Mr. Denney, and following that Joe Sorrenson. After that Mr. Denney became the associate general secretary and followed later on as general secretary.

We had at that time Jenny Linn Gapper, one of the most gracious personalities from a small town in Alabama. We happened to have the privilege of singing at the weddings of all these ladies and Jenny Linn stayed with us until she married Malcomb Fuller who is now at Arlington, Virginia. He was formerly pastor at Bluefield, West Virginia. But Jenny Linn like Mary Nance also had a tragedy in her home with the going of a little baby and a strange thing happened the baby lying next to the window and the curtain line fell across her neck and choked her to death. She was a wonderful person, Kenny Linn.

Then came Frances Barber. She, too, would have a sorrow in the death of her fiancée during the World War and she married Mr. Bill Gibson who was a director of an orchestra, Boston I believe it is or Pittsburgh or both.

Then in '49 Miss Estelle Slater I believe that up to that time she held the length of service. Estelle Slater was a very effective traveling associate and a wonderful person. She is now with the Texas institution where the BSU started in 1920.

Junker: Mary Harden-Baylor.

Dr. Preston: Yeah, that's right.

Junker: Well now was Frances Barber the first one to have a responsibility directly with student nurses?

Dr. Preston: That's right, she was with the student nurses. per se because she had come from I think Memphis Baptist Hospital and it might have been St. Louis, but one of those two places she had served that way. That was it.

Junker: Did this particular period represent a more specific assignment to associates than had been done previously or was this sort of Dr. Leavelle's theory all along to ask certain ones to do specific jobs?

Dr. Preston: I think that this was to expand the idea of specific responsibilities because we had the need for the nurses to be cared for then some attention was being given to business colleges, too. I think Margaret Culpepper did some of that work.

Now that leads us up to the coming of Dr. G. Kearney Keegan. At that time several folks had come to Mrs. Preston and also to me suggesting that I head the department. We prayed about it and decided we wouldn't be even considered for it and so told the executive secretary, Dr. Holcomb, that we felt that it was not our calling and I think wisely so because while we did not succeed Dr. Leavelle or any others, we have survived them.

Dr. Keegan came to the department from California where he was pastor of the Great Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles. A dynamic person if there ever was one. Everyone recognized a great hearted individual--someone who left his imprint on generation after generation of college students. And of all the folks that we've ever had, I believe, he reached the hearts of individuals. And so he meant so much not only to the department and to me personally, but to all the people that he came in contact with. One night, for instance, I introduced him at the home of Sibley Burnett who was one of the first BSU people and he entered that home there were the two grandparents and he got acquainted with them. The little girl was playing the piano. He went over and sang with her. Then he was requested to give a piano solo which he did, and before he left he had all of them from the youngest to the oldest on his side. He had that ability. And so we pay tribute to him. He passed away in 1960. During that time and before we had two or three associates--Billy Russell with a winning personality, Bill Codie, a great promoter who is now with the Howard Butt organization. Jane Ray Bean whose interest was with foreign students. She was the one who really did the groundwork on that and has friendships all over the world because of her work and interest. In 1959 she married Brother Robert S. Denney whose wife had passed away sometime before that time. She is now with him in the world work.

Junker: Well, of interest to me particularly is how the editorial work was done during these years. Dr. Leavelle, of course, was officially the editor of The Baptist Student which started in 1922. How did that operate? I noticed in early years he had an associate who helped with this. Do you want to comment on any of those or how that particular thing was done. You probably contributed a lot to it yourself.

Dr. Preston: All of us entered into the editing of The Baptist Student magazine. Back yonder we had a young lady from Nashville, one of the earliest ones, her name was Mary Browning and she helped us a lot. She became Mrs. Roy Dennis later on, but Mary was a winning person and did a splendid work. You see, we had it combined with the secretarial work, also. Now that was true back yonder, but lately it has been changed.

Now Marjorie Moore came in 1935 and worked until '42 and I believe that she left here to go with the commission of the Foreign Mission Board at least eventually she was with the Foreign Mission Board. In '42-44 Elizabeth Williams came from Mississippi. She was our worker, and for a short time Genevieve King from Texas was with us. And then Anne Crigden who was the daughter of a pastor and also the executive secretary of California if I remember correctly, was with us for two years. She was unusually gifted. Then later on she married Mr. Martin and they are now down in Alabama where he is a pastor of one of the churches in one of the large cities.

