HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Southern Baptist Convention Presidents

21659

HERSCHEL H. HOBBS

Interviewed

by

A. Ronald Tonks

on

January 14-16, 1974

and

March 11-14, 1974

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

PREFACE

Dr. Herschel H. Hobbs, longtime pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, was a leader in Southern Baptist denominational life from the 1940's to the 1970's. Hobbs was raised in Central Alabama by a widowed mother. Through the effort and dedication of his mother and other members of his family, he attended Samford University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he received the Doctor of Theology degree. Dr. Hobbs served as pastor of several major Southern Baptist churches and for many years as the preacher on the "Baptist Hour."

Hobbs is perhaps best remembered for his leadership role as president of the Southern Baptist Convention during the time when the Convention adopted the Baptist Faith and Message in 1963. Hobbs during this time played a very important role in molding the Convention into a unit in time of crises.

In the early 1970's the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention sought to develop a formal Oral History Program. The purpose of oral history has been to gather the oral memoirs or recollections of individuals who are first-hand participants in important and significant events. Since it soon became apparent that there were many important people related to Southern Baptist life who should be interviewed through the ministry of the Historical Commission, a deliberate and specific plan was developed. The Commission determined that a program entitled Southern Baptist Convention Presidents should be of primary importance. A list was compiled of all the living presidents, and the plan was begun to interview them systematically. It very quickly became apparent that many of the presidents are extremely busy even in retirement, and consequently for any one of them to devote a block of time when an interview could be conducted posed some serious problems.

Despite Dr. Hobbs's very busy schedule, it was possible to arrange two series of interviews from January 14 to 16, 1974, and March 11 to 14, 1974. He took a real interest in this project, and willingly devoted valuable time and care so that his memoirs would be preserved accurately. After the interviews were conducted, the transcript was returned for corrections of fact. He was a gracious interviewee and a willing "corrector" of the transcript. The manuscript has been corrected only at points of error and to improve some points of style. The flavor of Dr. Hobbs's speech has been carefully preserved.

Since this is the first bound oral history interview series completed by the Historical Commission, appreciation should be expressed to Dr. Hobbs and the staff of the Historical Commission who have carefully prepared and edited the transcript and final copy. Mrs. Patricia Goeller and Mrs. Sue Jones deserve special recognition for their careful and skillful work in transcribing and preparing the final transcript and index for binding.

A. Ronald Tonks
Assistant Executive Director
Historical Commission, SBC
May 20, 1978

HERSCHEL HAROLD HOBBS

BIOGRAPHY

Born: Talladega Springs, Coosa County, Alabama, October 24, 1907

Education:

Phillips High School, Birmingham, Alabama, 1926
Howard College (Samford University), Birmingham, Alabama, B.A., 1932
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, Th.M., 1935
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, Ph.D., 1938

Pastoral Experience:

Vinesville Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama - 1929
Berney Points Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama - 1929-1932
Seminary Pastorates, Indiana - 1932-1935
Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood, Kentucky - 1937-1938
Calvary Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama - 1938-1939
Clayton Street Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama - 1939-1941
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Louisiana - 1941-1945
Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Alabama - 1945-1949
First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma - 1949-1972

In addition, Hobbs served as a trustee or a member of numerous denominational agencies and committees as well as

President, Southern Baptist Convention - 1961-1963
Chairman, Baptist Faith and Message Committee - 1962-1963

Hobbs has written more than twenty-five books as well as numerous articles on religious subjects.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Southern Baptist Convention Presidents

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: Herschel H. Hobbs

INTERVIEWER: A. Ronald Tonks

DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 14, 1974

PLACE: First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

T: Dr. Hobbs, I appreciate you taking the time to share this interview with us and to offer some of your reflections on your vast experience among Southern Baptists. I wonder if you could tell us something about your first remembrance, like the first thing you remember going back to your early days. What were your parents like?

H: Well, of course, I was born in Coosa County, Alabama, out in the country from Talladega Springs. I never actually lived in Talladega; my parents did at one time. In fact, in 1900 they sold their business; my father was a hardware merchant at the time. They planned to move to Oklahoma City, but he got sick and the doctors advised him to get on a farm where he could get exercise, sunshine, and so on. So he bought about 685 acres of land in the Coosa River Valley, of Alabama, farmed part of it, rented out the rest of it. I was born on that farm on October 24, 1907. My father died there in 1910, so I really have no personal remembrances of him. I remember things that my mother and older sisters told me about him, but I don't really remember him. Now he was a member of the Church of Christ. My mother was a Baptist. They had three churches in that community--Methodist, Baptist, and Church of Christ. My father taught the men's Sunday School class and led the singing in both the Baptist church and the Church of Christ. However, the first Sunday School I guess I ever attended was the Blue Springs Methodist

Church. One of my sisters used to tell me about carrying me on her back to Sunday School. My wife and I were down through that country some years ago, and that Blue Springs Church is still there and is still in use. The little Baptist church is still there, but I think they only hold services once or twice a year. The cemetery is there where my father and sister are buried. My father and sister both died there: he died in May, 1910, and she died in October, 1910. So my mother sold the land that we owned almost for a pittance and moved back to Ashland in Clay County, Alabama, which is really my family's home country.

T: Was the property not good, or didn't it bring a good price in those days?

H: My mother wanted to get out of that area, because, you see, they had not learned how to control Malaria and Typhoid, which killed my father and sister. My mother just wanted to get out of there before any of the rest of us died.

T: Typhoid or Malaria? Or one from each?

H: Well it was really, I guess, Malaria more than Typhoid. My mother said that I averaged a chill a day from the time I was born until I was five years old from Malaria, and to this day I can't give blood transfusions because they won't take blood from a person who has had Malaria. An uncle wanted to stay down there and run the place, but my mother said, "No, I don't want any of my people down here." So she sold the land to a banker in Talladega Springs. Not too many years after that, the Alabama Power Company built their first hydroelectric dam, Lock 12. It backed water upon most of that land. It's grown up in timber now, and there's no farming in that area at all. It was good land, but it was just a period in history when men did not know how to control these diseases. Well, anyway, we moved back to Ashland, and my first real remembrance is there in Ashland; it's the county seat of Clay County. The first real remembrance that I have on my own was, one day some of my older sisters--I had five sisters born before I was born and then one after, before my father died--and I was telling about my oldest sisters who got themselves a job picking cotton. I asked them what they were doing that for, and they said, "To make money." My little childish mind had quite a puzzle on its hands trying to figure out how they could take that soft cotton and make hard money out of it. Well, anyway, I grew up in this town; it was the hometown of later Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black.

T: Did you know him?

H: I did not know him, but I went to school with his niece. Incidentally, she called me the other day in Birmingham. She had heard I was there and called me. It was the first time I had heard from her in almost fifty-five years. Yet, strangely, when she began talking and said, "You don't remember me, but I went to school with you in Ashland." I said, "Mildred Black!" Somehow, it just came to me. I had a cousin who practiced law; he and Hugo Black were law partners until my cousin got sick with Tuberculosis and had to move to Colorado. He got over it completely, but still lives in Denver.

T: The way you talk there must have been a real problem, and fear almost, of disease, was there?

H: Well, I guess so. We forget the tremendous strides that have been made in medical science in our lifetime. It was only since then that they learned how to control Malaria. Now we hardly think about it in this country. Missionaries tell us if you fly over Africa you get Malaria, but that isn't true in this country. It's almost unheard of. If you have it, you catch it somewhere else. Typhoid is the same way. But they were very much around then. I remember a sister of mine when she had Typhoid. You know, Typhoid Fever makes the intestines very tender, and you can't eat any solid food. I remember how she went for six weeks without solid food until a doctor would let her have a little soft food. That explains in a word just the difference in the lifestyle then and now, because diseases that have been practically eradicated in this country were raging back in those days, and that's been only sixty some-odd years ago. Well, anyway, my first schoolteacher that I remember was a Mrs. Lackey. Her husband was Martin Lackey who weighed about 350 pounds. I remember that, and I can still see him. He and an uncle of mine practiced law, and when Hugo Black was appointed to the Supreme Court, in an interview, he was asked where he learned his first law. He said, "I learned it sitting in the courthouse in Ashland, Alabama, listening to Martin Lackey and Ed Whatley argue law cases." Well, Ed Whatley was my mother's youngest brother. So, when I was about three and a half years old, my mother moved--well, I guess I was just a little over three years old. We moved back to Clay County and lived there until I was nine. I began my schooling there.

T: What did the family do for income?

H: My mother took the money she realized from the sale of the farm and built us a home. My two oldest sisters worked in a dry-goods store owned by a third cousin of ours, Charlie Owen Hobbs, C. O. Hobbs. I remember seeing his name on the front of his store. I'd see other stores that had like Jones and Co. It made me a little mad because they were copying my cousin, so I thought. Anyway, my mother was Registry and Chancery for Clay County. We never missed any meals and we never postponed any. But it was nip and tuck in those days. When I was nine we moved to Chilton County, Alabama, out on a farm. My mother's health had been bad, so the doctor told her she should get out of an office and on a farm. They put great stock in fresh air and so on, which is still good. So we moved to this farm just a quarter of a mile over into Chilton out of Shelby County, between Montevallo and Calera, and we all of our trading in Shelby County because those were the nearest towns. And it was in the Enon Baptist Church there in what we called Dry Valley that I made my profession of faith in Christ. This community was known as Dry Valley. I don't think there was a well in the community. We had cisterns, the creek beds only had water in them when it rained, and few farms had ponds, but they were just mostly muddy water. I remember some of we boys going swimming in one of those ponds. We swam in the nude, of course, and when we came out of the water you could see every hair on our bodies, arms and all, because of that mud hanging to them.

We didn't know we were having a hard time. We thought we were having fun. But it was in this Enon Baptist Church in a revival meeting in August, 1918--back then many country churches thought you could only be saved sometime beginning the second Sunday in August. Well, anyway, our pastor was a man by the name of Davis, and he had a son who was a ministerial student of then Howard College, Ernest Davis. He held a revival meeting for us, and it was in that revival that I made my profession

of faith in Christ. Ernest Davis died a couple of years ago in Birmingham.

T: You'd thought of it a long time before, I am sure.

H: My mother, of course, gave us a Christian home. I guess one reason why I am a Baptist is the fact that my father died in 1910, and when he died we all naturally went with my mother to the Baptist church. Living in Ashland, our pastor, the one that I remember, was Dr. James Allen Smith, who died a couple of years ago down at Dothan, Alabama. We had to go by the Methodist church to get to the Baptist church. I was all confused in my mind about denominations. When someone asked me when I was five years old what I was going to be when I grew up, I said, "I'm going to be a Methodist preacher like Brother Smith," though he was a Baptist preacher. Years later he was pastor of the West End Baptist Church in Birmingham when I was at Calvary Church there. He had me out to speak one night at a banquet and told that on me. I got up and responded that I wanted to contend that I made as good a Methodist preacher as he did. Well, anyway, I was baptized in Montevallo Creek, just outside the little town of Montevallo. They had two ways of going from Montevallo to Calera. One was to go around by the bridge. The shorter way was to ford the creek. The farmers all went that way for two reasons: to save distance, and to let the horses or mules get a drink of water. Even in the summertime we drove through there in our buggies and wagons--the spokes would get dry and loose, and we'd drive in there and just stand there to let the wheels get wet and swell. It would tighten them up. I was baptized just above the ford of that creek.

T: Were you baptized by Brother Davis?

H: Yes, by his son. I don't know why, but Brother Davis had his son do the baptizing. There was one other person with me, and as he was fixing to baptize the other one, someone took a picture of me standing in the water. I still have that picture. Well, a few years ago my wife and I went back to Alabama and spent our vacation going back to old places that were connected with our lives before we met and afterward. So we went down to Montevallo. I wanted to show her the place where I was baptized. We went down in there, but had a hard time finding it because the road was no longer through there as it had been. When we got down there, they told us, "Now you probably won't find it because we had a flood come years ago, and it's all filled in and they never did dredge it out." Trees had grown up all in there, but the creek was still there--you could almost step across it. Yet I could recognize the spot where I was baptized by the fact that you could still see the wagon tracks where they'd go down into the creek at the ford. So I knew I was at the spot. It had once been a very wide creek--and I know it was wide, not because of my memory, but because of the picture. Out in Oklahoma we'd call it a river.

We lived on this farm from 1916 to 1920. I was the only "man" on the place, though I was only nine years old when we moved there. World War I started in the spring of 1917, and the nation was even then preparing for it. President Woodrow Wilson had called up volunteers, so just about every able-bodied young man of military age was in the service. What men there were left in the community had to do their own farming. There was no one to do ours. We had employed, or hired, a man from

down in the Talladega Springs area to come and work during the wintertime. Just about all he did was fix fences, clean out ditches, and feed the stock. We did this so we would have somebody there to plow and put in a crop in the spring. But just about time to start spring plowing, he went back home. He said he was going to enlist in the army. We learned later that he didn't enlist; they finally drafted him. But he got homesick, I guess.

So we were there with this forty-acre farm--we had sixty acres actually, twenty acres in woods and forty under cultivation. So one day I told my mother, "Let me do the plowing." She said, "Son, you're too small." I was really a runt, I guess, from the Malaria until I was a grown man. I said, "Well I can do as well as is being done now; nobody's doing anything." So she would get out there--and a person who is familiar with farm language of those days will recognize this--she would lay off a land, that is, she would plow around a certain area that was to be broken up with the breaking plow. Then I would take over and do the rest of it. I was so small I had to reach up to hold the plow handles. If the plow hit a rock or a root or something, the handles would go forward and up. I've been hit in the chin by plow handles more times than I can remember. We had an old horse that really shouldn't have been a plow horse. We bought him from a man who had used him to pull wagons holding logs. He was a big, clumsy thing, stepped on more stuff than he'd make plowing. He soon learned that he could handle me, and when he get tired and wanted to go to the house, he'd just start to take out to the house. There wasn't anything I could do about it. I soon learned that when I'd pass a stump I'd throw the foot of the plow around that stump, and that's the way I'd stop him.

Our house was about an eighth of a mile back in a lane from the road with beautiful oak trees out in front of the house. They've been cut down now, I'm sorry to say, and cotton is growing there, even though the house is still standing. But it was a beautiful sight. One morning, real early, we looked down the road, and as far as we could see there were wagons coming up the road. The people of the community knowing our situation got together without us knowing it and they came with wagons, horses, mules, plows, and fertilizer distributors. They had come to put our crop in.

The women came along to do the cooking--I remember they brought along a wash-pot to cook greens in. The men got out and just laid off rows, that is, plow a row in the hard ground, unbroken ground. Somebody came along right behind them with the guano distributor. Those things, they popped--on the wheel of them they had a sprocket sort of a thing and a little old board back there. That thing would go from one sprocket to the other, and would open the box so that the guano got out. I can hear those things popping to this day. Then somebody would come along with a feed planter, they called it, that would plant the seed, corn, or cotton, whatever it was. They had us boys and girls doing what they called dropping corn. We got a sack or bucket of corn and walked along a furrow dropping the corn. I could drop corn as fast as I could walk. Just about a step apart was the distance they wanted the corn. planted. Then somebody would come along behind and cover it up. Well, by night-fall they had planted this forty-acre farm; they had the seed in the ground.

But they had not broken up the middles--that is, the ground between the rows where the corn and cotton, whatever it was, was planted. It was hard. We couldn't get in there with a plow to break it, because it would disturb the seed. It's hard to believe, but my mother and some of my sisters and I got out there with hoes and broke the middles on a forty-acre farm so that it could breathe, and that we could till it so the seed could sprout and grow. You talk to young people today about that sort of thing, and they look at you like a calf looking at a new gate. They don't understand it. But those things were part of the reality of life back then. It was either that or go hungry, and, of course, I never was one that wanted to go hungry.

T: Was this done quite frequently, that is the people would pitch in and help a family who needed some assistance?

H: Yes, that's something that we have lost in our modern urbanized age. People can get sick, live, and die in an apartment next to you, and people not pay any attention to them--that is in some of our big cities. You hear about people on the street being murdered, crying for help, with people standing and watching but not doing anything, you know, that sort of thing. That is one of the prices we have paid for this urban age. Because back then everybody looked after everybody else. In 1918 we had a terrible flu epidemic. Doctors didn't know anything about it, they didn't know how to treat it, there was no medicine for it, and people were dying like flies. Well, there was a young man in that community names Lester Lucas. Every morning he'd get up early and do his own work, feeding the stock, milking the cows, and so on. Then he'd get on his horse and ride--just make a round over that community all day long--going from house to house where people were down with the flu. He'd cut and bring in enough wood to burn. He'd feed the stock, chickens, hogs, and all, and milk the cows. He would see that everything was all right, bring in water from the well so that the people who were sick could have that, and see that they had food where they could get to it.

He never got the flu. He said that the reason was that whenever he went in a house where people had the flu, he always had a cigarette in his mouth letting that smoke go up his nose. I don't know if that had a thing in the world to do with it, I'm not drawing a conclusion one way or the other. I think it was just the Lord looking after a good Samaritan.

After that we got along all right on the farm. For one thing, I had grown up another year and knew pretty well how to handle things. My mother knew much about farming. The second year we were there the boll weevil came in and destroyed the cotton everywhere. They have a monument to the boll weevil in the town square at Enterprise, Alabama. I was down there recently and drove by and saw it. The boll weevil drove those people out of the cotton raising business, which was almost a bankrupt job anyway at that time, and drove them into raising peanuts. They have made scads of money down in that Southeast Alabama area growing peanuts, so they put up a monument to the boll weevil. Well, the boll weevil had come in, so my mother--where she got the idea, I do not know--but she got the idea that she was going to raise peanuts as a money crop, we called it. The corn was used to feed the stock, but cotton was the money crop. She

said, "We're going to raise peanuts." So we planted fifteen acres of peanuts. People laughed at us, thought we were just a bunch of town people who didn't know anything about farming. Well, at the end of the season we dug those peanuts, gathered them, pulling the vine and nuts and all out of the ground, and stacked them around poles like haystacks, and let them dry out. Our problem was that there was no peanut thrasher anywhere to be had. So my mother got two big dry-goods boxes from town, great big wooden boxes, and she cut a slot or hole on either side of the boxes and put a metal piece across the boxes. I guess it was a straightened piece of a wheel tire or iron. Then she and one of my sisters--the rest of us kinds were in school--beat those peanuts off those vines, fifteen acres of a crop! You can imagine what a dirty job it was; but they did it, and we sacked them. Then the problem was to keep them safe. Somebody, we never knew who it was, came into our barn stealing the peanuts by the sack. They laughed at us for planting them, but then they wanted them.

My mother also conceived another idea. In those days they let the cattle run on open range down in that part of Alabama to forage for themselves in the wintertime. My mother conceived the idea of planting velvet beans. Now a velvet bean is a little like a soybean, except it has a fuzzy shell-coating, and once the frost hit those things , it's just like handling stingers. We had to pick them with gloves on. We planted them among the corn, letting the vines run up on the corn. Again the people said, "You're ruining your corn, because it will pull your corn over." Well, it did, but it didn't hurt the corn; we got our corn out. We picked enough velvet beans to put in the barn to feed the cattle during bad weather. But during good weather we'd just turn them loose on our farm, in our fields, and they'd eat those velvet beans. Whereas other people's stock were skinny as they could be, ours were fat and sleek. One man had a herd of about thirty-five cows that ran out on the range. They went right by our place to get to what was known as the range, back over in an uninhabited area. Our biggest problem was keeping his cows out of our field, because they'd jump the fence and eat those velvet beans. We asked him to put yokes on his cows, but he wouldn't do it. One day one of his finest milk cows got in our field. Instead of running the cow out, my mother put her in the stable. The man was out hunting for his cow, and he came asking if we had seen it. My mother said, "Yes, it's out in the stable." He wanted to know why, and she told him. He wanted to get it, and she said, "You can get that cow when you put a yoke on it." So he got a yoke and put it on the cow and took it home. We kep the cow and milked her until he did. I could go on and on and on.

T: Was your mother self-educated?

H: No. My mother was an educated woman for that time, I guess. She went through what I guess you'd call today a Junior College in Ashland. My father was a schoolteacher before he went into the mercantile business. In fact, he was my mother's first teacher.

T: The way you describe her as having thought out these implications of scientific farming would suggest that she was well informed on these things.

H: Yes. Her brothers and sisters, brothers especially, went into other professions. I am proud of my heritage.

T: Was her family fairly wealthy?

H: No. That was not too long after the Civil War, and there just wasn't any wealth in the South then. At least, very little. The biggest thing people had was their land, if they had any at all. My mother's father and mother died when she was very young. In fact, one of my aunts reared her, and for this reason I suppose, we always had a feeling for her more than for any other aunt. My mother sort of felt like she was partly her mother. But again, that was the spirit of that time; everybody took care of his own. We didn't ask the government or anybody else to do it; we just did it ourselves. When we needed someone to help us plant our crop, we didn't write Washington for a disaster loan. People just came in there and planted our seed, and we got out there with hoes and muscle, and didn't have any better sense than to figure out that we had to work for a living.

T: You moved to Birmingham about 1920?

H: Yes.

T: Why did you leave the farm?

H: Well, we only had a two-room schoolhouse, and I guess this as much as anything else led us to move. One of my sisters taught school while we were on that farm; her salary of $40 a month helped--she paid her board and what she had to have, such as clothes and other necessities--why that was about our only source of cash income. And, of course, the peanuts when we sold them. Two other of my sisters, the one that taught school and another, had gone to Birmingham and gotten jobs. It was about thirty-five or forty miles from Birmingham, and my mother wanted us to have better advantages, educational and otherwise.

People look at me like they think I'm lying when I tell them that I did not know what beef tasted like until I was twelve years old. We had chickens and hogs. I chased down many a chicken to kill it for frying, then some unexpected guest would arrive, and I would stand and watch them eat up everything but the wing and back. Everybody in that part of the country had milk cows, but they just didn't at that time kill them for beef. Now out here in Oklahoma, where there's always been a cattle economy in Oklahoma and Texas, they have difficulty understanding that. But if they had lived in the deep South during the time that I was growing up as a child, they would understand it. It was when we moved from Birmingham where we could buy beef that we began to eat beef.

So we sold the farm and moved to Birmingham in the spring of 1920. Our school was out. Back then they'd have school until March, then they'd let us out during the farming season, so the kids could work on the farm. Then when they had laying by time, when they had done all the cultivation they were going to do and would leave the crops to grow, they'd have school in July and August. Then they would let out again in September and October to let the kids work in helping gather the crops. Someone asked me the other day down in Tuscaloosa--I was down there speaking at the Alabama State Baptist Convention at the opening session of each of their meetings as they celebrated their 150th anniversary--they asked me if I had ever picked any cotton. I said, "Have I ever picked any cotton! Even to this day when

I drive along a road and see a field full of cotton to be picked I get the backache."

The family moved to Birmingham in April. I told my mother, "I can't move and go to school up there"--school was still going on in Birmingham, but I couldn't enter at that time of the year--"and there's no need of going up there with nothing to do. Why don't I get a job and stay down here and work?" So our next-door neighbor gave me a job helping him on his farm. He paid me $20 a month and my board. That was my first job.

T: Did you work six days a week?

H: Yes. Or seven. Actually, this was not the first dollar I ever made. A young man who was dating one of my sisters was going to the medical school which was then located at Mobile, Alabama. To go from Ashland to Mobile, he'd get a train to Birmingham and then get one from Birmingham to Mobile. Calera was on the main line of the L&N Railroad, so he would get off there and come out and visit us and see my sister, and then go back and catch the train the next day to Mobile. On one Sunday morning he wanted me to take him to the train, so I hitched the horse to the buggy and we drove in to Calera. I helped him get on the train, and after he got up on the step he turned around and handed me a dollar bill. Well, that's the first dollar I had ever held in my hand, and the first one I had ever earned, of course. I wanted to make that dollar go as far as it would; I wanted to buy something that would last a long time, and do you know what I bought with my first dollar? I went to a drug store just about a half a block from the railroad station and bought a dollar's worth of chewing gum. I figured that would last longer than anything else, and it did.

T: You must have had a lot of chewing gum.

H: Oh, I did. In fact, I've got a picture of it now. When the gum was beginning to get a little old, you know, and had lost its taste, I wouldn't spit it out and get another piece, I'd just get me another stick and put in there with it. In time I got quite a ball of gum. One day my youngest sister and I--she was maybe five or six years old--were up on a scuppernong vine arbor eating scuppernongs, I had my gum in my hand. I don't know whether you know what scuppernongs are. Well, that's a kind of a grape; when it gets ripe it's sort of a golden color and real sweet. We had one of those vines in our backyard up against the chicken house. Anyway, we were up there on that vine one day, and I had my gum in my hand. Somebody in the family with a little old Brownie Kodak came out and took a picture of us sitting up there. I was about eleven years old at that time, or ten; and so I have that picture. You can still see that lump of gum in my hand. People would see it and ask, "What in the world were you holding in your hand?" I'd tell them.