Then Jane Wyatt Rudisol came the following year and in '48-51 Johnnie Johnson came to be with us. Following that Louise Kearling Kelley, she is now, she is Mrs. Maurice Kelley down in Dallas. Then Gladys Bryant who stayed from '54-56 and then got her Master's Degree and later her Doctor's degree and is now on the faculty of Belmont College. Then Louise Kearling came back for a second term.

Dottie Whitsell came for two years and now is in the East, married. Joanne McGhennis Prewett, Joanne served five years. She was an unusually gifted writer and an excellent editor of the magazine. Her pastor husband, William T. Prewett lives in Mt. Washington in Kentucky at the present time. He is working on his doctorate at Southern Seminary.

Then from '64-65 Mrs. Dianna McCutcheon and following and following '69-70 Gladys Meggs Masserole and 1970-71 Linda Lawson. Those were the associates in the department in charge of editorial work.

Junker: You referred to Marjorie Moore, of course, she now is Mrs. O. K. Armstrong and do you want to say something about them more than that.

Dr. Preston: Marjorie Moore was interested in writing, journalism, and probably one of the most capable that we have had in the department. She met O. K. Armstrong after he had lost his wife. He was the former Republican congressman from the state of Missouri one of those sections around Springfield. And they married. At that time they united together in writing. He wrote often-times for The Reader's Digest. They got together and compiled a book on Baptists I almost said impossible Baptists, but what is the name of that book?

Junker: The Indomitable Baptists.

Dr. Preston: The Indomitable Baptists, well that was the volume and it's an excellent volume on Baptists.

Junker: In 1955, I believe it was, Dave Alexander came to the department as editor of the publications. Now that's the first time, I believe, that a male editor had been employed up to that time I believe the department head had been considered the editor of materials and we had associates to help them as you say and sometimes a part-time secretary. Do you remember anything about the thinking that went into that particular period? Was this designed to expand editorial work in any way?

Dr. Preston: I think it was more or less to sort of dignify it and put someone in charge of it because other publications of other denominations were leaning that way and Dave Alexander did an excellent work as editor in his period of time that he spent there. I believe it was between 1955-58 as editor. Now I'm going back to

his election.

Junker: That must have been '55-60 because he succeeded Dr. Keegan or '61 I guess it was.

Dr. Preston: All right, '61. And he was chosen, then, by the Sunday School Board, Dr. Howse had a new conception of student work and that was to do it like they were doing other types of work--bringing folks into Nashville as consultants and so on. And so that was the plan of our work. He had Howard Bramlett, Ed Seabough, R. H. Fallwell, Larry Allison, and S. L. Harris. Those were the ones. Of course, Dr. Baird came in '56. I believe, Mr. Junker, you came in '57. What was your work?

Junker: Well I came as the Director of Student Evangelism I believe was my title at that time those titles, of course, have been changed to consultant, and then after about five years I believe, shortly after Dave came to be the department head he asked me to take over the editorial work which I've had since then.

Dr. Preston: Do you remember the first time you and I were together?

Junker: Yes, Focus Week down at Tres McConnell. Dr. Miller was the president I believe at that time. His son is a neurologist a doctor down in Memphis at the present time. Yes, we had a good time together and I was real favorably impressed by you and your lady.

Junker: Well that was mutual. I really enjoyed that. That was one of the highlights of my experience up to that point. I was just going to ask, but I don't want to get off of the subject too much, I was going to ask when this Focus Week idea developed and were you instrumental in the beginnings of it. I know Bob Denney came later to head this up, but how did that come about? Was that pretty much an early part of BSU work?

Dr. Preston: Earlier part, yes, but all of us were together on that as a lot of other things. For instance the Master's Minority Movement and so on. One day Dr. Leavelle and I were talking together about what we should call certain things and I said, "You know, it's not the unorganized majority but the persistent minority that finally wins." And he said, "That's what we want a Master's Minority and so that evolved from that and Focus Week, we called it something else for a time but then began to focus. By the way, the worst pun that ever was made was by"

Junker: You probably made it didn't you?

Preston: Well anyhow, the worst pun was when these three boys that were in the meat packing business decided they'd quit and go out and raise cattle. So they went out West, had a ranch, and they wired their Irish Mother and they said, "What shall we call it?" Adn she wired back, "Call it the Focus Ranch." And they said, "Well why the focus ranch? She wired back, "Where the sons raise meat. Well I say that's the worst pun which ought not to be on the record but it's going on the record here. So the Focus Week where we got a group of unusual personalities to go to the campuses and there meet on the high spiritual plain with all the other folks and students, workers there on the campus. We took in everyone on the campus.

Junker: What else, you mentioned summer missions a little while ago and I know there was I know a little of the history of that, but tell us how that got started.

Dr. Preston: Down in Mississippi one time at the state convention which was held at the old Sawdust Room of the Baptist Workshop there which by the way was built by our sister-in-law, Mrs. Edwin S. Preston when she was the first Baptist Student Secretary at MSCW that is MSCW, Mississippi's Sweetest Collection of Women. So she was instrumental in that plus when we were together there Irene Ward, I believe, was there and W. O. Watt and these others and we came together and decided that we'd do summer missionary work in the state of Mississippi. Now that was one of the firwt times we did it on a statewide basis. I recall that we had already sent out college students in the associations and so on, but this was the beginning in that way. Then in 1946 just before Christmas we were invited, there were five of us, there was Jacky Robinson, the Opympic star, Jacky Robinson White, there was Beau Baker, a music man, W. F. Howard and Mr. Bush whose name escapes me at the present moment and I went out as a team to Hawaii. We were to hold meetings in colleges and highschoools out there mostly high schools. Well after that campaign there were around 300 who lmade decisions. Howard Butt was on that team, also, and he sang over the radio every morning. And after he left and the rest of them left I went out to the radio station to make a short talk and the man says, "Where is that man who sings?" I said, "Who do you mean?" He said, "That man named Butt?" I said, "Oh that man, everything in his house is named Butt even the dog nothing else but." Anyhow I told him that he'd gone home. We met with the missionaries. They had their annual meeting after Christmas and Josephine Harris came to me and said, "Mr. Preston what shall we do next because next year it belongs to you and the Episcopalians and the Congregationalists they're not going to have a revival. I said well maybe not. She said, "What would you suggest?" I said, "Well ljust like the Lord have twelve folks sent out." I knew that the old folks were sent back, the missionaries from China and they did not appeal to the youngsters.

And therefore I said we ought to have some young people come out here and work with those missionaries and see if we couldn't put on a Vacation Bible School which is a natural for children, and so that was what was done. So we sent out twelve. The next year we sent out ten or twelve and we went up as high as twenty-two. But that first year we had a young fellow, Webster Carroll. Webster Carroll took a picture machine with him and he took movies of the work out there. He had never done it before, the blue sky just was perfect for his picture taking, and he came back with those pictures and showed them at Ridgecrest and we had a man from down San Andres, a missionary and San Andres Island is down in the Caribbean and it's 400 miles from Columbia down in that section and it's nine miles long and two miles wide. They have ten thousand folks who speak english and three million coconut trees that don't and that was the field. So he said I want some missionaries sent down so we sent four. They had 187 folks that accepted Christ. Sometime later, years later, I was at Glorieta and W. F. Howard had his singers that had gone out to Indonesia and other places and there was a great big black man there. I went up to him and I said where are you from. He said Wayland College. I said where did you come from? San Andres Island. And he was one of those 187 that had come.

And the next year we sent seven down there and one of our pastors Second Baptist Church of Memphis, now, that used to be with this Board was one of those seven.

Junker: Jim Hadley

Dr. Preston: Jim Hadley and later on Jim Hadley went out to the Beverley Hills Church Baptist Church in California.