Anyway, I got this job paying me $20 a month and board. About twice a month I'd get on a train on Saturday afternoon and go up to Birmingham and spend the night and Sunday afternoon with my mother and family. When I got my first month's pay, $20, I had money to buy my train ticket. So when I walked in the home there in Birmingham I handed the rest to my mother. You will never know how proud I was to be helping out.

In the latter part of July I moved on up to Birmingham. It was about six weeks, I guess, until school would open. I had never known anything in my life except to work. You know, the law now won't let a kid work out in public until he's sixteen years old. Frankly, I think it's ridiculous, because it's a reaction to the sweatshop's use of children in industry years ago. That's one reason why, I think, kids get restless and oftentimes do things that we would rather they didn't do.

So there I was, twelve years old, I had never known anything but work. I told my mother, "I'm going to get me a job and make a little money until I go to school." So I went up the street about three blocks. There were two brothers, Irishmen, who had a little eating place where their clientele was mostly railroad men. They had a roundhouse, a repair shop for a railroad, nearby. I went in there and asked for a job and they gave me one. The man was very wise. He told me, "Now in addition to your salary," which was about $3 a week, I think, "you can eat anything you want. Anything you see that you want to eat, you eat it." Well that was like putting a kid in Candyland, you know. I'd never seen anything like that down on the farm. So I just pitched in. I ate pies. I ate cake. I ate the stews. I ate tripe, the first time I ever ate tripe. If you've never eaten any, it's made out of the stomach of the cow; and it's good. I could get anything! I ate ice cream; I just inhaled it. For one day. The next day, that night at least, I was sick as two horses. From that time on everything in that place was safe. I just ate what I needed to keep going, and that was all. But this man knew he had to gorge me one time, and he did it the first day.

Well, I worked for him until time to start to school in September. At that time we were living in east Birmingham because we couldn't get a house on the southside, where we wanted to live. But by September we had rented a place on the southside and moved over there, and I went to the Highland Elementary School there at Five Points in Birmingham. Later, I went to Paul Hayne, which was a part of old Central High School that had burned some years before. Then when Phillips High School was built, I went over there. I was in the first group of students ever to go to Phillips High School there in Birmingham.

T: What did your mother do when she was in Birmingham for a living?

H: She kept house. By that time my sisters--all except the one just older and the one just younger than I--they had gotten jobs and were able to make a living. In the meantime, all the rest of us helped out. I had a job in Birmingham while I was in high school ushering in a theater. I first worked in the old Galax Theater and then the Strand Theater; both have been torn down now. I'd usher there in the afternoons after school and on Saturdays. They didn't have picture shows on Sundays then. During the summer I'd work steady. Finally, I worked at Loew's Temple Theater, which was the theater of Birmingham at that time--vaudeville and everything. I was made floor manager of that theater. They offered to make me assistant manager of another theater in that chain. Loews had a chain of theaters across the country. Eventually I would have been a theater manager, and they tried to get me to do it. Frankly, I was tempted. I lacked one year being through high school. My mother said, "Well, Son, go on and finish high school. Then you can decide what you want to do. If you want to take a job like this, all

right; but at least you would have your high school behind you. Someday, if you want to go to college, you will have a problem if you don't get your high school behind you. I've always been grateful that I did go and finish high school and that I didn't take that job.

T: She had in mind that you would go on to college?

H: Oh yes! She never had any other idea. This cousin that I mentioned earlier that lives in Denver--he had previously been the U. S. District Attorney out there--by this time had his own law firm and had made quite a lot of money. He tried to get me to come out there and live in his home, go to law school and work in his law firm, and then when I finished he would take me in as a partner. He said, "In about ten years I'm going to retire, and I'll give you the firm." Well, it was quite a tempting offer. As it turned out, the depression of the 1930's changed all of that. He lost everything he had, and kept on practicing law for a long time. I had in the meantime come to feel definitely that the Lord was calling me into the ministry. And so I did not go to Denver.

T: What church did you attend in Birmingham?

H: Well, when we first moved there, as I said, we lived out on the southside, going to Southside Baptist Church. Later, for whatever reason I don't know, we moved to Ensley, which is a suburb of Birmingham, and there we joined the Ensley Baptist Church. Dr. David M. Gardner, later editor of the Baptist Standard, and who died some months ago, was the pastor. Later my mother and sisters moved back to the southside and joined Southside Baptist Church; but I kept my membership at Ensley, because I had met the one who was later to become my wife. And, of course, my ties were there.

T: She was a member out there?

H: Yes, I'd go out on Sunday morning to Sunday School and church, then go over to her home and eat lunch. Then we'd go wherever we'd want to in the afternoon, then go back to Training Union and church that night. Then I'd go home. Agnes Durant Pylant introduced us. She was fresh out of Southwestern Seminary as an educational director, that is what we would call them now. The church was trying to raise money to build a new building. The young people decided to put on an operetta and raise money--charge for it and put whatever money they raised in the building fund. Back then the craze among American young people was Japanese umbrellas. So they had built one act around the Japanest umbrella. They had several couples, each under an umbrella. The boy would sing to the girl and she would sing back. The boy who was to be my future wife's partner got sick and had to drop out. Agnes got me to take his place. While I knew her sister, I didn't know my future wife. In fact, one time I tried to date Louise, her older sister, and she said, "I don't want to date a boy my age, you date my little sister." I said, "How old is she?" She told me, and I said, "Well, she is the same age as my baby sister; I don't want to date a baby." And that was the end of it. But I met my wife by being asked to take that part.

T: Do you think there was any planning in that?

H: No, I don't think so. It was just one of those things, because my wife's sister didn't have anything to do with it. But it's always been an interesting thing--the little song we sang. Agnes wrote us not long ago--we all called her back then Grandma, and we still call her Grandma, though at that time she was a young, single girl. But she wrote sometime ago and wanted to know if we had a copy of the words to that little song. We didn't, but by just beating our brains, we pretty well put it back together and sent it to her. It started off like this. I'd sing, "How'd you like to have a little home for two?" And she'd sing back, "I'd love to." And it finally wound up, "How'd you like to be my loving wife for life?" And she'd say, "I'd love to." So we've always told people that the first time we ever met, I proposed, and she accepted.

T: So you stayed on there at Ensley. Didn't you work in the theater after you graduated from high school?

H: No. When I graduated from high school in 1926, I got a job with the T.C.I.--Tennessee Coal Iron Railway Company, which is a subsidiary of U. S. Steel there in Birmingham. I got a job out in Pratt City at the roundhouse. They had their own railroad system, and had a roundhouse where they repaired engines. They wanted to know if I wanted to be a boilermaker's apprentice or helper. I asked, "What's the difference?" They said, "Well, if you are an apprentice, you are learning a trade and will be a boilermaker; if you are a helper, you just help and do all you are told to do." I asked, "Is there any difference in pay?" They said, "Yes, the helper gets more pay." I said, "I'll be a helper." Because I had no intention of making that my life's work. I worked there just for a little while. I had to get up at 4:30 in the morning--we still lived on the southside miles away from this place--catch a streetcar, go downtown and change, ride another one out to Pratt City, and change to another one in order to get to work by seven o'clock. And it was hard, dirty work. During the years I'd been in Birmingham schools, every year they'd give me a smallpox vaccination. You either had to be vaccinated or have a scar. Well, mine never took, I never had a scar. Well, when I went to work out there, they said the same thing. I said, "Well, you can go on and give me a shot if you want to, but it has never taken on me. So they gave me a super-duper one, because Brother, it took. I had to wear one of those little plastic shields over the thing to protect it. In fact, I was off from work for nearly two weeks running a high fever part of the time.

So finally, when I went back to work, I went in to find my locker open and all of my workclothes gone. So I just said, "Well, now, I'm not going to make this my life's work and this is as good a time as any to break loose. I've got to go buy new workclothes and all that," so I went in and told them, "I'm quitting." And they gave me my pay. I went on home and told my mother. She called the sisters. One of them called a man who had been my scoutmaster and a friend of the family. He said, "Well, you know, I just happened to hear today that Drennan Motor Car Company is looking for somebody."

Drennan is the General Motors dealer distributor in that area. At that time they

sold Cadillacs, Buicks, and then the LaSalle, and Marquette. You know, today you hear about the Edsel as being a flop. But General Motors came out with the LaSalle and the Marquette--they were trying to compete with smaller car makers. The LaSalle ran for a couple of years and they dropped it. They just put out one model of the Marquette and then dropped it. It didn't sell. I read not long ago where somebody was listening to the "All in the Family" television show where they start off singing about old times. There was one line in the song that I myself had never been able to catch, and I wondered what it was. Somebody wrote in and said, "Will you please tell us what the words to that part are?" And so they said that the words are, "Gee, our old LaSalle ran great." Well, that was that old LaSalle car. So they distributed these cars. They also distributed DuPont paint and Firestone tires, and I don't know what else.

I went over there and applied for this job and got it. I was shipping clerk for a couple of years, then a job became open in the Parts department selling Buick parts. I asked if I might have it, and they gave it to me. In that kind of a job you have to memorize part numbers--every part has a number, and I mean they are long numbers--and then, of course, a price. You have to learn every number and the price if you're going to work and fill orders. You can't be going up there making a list of all of these numbers every time you fill an order. A mechanic might come up to the shop window, and say, " I want an overhaul for a certain model Buick engine." Well, you had to know everything to get, and had to be able to charge it out rapidly. So I nearly went crazy memorizing those numbers. I'd find myself at night in bed just saying them over and over again.

In the meantime, my wife and I had married. We'll come back to that. I got this job, and then one morning the manager of the department--they had an over-all department, Cadillac and Buick, with a manager ofer the entire department. Then they had a manager over each of the two sections. The manager of Buick section didn't show up one morning. About 9:30 he called and said he had taken another job. The over-all manager came and told me about it, I was the only man in the Buick department. So he asked me, "Do you think you can handle the job?" I wasn't sure I could, but I reasoned like this: If I say I can, and try and fail, then they'll just get somebody and I'll be back selling parts. If I say I can't, then they'll go get somebody, and I'll just be selling parts. So I had nothing to lose. Therefore, I said, "Yes, I can do it." Well, I had to work like a dog for weeks until I got on top of it, but I did. Because, of course, in that job you not only had to sell the stuff, you had to keep up the stock and handle the business side of it. I stayed there until my wife and I started to college.

We married on April 10, 1927. She doesn't like for me to mention to somebody that this is our 46th anniversary or that our next will be our 47th wedding anniversary. She says, "You don't have to tell the number, do you?" I say, "I'm proud that one woman would live with me that long." But I was nineteen, and she lacked two weeks being sixteen. I'd been out of high school for about a year. She had two months to go in high school. We got married in her mother's home one Sunday morning, and went to Sunday School for our honeymoon. That night we were both leading B. Y. P. U. unions. She had a Junior Union called the "Go-Getters," and I had an Intermediate

one called the "Live-Wires." And they lived up to their names. Well, that night we went back to church--she went in and led her Union, and I went in and led mine. We came to the church auditorium for closing assembly.

In the meantime, Agnes Durant Pylant--she later became known as Pylant--but Agnes Durant had gone somewhere else, and Gladys Rickles was in that position in education work. That night, after she had made all the announcements and it was time to break up and get ready for church, she said, "Well, that seems to be all for tonight, let's sing a song before we dismiss." But in the meantime she had said, "We've got a bride and groom here tonight." She had us to stand up. I was on one side of the house and my wife was on the other with our Unions. Then she immediately said, "Well, it is time to go, but let's sing a song. Does somebody want to suggest one?" She had dismissed the idea of our wedding from her mind. One little boy hollered, "Let's sing, 'The Fight Is On.'"

Mrs. Hobbs had taken a commercial course in high school instead of the usual college preparatory course. So she got a job as a bookkeeper for an insurance firm there in Birmingham. Back in her growing-up days there in Ensley, when she got big enough to do so, she got her a job clerking on Saturdays at Goldstein and Cohen, a store there in Ensley. They're still in business. She got $2 a week, I think it was. She just worked one day.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you're speaking about your wife and the expreience of being introduced in church on Sunday night, and you seemed to be extremely closely involved and active in the church at Ensley. Did you and your wife really have any thoughts that you would be entering the ministry when you were married?

H: Well, I would say right at the moment, no; however, a year or two before that one Sunday night, without either of us knowing the other was going to do it because we really had no relationship with one another, her sister and I both went forward and surrendered for special Christian service. But I more or less got away from it, I got involved with other things. The fact of the matter is, I got to running around with a bunch of boys who were not--we didn't do mean things--but it just wasn't conducive to my being sensitive to that call.

T: The time you're speaking of would be back just after finishing high school?

H: Yes. Later on, after we married, we were active in the Ensley Baptist Church, but it was a large church comparatively speaking. Young people our age did not take many places of leadership, but we had jobs. We were leading these Unions. My wife was always large for her age, and we were both more mature than normal for our ages. That's why I think that our getting married as young as we did worked out, because we were actually older in our outlook on life. Our willingness to work and expecting to work, all, I think, would show that we had by force of circumstances become more mature than, for instance, kids that age would be today. My wife's mother had just moved to the little community of Brighton in the Birmingham area, out near Bessemer. We married in her home there, and we went back to the Ensley Church for a while. But it was a pretty good way to go. We had a car sometimes, sometimes we didn't. We didn't own

a car, but her father had one. He'd been living there at Brighton, had a hardware store and was postmaster.

T: Your wife really wasn't quite sixteen, was she?

H: No. She lacked about two weeks. Her mother had a lovely home in Ensley and took in boarders. That's the way her mother and father made a living. So we didn't have a car except when we could get her dad's old Ford. For the most part it was hard to get from Brighton to Ensley to go to church. So we wound up joining the Brighton Baptist Church. I think it was in the plan of God because in that small church they were just looking for people to take places of leadership. Though we were very young, we had had a variety of experience that they could use. In less time almost than it takes to tell it, we were both singing in the choir, and she was teaching a Sunday School class. I was secretary of the Sunday School and was elected and ordained as a deacon. I became the choir director and led the singing for the church. We've often laughed about it, I didn't know one note from the other. I'd never heard of one-two-three or one-two-three-four time in beating out music. My method of leading the music was to take one of those old paperback modern hymnals that went out years ago, roll it up like a club, and keep time by beating it in my hand. I have always said that the only thing that I possessed, the only talent that I had that the other members of the choir didn't have, was that I had more brass than the rest of them.

It was in that kind of atmosphere that the call to the ministry came back to me. One week night during the revival, for some reason my wife and her mother didn't go, but I went. That call came back, and I went forward and surrendered again. I went home and told them what had happened. My wife's mother, bless her heart, who has been with the Lord now since 1958, said, "Well, if you're going to make a preacher, you all can prepare to enter Howard College." By that time we were both working. I said, "Well, I can't go to college, I've got a wife to support." She said, "I don't care, if you're going to make a preacher, you're going to college. We don't want a jack-leg preacher in our family." Poor thing, after all she did she wound up with one.

She was the kind of person that always butted with her own head. She was rather independent. Even though she lived with us, I guess for thirty years of our married life before she died, she always wanted to do the cooking. She said that she didn't like anybody's cooking as well as she did her own. A lot of it, though, was she just simply wanted to feel she was earning her way; she didn't want to be beholden to anybody, not even her own children.

That was in the fall of 1928. A couple of people in this little church had moved into a community toward Birmingham called Vinesville. That little church there had full-time services, but it didn't have a resident minister. They were looking for a pastor, so these people suggested me. They had me to come up and preach, and they called me. Why they did, I'll never know. I remember the first sermon I ever preached. The pastor called me one Sunday morning about 8 o'clock, and said, "I'm sick as I can be this morning, and I can't preach. Can you get somebody to do it?" Well, with that usual brass of mine, I said, "Well, why don't I

do it?" He said, "That would be fine!" He couldn't say anything else. My father-in-law was a preacher in addition to the other things he did. He was pastor of little country churches out near Bessemer, and he had a small library. So I got down a book of just , really sermon outlines. I thumbed through the book and came up with one.

T: It was Sunday morning?

H: Yes. Eight o'clock. By 8:30 I had my sermon ready to preach. The longer I preach the longer it takes me to get up one. But anyway, I was ready to go. My topic was, "God's Universal Call to Humanity," and my test was, where Jesus said to Andrew and probably John, "Come and see." As R. G. Lee says, I had in a topic and a text the foundation for a skyscraper and built a chicken coop right on top of it. But that was my beginning. My father-in-law when he was perfectly able to go and preach to these little churches of his would send me. It wasn't a thing in the world but that he wanted to give me a chance to get some experience. So I'd take his old Model-T Ford and go out and preach to these people. When this church called me, we still lived with my wife's people there in Brighton. It was not too far up the Bessemer streetcar line from where we lived to the community, so it was all right. But I was still working at Drennan Motor Car Company. I would preach on Sunday and be there for Wednesday night prayer meeting.

My first problem to deal with as a pastor was a man and his wife. The man had been unfaithful to his wife, and she found it out and was about to leave him. He was very repentant and wanted her to stay with him, and I went over to deal with that. It was a baby trying to deal with adult problems, but by the help of the Lord and his grace I was able to hold their home together. My first wedding was a full-dress wedding, I'm telling you it had everything. Well, fortunately, my wife knew something about weddings. But I didn't know. She got down the Emily Post book and read up on it. We had the rehearsal and I went ahead with the wedding. Last fall, down in Tuscaloosa, when I was there at the Alabama State Convention on their 150th anniversary that I mentioned earlier, a woman came up to me, introduced herself, and said, "I was in the first group that you ever baptized at Vinesville," which would be the first ones I ever baptized. She said, "I was also in the first wedding you ever performed." Right behind her was another lady who said, "I'm from Dauphin Way and you married me and my husband." And so those things, you know, warm my heart.

I also held my first revival at Vinesville. I had led the singing in a revival at the Fairfield Highlands Baptist Church between Brighton and Fairfield, which is all a part of the Birmingham area. An old preacher, eighty some-odd years old, was holding a revival meeting there, and he asked me if I would come up and lead the singing. I did for one week. It was dead as a dodo. Of course, the old man had a great heart and a good mind, he couldn't put much enthusiasm into his revival preaching. So at the end of a week they decided to close the meeting. Nothing had happened. Our pastor, then, was Leroy Priest. I might say that we were married by John Evans. He later was pastor in Florida, and I'm not sure but that he may be dead now. I've lost track of him.

T: You were married at Brighton?

H: Yes, in my wife's mother's home. And as I said, the man who was pastor at the time of this revival when I led the singing at Fairfield Highlands was Leroy Priest. He later was president of Judson College, and from there went into the chaplaincy. He stayed in the chaplaincy until he retired. I think he was a full colonel when he retired, and is now in Montgomery as the superintendent and manager of a health center they have there. It is a very beautiful and a very fine thing out near where the Alabama Baptist Convention offices are located, next door to Baptist Hospital in Montgomery. Well, anyway, I went to Leroy, and I said, "Now listen," we just can't let this revival die." Leroy was the one who called me, by the way, and said he was sick and I preached. I had more enthusiasm then, I'm afraid, than I have now. The old preacher said that as he grew older he didn't know whether he grew more tolerant or just gave up. But young preachers are full of vinegar. They want to go! So I said, "We just can't let that revival die, and if you'll come up there and preach for a week, I'll lead the singing." So we did, and we had a good meeting.

My first revival in which I preached was at Vinesville. I preached every night for two weeks. On the first Sunday morning, we had two people join by letter. I preached that night and every night for two weeks and twice on the other two Sundays, and that was the only move we had until the last night. The house was packed for some reason, I don't know why; they certainly weren't getting a great deal of preaching out of me. There was just a lot of noise. But the house was packed. And when I gave the invitation a woman came down the aisle. Oh, she was torn up, you could hear her crying for a block. Of course, I dealt with her and they came and took her name. Then we finished the invitation. I was on cloud nine. (The first person to join the church on profession of faith under my preaching was in one of these little country churches of my father-in-law.) But I was on cloud nine. I said, "Brethren, if this was the only result of these two weeks, it would be worth all the effort." So we had the benediction, and the people came by shaking hands with her. One of the deacons came up and said, "Brother Hobbs, I hate to tell you this, but that woman is crazy; she does this the last night of every revival that we've had." You talk about puncturing a young preacher's balloon, he did! I was there at this church for about six months and then went to Berney Points Baptist Church, which is now one of the great churches of Birmingham.

I might go back just a minute, for I think this is important in any Christian's experience. While my wife and I had been active in the church, we had never been tithers. Actually, I was making about $25 a week until the day before we decided we were going to get married the next day. I went to see the boss, and said, "I'm going to get married in the morning." He said, "Congratulations!" And I said, "Provided." He said, "Provided what?" And I said, "Provided you give me a raise." And I told him what I had to have. We had figured up just what we had to have in order to pay our board, we would be living with her mother. Then I had to buy my streetcar tickets every week to get to and from work, and we would have other little extras. We had to buy a bedroom suite of furniture, and we paid $3 a week on that, which seemed like forever. We finally paid it out. But, anyway, we had figured up what we had to have. My boss said, "How much?" I told him it would be $28 and something a week. He said, "Okay." Well, that went on for a while, but every nickel

of it was taken. There wasn't any extra. I had been elected a deacon, and Leroy Priest talked to me about tithing. He said, "A deacon ought to be a tither." I talked to my wife about it and ultimately, after we had talked and prayed, we couldn't see any way to rearrange our budget to get a tithe out of it and still pay our bills. It was about the first of December. We agreed that the first Sunday, the first paycheck or envelope I got in January, we were going to start tithing. If we had to let somebody wait, it would be somebody besides the Lord. Well, on the Saturday night before the first Sunday in January, I went by and picked up my pay envelope from the paymaster, Mr. Kelley. As I turned away, I looked at it and noticed it was for $31.15 a week. Now that doesn't sound like much money now, but that was in 1928 or 1929, during the Depression. So I turned back and said, "Mr. Kelley, you made a mistake, didn't you?" And he said, "How?" I said, "Well, my salary was $28, whatever it was, and this is for $31.15." He said, "Mr. Drennan told me he thought you should have a raise, so I'm giving you that--that's a raise." I went home. My wife and I sat down and figured up then on the basis of $31.15 a week that we had enough money to pay our board, to pay for my streetcar tickets and other incidentals, meet our furniture payment, and tithe--and have fifteen cents left over each week to waste. So I've often used that to show that a person can tithe. If a person just makes up his mind to tithe, come what may, the Lord will make it possible, some way, somehow. I wanted to get that into the story because it means a lot to us. It's just sort of symbolic of the fact that through the years God has looked after us.

T: Were you ordained at Brighton Church?

H: Well, they called me as pastor, I guess it was in April.

T: This was at Berney Points?

H: No. It was at Vinesville Church. It's just barely in Birmingham. If you're familiar with Birmingham, going from Birmingham to Bessemer it's west of Central Park Baptist Church down a couple of miles. Anyway, I was called there. I guess it was in April. I requested the Ensley Church--I got this church to request the Ensley Baptist Church to ordain me. My wife had been converted there under Dr. Gardner's ministry, and he had baptized her. We still sort of felt that was home. They ordained me in June, 1929, the best I remember it was June 20. It was right funny. In preparing for my ordination, I went to see this old preacher that I mentioned earlier. He was the secretary of Birmingham Baptist Association. About all he did was to keep office at his age. We'd call in every week and give him our sermon topics and the Sunday School and Training Union attendance, B. Y. P. U. it was then. Anyway, I went to see Dr. M. M. Woods. I said, "Doctor, I'm getting ready for my ordination, and I want to study up on doctrine. Do you have a copy of the Baptist creed?" He sort of smiled, and said, "No, Son, I don't, and if you ever find one I'd like you to bring it to me and show it to me, I've never seen one." Then he went on kindly to explain that our position is that the New Testament is our creed, if we had to say that we have one. It's a long way from that fellow who asked about a copy of the Baptist creed to the man who was chairman on the Committee on the Baptist Faith and Message, which clearly points out that we have no creed. But maybe that's one of the fruits of that early experience. Dr. Gardner

was chairman of the committee that examined me for ordination and presided at the ordination service. Leroy Priest preached the ordination sermon.

T: Do you remember the kind of questions you were asked?

H: They were the usual ones. They had begun to ask me the usual questions about my conversion experience, and call to the ministry. Then they went into some doctrinal questions such as my belief about the church, salvation, and so on. I had not had any college training. I knew very little about the Bible except what I picked up in Sunday School and Training Union, and my own private reading and study. So I suspect a lot of my answers may have been about like the Dutchman when someone asked him, "What are you thinking?" and he said, "I tink vot you tink. Vot you tink?" But all went well until, finally, one of the pastors who was the pastor of the Fairfield Baptist Church in the adjoining community to Ensley asked me a question. He was a good man. I never shall forget him, but he was a little bit cold, you know. He was the kind that could cut you open and stand and watch you bleed to death.

T: He liked to harrass young preachers?