Well, the next time those pictures were shown they had a group of folks that wanted to be sent down to Jamaica and so this missionary presented the cause and we sent 35 down to Jamaica and they had thousands of folks to attend those Vacation Bible Schools and had 1,500 decisions. The weakness was we didn't have anything to follow it up. But, years later, Dr. Grinstead of this city came back and said, "Mr. Preston, I want to tell you something." He said, "There was a boy down there in that first group that accepted Christ, went on in training and at this meeting in Jamaica that he went to just a few years ago he said it was the first foreign missionary that they had sent out and this was one of those boys. Well, it just turns that way. Now what it does for the missionaries. Webster Carroll came back. Went on and got his seminary training then went on and first of all he went to Tanganika as a missionary. Now he is in Uganda and so on it goes. And so the mission work there has spread that way to other countries.

Junker: It is so much so I guess you know that we cannot even count, now, the number of summer missionaries who go out. We know it is something over a thousand that are appointed either by the Home Mission Board or Foreign Mission Board or state BSUs.

But we know there are many beyond that we don't have any record of because so many individual projects have grown up no telling how many people have been reached now through that. What are some other concerns that you remember about the work maybe particularly in the earlier days. What did you all spend your energy and time doing. I know these were the time of the quadrennial meetings and you published lots of materials, lots of free materials and some books. Do you remember what your major goals were and what mostly you spent your time doing in those early days?

Dr. Preston: Well most of our time was spent in travel. We got to the campus, got to the individuals and held conferences with students. I seldom set up a conference because it wastes time. I'd say, "all right, shoot," and in five minutes you could solve something or help in some way where it would take an hour to do otherwise. So we went to many campuses with that idea.

Talking about publications, Dr. Leavelle back there suggested that we have a "My Covenant" series of books, and I think they were fairly good. Now Miss Sybil Brain wrote one on Bible study and she was a genius on writing if you want to really read something worthwhile read her book on Bible study. Where Is The South was mentioned. Prayer and Devotional Life was written by preacher Halleck. You know we saw him the other day at Norman. He looks about the same and Mrs. Halleck about the same as always and their family certainly has turned out as a wonderful group of folks, Christians, Edgar Halleck I never will forget the time at Ridgecrest when they took the three-foot paper roll and had it around the front of the auditorium and he said if I'm a preacher in America it'll be probably a thousand people, but if I'm down in South America I could speak to a million people down there and that's where he is, I think, one of the outstanding missionaries of the world. And so these other books, Christian Stewardship. I had it as a duty, but it became a privilege of writing the one on church loyalty and these are the eight subjects that we had as marks of the "My Covenant" series.

I think one of the outstanding things that was done was the establishment of "Student Night at Christmas." It came at a low time for the pastor. He was glad to have somebody come in and take charge of a service at the close of the year or the beginning of the next, and I'll never forget going down to Shreveport I think it was in 1927 when I spoke over the radio called "Hello World." I don't know whether you remember that but it was by a man and his wife and they often had their family scrap over the radio, but that night, clear, wonderful, cool night, and we had after that message that I had the privilege of giving there, we had reports from Cuba and South America and thirteen states and Canada they came in because of that. But every year the young people are brought together and recognized that way.

Another thing that I was especially interested in was we used to call, "Off to College," and because there are so many local folks I changed that name to, "On to College" because that's really what it is. And the recognition of the college students that way. There are many other facets of the work that I enjoyed and was glad to have a part in.

Junker: You used to do a lot, I know, toward encouraging students to work in Vacation Bible Schools and in general in what was called, "summer service." I know this summer missions became a part of summer service but maybe you want to talk a little more about how students served in the summers in local churches.

Dr. Preston: We had the contact, of course, with the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board. The Home Mission Board, really, opened its doors a little wider than the Foreign Mission Board because of course they could use more and then they got into the business themselves. In fact, they probably were ahead of us in that, but we had a great host of young people through the years that have served that way. But then, there were opportunities in the local church or the local association, and we made the plea to students to serve in a Vacation Bible School because that's a place anybody can serve. They don't have to be able to sing or do anything they can do anything they want to do in the Vacation Bible School. And we endeavored to enlist a host of young people that way, and they were usually free at that time.