H: Well, yes, or at least, it was sort of like using a rapier rather than a meat axe. But, anyway, he asked, "Brother Hobbs, is the Bible the Word of God, but does it contain the Word of God?" Well, I know now that that's a very vital question. Dr. Gardner, who sort of halfway felt like a father to me, knew that I was not far enough along in theological training to have thought of that question or its answer. So he jumped right on that preacher, really jumped down his throat. He said, "I won't allow him to answer that question. That's an unfair question. It's an important question, but it's an unfair one to ask this young man who's never had opportunity to study these fine points of Bible study and theology. And I'm not going to let him answer it." Then he said, "But I am going to explain to him what you meant, and what it does mean." And he did: "That the Bible just doesn't contain the Word of God, which would mean that part of it is and part of it isn't God's Word." He said, "The Bible is the Word of God." Other than that there was no hitch of any kind, and we went from there into the service. It was sort of like, let's get the trial over so we can hang him. If I had failed, I don't know what they would have done except announce, "We're sorry." But anyway, we went into the service and I was ordained.

It's interesting; my wife and I have laughed about it since then. When I told her and her mother that I was going to preach, she said she had a talk with the Lord. Now when we first married, as I have said, I had gotten to running with a crowd of guys. They were not mean, but they were rowdy. I never was. Some of them would get out and get to drinking. I never drank. I wouldn't say, "I'm a Christian." I'd say, "Well, somebody's got to drive home, so I won't drink." I've often thought that the thing that kept me from becoming involved in a lot of things that they did, even though I was with them and we were friends who had met in school, was that the hand of God was on me. By the grace of God He had kept me from doing a lot of things that I might have done otherwise. I didn't even pray at night before I went to bed. So the first night of our marriage my wife got down on her knees by

the bed. She asked me if I would. I said, "Oh, I can pray in bed." And I went to bed. Well, every night for a month she would get on her knees and pray, and I'd get to bed. Until one night she was down praying, "Lord, I just want a Christian husband. She told me later she prayed this way every night. This particular night she felt me kneel by her and put my arm around her, and she wept in thanksgiving. So from then on, of course, we prayed together. When I accepted God's call she said she had a talk with the Lord and said, "Now Lord, I asked for a Christian husband, but you've given me more answer than I've asked for. I don't want to be the wife of a preacher." One day she was talking to her mother about it in my absence, and her mother in that way of hers said, "Now listen, if God has laid his hand on that boy, you are not going to keep him from being a preacher. If you become a problem, God can remove you like that." She said that hit her in the face like you'd hit her with a broadax, she began to pray a different prayer. Well, no man ever had a better preacher's wife than I have. She is not only deeply spiritual, but she's very practical. I call her my Martha. I think Martha was really a more spiritual woman in a crisis than Mary, and I think I can show it in the Bible. For instance, when Lazarus died, Mary went to pieces. Martha took charge of things. But anyway, it proves you can be spiritual and practical at the same time. And my wife is. Take, for instance, her bookkeeping experience--she has always been a good bookkeeper. I don't like to fool with those things. Figures bother me. I took an extra year of Greek in college to keep from taking one year of college math. I just didn't like math. So she has been our business manager, and I make no bones about it. I turn the money over to her. When I want some, I write a check and get it. I don't have to go and beg her for money, but I don't want to be bothered with it. For twenty some-odd years, twenty-four years nearly, while I was pastor at First Church at Oklahoma City, I never even saw my check. The business administrator would take it down and put it in the bank, put a deposit slip on my desk, and I'd take it home and give it to her. But she's been our manager and, as I said, she stood by me through thick and thin. Most of the time she has done more work than I've done in the church. So I just say that to me she's the ideal pastor's wife.

T: You went on to Howard College, then, the next fall? 1930?

H: Well, actually, we had figured out that we needed $75.00 a month income in order to pay our bills if we went to college. I was only making $50 a month from this church. It was poor preach and poor pay.

T: Were you still working?

H: Oh yes, I was still working in the business world. And my wife had her job. Well, one day as I was working at the Parts Department of the Drennan Motor Car Company, they called me to the telephone. It was Fred Schatz. You know Fred. Later he went to New Orleans Seminary and Tulane University, and got his doctor's degree, I believe, in Germany. He's retired now, I understand, but he was dean of Belmont College for years.

T: He's still teaching there.

He was once on the faculty of Carson-Newman College and was teaching at the University of Tennessee branch there in Nashville. Well, Fred called me. He was a member of the Berney Points Church and chairman of their pulpit committee. He called me and said, "We're looking for a preacher, and we wondered if you would come out and preach for us next Sunday." I said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "Now we're not going to beat around the bush and play coy about it; we pay $75 a month." Well, I knew then that the Lord was in it. And I mean that seriously. I went out there and preached for them. They called me. Even though I had been at the other church only six months, I went over there and stayed until we finished college. I have felt that was really an answer to prayer. Before we left there, the Depression had gotten so bad that we were just hardly getting enough money to pay the light bill and keep the place open. Sometimes we got our salaries, sometimes we didn't. By the time I left to go to the seminary they owed me about $95. After we got to the seminary and I had church work, I learned that the remaining men in the church who had jobs and were able to put a little money in the church had been laid off. I wrote them, "You need it worse than we do, just forget it." But anyway, we went there in the fall of 1929.

T: Just before the Crash?

H: Yes. Just before October. That's "black October." The church had ninety-seven members. I didn't have a car, but I visited every family in the church every week; I could do it very easily. Now it's one of the really great churches of Birmingham. It's the largest Baptist church in that particular part of Birmingham. We went there and my wife's mother moved over there with us to keep house for us while we went to college.

T: Your mother-in-law was still living then?

H: Yes, my father-in-law too. He'd come over and spend the weekend. He still had his store in Brighton, you see. When we first went over there to live, we boarded with some people. Then we got us a little apartment, the first time we had ever set up housekeeping. But when we decided to go to college, my wife's mother moved over there, and kept house and cooked, and we went to school and pastored this church, or served as pastor. We were in the opposite end of Birmingham from Howard College. We'd get on a streetcar out in West End and get off within three or four blocks of the college. Frankly, the greater part of our studying in college was done on a streetcar, because we had more than two hours a day going and coming.

T: You went together, then?

H: Oh yes! When we decided back there even before I was called to a church that we were going to college, we set our plans. We lived off my salary and put hers in the bank, so we'd have a cushion. Then when we got our sights set to enter college in the beginning of 1930, February, we bought us a good supply of clothes. I got a new suit, an overcoat, shoes, hat, and all that. My wife got dresses, shoes, and all, and she got a fur coat. It was a squirrel fur. Some of the people thought it was awfully extravagant, but I'm telling you, she wore it all the way through college and through the six years we were in the seminary. It was the best buy we ever made.

But anyway, we entered college in February, 1930. Her sister had married Henry Lyon. He came to be pastor of the Brighton Church after Leroy Priest left to go back to the seminary, and he boarded with my wife's mother. By that time we had moved to our little church field. It was there that Dr. Lyon met my wife's oldest sister, Louise. They fell in love and eventually were married in her home. I performed the ceremony. He had finished college. When we entered Howard College in February, he finished in May. They went on to Southern Seminary that fall and lived in Rice Hall. He didn't have a church; he was janitor of part of their building there trying to make a little money. He'd been invited to preach to a church or two up in Indiana. One night they were on their knees praying that God would open up some way for them to get a church. While they were praying, the doorbell rang. They opened the door, and there was a Western Union boy with a telegram from the church at Adams, Indiana, telling them that on Wednesday night, that night, the church had voted to call him as pastor. Later he was called to the Burney Baptist Church nearby.

T: That was also Indiana?

H: Yes. When we entered college, we figured ahead. We wanted to be at the seminary one year with them, so we figured out that we had to have 120 quantity and 120 quality credits to graduate. We took the curriculum and the things we had to take, plus electives, and figured out what we would have to do in order to finish in August in order to enter the seminary in September of their last year in there. Then we went in to see Dean Percy P. Burns, who was the dean of Howard then, and asked him if we could take extra work. He said, "You can take all the work you want to take as long as you average a B." Well, we took all the work we could take. We went to all the summer schools except one-half of a summer school. Then coming up to graduation time in August, 1932, we went to apply for graduation. So when Dean Burns looked over our record, he said, "You've only been here two and a half years, and you're required to be here three years in residence, or at least enrolled." I said, "Well, Dean, you told us we could take all the work we could take as long as we averaged a B." I've averaged A-, and my wife was averaging A- until she had to drop out before the end of one summer term and have an appendectomy. Since she didn't take the final exam, they just passed her but dropped her one letter in her grade. I continued, "But even then she's got a B+, and so we've just done what you told us. Besides, I've already resigned my church, accepted a call to a church in Indiana, and enrolled in the seminary; so if you won't let us graduate here, we'll just have to go on up there and go to summer school at Louisville and graduate up there." He thought a moment and said, "Ah, go on, but don't say anything about it." He's gone to be with the Lord now, and I can tell that. But at graduation his secretary had finished in three years, lived on the campus and was his secretary part-time. My wife and I had finished in two and a half years, lived all the way across the city from the campus, and we had been serving as pastor and wife of a church full-time. Yet we had finished in two- and a half years. He bragged on his secretary about what she had done; but he didn't say a word about us, just handed us our diplomas. Well, that was understandable, and after all, that was what we wanted. So that's how we came to finish in two- and a half years, and went on and enrolled in the seminary in the fall of 1932.

T: Was it really difficult on the campus? That was the bottom of the depression in 1932, the year of the end of Hoover's administration and the beginning of Roosevelt. What was it like going to college then?

H: Well, when my wife and I announced that we were going to give up our jobs--you see at that time the two of us together were making around $350 a month, which would be the equivalent today of twelve, maybe at least a thousand, maybe twelve hundred dollars a month. We were making a good living. When we announced we were going to give up all of our work, we went to work one morning making that and came home that night making $75 a month as pastor of this little church. When we announced that we were going to do that, one of my deacons said, "You are crazy. I'm looking for a job, I'm walking the streets hunting for a job and can't find one, and here you're giving up a job." My wife's boss said, "What are you going to live on?" She said, "Faith." He said, "My child, you can't eat faith." He said, "I'll tell you what, I'm going to hold your job open for six months, because you'll be back." Well, she never went back. We went on and enrolled and went on through. The fact of the matter was that everybody was poor, so we didn't know we were poor. The laws of aerodynamics say that a bumblebee can't fly because its wings are not big enough to support its body, but fortunately for the bumblebee he doesn't know that, and he goes on and flies anyway. Well now, everybody was poor, so we were not aware of being poor. I have a friend who is a banker down in Louisiana. He told me one time, "You know, wealth is relative. Around town here I'm a millionaire and considered a wealthy man. But when I go to a banker's convention where they've got multi-multi-multi millionaires I'm a poor man." So poverty is also a relative thing. Now as it turned out we chose the best time in our whole lifetime to go to college and the seminary. We didn't have many dollars, but if you had one it would buy a dollar's worth. I read a cartoon the other day where a man told his wife, "You know I believe as I grow older I'm getting stronger, because I find I can carry home $25 worth of groceries a lot easier now than I used to." But up there in Indiana, for instance, where I was pastor during seminary days, these farmers didn't have much money but they had all the food they could eat and give away. We lived off the fat of the land, though we didn't have a whole lot of money to throw around. But what we did have would buy a dollar's worth.

T: Where did you serve in Indiana when you went to the seminary?

H: I was pastor of the Baptist church at Hope, Indiana, in Bartholomew County, which is about fourteen miles northeast of Columbus. I also was pastor of the Little Blue River Baptist Church about seven miles northeast of Shelbyville. Usually the pattern was that a student must go to the seminary and figure on having enough to live on a year. In fact, they advise that you come prepared to live for a year without any work. If you get work, fine; but if you don't come prepared to live for a year without it. We were prepared, because as I said earlier, we had lived on my salary and put my wife's salary in the bank as a cushion against sickness or something else.

My brother-in-law was already at the seminary--he had been there nearly a year before he got a church--but by the time we went there he had two churches in the same association. In the adjoining association the Hope Baptist Church became

pastorless. The former pastor was from Alabama. He had finished his seminary work and was called to the First Baptist Church at Waldron, Indiana, which is in the same association, the Flat Rock Association, I believe. So the people there at the Hope Baptist Church, knowing my brother-in-law, asked him if he would come and be their pastor. He said, "No." They said, "Well, do you have anybody you could suggest," and he suggested me. They wrote me and we went up there. I preached and they called me before we ever finished college. So we moved up there and lived on the field until the middle of September. In the meantime, I was asked to preach at the Little Blue River Church which was without a pastor. It had also had a seminary student, but he had finished and gone. So I went over there and I preached, and they called me. The only free Sunday that we had in six years in the seminary was the first Sunday we were in the seminary. Because after we preached at this little Blue River Church, we moved back to Louisville. We came back to Hope the following Sunday. Then the following Sunday the Little Blue River Church called me as their pastor. So we had a full-time church work from the very beginning. I was in those churches until I got my master's degree and started working on my doctorate. Because of my wife's health--she had a very serious illness about that time--I had to give up those churches and get work in Louisville so that I could finish my education.

T: The churches that you describe were both what is now American Baptist churches or Northern Baptist churches. Was there much distinction between the two then?

H: Well, they were American then, or Northern, as they called it back then. I didn't notice a great deal of difference. Of course, the fact of the matter is that back in those days when people were financially hard up--and even going on back into the twenties or I guess the teen years of the century--those little town and country churches in Southern Indiana, Kentucky, and Southern Ohio and Illinois pretty well depended on the seminary to furnish them pastors. They couldn't afford a full-time pastor, and they couldn't even pay a living wage to a man that was just dependent on that altogether. So they were depending on these preachers for pastors. I think it worked a double blessing; they got a pastor and probably a better educated and trained man than they would have gotten had they just gone out and got somebody that would accept a part-time church. At the same time the pastor got an invaluable opportunity to preach to the people. I've always said those people are going to have some extra stars in their crown in heaven for letting us practice on them. Then, of course, they also would furnish us with a little income to live on. What they lacked in dollars and cents, of which they didn't have much as did nobody at that time, they made up for it in giving us food that they had raised on their farms.

Dr. John R. Sampey, the president of the seminary at that time, worked out a program for students who did not have church work. He set up a commissary in the basement of Judson Hall there at the seminary, and had cards printed with the values around 5, 10, 25, and 50 cents. These unemployed students would go over there and trade. They didn't have to give any money, if you got 25 cents worth of beans, they'd punch out 25 cents. Those of us who had pastorates would ask our people to bring canned goods or pumpkins or whatever it might be to the church, and we'd take them down there and put them in the commissary. Then, of course, he also set up an organization where the churches in the associations in Kentucky

and Southern Indiana would bring together goods that they would give. The seminary had a truck that made the rounds over the states to pick it up, somewhat like many of our Baptist Orphans' Homes do today. That was all put into the commissary. The people who had no church work and no money could go there and buy with dignity, even though they were using a card that had the amount of money punched out. The card didn't cost them one red cent.

Here is an example. Those farmers in Indiana in pumpkin time would have an old barn lot full of pumpkins. They'd put them inside the barn lot so the stock couldn't get in there and eat them up. They'd load the back seat of my car from the floor, just stack them in there and build them up to the top of the car. We would drive a hundred and twenty-five miles down to Louisville, and when we'd drive on the campus with that carload of pumpkins and unload them at the commissary, it wouldn't be long until you'd see the women coming out of their apartments, going over to get them a pumpkin. Everybody at the seminary would feast on pumpkin pies that week.

So, we, as I said, didn't know we were poor. The fact of the matter is, that we weren't any poorer than anybody else. I used to sit down at those tables up there in Indiana with those farmers and hear them grumble about hard times. They'd sit down to a table that had three kinds of meat, four or five kinds of vegetables, and two or three kinds of dessert and grumble about hard times. I'd laugh at them, I'd say, "Brother, you don't know anything about hard times. You ought to go down to Birmingham where I came from and see people standing in line with empty buckets, soup lines, just to get a bucket of thinned down soup to take home to the family to keep body and soul together. People today can't visualize it. I find it hard myself to believe what we went through back then. You know, like this energy crisis, there have always been depressions in the world. But before, if Germany, say, had a depression, the United States was strong, and we would come to their aid and vice versa. But then the whole world was in a depression. Nobody could help anybody. So that's why I say that we picked the best time in our lives to go to school.

T: How did you get up to your church field? Did you own a car by then?

H: Yes. In our last year in college, we knew that if we got a church during seminary days we were going to need a car. So, again my wife's mother came to our rescue. We found a dealer that had a car that a man had bought. It was a 1931 model Chevrolet Coupe, with a "mother-in-law's" seat in the back, we called it back then. Oh, it was a sport model, beautiful. It had cream-colored wire wheels, and had only been driven about four thousand miles. The man who had owned it had died suddenly, so his wife turned it back in and the dealer was selling it with a discount of what this other man had paid on it. We got that car for about $500. Imagine! My wife's mother put up the money, and later we paid her back part of it. But that was just part of her help in helping us get an education. When she said she didn't want a jack-leg preacher in the family, she meant it, and she did all she could to keep from having one. Maybe she didn't succeed too well, but it wasn't her fault.

Anyway, we got this car, and we used it to go back and forth to our churches. In 1933 we traded it in and got a sedan. We had an accident on the morning before the day

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I was to deliver the valedictory address at the commencement when I got my master's degree. We had a wreck and tore it up, but we got another car and kept that until we finished the seminary.

While we're talking about this depression, though, I think this is something you'd be interested in. Knowing that we were going to the seminary, we had some furniture; some of it we had bought, some of it my wife's mother bought.

T: This was in Birmingham?

H: Yes. She was going to go and live with another daughter, and we knew by that time that we would be living in a little Rice Hall one-room apartment with a cooking and a bath area, and we wouldn't need the furniture. So we were going to dispose of it. At the same time, the church in Birmingham was not able to pay our salary, so we were selling this furniture off one set at a time, to use the money to buy groceries. Fred Schatz, as I mentioned earlier, always called my wife's mother "Mrs. Jack"--her name was Mrs. Jackson. So one Sunday morning after church, Fred said, "Well Mrs. Jack, how're you all getting along?" And she said, "Well, all right, I guess, Fred, we've eaten up the living room and the dining room suites, and now we've started in on the rug." You could hear him laugh a block away. That's been a joke all through the years about what we were eating. You know what she meant, we'd sold these things to buy food. We sold the rug, and we had started eating that up. But again, I don't say that with the idea of wanting anybody to feel sorry for us, because we were supremely happy. We knew that we were doing what God wanted us to do. It was a little bit like the frog they tell about. They put him in cold water and then gradually turned the temperature up until he boiled to death and didn't know it. He got so adjusted as he went along. Well, we didn't know we were in hard times. Like Brooks Hays's old story about "We always had a depression at our house; it wasn't so bad until hard times came along."

T: Did you know, or could you describe, some of the professors that you had at the seminary? Certainly you were there just before Dr. A. T. Robertson died and were there all during Sampey's presidency. Did you know E. Y. Mullins?

H: No. I never knew Mullins. He died in 1927, I believe. Leroy Priest, who I mentioned earlier was my pastor at the time. I shall never forget the Sunday morning service when he announced that the word had been received that Dr. Mullins had died. Dr. Mullins in a way has been one of my heroes. His book The Christian Religion In Its Doctrinal Expression was one of our textbooks. I memorized that thing five times, the night before class, the next morning just before going to class, just before pop quizzes came along, before the semester exam, and then before the final. Because it was set up in outline form, 1-2-3-4 , you just had to memorize it. That was the only way I knew to get it. But I guess that was one reason why I have been pretty thoroughly grounded in theology. His book The Axioms of Religion was published in 1908. I'm right now sort of dickering, talking, with Bill Fallis at Broadman about the possibility of writing a book on The Axioms of Religion that Mullins set forth in that book. I think they are the basics in our Baptist faith. I've had a good many requests dating back to 1963 right after I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention to do it, but I just never got around to it. E. Y. Mullins was a great, I think the greatest, theologian that Southern Baptists ever produced

up to this time. W. T. Conner was the next in my judgment, each in his own way. They just happened not to be in the same, or exactly the same, time. Conner was just a little bit behind Mullins. Dr. Sampey was president when I went to the seminary and all the time I was there. Dr. Robertson was there. I was sitting in his class, his senior Greek class, on Monday afternoon--I reckon I wasn't over ten or twelve feet from him--when the stroke was coming on him that took his life two hours later. It was just a normal September afternoon. It was not hot, it was just balmy. The windows were open in the classroom because we didn't have air conditioning then.

T: This was in what is now Norton Hall?

H: Yes. Over in the section where Dr. Songer's office is now, that office suite. Dr. Robertson was wearing a blue shirt. I mention that because of the fact that it would show perspiration as it popped out on him. He had a blood disease. At times his complexion was almost purple, and that day it was like that. We noticed that he was perspiring profusely, drops of perspiration dropping off his nose and chin, and his shirt was just wet. He talked for about thirty minutes and then dismissed us. He said, "I don't feel good." It was about 3:30. W. Hersey Davis was teaching Junior Greek in the next room. He knew something was wrong, because Dr. Robertson never let a class out ahead of time. He might hold them over a few minutes, but he never let one out ahead of time. So he immediately dismissed his class and came in. I was the last one to leave the room. I was getting up my books, I had a little old briefcase and Dr. Robertson's big thick grammar. I was trying to get that thing in the briefcase, and I couldn't help but overhear the conversation between Dr. Davis and Dr. Robertson. Dr. Davis said, "What's the matter?" Dr. Robertson said, "Oh, I don't know. I just don't feel well, and I'm going home and go to bed." So with that I left the room. Dr. Davis took him home, and the next word we had was around five o'clock that he had just died. We students were gathered in little groups talking that night. I made the remark that if a tornado had come along and blown away every beech tree and every building, it would still be Southern Seminary more with Dr. Robertson there than it was with the beech trees and buildings still there and with Dr. Robertson gone. I greatly admired him. Everybody did, of course.

He was as tough as nails on his students, but it was because he wanted them to know that New Testament. I've had some men to tell me, "I don't think he was even a Christian." Well, I know he was a Christian, and people that were close to him know that he was a Christian, very warmhearted. One day he got on to some man in class, a man about Dr. Robertson's age who was going to the seminary late, and Dr. Robertson jumped all over him. After class Dr. Robertson was in his office and somebody knocked on the door. He said, "Come in." The door opened and there stood this man. He said, "Dr. Robertson, I've come down here to give you a beating, Sir. I'm no older than you are, and you're no older than I am, and I'm not going to let anybody my age talk to me like you talked to me." Dr. Robertson said, "Well, all right, Brother, but before we fight, let's pray." They got on their knees and they prayed, and when they got up both of them were crying. They shook hands and the fellow went on his way.

Dr. Leslie Williams was the Fellow in New Testament during my undergraduate course. He has told me on a number of occasions, and also Dr. Claude Bowen,

who was Fellow after Leslie, has told me this. Dr. Robertson would get on to a student for not knowing his lesson, give him a zero or some low grade, and tell him so. And then he would go down to his office, sit down and cry over it, then rub it out and raise the grade. He had a great heart. But he was an old North Carolina mountaineer. With all his learning and culture he never got over it. And he was pretty rough at times. Back then the students in the New Testament English class had a custom of giving him a silver goblet on his birthday. I was appointed chairman of the committee to buy him a goblet and give it to him that year. I don't remember any of the other men's names on the committee, but we ordered the goblet. It had not come in by his birthday, so on Sunday afternoon, which was his birthday, we went over to see him (had a pleasant visit) to explain and to wish him a happy birthday, telling him the gift was on its way. When we started to leave, I said, "Well doctor, I must tell you that it's much more pleasant visiting you in your home than it is in your class." He laughed. We all laughed and his wife said, "Yes, I've been on to the doctor about being so hard on the students." And he said, "Well, I want them to know that New Testament. They're going to be teaching it the rest of their lives, and I want them to know it." She said, "Yes, but you don't have to make fun of them and make the class laugh at them." He said, "But oh, that's part of it. They not only have to face me, they have to face the whole class." So that was his attitude.

Dr. Sampey was one of the great Hebrew scholars of that era as Robertson was in Greek. Dr. Carver was just unique in his own field, the first man ever to establish a Chair of Missions in a seminary in the world. J. McKee Adams in Biblical Introduction Geography and Archaeology--you just don't describe J. McKee Adams, you had to experience him. At that time there was a big map room where the larger classes would meet. There was a map on the wall, and Dr. Adams had a big long fishing-pole-like-cane. He'd run up and down the floor with that cane pointing out places on the map. It was just like a show to watch it. That room has a lot of happy memories for me.

For instance, Dr. Robertson always had a cold head. He'd come in the classroom--we'd all get there ahead of him, of course--and he'd come in the classroom with a stack of books on his arm. If his complexion was purple that day, look out. Lightning was going to strike! Fortunately, it never struck me. There were times that if he had called on me, it would have knocked me down, but I was fortunate that when he called on me, I knew the answers. On one particular day, he came in the classroom. He'd always turn and look at the thermometer by the door as he came in. Ice and snow were everywhere outside, and some students had taken that thermometer and buried it in the snow on the window ledge outside the window. One stood on lookout outside the door. When he saw Dr. Robertson start up the stairs, he gave the signal. They took the thermometer, dried it off, and ran and hung it up by the door. When he came and looked at that thing it was down to about 32 or 33 degrees. We were all sitting in that nice steam heated room, warm as toast. But Dr. Robertson nearly froze to death that morning with that thermometer being down.

I think Hersey Davis was one of the greatest New Testament scholars I ever knew. Robertson had an accumulative mind. He knew everything that anybody had ever said or written about anything in the New Testament. Davis had an incisive mind. He was more like Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian knot: he cut right through

and went to the heart of the thing. Of course, I learned, I hope. I learned a lot from these men. I majored under Davis in my doctoral work in New Testament Interpretation. But you know the incidentals sometimes are the most valuable things. You can learn facts from anybody that will teach them to you. You can learn by reading a book, but the incidentals are something else. For instance, Dr. Robertson used to say something, and I've had occasion through the years to quote it. "Young Gentlemen, let the Bible say what it says." Some people want to make the Bible say more than it says or less than it says. He said just, "Let the Bible say what it says." I find in interpreting that many of the problems that scholars conjure up are more out of their imagination than out of the Scriptures. They labour at the task of trying to create and even solve a problem, or point out that it is insoluble and maybe even reflects against the New Testament. When all the time if you just sit back, open your ears and your heart, the New Testament will talk to you. Then the problem disappears or is certainly minimized. Davis, on the other hand, taught me to take a passage of Scripture that has been worked over, plowed over, and preached over, until it has grown rather stale and sterile in the minds of people. And you find that you are just saying over and over again the things that have been said. Davis taught me to take those passages and, as we used to say on the farm, set your plow a little deeper. Now I don't know whether you ever lived on a farm or not. But if you want to set the plow, to plow a shallow furrow, you put the singletree (which was the cross piece fastened to the end of the plow beam and to which the traces were attached by which the plow was pulled) in a hole down low in the end of the beam. This tended to pull the point of the plow up so that you wouldn't plow a very deep furrow. If you wanted to plow deeper, you would put it in a higher hole. If you put it in one right at the top, then when the horse or mule pulled on it it would tend to throw the plow point down, and you'd plow a deeper furrow. So Davis taught me to do that: To set your plow a little deeper and turn up some fresh soil, instead of just kicking around harrowing over the part that's been plowed and gone sterile. Plow up something fresh; find some new ideas.

He was a great student of the Papyri. The first time I ever heard of the Papyri, he introduced it to me. He wrote a little book on it. Since then I have tried to make a study of the Papyri in the intervening years. I wrote a little book a few years ago on Preaching Values from the Papyri, and I learned from Davis to go to the Papyri and see what it says about the meaning of a Greek word, for instance, and what did this word mean to the people of the first century when they first heard or read it in a Christian context. That's what it should mean to us. You talk about getting back to the original Greek, and to many people that means go back to your lexicons, Liddell and Scott, or Arnot and Gingrich, which I think is the best modern lexicon . Or even go to Thayer who wrote prior to 1888 before the Papyri was discovered. He even quotes the Greek text out of the King James Version. I don't think that the original Greek was found there. Now these lexicons help us, but they have picked up so much theological debris through the centuries. If you want to get back to the original Greek, you've got to go back to the Papyri. What did this word mean to the man on the street when he first heard it or read it in a Christian context? That is what it means in the New Testament. Davis taught me that. This book on the Papyri that I mentioned, I dedicated it to Dr. Davis. I dedicated one of my expositions of the Gospels--I have written a four-volume set on the Four Gospels, one on each--I dedicated one of those to Dr. Robertson.

We, then, our generation of preachers, or students, got the benefit of the old giants. We got the cream of what they did and thought. I used to say to Dr. Davis, after he would give us an exposition of a passage of Scripture, "Doctor, why don't you write this in a book?" He would say, "Well, Hobbs, I intend to someday, but you know Dr. Robertson and I don't always agree on the interpretation, so I'm going to wait until after he dies, and then I'll write my books." Well, Davis never did write them. Robertson wrote fifty or more. Davis was always so busy hunting for new ideas that he never wrote down the ones he had. And as a result, except for the influence that he had on the students who sat under him, he left very little. He wrote a small Greek grammar. He and Dr. Edward McDowell wrote a revised form of Josephus and the Interbiblical Period history, and a few other small things like that. But the treasures that man took to the grave with him because he was so busy hunting out other truths! I guess that as much as anything else has encouraged me in my writing ministry. Whether it has been good, bad, or indifferent is another matter. But at least it is my effort to leave behind for others, even to share while I'm living and to leave behind hopefully for others, something that will live on after I'm gone. Now Dr. Robertson has been dead forty years. He died in 1934. Yet, I never start to work on a sermon or an article dealing with the New Testament but that one of the first books that come off my shelf is his volume on that particular passage and his Word Pictures in the New Testament. I don't always agree with him, but he left his ideas for heritage. I just think it was tragic that Davis didn't. For that reason, I have tried to put many of the interpretations that Davis gave us in books that I have written. Now sometimes I give him credit. But you know, after a while you keep saying so and so said and so and so said--that's the way the Jews taught--Rabbi so and so said, and Rabbi so and so, and Rabbi so and so. Everything you know you learn from somebody. You can't quote everybody, so after two or three times you quote it, then it's legitimate to use it as your own. And so a lot of things that Dr. Davis taught me for a long time I would cite him as the source of this interpretation. But I don't do as much of it now as I used to do. Many, many of the ideas that I have been able to put in my books, at least the germ of it I got from W. Hersey Davis. Take, for instance, his interpretation of the passage of Matthew 16:19. One of the most wonderful things I ever heard, which just clears it up like turning on a light in the dark was when he simply pointed out that the verb form is a form of a verb that means something that has already been done in heaven. "Whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall have then bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall have been loosed in heaven." It isn't something that heaven does after we do it on earth. God has already decreed certain things. I've used that many times, and preachers come around and say, "You know, that's one of the best interpretations I ever saw." Well, I like to think that I have done with that what the old Negro preacher said about using Dr. Truett's sermons. Asked if he did, he said, "Yes, but, of course, I polish them up a little before I use them." Well, I'd like to think I have polished that up a little bit, but the root idea came from W. Hersey Davis. So we were fortunate in our generation of preachers over, say a span of ten years there, of getting the benefit of the cream of those old giants before they went on.

T: Would you say Hersey Davis was the most influential of all your seminary teachers on you and your later ministry?

H: I would say, "Yes." I was Dr. Weatherspoon's Fellow. In fact, I had been asked to be Dr. Carver's Fellow. Cornell Goerner was getting his doctorate, and had been appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to go to Rumania and teach in our seminary there at the time. Cornell and Ruth and my wife and I were members of the Dodeka Club, made up of twelve students and their wives, based on their idea of the Apostles.

T: How did that get started?

H: I really don't know, except that it was supposed to be on the basis of scholarship. It wasn't that the seminary itself sponsored it, but the organization itself chose men on the basis that they were scholastically good men. That doesn't mean that unless you were in it you weren't good scholastically. You had to be married and had to rank high in scholastical matters. But I really don't know where it started.

T: Who all were in it at the time you were?

H: Well, I don't know if I can remember everybody, but my brother-in-law and his wife were in it. Doug Hudgins down in Mississippi and his wife were in it. But at the moment, it just doesn't occur to me the others that were there. I think all of the men that were in that club would agree that these old giants back there--we got the cream of the crop. I have had so many people say to me, "You know, there must have been a bunch of giants in your time in the seminary." I say, "Why?" "Well, look at the men that were there, your contemporaries, they're in the leading pastorates in the Convention, they're in the leading positions, heads of agencies, and boards, and all of that. I said, "Well, acmally, we're not giants or any smarter than anybody else. We happened to be there at the right time." We had gotten out of the seminary and had gotten some training and maturity at the time when there was a complete changeover in the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Truett and the other pastors of the other great churches were dying or retiring. The Seminary heads, the Sunday School Board secretary, the Home and Foreign Mission Board secretaries, all of them--it was just a sort of a turnover in leadership. And we were the group that was there ready, and I would like to think prepared of God to take those places. Now there will come a day, and that day has come, my friend, as I'm talking to you right now. There will come a day when there will be another change. It won't mean that the generation of men that will take over at that point are any better than the ones in between. It just means that they are there at the right time, ready to take over.

Now, I mentioned Cornell and Ruth Goerner. He was to go as a foreign missionary and the Dodeka Club had given them a going-away dinner and a gift. Later, we learned they were embarrassed to death, because they knew all the time they weren't going. But they were sworn to secrecy. The Seminary Trustees had asked the Foreign Mission Board to release the Goerners from appointment, and they had elected him to be an instructor, knowing Dr. Carver was getting old and needed some help. Before that was done, however, Dr. Carver had asked me to be his teaching Fellow, and I had to agreed to do it. Well, you can imagine the night of graduation when I got my degree and sitting there thinking, "Well, now I'm ready to go to work as Dr. Carver's Fellow. Then Dr. Sampey announced that Dr. Goerner was going to stay on and explained why. And that in order to supplement his salary so he can have enough to live on, he was going to do the fellowship work for one more year. Well, you talk

about the rug being jerked out from under a fellow, it was jerked out from under me. Later, Dr. Weatherspoon asked me to be his Fellow, but that's another story that I'll relate a little later on.

T: How much did you get being a Fellow in those days?

H: Thirty-five dollars a month. But it was the difference between what I made in my church work which made the difference between living and not living. We had a student aid and loan fund back then. If you needed it you could get a certain amount of aid that you did not have to pay back and a loan that you did have to pay back with interest. But when you got your master's degree, you didn't qualify for that any longer. So I had to have $35 from somewhere in order to go to school and to go on and do my doctor's work, and that fellowship was the difference.

I want to tell you how I came to be this Fellow. Also, I want to relate another experience as to how I think God worked to enable me to stay on and do my graduate work. They are to me two of the greatest stories in my own experience of God's guidance.

Well, when I learned that I would not be Dr. Carver's Fellow--as I mentioned earlier, I had just delivered the valedictory address. They didn't call it that, but they had two speakers at commencement. Number one was the valedictorian and number two was the salutatorian. Well, I was the valedictorian and Millard Berquist was the salutatorian. I spoke on "The Gospel and the Modern Mind" and he spoke on "The Christian and World Peace." We have kidded one another ever since. He said, "Your speech had neither gospel nor mind in it," and I said, "You spoke on the Christian and World Peace in 1935, and we've been in war ever since." But anyhow, I had just delivered my address and sat down and gotten the degree, and then that rug was jerked out from under me.

T: This was your master's degree.

H: Yes. Back then the basic degree was the Th.M. degree.

So, we moved out on my field up in Indiana. The Baptist church at Boaz, Alabama, had invited me to come and preach a trial sermon. It is on Sand Mountain in North Alabama. Well, I had written to Dr. Davis, the only time in my whole life that I ever asked anybody, even hinted that somebody recommend me to a church or to a job in my ministry. I told him what had happened. "I cannot come back for graduate work. I want to very much but unless I can get some kind of work that will enable me to supplement my income, I can't do it. Do you know of a church anywhere around near Louisville where I won't have to spend most of that money getting to and from the church?" We went over to the Little Blue River Church and came back on Wednesday. I was going to conduct prayer meeting at Hope that night, and leave the next morning for Alabama for a vacation, during which time I was going to preach at Boaz. When we got back to Hope we went by the post office and got our mail. I had three letters, and I looked at the postmarks on them and opened them in the order of the postmarks. The first one I opened was from Dr. Davis telling me, "I can see your problem and I'm sorry as I can be, but I do

not know of anything." The second one was a letter from Dr. Davis, saying, "Since writing this other letter and mailing it, I've just run into Dr. Weatherspoon in the hall. He has just gotten back from his trip to the Orient and said he needed a Fellow." (Howard Colson had been his Fellow.) He said, "I need a Fellow and the graduate students are all gone. Would you suggest somebody?" Dr. Davis said, "I suggested you, but don't you mention it unless you hear from him." The third letter was from Dr. Weatherspoon asking me to be his Fellow. So I wired the church at Boaz and told them that the way had been opened for me to go back to the seminary for graduate work, and I would not be available for consideration. There was no need of my coming to preach for them and just muddying the water for somebody else. And so I didn't go.

The other thing, the following fall, I had just started in my graduate work. My wife came down with a streptococcus infection. That was before the day of miracle drugs, and it was just you against the germ, and you didn't know which was going to win the fight. Her infection was on her lower lip. It swelled out so much that she looked like one of these African Bantus. She was in Kentucky Baptist Hospital a month. For two weeks, the doctor told me later, he didn't know whether she was going to live or die. He knew that the infection was going to move. If it went up to the brain, that was it. If it went down, she had a chance. It went down and settled in the pleura, and to this day she has a little problem with dry pleurisy, not wet pleurisy, just a little inflammation in the pleura. They even gave her the tuberculin test. She had lost so much weight that they didn't know but that maybe she had tuberculosis. She didn't have. The doctor put her on a diet that would be a hog's delight, almost, trying to put some flesh on her. She had to take three raw eggs in a glass of milk three times a day. Now that was in addition to all the other food. Her stomach soon rebelled, so he said, "Well, put a little vanilla flavoring in it; there's enough alcohol in there to sort of help to cook the white. That worked for a while, but her stomach was almost ready to rebel again. So he said, "Well, you go buy a bottle of whiskey and put a tablespoon, I believe, or a teaspoon, I don't know which now, of that in there and that will cook the white of the egg enough to where she can take it." Well, I'd never bought a bottle of whiskey in my life. I didn't know how to get it or anything about it. I didn't even know the brands. I'd seen Four Roses advertised on billboards, so I got in my car one night--the seminary is located out on the east part of town, you know--I drove clear down in the West End, parked my car on a back street, walked around to a liquor store, looked both ways, saw nobody coming, then I darted in there and said, "Gimme a half a pint of Four Roses." I didn't know Four Roses from Five Stinkweeds, but that was the only brand name I knew. I took that stuff home, and it did the job all right. I put a spoonful of it in those eggs for my wife, then I put it in the back of the refrigerator behind everything, so if a woman came in to look after my wife while I was not there and opened up the refrigerator to get something, she wouldn't see that bottle of whiskey sitting there.

Well, anyway, she finally got over it, and she's been in good health through these years. But by that time the doctor had told us, "You've got to get a church in Louisville, or you've got to get out of the seminary, because your wife can't go with you on these trips anymore. They're too hard on her, and you shouldn't leave her at home while you go in the snow and ice. Because of her nerves, she should not be put under that strain." Well, again the bottom fell out of our dreams. The

next morning, Ruth Goerner--they lived next door to us, and we were good friends--came over to see my wife who told her what the doctor had said. In the meantime, Dr. Gaines S. Dobbins had gone down to Highland Baptist Church there in Louisville on Grinstead Drive to teach a study course. Dr. T. D. Brown, the pastor, asked him to recommend some ways to improve their educational program. He recommended that they get a seminary student to come and be his associate and work in the field of religious education.

T: Dr. Dobbins was serving as interim pastor there?

H: No. He had just gone to conduct a study course. Dr. T. O. Brown was pastor then. He asked Dr. Dobbins to make a recommendation, and that's what he recommended. Then Dr. Brown said, "Would you recommend somebody?" And he said, "Well, there are so many students out there, I wouldn't be able to pick out one. You go out to the seminary and talk to Brother Gohr, George Gohr, the person to whom he was referring. He was from Minnesota. He's up there now teaching in one of the colleges, I saw not too long ago a book on theology that he wrote. Anyway, George was in charge of the student teaching program in the Masonic Homes, rest homes, the slums of Louisville, and so on. Only students that did not have church work were involved in them. Well, I had church work, and while George and I knew one another--he was a year behind me in school--I was not a part of his program. He knew nothing about my work, and he would never have thought of me in terms of this teaching program. He would have thought of somebody else. Well, Dr. Brown misunderstood Dr. Dobbins. He thought he said Brother Goerner, so he came out to see Brother Goerner on a Tuesday morning. Dr. Goerner said, "I don't know of anyone offhand, but I will think about it and let you know." He went home to lunch, and Ruth told him what the doctor told us. He said, "Well, that settles it, I'll recommend Herschel." He called Dr. Brown. Dr. Brown called me and came out to see me, and we had a visit. The deacons met on Wednesday night, and I met with them before prayer meeting.

Frances and I had figured that we needed $80 in addition to the fellowship money in order to live. In the meeting they said, "We've got $40 a month in our budget for an associate pastor." I thought to myself, "Well, that won't be enough, but if I can get that much I'll borrow the rest of it and pay it back when I get out of school." So in the course of the conversation the chairman of the committee, Dr. Ireland, a physician, said, "Have you ever done any preaching?" I said, "Yes, I've been a pastor for seven years." "Would you be willing to fill the pulpit in the pastor's absence?" I said, "I'd be delighted to." That was all set. After the meeting they told me to go on home and they'd let me hear from them. So the next morning before breakfast, I got a special delivery letter from Dr. Ireland. It said, "I'm happy to tell you that we recommended you to the church and the church extended to you the unanimous call to be the associate pastor. Since you will be in position to fill the pulpit, we're going to take the pulpit supply money in the budget and put it on your salary, and your salary will be $80 a month." Exactly what we had figured we had to have!

T: And you did not tell them?

H: Oh no, I didn't tell them that at all. I just said to myself, "Well, if they pay me $40, I'll borrow forty in order to go on and finish my work." But that was the same old story--the $75 deal back there when we needed to go to college. Now we needed $80 to stay in the seminary. So the point I'm making is this: It was a time of crisis in our ministry. If I had not gotten to stay on for my doctoral work, I would have probably gone to Boaz on Sand Mountain, a little County Seat church, a good church but just a little church. That probably would have set the pattern for my ministry. But by going on and getting my earned academic doctoral degree in New Testament Interpretation, there have been so many opportunities opened up for me in writing, preaching, the "Baptist Hour," and other things--the experience of being the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the problems that we faced then that we'll talk about later--all of those things I think hinged on what happened right there. I've often thought that the misunderstanding of the pronouncing of a man's name was the thing that did it. I love to quote in connection with that the saying of a dear old lady who had more faith in the Lord than she had knowledge of vocabulary. She said, "Well you know what they say, the Lord works in mischievous ways, his wonders to perform." I have had on my heart--whether I'll ever get to it or not, I don't know--but I've got it on my heart to write a little book sometime, relating just experience after experience similar to that one that have happened to us over these years. I would call it My God Is Real, What About Yours? So many people are saying, well, that idea of God is just an idea. They say that they don't know anything about God. Well, I know as you can say, and many others, multitudes of others, that God is real. And they can see it in events in their own lives. Sometimes you don't recognize it at the moment, and yet you can look back later and see that God was at work. But these things are evident, I can't explain them as accidents, they fit together too well and form a pattern. That pretty well sums up our seminary days, unless there are things that you want to ask further, maybe in other fields.

T: Well, there's just the men that you were involved with, and I think that you have mentioned many of the key ones that were there at that time. In 1938 you graduated and were called to Calvary Baptist Church in Birmingham. Will you tell me something about the call to that church and to Clayton Street in Montgomery?

H: Well, I might say this, I went to the Highland Church in Louisville and stayed a year and about a month. Then the Crestwood Baptist Church right on the edge of Louisville, which at that time was considered the cream of what we called the seminary pastorate, called me. One of the deacons in Highland Church was a former member in Crestwood. His mother was still a member there, and when they were looking for a pastor he recommended me. They came and heard me and called me. I only stayed with Dr. Brown a little over a year, as I said, but he himself called me in and said, "I understand that this church is going to call you. I just want to tell you to remove any idea of hesitancy since you've only been here just so long. If they call you, I hope you'll take it. Because while I have not heard you preach, our people have and they say you ought to be preaching somewhere every Sunday, not just filling in." And he said, "I think with all fairness to you, you should take it if they call you." Well they did, and I did. And we were only there about a year. I shall never forget, they had a home next door to the church. The janitor at the church was named "Sims." He was helping my wife unpack, and she told him to stack the boxes that we had our stuff packed in down in the basement. He said, "You

know, I don't know whether I like the sound of that or not. It sounds like you're thinking about moving." Well, at the time we didn't know we were going to move so soon. I've always felt that I was at Crestwood on the wrong end of my pastorate, because right now that's really an up and going church. I preached there last August one Sunday when I was teaching at Southern Seminary. But back then most of the people in the community except for the farmers that lived there were people who worked in Louisville and had responsible positions. One was Vice-President of a big wholesale hardware place. Bellnap. His name was Gibson. These people would move out there and buy these big country estates to get away from city taxes and the noise and bustle of the city, and they'd just drive in to their work and come home.

T: Wasn't there a commuter train?

H: Well, up until shortly before we went there there was one that ran from Louisville out to LaGrange, but it was not running at the time we were there. Anyhow, the biggest thing these people wanted you to do was to preach on Sunday morning and Sunday night. You could go and preach on Sunday night and be there and conduct prayer meeting Wednesday night if you wanted to. It didn't make any difference to them. A few of them would come. They wanted you to visit them when they were sick, and as the old preacher said, "Visit the sick, bury the dead, and marry the crazy." But other than that, they didn't expect a great deal out of you. I told my wife that this would be the ideal place to be on the tail end of my ministry, right here near the seminary, going to that library and listening to the lectures and all that. After a year the Calvary Baptist Church in Birmingham sent a committee up and they called us.

We had one cat of our own. But we had a dirt basement with a concrete floor where the furnace sat. Every stray cat in the neighborhood would come around there, especially in cold weather. We'd take it in and put it down there in the basement where it could stay warm. People learned about our tender spot for cats. It seemed like everybody in the community who had a cat to get rid of would drive by and throw it out, and, of course, it would show up at our place. At one time we had about eleven cats and a dog. This dog had five puppies. Well, for six years we had lived up there in that cold climate, going up to Indiana every weekend except for these two years when we were there in Louisville. Louisville, as you know can get plenty cold. We didn't have a heater in the car. It was not standard equipment in those days. But when we were ready to move to Birmingham where the people never thought of even putting a heater in the car, we bought one and put it in because we were going to take that dog and those five puppies. We were afraid those puppies would get cold and get sick. The silliness of youth.

But anyhow, we were called to Calvary Baptist Church. It was a good church but not a strong church. Some might have said, "Well a man with a Ph.D. degree should have gone to a bigger church. But I've always felt this way--I have yet to ask anybody except for that request I made of Dr. Davis if he could help me out to get some work near Louisville--other than that I've never asked anybody to recommend me to a church, or to get me appointed on a committee, or to get me nominated for an office. I've got lots of sins on my record when I get to heaven, but that won't be one of them. Anyhow, my wife and I said, "Well, now, whatever church calls

us, we're ready now to go out in the field, and whatever church calls us, that'll be it." And that's the one that called us.

W. A. Criswell had a similar experience. First Church, Birmingham, and First, Chickashaw, Oklahoma, were both dealing with him. Of course, at that time Birmingham First was considered one of the choice pastorates. They've been through some troubles in recent years, and the old downtown churches everywhere have suffered some from the city situation, as you know. But anyway, back then it was one of the choice pastorates. Yet, W. A. and Betty, who, by the way, have been good friends of mine and my wife through the years. (I drove the get-away car at their wedding, which is another story.) But anyway, they said that whichever one of these churches called them first, that was going to be the Lord's will for them. So, First, Chickasha, Oklahoma, called. Now it is a good church, but back then it just didn't compare with First Church, Birmingham in prestige and so on. So they accepted. But then the next day they got a letter saying the First Church, Birmingham, had called. Well, they were sick at heart because they felt like they had missed the big chance. Imagine going right out of the seminary to First Baptist Church in Birmingham! But it turned out that it was the best thing that ever happened to them. They went to Chickasha and stayed a couple of years, and then went to Muskogee, Oklahoma, where they stayed a couple of years. Then First Church, Dallas, called. They would never have heard of him over in Birmingham. I don't mean this unkindly, but I seriously question if at that time the First Church, Dallas, would have called any man east of the Mississippi River. Nothing against the churches over there, but they were just sort of absorbed in the Southwest. I don't think they would have called W. A. Criswell if he had been east of the Mississippi River at that time. So what seemed at the moment to be a tragedy turned out to be a blessing.

We went to Calvary in the same way. I only stayed at Calvary Church for about fifteen months. It's a funny thing, while I was there Dr. John Buchanan, Southside Baptist, Birmingham, called me on a Monday morning and said the First Baptist Church in Meridian, Mississippi, was looking for a pastor, and the pulpit committee had been by to see him the day before. They'd been to hear a man, and something had happened so that they didn't feel impressed with him. The church in Meridian was having some problems at that time, so they had quite a large pulpit committee to try to bring everybody into it. Well, they came back through Birmingham and visited with Dr. Buchanan. He was at one time pastor of the church in Meridian. They said to him, "Anybody that you recommend to us we will guarantee him a call; we just have that much confidence in you. We are ready to recommend to the church anybody that you recommend, and we know the church will call him." He called me and said, "I want to recommend you." I said, "Doctor, I appreciate it, but I've only been here twelve months, and I just can't think of leaving here in twelve months." Well, he took that for an answer. Five months from then I went to Clayton Street Church in Montgomery, which, while a good church, had far less prestige in the denomination and in other ways than First Church, Meridian. But I went up to northwest Alabama and preached at a Training Union Convention. The state secretary was a former pastor of Clayton Street in Montgomery. Chester Quarles, who later became Mississippi Baptist secretary and died down in Peru, was the State Training secretary. I preached. Clayton Street was looking for a pastor. I learned later that when I got through,

Dr. Barnes, the state secretary, leaned over to Ches and said, "Ches, there's the man for Clayton Street." He went home and told them. They came up and heard me and invited us down. We went down and they offered us a call, and we accepted it. We were there from about 1939 to 1941.