One thing that we were especially interested in was Ridgecrest and later on Glorieta. Ridgecrest started out in 1926 I believe it was with just sixty folks attending. The next year we had a hundred and we doubled it the next year and doubled that and of course we counted the babies and everybody else that was there and we had their names, and it went on. I remember in 1936 that year Dr. Leavelle was in China. He was trying to make the BSU international, worldwide, and so in 1936 Sybil Brain and I were the only ones in charge at Ridgecrest and we had close to two thousand people there so it was one of those things. It will be a long time before I forget some of the experiences of that year. We had the rule that we wouldn't take any doctor to Ridgecrest. We would depend upon Black Mountain or some other place close by. And so we didn't take any doctor, but that year I decided I would. So I ran across a man by the name of Caleb Pickett. Caleb Pickett now is a doctor in Garland, Texas, and he had just married a nurse, and so I approached him. He said, "Yes, pay my way for myself and my bride and we'll be glad to go." So they came on the bus. But just the second day after he was there they had a wreck and he looked after the lady sending the bill to the insurance company and I paid \$7.37 I believe it was the total expense because he returned to me all the money that he got. So we had a doctor and that started the doctor up there.

Later on we had or before that time we took pictures of Ridgecrest. Now Brother Ed is an expert in picture making--one of the world's best, I think, because he never shows his poor pictures. He always shows his best. So he's got a reputation. And so he took a movie that was first of all black and white. And we brought an old picture machine that I'd carry around. I'm a little low on the right shoulder, now, from carrying that thing. And we showed Ridgecrest. Now folks didn't know what Ridgecrest was up to that time. Ridgecrest, what is it? Then we'd show them these young people having a marvelous time at Ridgecrest and then the Sunday School folks said well let's us go. So we really presented Ridgecrest to the folks of the Southern Baptist Convention. Then we got it in color and so it went on. So I think that Ridgecrest was built largely because of our advertising that way.

Then came Glorieta and Ridgecrest slumped, naturally, because the western folks went to Glorieta and it has become a wonderful place. The natural beauty is Ridgecrest. The man-made beauty is Glorieta now that's where a lot of folks go.

Junker: I can read your prejudice as coming out in there, Dr. Preston.

Dr. Preston: I'm always prejudiced.

Junker: Another thing that interested me was the progression of student work from being done primarily by students and volunteer help into our present situation of having a large number of paid staff members on a state and local level. Do you remember anything about this development in the early days? I know you started out with having southwide meetings and then went to statewide meetings but I don't know much about those early days. Do you remember what was developing there or what was happening?

Dr. Preston: Well you're a little too young to know anyhow. But back yonder in those days we did depend largely upon the students. Dr. Leavelle, if you'll notice that picture of planning the 1926 meeting at Birmingham, for instance, which was the first. You'll notice that most of those were students. Some of them now, E. H. Westmoreland has retired from a pastorate down here at South Main in Texas and Sibley Burnett has already retired. Here are some of these folks that you have in the picture. Of course the only paid person in that group was Dr. Leavelle and Miss Louise Foreman. Agnes Durant was there and I see Claude Brooch, some of these others, R. P. Downing over in the state of North Carolina who later on became state secretary in that state, also pastor. So the work began to get out of the reach of students. They didn't have time for it. Somebody had to minister to them and like they began to specialize in Sunday School work and Training union work so it began with student work, and it had to be done in a different way than just Sunday School and Training Union work per se. So it developed. I believe you have around six hundred, now do you now paid and volunteer workers?

Junker: Yes, and I think this year we registered over 800 units--organizational units of some sort. Some of them are full fledged BSUs. others are just small groups meeting together for fellowship and study. they're meeting a real need. This, of course, represented an expansion of the work when you went, i guess from the quadrennial which was the original getting together of all the interested BSUs to state meetings where you were able to reach a whole lot more and then the quadrennial gradually dropped out probably because of Ridgecrest and Glorieta combined with the state meetings. is that the way it happened? I know that we don't have the quadrennial any more.

Dr. Preston: well just before the home-going of Dr. Keegan, we had everything planned to have a great meeting at St. Louis to have around ten thousand people there, and we had the keynote, we had the second chapter of Ephesians as the program that we'd build around, and everything was planned out before his home-going, and the choice of a successor made that impossible at the time.

Junker: I guess the Student Missions Congress in 1956 was somewhat a return to the idea of having a large meeting.

Dr. Preston: Oh yes.

Junker: How was the idea of the quadrennial related to once in a student generation. Was that the idea you were going on there?