I think that a young man just out of the seminary moves more often until he sort of finds his place. I think the Lord puts him in different situations to let him get different types of experience. Somebody said to me one time, "It's always strange to me that when a preacher gets a call to a church, and it's the Lord's will, it's always a bigger church with a bigger salary." I said, "Well, you're a businessman or you know how business executives work. They get a man they think's got the ability. They move him around and let him get some experience and prove himself. Then they move him up a little higher and he proves himself there, a little higher and the first thing you know they decide he's ready for a top job." "Now," I said, "Each move of improvement calls for a bigger responsibility and carries with it a greater monetary reward, but it's just a part of the system, and finally he's ready for this top job. Now don't you think that the Lord's got almost as much sense as the average business firm administrator's got." Of course, that's facetious. But I think God moves His men around until they finally find their place. I thought I had--I went from Clayton Street to the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Alexandria, Louisiana, a downtown church in a city of about 35 or 40 thousand people that had suddenly been swelled into a city of 150 thousand--maybe by World War II.

T: You were in Alexandria when World War II began?

H: Yes. I went there in August of 1941. We were rapidly getting ready for the war, but the attack on Pearl Harbor had not taken place. We were not actually in the war at that time. Emmanuel was a downtown church, sort of like any downtown church. Its members were poor people, good substantial middle-class people, also bankers, lawyers, and doctors, and heads of businesses and all that. I think again that gave me a particular kind of experience that I needed. From there I went to Dauphin Way in Mobile. We certainly thought we had found our place. It was the largest church in our native state. It had the largest Sunday School, the largest budget, the largest buildings, and it was paid for. The climate was ideal. We loved the climate, the Alabama Gulf Coast climate. We loved those big live oak trees and the camellias and azaleas. There was never a day flowers weren't blooming in our yard. The people who had owned the place where we lived had planted seasonal flowers. We bought our home there and what they had not done we completed through a nurseryman, who was a deacon in the church. But we had in our yard different varieties of flowers, so that there were flowers blooming in our yard every day in the year. Imagine, leaving there and coming to Oklahoma, where you can have flowers and things like that, but you have to work at it so hard. In Mobile they grow in spite of everything you might do to keep them from growing.

So we thought we had found our place. Dr. C. B. Arendall, who was my predecessor there, owned his own home. So they asked us if we wanted to buy a home or if we preferred them to furnish a home. Of course, they would give us extra salary in lieu of a home if we didn't take a home. I said, "Let me have the salary and I'll buy a home. I've never owned a home in my life." And we honestly thought we had

come there to stay. We were going to buy a home, and when we got old enough to retire we were going to live right on there. I told my wife when we bought it, "Well, I'll just put a sign over the front door that reads, 'done moving.'" Well, in 1949, we went to Oklahoma City, and she asked me, "What happened to that sign?" I said, "I don't know, unless the rain washed it away." But I think there at Dauphin Way we got another kind of experience. It was made up of a mixture as far as socio-economic classes are concerned. But it was a large church that called for a particular kind of administrative approach. So that all of these churches from the country church up there at Little Blue River, the village church, the small churches in the suburbs, to the medium-sized one up to the downtown church in a small city, to the big, more or less people's church in a big city, and then to a church like First Baptist, Oklahoma City--that is a combination in a sense of all of those things. I think God just gets His men ready, and then moves them to where He wants them. Once they find their place they get settled and stay. And that's what happened to me in Oklahoma City.

T: Tell me, you were at Emmanuel in Alexandria when World War II began in the United States, do you remember what you preached on that Sunday morning, December 7th?

H: The fact of the matter I was in Birmingham at the time. My wife's mother was in the Jefferson Hospital there seriously ill. She had had surgery and complications following surgery; she had such a high temperature on the Tuesday before that day, the doctors thought she wouldn't live through the night. She had a fever of 107.4, and they said that even if she lives her mind would be affected by that high temperature. Well, people talk about faith healing. I believe in faith healing, but I don't believe in "faith healers," as we have them going around today. She was healed by faith; the doctors had done all they knew to do and said so. But without any of us knowing it members of the family got off one by himself or herself, and we were all praying for the same thing and didn't know it. The night nurse, eleven to seven, was a nice woman, but she was one of the sort who gave up. I mean she spent the night telling us, "Well, you know we've all got to go sometime." Well, we knew the seven to three nurse was a little woman that wouldn't weigh a hundred pounds soaking wet, but she'd fight a buzz saw holding a wildcat under each arm. So, unknowingly, all of us were praying that she, that our mother or mother-in-law would live until she came on duty the next morning. Because we knew what would happen. Sure enough, when she came on duty the next morning, she took off her coat, rolled up her sleeves, got ice water and big towels, and began to swab her with ice water. By nine o'clock the fever was broken. The doctor came by about ten o'clock. He said, "I thought she'd be dead when I got here." She went on and recovered and lived until 1958, and her mind was as clear as mine until she went into a final coma before death.

Pearl Harbor occurred on the following Sunday. I remember it was about eleven o'clock in the morning in Birmingham. I guess it would be about seven o'clock in Hawaii. The radio began to tell about it. Well, of course, anybody with any sense at all knew that we were in war, though the President did not declare it until later in the day. But the next day my wife stayed on in Birmingham with our son, who was just a little fellow then, and I went back to Alexandria. By that time our mother was better. We had brought along our Negro cook and cleaning woman; she was a

young Negro woman, and very attractive. We had brought her along to look after our boy who was then less than three years old. By that time my wife could look after him and so when I was going home this Negro girl wanted to go with me, and I took her. It was right funny, the first place we stopped to get gas she was riding up in the front seat with me. Of course, that was a long time ago. I can never forget the looks that the white folks there at the filling station gave me riding up in the front seat with that very attractive Negro woman. Well, anyway, I didn't pay any attention. We just went on down the road. The order had gone out for all soldiers on leave to report to their outfits. When we got over to Mississippi there was a bus strike on. You see, the heart of the military training area was right there in the general area of Alexandria. There were five army camps and five air fields in that area. It made an ideal place to train soldiers, south of the city, for those sent to the Louisiana swamps. Most of the men in that area of the country were on leave from one of these outfits around Alexandria. They couldn't get a bus, and were on the side of the road hitchhiking. They were all Negroes. The first one was at Fort Gibson, Mississippi. I stopped to get gas and the man said, "Where are you going?" He saw that I had a Louisiana tag. I said, "I'm going to Alexandria." He said, "Are you going by Camp Livingstone?" I said, "I go right by the front gate." He said, "Well, this man here," he pointed to this Negro soldier, "has been ordered back and the bus strike is on and he can't get transportation, would you mind taking him with you?" I said, "No, I'd be glad to." Because I felt I was not only glad to for a lot of reasons, but I felt it was my duty to take him. Also, I'd been getting these stares all day, and it gave me an idea. So I put him and this very attractive, youthful Negro woman in the back seat. Well they were happy as larks back there, and I drove on. But I hadn't gotten very far down the road until there was another one on the side of the road thumbing his way. I picked him up and put him back there. It kept on the rest of the day, and by the time I got to the Livingston gate I had the car just packed and jammed with Negro soldiers. The more I got in there the happier that Negro girl got. So I was serving the country and making her happy at the same time.

Well, I thought, as I guess every other man of my age did at that time (in 1941 I was 34 years old), I thought of going into the chaplaincy. My brother-in-law, Henry Lyon, did go into the Air Force chaplaincy. I talked with chaplains, line officers, and enlisted men, and all of them told me that located where I was in a downtown church in this area where multiplied thousands of troops would come and go (at one time we had half a million troops on maneuvers in that area), I could reach more men and do more good right there as pastor of this church than if I became a chaplain. They said, "There are pastors all over the country who can go into these outfits and they can't really serve the cause where they are. But you can serve as these men pass through, you will serve all of them." The soldiers told me, "If you put on that uniform you're just some more brass to us. We're looking for a pastor." So for those reasons I stayed in the pastorate, and I feel that subsequent events justified this decision. These young men were right out of civilian life. They had not made the transfer in their thoughts and emotions into the military, and sure enough, the chaplain then was just so much more military brass. Chaplains told me that whenever the men started moving out, the nearer to the port of embarkation they got or the nearer to the battle area they got, the more they turned to the chaplain. Because, you see, they had been cut off from civilian life, but as long as they were in this country, they still looked to the pastor.

So they said, "You will render a greater service right here." That's why I stayed there and did not go into the chaplaincy.

You could always tell--of course, they would keep it a secret when they were going to ship out a division to a battle area--but we preachers always knew. We didn't publicize it, but we always knew about two things: These men that came to our churches would come in or call in and want to see us, make an appointment to come for a conference. They wouldn't mention going or leaving, but we knew they were seeking that one last spiritual straw. We knew then they were fixing to go out. Another sure sign was that as the time was approaching, not necessarily that the order had been issued, but that the time was approaching that all of a sudden Alexandria would be flooded with sweethearts and wives back home. The wives coming to be with their husbands one last time before they went overseas, maybe never to return. And the sweethearts coming to get married . Now they were not the camp hangers-on that married a soldier just to get his insurance if he got killed. These were genuine sweethearts back home. It used to bother my conscience, marrying these people when they were going to be together just a short time. But it dawned on me that this is the only hope of happiness they may ever have. And so without any compunction of conscience I would schedule weddings starting at one o'clock in the afternoon, Saturday. I'd put them every forty-five minutes, thirty minutes for the wedding, and fifteen minutes to get in and out before the next one, and that would go on until nine or ten o'clock at night. Just about every pastor in the city was doing the same thing. They might get married and live together for a week, for two weeks, and then they were gone. But at least they had had some happiness together.

Now we broadcasted on the radio every Sunday night from the pulpit, not to reach the civilian people but these soldiers. We knew some soldiers came to our church. But most of them were scattered all over those swamps and pineywood hills in Central Louisiana. In every outfit someone would have a radio, and they said that we could reach them with the gospel. We just had gobs of them come to our services. I baptized, I couldn't begin to tell you how many, that were won to Christ in our services. Never do I go anywhere in this nation even to this day but that somebody will walk up to me and say, "Do you remember me?" And I say, "I'm sorry, Friend, I don't." "Well I was in Alexandria during World War II and I came to your church" or "You baptized me." Of course, back then they were young, had no fat on them, were dressed in a uniform, and had a head full of hair. Now they are older, got a lot of flab on them, bald-headed, and in civilian clothes, so I don't recognize them. I received letters from men who would say to me, "You never saw me and I never saw you, but I'm fixing to go into battle (some might be written at the port of embarkation or might be written on the battlefield), maybe to die. I just want you to know that if I do die, I'm ready, because as a result of hearing you preach the gospel on the radio while I was lying on my side or my back out in the woods, I surrendered to Christ."

So I stayed in Alexandria then until January 1, 1945. By that time it was just a matter of time until the war was over. Of course, we were right in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge, but that was a temporary thing. It was a last-ditch effort on the part of the Nazi forces to break out of a straugle hold that the Allies had put on them. At this time Dauphin Way Church in Mobile offered me a call, and I went over there.

T: While you were in Alexandria, you began your first service on a committee or Commission of the Convention by serving on the Foreign Mission Board for Louisiana. You were elected at the 1942 Convention in San Antonio. Can you tell me something about the leaders at that time? Dr. Rankin, perhaps?

H: Well, I did go on the Foreign Mission Board at the San Antonio Convention. And you know, it's one of those things that a man is not without honor save in his own country. Some say that Jesus was quoting a proverb and others say he was quoting his own idea. Whether or no, he certainly spoke the truth. I don't mean to say that a man's own country doesn't recognize him and all that, but it is just one of those principles that is sort of a part of human nature. I was in Alabama at Clayton Street. Well, at that age you are an eager beaver, you want to get started too soon, maybe that's true. But at the same time the brethren would think about someone they'd want from Alabama to go on the Foreign Mission Board. They would think of somebody in Birmingham or some other place who maybe came from Georgia, Mississippi, or Missouri. Somehow they didn't seem to think of any of their own native sons. I don't know why, but the same thing would happen in Missouri or Mississippi, you know. It's just the prophet not without honor. But when I went to Alexandria, it was then the second largest church in the state in its gifts to the Cooperative Program, second only to First Church, Shreveport. Naturally, it was one of the leaders in the work.

I have many wonderful friends in Virginia, and I certainly don't mean this to be unkind to them, but when I was at Clayton Street and was offered the call to Emmanuel in Alexandria, I was approached at the same time by another church in Alabama, the First Church in Dothan. It was one of the key churches in Alabama then and is now. They didn't offer to call me, but I was approached and I turned them off. But I was also seriously approached and almost, but not quite, offered a call to a church in Virginia. I don't even remember the name of the church. It was in Norfolk, as I remember. It wasn't the First Church. But anyway, I accepted the call to Alexandria. Well, back in those days about all that Southern Baptists knew about Louisiana was what they read in the Home Mission Magazine. They pictured little churches sitting over there in those Louisiana swamps surrounded by bullfrogs mosquitoes, and Roman Catholics. The average Southern Baptist didn't know much about Louisiana. The fact of the matter is that one of the strongest works we had was in Louisiana right then, but the people didn't know that. So a dear woman came up to me and said, "Will you please tell me why, with the opportunity you have to go to the great historic state of Virginia, you're going to Louisiana?" Well I thought I'd be as facetious as she was in my answer. I didn't mention that the Lord might have had something to do with it. I simply said, "Well, I got to thinking about it and I just decided I'd rather go to Louisiana and make history than go to Virginia and listen to it." And we laughed it off. Well, I told that to some of my friends up in Virginia. Maybe that's the reason I don't get any more invitations to go to Virginia. (Actually I do.) But, anyway, it was just a joke.

It just happened that the position on the Foreign Mission Board was open at the Convention the following year. I was nominated and the Southern Baptist Convention elected me. I was happy to serve. Dr. Maddry was then the Executive Secretary

followed by Dr. Rankin, and he by Dr. Cauthen. Dr. Maddry was a great soul. He was a giant of a man in size and also in spirit. In fact, after Cornell and Ruth Goerner had first been appointed to the mission field and then the seminary asked that they be released so they could stay on there, Dr. Maddry would come to the seminary in Louisville talking about the mission needs in the field of missionary volunteers. It would tear Ruth Goerner all to pieces. So much so that the doctors forbade her to go to chapel anytime that Dr. Maddry was going to speak, because she would feel that maybe they hadn't done God's will. Well, of course, you can look back now and see that it was very much God's will. Cornell got the academic benefit of teaching missions at Southern Seminary, and then he went to the Foreign Mission Board as a coordinator of our work in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Now he is over the African work only. Ruth naturally is just as happy as she can be, but at that particular time it was a traumatic experience for her, because she wondered with all that need out there had they really done the will of God. Well, Mr. Jenkins was the Foreign Mission president of the Board. He died last year. He had been president for many years. He was one of the finest Christian men I ever knew, a layman; his wife was an equally fine person.

T: Let me ask regarding issues during World War II especially the problems of the missionaries in China, some of whom were in concentration camps. What was the outlook of the Board at that time? As a Board member, what were your feelings as you wrestled with such matters?

H: Well, it's hard for me to think back and just take hold of any one thing. We were so caught up in the whole thing and wrapped up in the need that naturally we were concerned about what was happening to the people. Do you remember when the British had to shut off all support to their missionaries? At the Convention in Baltimore in 1940 Dr. Truett made the appeal and we set up a program to raise $200,000 to aid British Baptist missions. That sounds like small money now, but it was big money back then.

T: Was the Convention out of debt?

H: No. We were still in debt. This was in 1940 in Baltimore when we voted to raise $200,000 to come to the rescue of the British Baptist missionaries who because of the war could not get funds from their own Mission Society. They didn't have the money, and I guess they couldn't get it to them if they had, so Southern Baptists kept their work going until they could get organized and oriented. The big problem that I remember at that time was not just focused on the war, though as I said, we were all concerned about it. We felt that the work of the Foreign Mission Board was far greater than the issues involved in war, and we were of the notion to keep on increasing our missionary force and trying to make them more efficient. The missionaries wrote home and said, "We are having to do things out on the mission field that we are not qualified to do in medicine. We have to render first aid almost to the point of minor surgery; we have to deliver babies, and we don't know how. We have to do it by main strength and awkwardness, and we think the Foreign Mission Board should set up a program where we could get out on furlough and get some training to help us to do the things that we've got to do anyway." So I was appointed chairman of a committee since I was the representative from

Louisiana and the Baptist Hospital was in New Orleans. We went down there and worked out a program with the administrator of the hospital, whereby these missionaries would come in there and get a crash course in advanced first aid dealing with minor surgery--nothing major, of course--and obstetrics. Well, we worked out what we thought was a pretty good program. Dr. Maddry was for it. But when the committee reported to the Board in Richmond, immediately one member got up and spoke against it. He wasn't against anything that we had done, he was just against the whole idea. He said, "I don't think in that length of time we can train these people." Well, we knew we couldn't make doctors out of them, but the idea was to help them to know how to deliver a baby, etc. But when he spoke against it, Dr. Maddry then got up and--well, he changed his mind, I guess, about the way we could do it--and so it was dropped.

When Dr. Maddry retired, I happened to be on the committee to nominate his successor. A layman from Knoxville was chairman. I don't even remember his name. The committee met and the first thing decided was that we would not consider anybody that was then connected with the Foreign Mission Board lest it make for hard feelings within the Board personnel. We thought we had done something wise. But we began to look, and we looked and looked and looked. Everytime we'd think we might have found a person, we'd run into something. One man, I won't call his name, but one man we all agreed would be a good one, but he had just moved to another denominational job six months prior to that. So we all agreed that if it was the Lord's will for him to go there, it wasn't the Lord's will to move him six months later to this job. So we dropped that. You know that the Convention met in 1942 in San Antonio. We didn't meet in 1943 because of the war. We met in 1944 in Atlanta. In the meantime the committee had been meeting for about a year off and on. So in Atlanta we met in the Biltmore Hotel. The chairman of the committee said, "Brethren, back yonder when we started working, we reached an agreement that we would not consider anybody that is now related to the Foreign Mission Board personnel. We've run into nothing but frustrations ever since, I wonder if we should reconsider that decision." We had all begun to feel the same way, but I guess none of us wanted to mention it. Immediately somebody moved that we reconsider, seconded and passed. Then the chairman said, "Now brethren and sisters (there were some women on it), without us discussing anybody, without any name being mentioned, I'm going to ask that we do one thing, that we have a season of prayer asking the Lord's leadership. Then without anybody's name being mentioned, I want each one of you to write on a piece of paper the name of the person to whom you feel God is leading us to be the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board." So we had a season of prayer. We wrote our names, folded our papers, and turned them in to the secretary. He read the names and every member of that committee had written the name of M. Theron Rankin. I never in all of my experience in the ministry have been more conscious of an incident where the Holy Spirit was leading than there. Well, of course, history shows he made a great one. He's the one who started us on the Advance Program that's still going on. Some people that didn't know Dr. Rankin thought he was a little, well on the effeminate side a little bit. He was very kind and gracious, but he could be as hard as nails when he had to be. He knew what he wanted. After we'd reached this decision we sent word up to his room asking him and his wife to come down. They came down and they were scared to death. It just happened that we caught him in his room. They were scared to death. But he said, "If you

feel like it's the Lord's will, and if the Board feels like it's the Lord's will, why we surrendered ourselves to do the Lord's will too long ago to back out now," and of course you know the story. We elected him to serve, and he served in a great way.

T: I want to ask you about the Oklahoma Convention in 1949, where you were very much involved in the issue of the Federal Council of Churches. But you've raised two things of interest to me, and we've not talked about them. That's the San Antonio Convention, that was the Convention which the California group applied for admission and was admitted. Your colleague in the leading church in Louisiana opposed very much that decision to welcome California, accept California, do you want to comment a bit on that Convention?

H: Do you have reference to Dr. Dodd?

T: Dr. Dodd, he was pastor of Shreveport.

H: I think if you will go back and review the issue, you will find that you've got it, if I understood you correctly, that you've got it just backwards. Dr. Buchanan, Dr. Newton, and Dr. McDaniel, and some others east of the Mississippi were the ones that opposed taking in California. Dr. Dodd was the one that led the fight to take them in.

T: Okay.

H: You see he had been at one time pastor of the Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles and had been regularly going out there preaching for those people in California.

T: That was the Northern Baptist congregation of the Baptist church.

H: Yes, still is, but anyway he was there for nine months. It was always interesting to me when Dr. Dodd would figure how long he'd been at Shreveport First Church in his later years, he would always forget that nine months break there. He would just figure from when he first went till that time. He just considered that something he did that he shouldn't have done.

T: Was he very much, or did he feel unhappy in going to the Northern Baptist Convention?

H: He came to feel like he had made a mistake in going out there, that he should have stayed in Shreveport, and so after nine months he had the courage to admit it and he went back and stayed then till he retired after two very severe heart attacks. But anyway, Dr. Dodd was the one that led the fight to take in California.

T: All right. And Dr. Newton and Buchanan?

H: And others over in the East. You see, they were not as familiar with the West as was Dr. Dodd. They were all great giants and conscientious men, but at the same time they had not been connected with the work out there in California. To them it was just a faraway place with a lot of strange sounding names, and they felt

that the Southern Baptist Convention should stay in the South and not branch out. Well, of course, a lot of the problems that we've had since that time have come from our spreading out and becoming nationwide. I'm not saying that I regret the decision made in San Antonio, I think it was a correct decision. I voted for it at that time, and I've never doubted that it was the right thing to do. Some of my friends look at me like a calf looking at a gate when I say this, but I think--it won't happen in my lifetime--if things continue the way they're going now we will see the day when Baptist work, Southern Baptist work in California, will be greater than that in Texas. That is for this simple reason, that, of course Texas spreads out all over, and they take in lots of territory. I kid some of my Texas friends and tell them that if you take in the same territory east of the river you'd take in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and part of Kentucky and Arkansas. "Add up all they do and compare it with what you do in Texas, you fellows wouldn't crow so loud out here." I just kid them about it. But I think that Texas is sparsely settled compared to other parts of the country because of their climate, topology, and geography. Now California has the people, and those little churches out there--I was out there last spring for two and a half months, and I preached all over the place. I went out every weekend, held two or three revivals. They don't even consider a church orthodox if it doesn't have three or four missions, even though it may not be much bigger than a mission itself. They are planting those little churches all over California. One of these days, maybe after I'm dead and gone, but one of these days in my judgment those litt le seeds are going to grow, and we're going to see a harvest of Baptists in California like as under which we have not dreamed of. But that, of course, was a far look from 1942, and I think Southern Baptists did the right thing.

T: What was the background of that issue, do you remember some of the behind-the-scenes talk?

H: Well, the background generally was that during World War II people from all over this country were displaced, and people from the . . .

T: What about the meeting itself, I'm not thinking of the background of the move to California. I was thinking of the California Convention. Had there been some pressure brought to bear before the convention met in San Antonio to approve this?

H: I don't know of any particular pressure. For one thing, at that point I was not very much in the know of what was going on.

T: Okay.

H: But I do know that the fact that these Southern Baptist people had moved to California--American Baptists were not too plentiful out there, the number of churches--even where they were, they were a different kind of a Baptist from what our Southern people had been accustomed to seeing. So they began to organize their own churches, they got some associations going, and then they got them a state convention. They wanted to be in the Southern Baptist Convention. So Southern Baptists didn't invade California. The Southern Baptist people that went out there during the war and stayed, they just came back and said, "We want to be taken into the family." That

was the issue, but as to the back of the scenes committee meetings and things like that, I at that time was just coming into what you might call a position of leadership in the so-called inner circle of the Convention.

T: Was it bitter?

H: It was an open debate; it was pretty hot. But the Convention voted, as I remember, by a strong majority that it be done.

T: You mentioned that you are acquainted with W. A. Criswell, and I was just interested in your answering this, if you will. After Dr. Truett died, Dr. Newton and Dr. Truett had an agreement that whichever one died first, the other would conduct the funeral. Some have suggested that Dr. Louie Newton was the man to be expected to be called to First Baptist Church, Dallas, and Dr. Criswell was called. Do you know any of the story behind that?

H: No, only what I have heard. I frankly doubt seriously that that was an arrangement made with the church. Now I'm not sure that would be even an arrangement between Dr. Newton and Dr. Truett, because both of them were well enough acquainted with Baptist churches to know that that wasn't the way it was done. Yet knowing the church as I do, I doubt if they themselves had in mind calling Dr. Newton. Now he and I are very good friends. I spent two weeks with him in a revival back in 1951. It was one of the richest experiences in my life as I sat and listened to him relate Baptist history, Southern Baptist history, things that have never been in books, and some of which never will be, I suspect--things that I had heard about that he was actually in on, like the Carnes situation. He was on the committee that went in and found that mess, you know. But at the same time, the temperament of the two men, I think--they were very close friends and all--but I don't think the temperament of the two men was such or similar enough, that First Church, Dallas, was considering calling him. In fact, Cornell Goerner and I agreed five years before Dr. Truett died that there was only one man we knew in the Southern Baptist Convention who had the temperament that could succeed Dr. Truett. And that was W. A. Criswell. Cornell was W. A.'s best man in his wedding and I drove the get-away car--so we were both close friends with him. At that time if you got two Baptist preachers together and let them talk five minutes, they began talking about who's going to succeed Dr. Truett. It was a whole lot more then than it is now--who's going to succeed Criswell. He had enough of the emotional in him that would satisfy that desire in the church. Dr. Truett was a heart preacher. On paper his sermons were just ordinary, but the message was in the messenger. At the same time, Dr. Criswell is an individualist enough that he wouldn't just be another carbon copy of Truett. Cornell and I agreed at Ridgecrest one day that he was the man. When Dr. Truett was sick and it was pretty generally known that he was in a terminal illness, it seemed that every church that would get without a pastor at that time would approach W. A. He would write me, "Such and such a church is after me, what should I do?" And I'd write back and say without ever mentioning Dallas or Truett, I'd say, "Don't go. God's got something bigger than that for you." It would only be a matter of a few days until I'd get a letter from the same church. Later on, I accused Criswell of writing and turning them down and suggesting me. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. But anyway, finally he wrote me--and by that time Dr. Truett was already dead and buried.

I went to Dr. Truett's funeral. If I hadn't known who was in the casket, I wouldn't have recognized him. His illness had just eaten him away to where he was just a shell of himself. He was a big man, physically, as well as otherwise. But anyway, Dr. Criswell wrote me, "Such and such a church/ well it was First Baptist Church, St. Petersburg/ is after me. What shall I do?" Dr. Gardner had just left there to come to be editor of the Baptist Standard. Incidentally, Dr. Gardner resigned the day I was ordained to go to St. Petersburg. I wrote Criswell, "Let it alone! God's got something bigger for you." I still didn't mention the First Church, Dallas. He wrote back and said, "Well, I'm going down there, I'm going to Ridgecrest to speak for a week." It was Training Union Week. He said, "I'm going to go down there and spend a week with them."

T: Down to St. Petersburg?

H: Yes. Every day, while he was at Ridgecrest and St. Petersburg, I wrote him a letter. I said, "Don't you accept that church, God's got something bigger than that for you." Finally, on the way back home, I got a letter from him written on the train. He said, "You'll be interested to know that I went down and spent a week with them. I'm on the train on my way back home, and I have turned them down. I don't feel I should go there." He got home, went to his office, and on the top of his mail on his desk was a letter from the committee at First Church, Dallas, inviting him to preach for them. He went down there and preached. That was August, of course, and they called him in October. If he had taken that St. Petersburg Church, he couldn't have done a thing but say, "I'm sorry, brethren, I have already taken this job." So, again, you never know how things work out.

T: You've heard that story about Dr. Newton being considered as one of the people for First Baptist Church, Dallas?

H: Well, I understand there were sixty-five that were considered. I know Dr. J. W. Storer, after Criswell's call was announced--he used to write little humorous things in the paper about the Convention--he wrote a humorous story about a meeting of the newspaper account of Criswell's call. It said the church considered sixty-five other men, and out of that group called this comparatively unknown. Incidentally, the church said, "We're going to take him and make a great preacher out of him. But Dr. Storer's little humorous story had to do with a meeting of the sixty-five. They were discussing the fact that Dr. Criswell had been called and they hadn't been. After a while one of them said, "Now what does this young man Criswell have that we don't have?" And with one accord, they replied, "The Call." So I don't doubt but that they seriously discussed Dr. Newton, as they perhaps did others. For some reason or other they turned to Criswell, and I think he's done a pretty fair job down there.

T: Dr. Hobbs, we were talking briefly about your days at the seminary. You graduated from the seminary in 1938, and Dr. Sampey was the president of the seminary all through the period of your student days. I wonder if you would relate some of the events in his last days. There were several professors who left just prior to his leaving.

H: Of course, I had just finished the seminary, so anything that I know is hearsay.

But it seems that Dr. Sampey had the idea that before he retired there were certain men that he felt should leave. There was a report that some of them may have been entertaining the idea of succeeding him, and there could have been some rivalry there. Another man Dr. Sampey apparently wanted out took the matter to the trustees. One of the other two was called to a church, and the other was elected president of a seminary up in the East. But the other man, as I understand from what I heard--I, of course, was not involved in any way--anyway, Dr. Sampey took this to the trustees, and they voted to vacate that particular chair. Some say that Dr. Sampey may have gotten a complex in those latter days about it. Whether he had any justification for what he did, I could not say, because I was not in any sense involved. In fact, I was completely away from the campus. I was living in Birmingham at the time. This action was taken by the trustees about this one professor as I recall at the Convention that met in Birmingham in 1938. I know that the professor involved was hurt and became rather bitter, and never did really get over it. He's dead now.

T: Now these men you said that Dr. Sampey either encouraged to leave or did leave under pressure, were they rivals of his prior to this time?

H: Not to him, no. The rumor that came to me was that two men aspired to succeed him, and that apparently he was fearful that there would develop a rivalry between those two men that might hurt the seminary.

T: Did he have somebody in mind to succeed him?

H: Not that I know of. I know they elected Dr. Ellis Fuller at the Convention in the trustee meeting when it met in connection with the Convention in San Antonio. But I'd be rather certain that Dr. Sampey did not have anybody in mind that he wanted to succeed him, though that's a matter of opinion.

T: Would you be willing to indicate who these professors were?

H: Well, I guess it's pretty well common knowledge that one was Dr. Tribble, the other was Dr. Kyle Yates, Sr. He went to Walnut Street; Tribble went to Andover-Newton, later to Wake Forest. Dr. Yates went from Walnut Street to Second Baptist, Houston, and then from there to be "Distinguished Professor of Religion" at Baylor. He's been a very dear friend of mine through the years. Frankly, I would prefer that this information not be made public as long as those men live. But there was no--now let me say this--between Dr. Sampey and those two men, there was no problem, no trouble, I think that they just maybe felt the situation and got these opportunities to leave and did. I know Dr. Yates, for instance, he always, even as a professor, had a pastor heart. For instance, he would always sit down and memorize the first names of the first-year students from the enrollment cards. When he'd meet them on the campus, he'd call them by their first names. He'd get the birthdays of the students and their wives, and on their birthday he'd either call them or come by to see them. Dr. Yates came by to see my wife on her first birthday in the seminary, just to wish her a happy birthday. I can't explain how much it meant to her, because she was away from home for the first time and rather lonesome. So Dr. Yates always had the pastor heart, I rather think that he delighted

to get into the pastorate, because Walnut Street is one of our great churches. He was always in high demand for pulpit supply and interim supply work because he was and is not only a great teacher and scholar but a great preacher. I was never as close to Dr. Tribble as I was to Dr. Yates, although we've remained friends through the years. Dr. Tribble was a good preacher and a scholar--but I wouldn't call him the warmhearted person that Dr. Yates was. It was just their nature, nothing against him, but it was just their nature. The other man was Dr. Frank M. Powell. He went from there I think to a church--Calvary, I believe, in Tupelo, Mississippi. He later was elected to teach at Golden Gate Seminary. He finally retired and went to Thomasville, North Carolina. He had a son living there, and he lived in Thomasville. He was the unpaid associate pastor of the First Baptist Church there for a long, long time. When I was there during my presidency of the Convention to speak during Dedication Week for a new church building auditorium, he and I had quite a wonderful visit. It was the last time I was really with Dr. Powell.

T: Is he still living?

H: No. He died last year.

T: In 1945 you moved, as you mentioned, from Alexandria back to Alabama and to Mobile, and while you were in Mobile your denominational service included a membership as a trustee of New Orleans Baptist Seminary. I wonder if you'd relate something about some of the leaders in that seminary at that time. Who would have been the president when you first became a member of the board of trustees?

H: Well, Dr. Duke McCall was the president. It was known as Baptist Bible Institute at that time, and later changed to New Orleans Seminary.

T: During your period of serving on the board?

H: Yes. As I remember it was under Dr. Roland Q. Leavell; it may have been under Duke McCall, I don't recall. Anyway, there was a vacancy on the board from Alabama, and Dr. McCall asked me if I would be willing to serve. Of course, I was glad to do it. I was elected by the Convention and served. He left in the meantime, I mean while I was on the board of trustees, he left to go to be the Executive Secretary of the Executive Committee, and we elected Dr. Roland Q. Leavell who was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tampa at the time. It was under Dr. Leavell's presidency that the present campus was built. I came to know a number of the faculty members. Dr. Watts was one that stands out in my mind, Dr. Shepard was another; the other men I don't recall too much about them. The campus then was located on the property that had once been the old Sophie Newcombe School for Girls. One of the richest experiences I had in serving on the trustee board at the seminary was my getting to know and having close fellowship with Dr. John Jeter Hurt, Sr. His son, of course, is editor of the Baptist Standard now. Dr. Hurt was president of Union University. Back then he was getting on in years, but he had been one of the stalwarts through the years, and he liked to talk and reminisce, and I liked to listen. I've always had a love for history, and he and I would sit in the lobby of the hotel at night and he would talk to me about things that I had heard about but knew nothing about personally. One of the most interesting

stories he told was, he was on the committee appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention when they voted to establish Baptist Bible Institute, to find and negotiate the purchase of property for a campus. And the old Sophie Newcombe School property was available. They went to the bank there in New Orleans, and wanted to borrow $35,000. That was back about 1918.

T: It was 1918 when the seminary opened?

H: It was right in there somewhere. The price is sort of ridiculous to us now. Whether that was the total purchase price, I don't know, but they had to borrow $35,000. They told the banker they were going to buy that property and establish a seminary to educate Baptist preachers. The banker said, "Well, we'll be glad to let you have the money, the property is worth far more than that and would be ample security. But the question in my mind is, "Why do you want to spend this much money to start a school to educate Negro preachers?" At that time, down in Southern Louisiana, the only Baptists they knew anything about to speak of were Negro Baptists. We had churches there, of course, but they were very small and weak, and it was so preponderantly Roman Catholic that he didn't even know there were any Baptists except the Negro Baptists. But I think that the change, the effect--for instance, in New Orleans Seminary and Baptist Hospital, and men like Dr. J. D. Gray--the impact they had on New Orleans is seen in the fact that at that time I'd get in a cab at the hotel and simply say, "I want to go to Baptist Bible Institute," and they'd go right to it, they knew where it was. So, when the time came to move the campus--of course the Sophie Newcombe property was old, didn't have too much land, and we wanted to move out into a larger area and build a new campus. The way New Orleans is laid out, you go south and you hit, of course, the swamps and the Gulf. As you go west, it's the Mississippi River; you go north, there's Lake Pontchartrain. The only way to go without crossing a body of water is east. And the last large tract of undeveloped land east in New Orleans without having to cross a body of water was the piece of land where we located the seminary. And again, to show you the progress of Baptist work made through those years, the Archbishop, the Catholic Archbishop, wanted to buy that same piece of land. He was going to build a cathedral and develop a Catholic housing project. The trustees met, like today, and voted to buy it and the money was already on hand. As I remember the land cost $260,000 or thereabouts. The Convention had already put in Dr. Leavell's hands the money to buy the land, so when we voted to do it, he went right over that afternoon and closed the deal and paid cash for it. The next morning representatives of the Archbishop went in to buy that land. They were told that they were too late, that the Baptist seminary had bought that land the day before and paid cash for it. Well, when they reported back to the Archbishop, I understand his blood pressure went up several points. He went in then and bought another tract of land, a part of this tract but back behind it, a less desirable tract, and away from what was then the main highway--Highway 90 that went through there. I tell that merely to show something of the progress Baptist work has made in New Orleans during those years. World War II greatly changed the religious complexion of the Gulf Coast.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you were saying the second world war changed the religious complexion of the Gulf Coast area?

H: Yes.

T: Even in Mobile?

H: Yes. You see, the war brought people from inland to the Coast to work in the shipyards and other related industries. Mobile itself prior to World War II was about 60 percent Catholic and 40 percent non-Catholic. After the war, the percentages were just reversed. Not too long after that, the non-Catholic people of New Orleans got a professional group--they didn't do it themselves, they got a professional, non-partisan group--to come in and take a city-wide religious census. And, again, the Archbishop had a rise in his blood pressure, almost to the point of a stroke, I imagine, when it was revealed by this non-partisan scientific survey that New Orleans was then fifty-one percent non-Catholic. And of course it had always been preponderantly a Catholic stronghold. There were other factors, of course, that entered into that, but I think that the location of our seminary and hospital there gave Southern Baptists a prestige that they had not had. As a result now, we have, of course, a very strong work in New Orleans.

T: Can you tell us something about the background of the calling of Dr. Leavell to New Orleans Seminary? Were you a member of the committee, the selection committee?

H: No, I was not a member of the committee. Of course, Dr. Leavell was well known among Southern Baptists. He had been pastor at First Baptist Church in Gainesville, Georgia, as I remember, and was elected as the secretary of the Department of Evangelism of the Home Mission Board. I think he started the idea that grew into the simultaneous evangelistic crusade later. In fact, the first such crusade was held in Oklahoma City. He was the man who came in and organized and led it, and I guess because of that fact along with other things that such crusades have become somewhat of a tradition in Oklahoma City, whereas now many cities have more or less let this simultaneous idea go by the board. Whether for the good or the bad, I won't say. In Oklahoma City they have had without a break a simultaneous crusade, I think, beginning in 1935--the White, Black, Indian, Mexican churches all join in.

At the time Dr. Leavell was elected president, he was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tampa. I don't know any of the particulars as to how the committee came to decide on him, I just know that they did , and he was unanimously elected. At one stage of the game, I know, in the time we were searching for a president, another idea jelled. Baptist Bible Institute at that time was rather weak. It was of course just an Institute, although the curriculum there would correspond to most any seminary. They had faculty members who could have taught in any of our seminaries, but that "institute name" seemed to detract from the seminary aspect. We were still in financial problems back in those days. Southern Baptists had just paid out of debt in 1944, but we were still debt conscious, and there were lots of needs. The thought was even advanced--and I think the committee pursued it some, if I'm not mistaken--of getting Dr. R. G. Lee to be the president with the idea that he would spend two or three days each week in New Orleans and the other time at Bellevue. I think he even gave it some serious thought, but came to the obvious conclusion that neither job could be done on a part-time basis. So, of course, he

elected to stay at Bellevue. This is no reflection against Dr. Leavell because that was something considered before Dr. Leavell was even brought into the picture. But we all agreed that we needed a full-time president, and so as a result Dr. Leavell was elected, and came and led in the building of a new campus and moving the seminary. And, of course, he did a wonderful job.

T: Dr. McCall had certainly laid the groundwork, I am sure. He had been with the seminary two or three years before you came on the committee. How would you describe his administration when you arrived? He would have been a rather young man at that particular time, he was the youngest seminary president, I believe, when he was elected to be the president of the Baptist Bible Institute.

H: Well, Dr. McCall and I had been at the seminary together, though I was ahead of him. He got his Master's degree the night I got my Doctorate. He reminded me of that one day, I wasn't aware of it. But I did recall when he reminded me, too, that he was also the valedictory speaker for his commencement as I had been privileged to be at mine. He was the pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church there in Louisville, and from there was elected to go to New Orleans. As you said, he was a young man, the youngest president of any seminary in the United States. Dr. McCall had started out to study law. His father was a lawyer in Memphis. Then he later felt he was called into the ministry and gave up law. So Dr. McCall has an unusual ability, and did for a man of his age then. I think still does. Not a great deal, as I recall, I mean nothing of a world-shaking variety happened while he was there. He was a good, solid man, he laid a good foundation. I think that was perhaps what was needed at that time, looking toward the time when it would become a seminary and would be moved to the new campus. Now my mind is hazy on the exact time that it did change from an Institute to a Seminary, but I believe it was in Dr. McCall's administration. I'm almost certain it was. We hated to see him go to the other position, but, of course, felt that the Lord was in it. So we went on and got a good man in Dr. Leavell. Whenever God moves a man he always has somebody to take his place.

T: In 1949 you moved to First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, became its pastor. Could you relate something of your experience and how you came to be called to that church? You mentioned earlier that you were very much in love with the southern part of Alabama and it seemed like a real shift or change. Tell us something about that.

H: Well, to begin with I think I might pay tribute to Dr. C. B. Arendall, Sr., who preceded me at Dauphin Way. He had been there or had finished his twenty-first year when he retired. One of the deacons said to me, "Dr. Arendall was a steam engine in breeches." He was a very dynamic person, a great organizer, and really a pusher, as far as his work, his program, was concerned. I have been told that he could tell you before he ever got in the pulpit how many people were going to join the church that day. He just knew.

T: Because of the work he had done that week?

H: Yes. At that time his associate, Howard Aultman, who is now pastor of the First Baptist Church in Columbia, Mississippi, and he had just done the work so well

that he knew how many were going to join as a minimum, but any that came over that was just a plus. But when Dr. Arendall retired, and the church was turning toward me, I had one of those experiences that rarely ever comes to a preacher. I had been hearing that a certain church in Texas had been inquiring through the local Credit Association about me, I'm not going to call the name of that church. They wanted to know, first of all, all about me. Another time they wanted to know about my wife. It happened that the secretary of the local credit association was not a member of Emmanuel Church where I was pastor, but he was a Baptist and a friend of mine. He would tell me these things. Finally, one day he said that they called up over there--the Credit Association in this city in Texas called him, they were doing the work--and wanted to find out if I paid my debts on time. Well, that sort of got my dander up. I said, "I'm tempted to ask you to tell them that I understand this church was considering possibly offering me a call, and I would like for them to inquire to see if they paid the pastor on time." But, of course, I didn't do it. Anyway, in the meantime, Dauphin Way Church had a committee come over and visit me. I was going up to the First Baptist Church in Chattanooga to hold a revival meeting for Dr. John Huff, and I planned to come back through Mobile and preach for them on a Wednesday night. When they called Dr. Arendall, they called him and he accepted right on the spot. They said, "We want to do that again. It worked out so well the other time, we want to do that again." I said, "Well, I can't do that." They kept talking, and I said, "Well, I've got to talk to my wife." They said, "There's a telephone upstairs in your hotel room. Talk to her as long as you want to." Well, anyway, the upshot of it all was that I preached that night and they called me. I went back in the office while they had a brief business meeting and called me. I thought, "Well, if I'm going to go there's no need of being coy about it." By that time I felt that I should. So I accepted, and then went immediately and called the chairman of the deacons at the Emmanuel Church and told him what had happened. I said, "Now if you don't mind, I wish you wouldn't tell this until I get home. I'd like to announce it to the church Sunday." But when I got home the next day it was all over town. Anyway, the following Sunday morning, I resigned.

T: To go from Emmanuel Church in Alexandria. . . ?

H: To go to Dauphin Way. After the service a man came down and said, "Well, you pulled the rug out from under my feet this morning." I asked him, "How's that?" He said, "I'm a pulpit committee from the First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas." Now this was not the church that was doing this inquiry; it was another one. It was during the war, and they couldn't get train reservations for a group, they couldn't get gasoline, or couldn't get plane reservations, so they sent the chairman down there alone. They said, "Now if you like the man, you invite him to come and consider a call to our church. We'll trust your judgment." Said he, "I was fixing to come down here and invite you to come to Texas, and now you resign to go to Alabama." Years later, after I had come to Oklahoma City, I went down and spoke one night at a banquet at the First Church, Wichita Falls. I drove down and back then, since they didn't have good plane connections to Wichita Falls from Oklahoma City. So I drove to the church and walked into the building. The first man I saw said, "I know you, do you remember me?" I said, "Yes. You are the Pulpit Committee." We laughed about it. But I learned then, the very next day--no on Friday before that Sunday--this Credit Association man said, "I had a call from this Credit Association out in Texas wanting me to find out if you were going

to be in the pulpit Sunday, they wanted to come over and meet you." He said, "Well, you're too late, he has already accepted a call to a church in Alabama." So as I said it was one of those unusual experiences when there were three possible calls there at one time.

Dr. Arendall's work ended December 31, 1944, and I moved on the field the following week. He got up the Sunday after they called me and I had accepted, and said, "Now you called your pastor, and he'll be on the field the first of January. I just want to say now that after December 31 I will neither bury nor marry any member of this church." One dear soul came up after service and said, "Well, Brother Arendall, I want you to bury me." And he said, "Sister, you better die before December 31, then." He stuck to it. Some of our mutual friends discouraged my going there. They said,"Dr Arendall is too much of a driver, he's too much involved." He went there when it was a little struggling thing, even the state convention was paying the interest on their indebtedness to keep them from losing their property. He left it the largest church in Alabama with the largest budget, the largest membership, the largest Sunday School, and the largest auditorium and paid for. And these friends said he just can't turn loose of that, he's too much a part of it. I said, "Well, now, listen, Dr. Arendall is a Christian gentleman, and I think I am, and I'm sure we can get along."

We never had one second of trouble. The only trouble I ever had with him was, I had wanted him to help me at a funeral and he wouldn't do it. He said, "Now, if I do it once, I'll have to do it many other times." He just would not. He knew how to work, but he knew how to retire.

T: Did you appreciate him taking this attitude?

H: Oh, yes.

T: Did it make your work much easier?

H: Oh, yes. It did. He didn't even come to church for almost five months. He'd come in to see me every week, sit down and talk to me in the study. When he'd come into the pastor's study, I would offer him the chair behind the desk. He'd say, "No, that's the pastor's chair, I'll never sit in it again." He'd sit across the room. But he said, "Now I'm not going to be in the services because I'll be out of town a great deal preaching in other churches. And if I'm in town, we'll go to another church that Sunday, because you cannot get the hearts of the people with me hanging around here." It was from January 1 to May, Mother's Day, before he attended services. Even then he waited until church services started, and he and his wife came in and sat up in the balcony. I recognized them being there, and I called him to come down to the front after services and lead in prayer. He got onto me about it later. He said I should have ignored him. I said, "No, if people knew you were here and I ignored you, they would have thought I did it intentionally."

Dr. Arendall had a fatal or terminal illness at the time of his retirement and didn't know it. I think it was cancer of the liver. He died fourteen months after he retired, and I conducted his funeral. His wife and their boys, all but Ed who was a preacher, were members of the church. Two of the boys were deacons, and they were the

staunchest supporters I had in the church.

Ed was up at First Baptist Church, Atmore, just north of Mobile. Dawson Memorial Church in Birmingham wanted to call him. Well I was the nearest thing to a pastor he had, I guess, and he came down and talked with me about it. Knowing I was from Birmingham, he knew that I knew something about the situation. And I did. In fact, my wife and I remember the Monday morning in a church history class in Howard College when Dr. L. O. Dawson came in and said, "Well, we organized a little church out in Shades Valley yesterday. It's not much now, just out there in the woods, but some day it will be one of the great churches of Alabama." And I think today it is that, and perhaps in many ways the greatest. Well anyway, I told Ed about what his daddy told me, that when he came to Mobile, he said, "All I had was the opportunity." And I said, "He made the most of it. And if you go to Dawson Memorial, you will do there what your dad did in Mobile." Every year now for a number of years on his anniversary, I send him a letter or telegram reminding him that he made a liar out of me, that he has done better than his dad did at Mobile.

Not long after Dr. Arendall's death, when I had been at Dauphin Way about fifteen months, I got a letter from the chairman of the Pulpit Committee of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. He asked me if I would come out here and preach for them on a given Sunday, that they were having a number of men in and would like me to be one of them, the church wanted to hear them. In other words, they were having a parade of preachers. Well, I wouldn't have wanted to get into the parade to begin with, and furthermore I had been at Dauphin Way such a short time. The work was really just getting started, I mean the type work I was leading in, and I didn't feel like I should do anything to disturb the church there. Besides I had no impression whatever that I should leave there. So I wrote and thanked them, but declined. Funny thing, in 1939, I was preaching in a revival meeting at Goodwater, Alabama. The man leading the singing was Jack Boston who had at one time been on the staff of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, as a bookkeeper. He walked into my room one day during that revival, and said, "I just recommended you to a church." I said, "You have?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Where?" And he said, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City." I said, "Well, I didn't know they were even looking for a pastor." He said, "Well a friend of mine wrote me that Dr. W. R. White resigned Sunday, and I immediately sat down and wrote a letter." I said, "Well, that's fine, Jack. Because that's the first letter they'll get and it'll be thrown in the wastebasket so that it'll be on the bottom. It will be the first one they will get, so it will be the last one they'll come to in looking for a preacher." But you know, in youthful enthusiasm, and, I guess, egotism, it never occurred to me that if they would call me, but that I could do the work. I didn't expect them to call me, but I thought if they'd give me a chance, that I could do the work. Well, I know now it would have been a tragedy to me and the church. I had the academic training, but I did not have the training necessary to come in and lead and administer a church such as this one. Anyhow, after hearing from the Pulpit Committee chairman, I went on about my business. Some of my friends came out here and preached and later told me I was the only one who had any sense, that I didn't get in that horse race, but I went on about my work.