Dr. Preston: Yes, and you recall that we had sectional meetings. We had them one in Chattanooga, one out here in Oklahoma I believe it was, one in the East and then come together for this quadrennial. Then after that came state meetings which took the place of the section meetings. The quadrennial was not held in the second World War years. We counseled with Howard Reece and we were going to hold a meeting and Howard Reece working in Washington knew more about what was going on than most folks and he said, "Don't have it at that time because there's going to be a great something happen, push." And it was the African campaign and the closing of the war and the interest was turned that way. So that was done away with eventually at that time, but when Dr. Keegan came to the end of his ministry plans were already in the making for a great . . . we wanted to have the biggest student meeting that we'd ever had this would be in St. Louis.

Junker: I guess to bring us up to date on department staff members we might mention just the names and responsibilities of the ones who've joined the department since 1960. Nell Magee came in 1960.

Dr. Preston: She was from Ellisville down in Mississippi is that right where she was the student director.

Junker: Right, and she came to work primarily with junior college work and that has been a continuing interest. Of course now she's consultant in leadership, student leadership. Then Denise Jones came from the neighboring state of Louisiana in 1961 as editorial assistant and then was promoted later to assistant editor and has been working primarily on the student magazine as assistant editor for several years now. Art Driscoll joined the department in 1965. He has worked since coming here primarily with directors in their training and with student centers.

Dr. Preston: Well he certainly had some real experience at the University of Oklahoma and then later on the University of Virginia and he had a taste of East and West. He's a great leader.

Junker: Right. Some of these campuses have been in sort of the limelight, I guess in student work for several years. Art started a course at Ruston, Louisiana at Louisiana Tech and I believe Warren Wolf was there as the director one time and Sam Sadler later on. All of these, of course, now are becoming old timers in student work.

Dr. Preston: I remember one time when he was considering going to the University of Oklahoma from Ruston. I was down there at that time.

Junker: Yeah, those have been . . . he did a great work at the University of Oklahoma and as you say, other places, too. Gene Bowling came to the department first in 1967 and stayed a short time then returned in 1970. The first time he was consultant in student evangelism and then returned in 1970 somewhat as a replacement for Ed Seabough to do work in new convention areas or what we're calling now new work development. Norman Bowman was in the department at two different times. He came as an assistant editor in 1965 and then went to the Church Training Department for a while and then came back in 1969 as editor of student publications. Then Jerry Buckner in '69, Benton Williams and Milt Hughes I suppose have been the three most recent additions to the department.

Dr. Preston: What's the emphasis of Mr. Hughes?

Junker: Milt is the consultant in campus evangelism and has done really a lot of great work in developing materials and programs. Probably the most organized approach to it this department has ever had. Benton Williams, of course, came from Thailand to be consultant in international student ministries and actually we had not had anyone with that specific responsibility since Jane Ray left in 1959.

Dr. Preston: He was telling me how enthusiastic our pastor, Brother Bob Norman is about the people coming from these other countries and we're setting up a three-pronged program there in our church, especially, working with the families, teaching them English, the students, and having them come under other arrangements, but we'll have at least 80

of them coming to Belmont College from Hong Kong and then I expect over a hundred altogether coming from that section of the world.

Junker: That really is great. He was telling me that Lib, his wife, who is the coordinator at Belmont for international students and I suppose working in the church a lot, too, has just had that thing organized and those students were already placed with host families and it looks like it is really going to be a great ministry this fall.

Dr. Preston: You ought to get an opportunity.

Junker: You've had several conversions in the church from this group within the last year, haven't you?

Dr. Preston: yes we have, and one of the key persons is Mabel Beaker. She knows how to work with foreign students and she has been the one that has brought numbers of folks to Christ. I want to pay her tribute because she deserves it.

Junker: She is an editorial worker in the Church Training Department here.

Dr. Preston: Right.

Junker: Might mention that Jerry Buckner has a general title of Consultant in Campus Ministries which is a sort of a catch-all for program leadership. Actually his responsibility is to do program design and program consultation in areas that are not covered by anyone else which includes a lot of areas, and one of the areas that he's been giving a lot of attention to lately because we didn't have a consultant specifically for it is the Black student area. But as you know, we do have now on the way to join us September 1, John Westbrook who is a Black man and who will be heading up the work with Black students I suppose primarily on formerly all black campuses, but also helping us to include Black students on formerly all white campuses.