We were building two educational buildings at the same time at Dauphin Way. The auditorium was there, built and paid for, and we were building two, one at either side just to the rear, sort of making a "T." In October, 1948, Dr. Willis Howard

had resigned at First, Oklahoma City. I got a call one day from Ira Prosser. Ira and I had known one another in Louisiana. He was Brotherhood secretary down there, and had come to Oklahoma to be in charge of Music and Brotherhood. He was a member of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. He called me and said, "The Committee out here asked me to call you and see if you would be interested in coming to this church."

T: Whom had they called in the interim between Dr. White's pastorate . . . ?

H: Well, actually, when Dr. White resigned to go to Hardin-Simmons University as president, they called Dr. J. Howard Williams. He stayed until 1945, I think it was, and then they called Dr. Willis Howard. So when Ira called me and talked to me, I said, "Ira, I have no feeling that I ought to leave Mobile, I think I've found the place the Lord wants me. Besides, we're right in the middle of a building program, and even if I felt inclined to make a move, now would not be the time to do it." I said, "Thank the committee for me, but that's all I can say." Well, we went on with our building, and they went searching for a preacher.

In January, 1949, I got a phone call from Dr. Andrew Potter, the state executive secretary of Oklahoma at that time. He talked to me about the church and wanted me to consider it. I said, "Dr., I just don't feel like I ought to." I mentioned that this building program was still on--they were supposed to have finished it the first of January, but weather and all had held them up, so that they were running behind--and I said, "Besides, we've got a Southwide Sunday School Clinic that's going to be held in our church when we get this building finished. The Sunday School Board has spent a lot of money bringing people in from all over the Convention. They are having this clinic where they can show off the latest in Sunday School building and equipment and then have the teaching clinic. It wouldn't be fair to the church or to the Sunday School Board for me to consider making any move." He said, "Well now, just don't say no like that, pray about it." I said, "Well, I'll pray about it." So in a few days I got a phone call from Jasper Barnette. Jasper was, of course, with the Sunday School Board and was in charge of this clinic. He asked me some questions that didn't amount to a whole lot, questions that could have been answered by mail instead of a phone call. When he got through with his questions and just before he hung up he said, "By the way, are you going to be in the pulpit Sunday?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, good to talk to you. Goodbye." And he hung up. I went home and I told my wife, "There'll be a Pulpit Committee here from Oklahoma City Sunday."

Sure enough, they came. They had an awful time getting there; they rode a train from Oklahoma City to Houston. Then they were going to fly across to Mobile, but the train was late and they missed the flight. They had to ride a bus all night to get into Mobile about four o'clock in the morning. They later pulled a skit here on one of my anniversaries and had a mock meeting of the committee. Somebody made a motion that "we haven't even heard this man Hobbs, but we are tired of traveling, and I make a motion that whether he can preach a lick, we recommend him to the church. Let's get this over with." Anyway, they were in the auditorium that morning. After service they didn't say anything to me, so I went on home and told my wife, "Well, they were there. I saw some men that I didn't know, and I'm sure that's who it was. They didn't say anything to me, and maybe I won't hear anything at all."

About that time the telephone rang, and Mr. R. A. Young, Ray Young is -- you know the chain of T.G. & Y. Stores across the country. He's the "Y" in that chain. He's retired now, but he was the president of it at the time. Ray called me and told me who they were. The Pulpit Committee had sent him as chairman, Oscar Davis, and E. V. Mashburn to see me. The other members of the committee didn't go. They wanted to know if I'd come down to the hotel, they'd like to visit with me. So I went down there. As I walked into the room the first question I asked them was, "What took you so long?" And they said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I know for a fact that I was recommended to you ten years ago." This was 1949, and that was in 1939. "It took you a mighty long time to get around to it." They laughed, and Mr. Mashburn said, "Well, you're not going to believe this, but I was secretary of that committee back then and kept the records. They're still in my files. When your name came up and we decided we were going to come over here, I remembered that letter and I got it out and read it to the committee." But they told me that they at first made this approach to Ira Prosser before they had done anything else. And I had said, "No," so they went ahead and got a list of names with the usual procedure. They would go and hear someone, come back, and compare notes, but they never felt impressed towards any of these. Every single time before they adjourned, my name would come up. So it was finally way up in January that they said, "Well this man Hobbs' name keeps coming up even though he has taken himself out of the picture. I think we ought to go back and approach him again." They agreed to it, and that's how Dr. Potter came to call me.

Well, I met with them the next morning. They came down on January 23, 1949, and the next day I was meeting with them again in their hotel room. One of the men got a phone call from his office here in Oklahoma City. I could tell from the conversation that they asked him how the weather was down there. He said, "Oh, it's beautiful, the sun is shining /now this was in January, the latter part of January./ The flowers are blooming everywhere. Then I said, "Ask how the weather is up there." He asked and they said, "It's snowing." Well, anyway, I told them, "Brethren, I don't have any feeling toward this move." Mrs. Hobbs and I were expecting a child at that time. Also, I said, "I just don't see that this is the opportune time in lots of ways, this clinic coming up and all of that, I just could not give you an answer now." They said, "Well, you're not saying no." I said, "Well I'm not saying no because you've gone to the trouble to come down here. But I am not ready, certainly, to say yes by a long shot." They said, "Well, that's all we ask. We are not going to approach anybody else until you say 'yes' or 'not.'" Mr. Mashburn said, "Now I'm chairman of a committee to plan for our revival this spring, the simultaneous crusade, and we thought we'd have a pastor and let him do it, or get somebody. But it is evident now we're not going to have a pastor. Would you come and hold our revival for us?" I said, "Yes, provided it's understood that I'm obligated to do nothing more." They said, "That's all right."

Well, they kept calling me. They went home and sent me a lot of literature, all the Chamber of Commerce stuff. I learned later that they got back home and it was still snowing. It would snow and freeze and melt, snow and freeze and melt, and snow and freeze and melt. Each snow just piled up on top of the other. That stuff was on the ground for six weeks. They haven't had anything like that since. Even when I came up here to hold this meeting in March, there was still snow in the gutters downtown where they had scraped it over to the side. Some of the men who played golf got so hungry to play golf they painted the golf balls red so they could find them in the snow,

and they went out and played golf. I never let them forget that, but they never one time mentioned that weather. But anyhow, we kept talking back and forth on the telephone, and finally, the thing more and more began to get hold of me.

We lost our baby at birth. It was a perfectly formed baby, it was just one of the accidents of birth which sometimes happens. Anyway, it was a little boy; we buried his body in Birmingham on our plot where we will someday be buried. I don't know how to explain it except that the Oklahoma City Church just got on my heart. I had never been to Oklahoma City but one time and that was 1939 at the Southern Baptist Convention that year. At that time, as the old boy said, they didn't even let me pray in secret at the Convention. I was just one of the young fellows shortly out of the seminary coming to the Convention. Word got around that they were considering me, and my mother's pastor, Dr. John Buchanan, just begged me not to come to Oklahoma City. He said, "Churches have personalities. Some have the personality that makes for a long pastorate, others have a personality that makes for a short pastorate. You are in a church that just had a twenty-one year pastorate. They're not thinking in terms of anything else. The church in Oklahoma City has a personality where, good or bad, that makes for a short pastorate." I learned that the average-length pastorate in this church from the day it was founded until I came here was two and a half years. Now Doctors Holcomb, White, and Williams stayed five years apiece, I believe; maybe one of them six, but the average was two and a half years. Dr. Howard just barely made the average. His health got bad. But they had had some big men, some giants. Mordecai Hamm served one year and resigned to go back into evangelism. He said, "There were just two mistakes made, one was when you called me, the other was when I accepted." He said, "I'm an evangelist, not a pastor." So he resigned after about a year and went back into evangelism. Now, who knows if he had not done that would Billy Graham have ever been saved? That's a question that nobody will ever have the answer to, but, nevertheless, God works in his own way.

Anyway, I still felt the burden of this church. And finally, in a telephone conversation--the committee met in Ray Young's office, he was talking, and was buzzing around in a circle to the committee and answered questions. I agreed that they could recommend me to the church on March 21. It just happened that that was the Sunday after this Sunday School Clinic was over. Well, the funny thing is, nobody in Oklahoma City or in Mobile knew; everybody else, it seems, all over the Southern Baptist Convention knew that I was the man going to Oklahoma City. So when the crowd began to come into Mobile for the clinic, it wasn't long until everybody in Mobile knew about it. But we said nothing. They called me on that Sunday, and it just happened that the next Sunday was the Sunday the revival started. It wasn't planned that way, it just worked out that way. I came out on the train as far as Fort Worth, and I went by to see Dr. Ray Summers, then a professor at Southwestern Seminary, and who had been the interim supply pastor. He had been that during a four-month's period they gave Dr. Howard off for a rest. Then when he resigned he came back and stayed until I came. So I went out to see him.

There was a problem in the church that revolved around a couple of people who had been asked by the deacons on request by the pastor, Dr. Howard, to leave the church. And they had gone to another church. Well, a lot of the people who were friends of these people honestly felt that it was not the right thing to do. So they were contending that the deacons should ask them to come back. It seems that in the past in a lot of

these short pastorates--Holcomb, White, and Williams, for instance--they knew of the situation, but rather than to go into it, they got a call and went somewhere else. Dr. Holcomb went to the Sunday School Board. And as I said, Dr. White went to be president of Hardin-Simmons University. Dr. Williams went back for a second time to be executive secretary of Texas Baptists. Now the people I am talking about that were asked to leave the church--incidentally they have been good friends of ours through the years--are in another church and have been active in it. It was just, I don't know, it's hard to explain these things, sometimes it's personalities, you don't know what it is.

T: Were the pastors kind of dictatorial in the way they dealt with . . . ?

H: No. Well, maybe the other way around. Like so many churches then, the church had a big class of men. This man taught the class. The method of electing deacons prior to Dr. Howard's time was that on a given Wednesday night they'd have a blackboard down front. People would make nominating speeches for different ones, then they'd vote. Well, this big class had the majority of the men of the church that weren't teaching somewhere else. It just worked around that they'd come out to the meeting, their class members would be nominated, and I guess they'd vote for them. So most of the deacons were either members of that class or at one time had been. Dr. Howard told me that the first week he was here, this man took him out for a ride and told him, "Now if there's anything you want done in the church by the men, you let me know and I'll get it done." And he could just about do it. The ability to help a pastor worked another way if he didn't like him. So I always said Dr. Howard was that kind of a fellow that would fight a buzzsaw holding a wildcat under each arm. He said, "Well, Brother So and So, I don't work that way." And from that time on, the fat was in the fire. Later I told Dr. Howard, "Doctor, some people will say that your ministry in Oklahoma City did not succeed, but it did. You did something that had to be done, and I think that I'm going to have a long and happy pastorate as a result of what you did."

So when I went by to see Ray Summers he said that after the service the Sunday before when the church had called me, he asked some of these people who were contending that this man and his wife should be asked back into the church what they were going to do now that they had a pastor. They said, "We're going to wait until he gets on the field and face him with it." Well, honestly, if I had not been scheduled to begin a revival meeting on Sunday following this Friday, I would have sent them a wire and declined the call and gone back to Mobile. But I was obligated to hold the revival. I came up here and spent Saturday with the committee showing me around. The building was in great need of renovation. I was frankly surprised to find a church of this standing with the facilities needing so much attention. I don't know whether you could attribute that to the short pastorates or not. It takes time to get things done, you know that. But at any rate, whatever the cause, it was there. On Sunday morning I walked around to the Sunday School. I went into the Children's departments where they had some of the nicest equipment you ever saw. But they'd have four workers and three children. I went down to an old building on the corner where the two Young People's departments met. I found the most discouraged bunch of workers I ever saw. My heart was as heavy as a chunk of lead. Down in Mobile, as I said, you had to knock the kids out of the way to get through the halls. Dr. Arendall said, "Our people are a prolific people." But this church was a typical old downtown church, a good strong Adult area but Youth and Children, no. And with the internal conditions, the feillowship, strange as

it was if nothing else, I had a heavy heart. I went into the pulpit that morning feeling like I was almost going up to the noose, and yet I knew God had called me to this church. I knew it, but it didn't make sense. I talked to a man the other day that left Dauphin Way to go to a church out in Texas, Dr. Jaroy Weber. He said, "I'm still trying to figure out why I came." And yet I know what he felt like. He knew God had called him. I knew God had called me to Oklahoma City First Baptist Church. When Wallace Bassett, bless his heart, heard that I was coming out here, he said, "Herschel Hobbs is a fool." Five years later I had him up here for a revival. He opened the revival by repeating that statement and apologizing to the church and to me, because at that time it was obvious that we were happy together and things were going great. Some predicted I wouldn't be here six months. Bill Reynolds, Dr. William J. Reynolds--I guess I'll have to use his handle now, but he's just Bill to me--Bill and Mary Lou were out here. He was the Minister of Music, and, by the way, was the only full-time staff member they had except the church hostess and one janitor. This Negro man, Bush Walker, who came and helped us set up this recording equipment was here.

I know I keep chasing rabbits, but these are little fine things of interest. Bush Walker, I'd known him as Bush for years, he's the senior member of the staff. I always said he and Mrs. Bay, the church hostess, were the only ones that I had to look up to. Bush got cataracts on his eyes but wouldn't go to the hospital. He was a war veteran and could go to the Veteran's Hospital. It wouldn't cost him a dime, but he wouldn't go. He finally got to where--well, at first his work was sloppy, where he was supposed to clean up, he'd leave areas of a room not swept. It was just because the poor fellow couldn't see. Finally he got to where he could hardly see the building. Mr. Dunbar, the business administrator, just took him one day in his car and took him over to Veteran's Hospital and checked him in. They operated, took the cataracts off his eyes, made him some glasses, and it didn't cost him a dime. The first time he came back to the church after he got his glasses, he walked in the kitchen. We have a green rubber floor mat on a ramp leading from the service entrance into the kitchen. It's been there since we came into the building in 1954. Yet when Bush walked in and looked at it, he said, "Well, I see you got a new mat." It had been there all the time, but his eyesight was such he couldn't even tell the color of it. Well, anyway, when I went over to the hospital to see Bush, I asked the lady, "I want to see Bush Walker." She looked and said, "Well, we've got a Mr. Bushyhead Walker." I said, "Well, I guess that's the one." I went up to see him and told him about the name. I said, "Where did you get that name?" He said, "Well, you know I'm half Chocktaw, and when I was born, Johnny Bushyhead, the missionary to the Indians, came to see my mother. I had a big sack growing down from my neck and my mother was worried to death about it. Johnny Bushyhead just took a pocketknift and punctured it, let the fluid out, and it soon went away. My mother said, 'What can I do to show my appreciation?' He said, 'Aw, just name him after me and walked off.' So I'm named after Johnny Bushyhead, the missionary to the Indians."

Well, anyway, the rest of the staff had left. They had temporary workers in the office. The deacons asked Bill to try to oversee the thing until they got a pastor. He didn't really get to develop his Graded Music Program as he later did until after I got here, because he had to do all this other. But the furniture in the office--honestly, and I don't exaggerate one bit--every desk in the office except the pastor's study--it was very nice--but every other desk I found they had to take pieces of orange crates that they had nailed on the backside to hold them together. They had an adding machine

that I am sure Noah used when he counted the animals as they went into the ark. The water fountains over the building were just natural water, no cooling device. When hot weather hit us, one Sunday morning they had a great big wooden keg in the hall back of the auditorium, full of ice water. People were coming up there to drink water and sloshing it on the floor. Kids throwing the cups down--it was the biggest mess you ever saw. I just said, "Lord, if you let me stay here long enough I want to see a cold water fountain within easy reach of every part of this building." So, praise the Lord, that's happened.

But anyway, I went in the pulpit that Sunday morning knowing that I was going to accept, and yet my heart, as I said, was as heavy as lead. I did accept, we had a good revival. We had 114 additions, and a great host of them were on profession of faith. I've often thought about it--I'd shiver a little thinking of it, what a way to start a pastorate. Suppose that had been a flop. But the Lord took care of it. I've always said that the Lord takes care of his own and fools, too, and I figure I come in there somewhere. But we had a great revival, and I went on back home. I had wired my resignation in to the Mobile church. So I went on back home and we moved out here.

T: You accepted while the revival was going on?

H: I started the revival that morning, I got up and the first thing I did was to thank them for the confidence they had placed in me, and I accepted the call. Because I knew, though I couldn't explain it, that God had called me. It's always been an unusual thing to me. We talk about the leadership of the Lord, yet so often when a pastor goes from what seems to be a delightful situation into a difficult one, some say, "Well, what in the world is he doing that for?"

When John Bisagno left First Southern, Del City--which by the way was organized out of a mission of our church after I came here--went to the First Church, Houston--I understand the pastor before him had resigned because he said the situation was hopeless--and people were saying, "Well, what in the world does John mean going down there?" I said, "Well, it could be the Lord is leading him." And I said, "I'll say this much. If John Bisagno can't pull that thing out, then it is hopeless." Well, of course, he has been a very successful minister there. They're going to move out into a new neighborhood in the city, and I suspect he'll have one of the most blessed ministries of anybody.

But anyway, I accepted the call and we moved out here. Actually, my pastoral ministry here began the first Sunday in May, 1949. If anybody had told me at that time that I would have been here twenty-four years, I would have said, "You're crazy." Ray Young told me, "We're looking for somebody to come and stay twenty years." Well, they had never had a pastor to stay over five, and I'd never stayed anywhere over five. So, to both of us that seemed like an eternity. Every year on my anniversary Ray would come around and say, "Well, we've got one less to go, haven't we?" And he said, "I'm going to support you for the twenty years, and after that you're on your own." Well, to Ray's undying credit, the twenty years have long since been gone, but Ray's been one of the main supports we had in our church. And he still is. He told me one day shortly after I came, "Now, I'm not going to get in your way, Preacher, but if you ever need me, pull the rope." Well, I didn't pull it many times, but every time I pulled it, Ray was there.

T: You described visiting with Dr. Summers, at that time professor of New Testament at the seminary. Do you know Dr. Summers well?

H: Oh yes. In fact, I think this might be a good story to tell. You know, not all of church history is solemn. Nobody has any more fun than a bunch of preachers, I guess, when they get together. The Southern Baptist Convention met here about two weeks after I moved on the field. It was almost impossible to get a room. In fact, many people had to stay in a home. Some of my friends still accuse me of coming out here just to get a room at the Convention. Back in those days we closed the Convention every year with an evangelistic service. C. E. Matthews, secretary of Evangelism at the Home Mission Board, would set it up. We had it out in Taft Stadium in Oklahoma City. My wife and I got there early and were sitting up in the crowd. Earl Edington was then at First Baptist Church in St. Petersburg. He and I had been friends for many years from back when he was pastor of the Hunter Street Church in Birmingham. Another pastor we knew in the state, his church wanted him to move. And he wanted to move, but he couldn't get a call. Almost at the same time Earl and I were called to other churches and moved. This fellow said, "Well, Earl and Herschel have proved they've got what it takes to move, but they haven't proved they've got what it takes to stay." Well, we made a joke out of that because we knew how badly he wanted to move. Anyway, that night in Oklahoma City Earl and a group around us were talking about us coming out here. Earl said, "Yes, Herschel is the only man I know, the only preacher I know, that takes literally the Great Commission. Go ye into all the world to preach the gospel." J. D. Grey was president of the Southwestern Seminary Alumni. They had a breakfast in the Skirvin Tower Hotel one morning, and he invited me to come down (he and I have been very close friends ever since our Louisiana days). I went down but I got there late. The meeting had already started, the business meeting, and I just went in, got a chair and sat down by the door. J. D. saw me, and said, "Well, I see Dr. Herschel Hobbs has come in, sitting back there by the door, and I want you folks to meet him, Dr. Hobbs, stand up." He said, "Dr. Hobbs has come out here to be pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, for a little while." Well, that got a big laugh. The Sunday I started here, Ray Summers started an interim pastorate at First Baptist Church, Shawnee, Oklahoma, which is just forty some odd miles east of here. The man that introduced him that morning said, "Dr. Summers is the permanent interim supply pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, temporarily unemployed." When I heard about it, I wrote Ray and told him that I was going to keep him out of a job as long as I could. And I kept him out of a job, at least here, for twenty-four years. But he and I are dear friends, have been through the years.

T: Dr. Summers apparently, as some have suggested, was very, very influential with the president of Southwestern Seminary during those days. Do you know anything about this story?

H: Nothing more than just what I heard. I mean, the rumor. Being a Southern Seminary alumnus, I don't have any particular inroads into what goes on down there.

But I just heard the rumor. He would have made a good president. I think Dr. Head was finally called, and well, Dr. Head succeeded Dr. Scarborough, then Dr. Naylor succeeded Dr. Head, and both have made good presidents. But Ray would have been a good president. I am not sure Ray would have been happy as a seminary president; he's too much of a teacher. He likes to study and write. He likes to teach and delve into the realm of scholarship, and you can't do that and be president of a large institution at the same time. You just don't have enough time. George Beasley-Murray recently came from London to the faculty of Southern Seminary. He is perhaps the leading New Testament scholar among Baptists today. And he had expressed even long before this ever opened up his desire to get back into teaching, because he said in the administrative field you don't have time to study, write, and teach. So I am not sure that even though Ray had been elected, he might have accepted, but I'm not too sure he would have been happy as a seminary executive. He's too much of a teacher and a great one.

T: During Dr. Head's presidency, apparently Dr. Summers exerted rather a strong influence in the direction that the school went, is this true?

H: Yes, I think, if I remember correctly--he was dean of the School of Theology at that time, and more or less Dr. Head's right-hand man--he did greatly influence the direction that the school went.

T: The influence Dr. Summers exerted on the school would not have been as true then when Dr. Naylor became the new president?

H: No, I would think not. You know with the change of administration you usually have a change in relationship, but he did greatly influence the school at that time. Dr. Head was a wonderful president. I didn't know him too intimately as he belonged to an older generation than mine. But as I knew him it appears to me that he would be the kind of a man who would want to rely on another man to carry a certain amount of the burden such as delegating responsibility to Dr. Summers, let's say, in their school of theology. Some pastors are like that. Some more or less want to carry the ball themselves, and let others block for them. It's just a matter of personality. Dr. Head appeared to be the kind of a man, a wonderful Christian, a wise administrator, but one who would delegate authority and responsibility. And of course, if you delegate responsibility, you've got to delegate authority. They go together.

T: There were a couple of other people that you had been associated with and you mentioned one, and I wanted to ask you something about him, that is, John Buchanan. He was on the Executive Committee from Alabama and an acquaintance of yours. Can you tell me something about some of your remembrances of him?

H: Well, I could almost talk all day about Dr. Buchanan, because as I said, he was my mother's pastor until she died. He conducted her funeral. He conducted the funeral for our little baby, and I always felt that he was my pastor, though he actually never was. I remember the first time I ever saw Dr. Buchanan, it was at the seminary. I was a student, and he came there during one of the lecture weeks conducting conferences on Church Administration. Some member of the faculty at that time pointed him out to me as he walked down the hall. He said, "There is one of the greatest diplomats in the Southern Baptist Convention," or statesmen, I believe, is the word he used. At that time he had just been called to Southside, Birmingham, which, of course, at that time was more or less the stackpole church of Alabama. It still is in a way, but as the city has spread out, other strong churches have arisen. I worked with him there as a pastor, and there was no question but that he was the number one leader. The brethren had confidence in him. He was a great factor in the building of Samford University out of Howard College. During the time of the Depression years, when Howard and Judson College like all Baptist colleges were struggling to stay alive, John Buchanan was just like a rock in there helping and leading other people to help. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, and in those days we didn't have the rotating system. Therefore, he was on for many years. Men like Dr. Buchanan, Louie Newton, Frank Tripp, George Ragland, and some others, they were more or less a bunch of giants in those days.

T: Did they run the Convention?

H: No, I wouldn't say they ran it. I don't think any one person runs the Southern Baptist Convention. But by virtue of their stature, ability, and their experience in being on the Executive Committee, they exerted a great influence. And it's interesting that so often in state as well as Southwide Baptist work, Dr. Buchanan would be on one side of a question, Dr. Tripp on the other. But they were the very best of friends. I've seen them debate some pretty hot issues. The Convention met one year in the First Church, Montgomery, where Dr. Tripp was pastor. He and Dr. Buchanan were both nominated for president of the Convention. Dr. Tripp was elected. It would have been, I guess, a tragedy if he hadn't in his own church. But later Dr. Buchanan was elected. They would debate in Alabama Convention affairs like they would in Southern Baptist affairs. But they were like any great Christians, whenever a decision was made they worked together and pitched in. Dr. Buchanan was nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention in Memphis the year Dr. Lee was elected his first time. I was asked to nominate Dr. Lee and had agreed. I was then at Dauphin Way.

T: Were you a good personal friend of Dr. Lee's?