Dr. Preston: That reminds me that the Student Week at Ridgecrest was the initial place for the welcoming of the Baptist students--the Blacks and the others and Dr. Keegan took a leading role in that. Also, in securing other than Baptists as outstanding speakers. For a long time we thought the Baptists had it all, but we found out that the other sections of the world had some real speakers and some folks who could make a real contribution and we've been using them ever since.

Junker: That was great. And as you mentioned, other programs have picked that up and are now using more than they did outside the denomination. You mentioned Dr. Grinstead a little while ago and I wonder if you'd talk a little more about him and his relationship with student work.

Dr. Preston: He was a clerk, a mail clerk on the railroad when he gave up part of his time to student work and became so enamored with it that pretty soon he was the leader of it working through the American Baptist Theological Seminar, Fisk University now the Tennessee State University and building a student center and being a connecting link. He was a most worthwhile and acceptable speaker in all groups--Black and white and has done a monumental piece of work. At the present time, he's giving his full time to the work and he has a sister who represented him and represented the Blacks at the Norman celebration of the 50th anniversary of our student work.

Junker: All right, Mrs. Turner, and she does the local work here and of course Mr. Grinstead was instrumental in organizing BSUs, i'm not sure what the number is but over a couple of dozen campuses maybe as many as 50 and he retired, of course, from that a few years ago and as you mentioned is in full-time work now with one of the national Baptist boards here in public relations work. This work, by the way, is interesting because even though it has been primarily with National Baptists students, the Black convention, the work has had a relationship to Southern Baptist work in that a lot of its support has come from the Home Mission Board and has been administered through Victor Glass in recent years who is their worker there with National Baptists. Let me ask you one more question. There's been a lot of I suppose controversy, but a lot of different opinions about the BSU when it first got started where it happened and so on and I believe you have a connection with Mary Harden Baylor that is of real interest.

Dr. Preston: Well I have, but in the early days it was a hot issue. It's died down with the dying of folks, but they debated long and loud about who started the BSU. Well quite naturally the Southern Baptist Convention started in 1921, really, when they voted and in 1922 when they secured Dr. Frank H. Leavelle who for nine years was a very successful BYPU secretary of Georgia. He felt that that was the beginning, really, but Dr. J. P. Boone who was the executive secretary before that time down in the state of Texas claimed that the work started there and the facts of the figures indicate he was correct. It so happens that he, as a state secretary, and along with Louise Foreman who was his associate, made a trip to the college at Mary Harden Baylor. There they interviewed the YWCA at that time was the campus organization and suggested to the president of that organization, who is now my daughter, Miriam's mother-in-law, that they organize the Baptist Student Union on the campus and that she be the president of it which they did. That was in 1920. And so the first recognized BSU, according to the records, is that one there. You see, in our home, the BSU has been quite popular. All three of our children have been BSU presidents. Miriam down at Blue Mountain, John at Baylor, and William at the campus of the University of Tennessee. Only he turned it down after he was elected because of the pressure of medical work, but that's an enthusiasm that our family has had or the loyalty that they've had.

And I might say that I don't see how anybody can travel unless they have a wonderful wife to back them up, and Kearney Keegan had, I have, Frank Leavelle had and these others, and so it goes.

Junker: That's a real fitting note on which to close the interview, I think, because one of the things that stood out about you, among many things during the years, has been your love and appreciation of your family and including them as much as you could in the schedule which called for you to be out of town many weeks of the time and on frequent occasions and we appreciate this. It has been very delightful and helpful.

Dr. Preston: Thank you, it's very painful sometimes, a six weeks trip after our marriage I had to go out to Norman Oklahoma, do you remember, and there I sat on the steps of the First Baptist Church and here then came Dr. Halleck and I introduced myself and he said, "What are you here for and I said I'm representing the Baptist student work. Do you speak and I said some. Do you sing? Some. And so it was from that that we started our friendship and that day I took charge of the services and I've been a loyal friend of the Halleck family every since. I realize