H: Well, yes, I guess you'd say so. I had not been buddy-buddy with him. There's a difference in our ages which would have taken care of a lot of that. I've had him in my church in a revival. So when some that were interested in Dr. Lee being nominated asked him what he thought about asking me to do it, he said, "I think it would be fine, I'd be delighted and honored." And so I agreed to do it. Well, I learned later that Dr. Buchanan was going to be nominated, and so I wrote the man who had asked me to nominate Dr. Lee, "I am embarrassed, but Dr. Buchanan is an Alabamian, a pastor in Alabama where I am, he was my mother's pastor, he buried my baby, and I just cannot nominate anybody against John Buchanan. So I'm asking that you release me, and that you explain to Dr. Lee." So he did. And Dr. Lee, of course, being the gracious Christian he is, understood and accepted it without any question. Now, what little influence I could have in talking to people at the Convention I did talk in favor of Dr. Lee, because I felt that at that particular time he was the man we needed. But that did not in any sense mean that I was any less a friend of Dr. Buchanan, because I loved him and still do.

I told that story to point this out. Dr. Lee--and again this is not in any sense derogatory concerning him, he and I are very dear friends, have gotten closer friends through the years, and we were even at the time I agreed to nominate him. But Dr. Lee was the great preacher. He was on the program to preach at Southern Baptist Convention, the state convention, or the evangelistic conferences. Dr. Buchanan was the statesman. He was the wheelhorse, so to speak, Dr. Lee was the racehorse, Dr. Buchanan, I am sure, has spent more hours, midnight and two and three o'clock in the morning, in committees wrestling with the problems of Southern Baptists, more than we could count almost. I know from my own personal experience in later years what he did. Because my contemporaries on the Executive Committee did the same thing. But Dr. Buchanan, being the statesman and not necessarily a great pulpiteer like Lee, was in the background. The only time the brethren ever saw him at the Convention was in connection with the report of the Executive Committee, usually when he

and somebody else would be debating an issue. In fact, that year, he was pretty much involved in a debate over some matter not too many hours before the election of the president. Well, when you go to the Convention, whether you are pastor of the First Baptist Church in a big city with a lot of wealth and affluency or whether you are at the Goose Creek or Chittling Switch Baptist Church, you have just as many votes as that big city pastor. So the preachers for the most part didn't know Dr. Buchanan. They weren't back there in those committee rooms seeing him labor and bleed for Southern Baptists. But they knew Dr. Lee, so they voted for him. Dr. Buchanan was not elected. Either one of them would have made a great president. Dr. Lee made a great president, so much so that he was asked to take an unprecedented third term, unprecedented in modern times, but Dr. Buchanan also would have done a fine job if he had been elected. Just like another man whom I nominated for the presidency one time, Doug Hudgins. Doug dropped out, as I remember, on the first ballot. And yet Doug Hudgins would have made a tremendous president of the Convention. I guess he knew more about the Convention at the time in a minute than the man who was elected knew all day. Because he was involved in other things. But the brethren as a whole didn't know Doug. Doug has not been one of the great evangelistic conference preachers and things like that.

T: Dr. Lee indicates that there were a number of people that didn't want to see him elected and some of his enemies didn't want to see him elected as president. He, of course, tried on at least a couple of occasions, and then was elected in the Memphis Convention at a time when he says this would be an unexpected thing for the pastor in the local city, in which the president came from the local city where the Convention is meeting. Do you think there's any truth in that?

H: Oh yes! There was not personal enmity between Dr. Lee and these men. I think the word "enemy" is a pretty strong word to us. They were opponents.

T: With theological issues or just opponents period?

H: Mostly on ecclesiological issues. Well, when Louie Newton was elected in Miami they voted half the night. And they had so many nominated. We didn't have the modern ways of counting votes. They'd vote by ballot, and then they'd have to count, and hours later to come back and report. Well, so many had dropped out, and now we've got to vote on these. It finally came way down the line to Dr. Lee and Dr. Newton. And so Dr. Newton was elected. Dr. Lee is reported to have said, "Well my friends on the next to the last ballot cast their ballot and figured that was decided. It was late at night, and they went on to their hotels." He said, "A lot of my friends weren't there." That may have been true or not, of course nobody knows. But anyway, Dr. Lee at Memphis was criticized by some for letting his name go up in his own city. Well, I don't think it was a valid criticism, but nevertheless some did. If you're looking for some reason to criticize somebody, you can always find something, you know. But at this particular Convention in Memphis, some men, many of them were very good friends of mine, I would rather not call names, but they were friends of mine, were going around in the hotel lobbies, saying, "Now we must not elect Dr. Lee, we must elect Dr. Buchanan, because Dr. Lee is involved with so many things outside our denomination." They mentioned particularly Bob Jones University. Well, he'd been on their Board of Trustees for quite a while. Dr. Lee is a very strong con-

servative. I wouldn't call him a Fundamentalist in the classical sense of that word as Southern Baptists use it. He is a strong Conservative, but cooperative in all of our work. And I guess that perhaps in a way led him to have connections with other groups outside the denomination. But, anyway, they were using that against him. J. D. Grey and I, knowing that, got in a cab and went out to the Bellvue Church, taking a chance on finding Dr. Lee there. And sure enough, he was there. We went in to see him and told him, "Now Dr. Lee, some who are opposing your election are using the fact that you are a member of the Board of Trustees of Bob Jones University against you. And, honestly, we don't have anything to answer that with. You've got to give us something, if there is anything, that we can use to answer this as people come to us and as we talk to people." There was no political campaign on. But you know that when you go to a Convention, when you're going to elect a new president, people are talking about it. If they know you and know anything about you, they ask, "What do you think?" And you talk. Well, we told him that we just had to have some kind of an answer, if there was one. He called his secretary to bring him his file on Bob Jones University. He showed us letters that he had written asking Bob Jones to remove his name from his trustee list. They dated back for two or three years, at least. But his name was not removed. He said he had even considered going to law to get his name off, because he had come to feel that it was not in the best interests of Southern Baptists. So with that we went back and began to pass that word around. Whether it did any good or not, I don't know, but evidently it did.

Another thing that they were telling had to do with Frank Norris, who was still living then and quite active against the Southern Baptist program. You know the Convention constitution bylaws say that a person can be a messenger if he contributes any money to the support of the Convention during the year. Every year Frank Norris, though not part of the Convention, would send in a contribution to the Cooperative Program in order to qualify. He was always a messenger to the Convention, and used to hold his tent meetings near the Convention Hall where he would lambast Southern Baptists. And lots of the young preachers would go down there and hear him, not because they were in sympathy with him, but he was quite a show. I never did. And Frank Norris, by the way, was a genius. It was just too bad that he got off on the turn that he did, at least in my judgment. But anyway, they were telling this story that Frank Norris' son moved to Memphis, and that Dr. Lee contacted him and in talking to him said, "If I had been in your father's position, I would have done what your father did." Well, the implication being, "If I'd been in his position back there in Texas years ago, I would have pulled out of the Convention, too." That was what the story implied. Dr. Lee said, "Well, now, I'm going to tell you the straight story. I don't mean that these other men were deliberately twisting facts; but you know how a story gets going and the first thing you know you hear it and don't recognize it. He said, "Now here is the whole story. I had a phone call one night from Frank Norris. He said, 'Dr. Lee, this is Frank Norris in Fort Worth. I've got a son in Memphis and he's a Baptist. Regardless of what his father may or may not have done, he's a fine man. I wish that you would go to see him and invite him to your church.'" And Dr. Lee said, "Brother Norris, I'll go anywhere at any time and invite anybody to come to my church, and I'll certainly go." Well, he went, and the son expressed surprise that Dr. Lee, a Southern Baptist, would come to him trying to get him to come to his church because he was Frank Norris' son. Dr. Lee said, "If I had been in your father's place, I would have done what your father did.

Had I had a son in another city, I would have contacted a Baptist pastor there and asked him to go to see him and invite him to his church. Now that's the true story." He told us that story that day, and we passed it around.

T: Who were Dr. Lee's strongest opponents in the Convention at that time?

H: Oh, I don't know. Dr. David M. Gardner, as I remember, nominated Dr. Buchanan. I'm certain of that, but they were good friends. And Dr. Gardner was, Brother, he was a staunch Southern Baptist if there ever was one. I related earlier my relationship to him, you know. I know he was one that I remember hearing going up to some group in the lobby of one of the hotels, and talking about Dr. Lee being on the Board of Trustees at Bob Jones. Now, I'm sure that others that were friends of Buchanan, maybe some of the men--I can't be absolutely certain about this--but maybe some of the men that I've mentioned who were with him on the Executive Committee. They were not against Dr. Lee. You don't have to be against somebody to be for somebody. If I'm for you, that automatically means I'm against somebody that might be considered for the same position that you are being considered to fill. So it wasn't a matter of bitterness at all. It was just an honest difference among Baptist brethren.

As I started to mention, after Dr. Lee's election in the Convention was over, I went back to Mobile. I got a letter from C. E. Matthews, who at that time was still pastor at Travis Avenue Church of Fort Worth. He said, "Herschel, I have learned since coming home that Dr. Lee is to deliver the Commencement address at Bob Jones University, and it just simply must not be. I don't know of anybody but you close enough to Dr. Lee (now I'm sure there were others, but I'm just telling you what his letter said, he evidently had known of my agreement to nominate him and just put two and two together) to ask him to ask to be released from that engagement." Well, I wrote Dr. Lee a letter, I felt like an ant trying to advise an elephant. But I wrote him and I said, "Dr. Lee, you know I love you and I want your ministry as president of the Southern Baptist Convention to be everything great that you hope it will be to the glory of God. And I'm so hesitant to make a suggestion to you, but I'm going to make bold to make one. I understand that you are scheduled to deliver the Commencement address at Bob Jones University in June. Now what you did as pastor of the Bellvue Baptist Church was nobody's business but yours and that of the church. But now, since you've been elected to this office, what you do is the business of all Southern Baptists, and I hope you can find it in your heart to ask to be released from this engagement." I thought it would be a great service to Southern Baptists and to what he was hoping to do as the president. I got a letter back in a few days. He thanked me for my letter, and he said, "I'm happy to inform you that I have already written asking to be released, that I will not be able to deliver the Commencement address. And he didn't. So Dr. Lee had these outside interests and connections, and we have lots of pastors like that. We have some pastors--you know that unless something has a Southern Baptist label on it, they won't have anything to do with it. We have others that are more or less John Wesley. "If your heart be as my heart, give me thy hand." So the fact that Dr. Lee would take that step and then went on to make a tremendous president shows the caliber of the man.

I think one of the most dramatic moments I ever saw was when the Gardner Committee, not David Gardner, but the Gardner who was Secretary of Training Union work in Texas--

whose sister by the way was Dr. Lee's educational director--C. E. Gardner, I believe. Anyway, he was chairman of a committee that brought in a report that year. They had brought several reports, but this one was to be their final one, in which it was setting forth certain doctrinal requirements for a church to be considered a Southern Baptist church. One of them had to do with baptism and the Lord's Supper. Dr. Lee wisely knew that if that were adopted, it could very easily have driven a wedge in the Southern Baptist fellowship. It could even have resulted in a division. So when that report was finished, Dr. Lee relinquished the gavel to a vice-president. I'm sure that in his own mind and heart and in his own theological position, the things that they recommended were things that he agreed with; but knowing what it could do to the Convention and for the Convention's sake, Dr. Lee relinquished the gavel and made an appeal to the Convention not to adopt that report. And they didn't.

T: This report also included the provision that no member of an agency could be a member of a church affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches, did it not?

H: I think that was involved. But I remember also that it had to do with baptism and the Lord's Supper.

T: Dr. E. P. Alldredge was very strongly involved in that?

H: Yes. But I mentioned that to show you the bigness of the man. Though he had these outside interests, his first love was the Southern Baptist Convention. He did, I guess, what was an unprecedented thing--and it hasn't been done since to my knowledge--in relinquishing the gavel to appeal to the Convention not to adopt a report of a committee appointed by the Convention.

T: You mentioned earlier Dr. J. Frank Norris, did you know him?

H: I knew him just casually. But I dare say he didn't know me except in the same way. The only personal connection I ever had with Dr. Norris was at the Convention in Oklahoma City in 1949. Now Dr. M. E. Dodd has been president as they call it in those days or chairman of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference for sixteen years at that time. He had a heart attack and could not be present to preside. He asked that I preside. Well, Frank Norris and the men who usually walked around with him were in the meeting the afternoon Louie Newton was to deliver an address. Louie had just come back from Russia a few months before, talking about what the Russian system was and the freedom the churches had and all, and, of course, Frank was insisting that was not the case. So he had been taking Louie apart in his paper, The Fundamentalist. When I presented Louie to speak that afternoon, one of Norris' men got up and began to protest. I was still somewhat of a fledgling in denominational work. I had been on a number of boards and things, but I had not been in that particular position. Louie had been a past president of the Convention; he was perfectly in control of himself. He said to me, "Sit down, I'll take care of it." So he said, "Well, now, Brother So and So, you've had your picture made, that's what you stood up for, now sit down and I'll go on and make my speech." Well, everybody laughed, and the fellow sat down, and Louie made his speech. But when he got through, Frank

Norris and this bunch got up and walked out of the auditorium. That year they met in our auditorium, that's how the Pastors' Conference has grown since then.

T: At First Baptist Church?

H: Yes. It was packed and jammed. Incidentally, the Southern Baptist Convention met in our auditorium in 1912 just two or three months after it was finished, and there was enough room in there for everybody. You've got a picture that I sent you of the Convention, one of those roll-out pictures, that was made along the 11th Street side of our church. When we began gathering the historical materials that I showed you yesterday, a woman brought me this picture. I looked on it, and just like I was almost drawn to it, the first two people I recognized were Dr. B. H. Carroll and Dr. George W. Truett. Dr. Carroll--I recognized him by his long beard--and Dr. Truett were sitting on the curb. Of course, Dr. Carroll was Dr. Truett's hero. I had copies of the picture made, one for our own library, one for myself, one for you, and one for First Baptist Church, Dallas, I sent it to Dr. Criswell. Davis Woolley, who was then, of course, executive secretary of the Historical Commission, wrote me back and thanked me for it, I said, "Now, Davis, I recognize certain people, but people over there can probably recognize most of these people and you can make a notation as to who they are." He wrote back and thanked me for it, he said, "This is a tremendous thing to give to us. The first person I recognized on there was my own dad standing on the back row."

Well, anyway, when Dr. Norris and his group got up to leave, the building was hot, we had air conditioning, but with that crowd in there it was hot. It was in May. So I said, "Well, I'm going to ask the ushers to open the doors /couldn't open the windows/ front and back, and let's blow this thing out and air it out." Well, everybody thought I was taking a crack at Frank Norris and his group. But I wasn't. That was the last thing I wanted to do. I didn't want to get him on to me. I meant simply to air out the building because it was so hot and stuffy in there. But everybody really laughed. When Norris got out I said, "Don't misunderstand me, I wasn't referring to them, I knew the building was hot and stuffy." But later, I guess it was in Chicago the next year, I was in the coffee shop of the hotel at breakfast time. I walked by the table where W. R. White was seated. Frank Norris was just ahead of me. He stopped and talked to Billy White. I was not able to get by, and didn't want to anyway. I wanted to see what they were saying. I never shall forget. This was only a year or so before Frank Norris died. Billy said, "Frank, how are you getting along?" He said, "Oh, Billy, I'm getting along all right, but, you know, I get lonesome for my brethren. Do you suppose Southern Baptists would take me back?" Billy laughed and said, "No, Frank, you stay right where you are. You're doing us more good where you are than you would be if you were one of us." Well, as I said, I had never had any personal relationships with Norris above that, but I was familiar with him, I had read his paper. Incidentally, a biography of him recently was written by a former associate pastor of his who is now a Southern Baptist pastor. It's a very fine biography, and I think it's very fair to Norris and to Southern Baptists.

T: What is that?

H: I forget the name of it, but it came out four or five years ago. But anyway, I have made the statement and I make it now, though some have been rather surprised.

But I have said that Southern Baptists owe a greater debt to Frank Norris than they will ever recognize or than they can ever repay, in that at a period when denominations were being swept from their traditional historical moorings in theology into modernism and so on, every time that any person in a place of leadership of any sort in the Southern Baptist Convention would get a little bit off of the center line, he was the headline material in Frank Norris' paper the next week. And he'd get back on that center line. Seminary professors, for instance, would go out and speak at state conventions, and he'd find out. They'd maybe said something, maybe it was not bad but he'd pick it up and out of the context he would blow it up into something. So the brethren were careful not to get involved in these extraneous matters. It's for that reason that I feel that we owe Frank Norris a debt, in that he was sort of a watchdog. We've had a lot of self-appointed ones since then, but I think Frank really was in a sense. He didn't stay inside and try to tear up the Convention, but he did it from the outside.

T: He was put out of the Texas Convention?

H: Oh yes, he was put out by them back then. But at the same time he was a genius, as I said earlier, in many ways. You know there's a thin line between being a genius and being unbalanced in a sense. I don't mean that he was insane, but most great crusaders have those two elements. They are so closely related that you sometimes wonder which side of the line they're on. But I still think that he did us a great service. Maybe he didn't necessarily intend to or maybe he did. But he did render it. You know, long before I could find any manuscript evidence for it, and thankfully I have found it in Nestle's version. But long before I could find any manuscript evidence for it, just my reason told me that Romans 8:28 in the King James Version is not translated correctly. "We know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, and who are the called according to his purpose." Well now, as I said many times in sermons, "We know that all things work together for good," that isn't faith, that's fatalism. That somehow everything's going to work out. But for a long time I was saying, "God works in all things for good" and so on. And there is manuscript evidence for that now. I think that is what Paul really wrote. And even though some of the things that Norris did maybe were not intended to help Southern Baptists, the end result was that it did help Southern Baptists. But I think God works in all things.

T: You mentioned Dr. Newton being at that Pastors' Conference meeting in 1949, that was one of the last times he was active within the platform among Southern Baptists for a long period of time. Do you think that particular experience was disturbing to him and was in part why he dropped out?

H: No, I don't think so. In other words this didn't matter enough. This man, I can't think of his name now, some people called him Norris' "hatchet man." He was the one who tried to disrupt the Texas Convention one year in Amarillo. Wallace Bassett was president. He knew they were going to try to do it, and he got some Baylor football players up there, or pastors who had been Baylor football players, and they were all ready. When this old boy started a Hurrah, they just got him bodily and took him out. Vernon Yerby, by the way, who is secretary of the Baptist Foundation in Alabama, was one of those football boys who had to take the fellow out. They

didn't mistreat him, they just took him out bodily. But there was nothing like that here. It was merely that this man got up and protested having this man on the program who had been to Russia. It didn't upset Louie. He merely told me, "Sit down, I'll take care of it." And he gave that one reply. "You wanted to get your picture made, that's what you got up for, now that it's been made, sit down, and I'll go on and make my speech." The people laughed, and he went on and made his speech. I don't think that experience had anything to do with his dropping out at all. Now, whatever it may have been, I don't think that was it. Louie continued to be active in the Executive Committee. He was chairman of the Finance Committee when I went on the Executive Committee in 1951. I served on that committee. He was on the committee until the rotation system that was brought in by Dr. Barton of Alabama. When it began to operate, Louie rotated off, and was never back on. But in the meantime, age was creeping up on Louie, and his wife's health wasn't too good. I think a lot of things entered into his more or less taking a back seat. He hasn't been to a Convention in a number of years now. But I don't think it's because he's mad about anything or sulking; there are other reasons. Some say that it's related to his not being elected president of the Baptist World Congress in London when it was, everything else being equal on the surface, his time. But I could not say that that is the case, because while I've been very close to him for twenty years or more, he has never indicated anything like that to me.

Incidentally, I held a revival meeting for him when we had the crusade east of the Mississippi River three years ago. I was with him for two weeks, and I felt that I'd been sitting at the spring of Southern Baptist history. He is just a storehouse of it. He had himself been involved in so much of it. For instance, he was on the committee that went in and discovered the shortage when Carnes made off with all that Home Mission Board money. Things that I had read about him in the papers, he was a part of it. So it was a rich two weeks that I had just listening to him talk about church history. He liked to talk about it, and I liked to listen to it.

T: You mentioned the 1949 Convention in Oklahoma City; that was perhaps one of the most volatile that Southern Baptists had held for some time. There are several issues--the selection of an assembly site west of the Mississippi, the issue relating to several council of churches, can you give any description of what really went on in 1949 at that Convention?

H: Well, you know every Convention has a personality all its own. I've been going to the Southern Baptist Convention since I got out of the seminary, except the one two years ago when I was recuperating from a slight heart attack. But I don't think any two Conventions have been just alike; each has its own personality. You go along for a number of years--at least back then, it hasn't been so true in recent years--but back then you'd go along for a number of years, with the brethren sitting out there on those hard Convention seats while the brethren on the platform were bringing their reports, moving their adoption, and the brethren out here voting, "Aye." But every once in a while you'd come to a Convention when the mood seemed to be that we want to remind you fellows on that platform that we are out here. Even though you might think you're running the show, we're the ones who are really running it. And that year they would vote against everything that smacked of any kind of officialdom.

The 1949 Convention was one of those years. They voted down the motion brought by a committee that we postpone indefinitely the matter of taking in the Baptists of Kansas. Well, that committee knew something they could not tell the Convention. I suppose it's all right to put it in this report, because the man that talked to me is dead. Not too long after that Convention I went to Wichita and spoke at the Southern Baptist State Convention in Kansas. It must have been in the following fall. While there I went over to the First Baptist Church, which was an American Baptist church, and visited with Dr. Fred B. Thorn, who was the pastor. He had been a Southern Baptist, and was a pastor in Houston. But he was up there then as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Wichita. When the committee of the Southern Baptist Convention went up there to visit relative to this matter, they talked with him. He told them, "There is a movement of unrest among the American Baptists of Kansas. With things that are going on in their Convention, their relation to the Federal Council, and a lot of other things," he said, "If you will wait five years , why, I think the Baptists of Kansas, lock, stock, and barrel, will come into the Southern Baptist Convention. /There was friction between the American Baptists and that group at that time. I don't know that there is now. American Baptists resented Southern Baptists as they thought, coming into their territory. Actually, these Southern Baptist people were there, they sprang up from the land. Southern Baptists as such didn't come in as an invading force./ But if you take this other group in now you'll never get the others, and they can be the real strength of Baptist work in Kansas." But the committee couldn't get up and tell that to the Southern Convention. They merely recommended that we postpone action. And, of course, the brethren in Kansas that wanted to be taken into the Convention didn't know that. They argued their point that they ought to be taken in now without delay. The Convention voted down the Committee's report. They voted to adopt the minority report, or a substitute motion, I don't know which it was, to receive the Southern Baptists of Kansas at that Convention.

T: Dr. Thorn's church was the largest American Baptist church at that particular time?

H: Yes. I might say since all of that happened that church itself finally split. This was after Dr. Thorn had left there. The larger body of that church organized the Metropolitan Baptist Church. Dr. Thorn's son, incidentally, is the pastor of it now. But they organized an unaligned church. While I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I received a long questionnaire from a committee of that church wanting to know what Southern Baptists believed about various things. One had to do with who owns the property. You see, the courts had decided that the minority that stayed with the First Baptist Church in the American Convention owned the property, when actually the greater number of people who had helped build it were gone. So that was one thing they wanted to know. But they also wanted to know about our doctrinal position on other things. For instance, about the relation of the local church to the Convention, you see, the American Convention has a different concept. Their concept is that the Convention life revolves more around boards than agencies. Ours is that the local church is the final authority in Baptist matters. Anyway, they were considering whether to come into the Southern Baptist Convention. They said, "We want to be aligned somewhere, and we don't want to come into the Southern Baptist Convention and find that we are back in the same thing." I answered their questionnaire and wrote them a letter. I believe they may even have talked to me, either coming here or calling, I don't remember the details. But anyway, they did vote to come into the

Southern Baptist Convention. The group was largely made up of people that were in First Baptist Church at the time all this other was happening.

Now the other thing was about the assembly west of the Mississippi. Dr. Perry Webb, who has been at First Baptist, San Antonio, was chairman of the committee. He was a native of Arkansas. Naturally, various states made a bid for this assembly to be located in their area. New Mexico made their bid on the area which is now Glorieta Assembly. Arkansas Baptists offered land up around Harrison, Arkansas, in the Ozarks. I'm not saying that this had anything to do with the report of the committee, but it just happened that Dr. Webb is a native of Arkansas. The committee finally voted to recommend that it be located in Arkansas. Well, the minority report was brought recommending Glorieta. They had quite a debate. It was sort of nip and tuck until one member of the committee, Pat Murphy, who is now dead, spoke. He was then pastor at Tulsa. Pat was a grand old boy. He was on the committee. When it looked like the sentiment was swinging toward Glorieta, he got up and made an impassioned plea that they support the committee's report, the majority report. He said, "If you don't vote to adopt this report, you're going to embarrass your committee, because we've made commitments." Well, brother, that was just like old Jereboam the First saying, "To your tents, O Israel!" That settled it. The committee had no right to make commitments. Now what commitments they had made, I don't know. I'm sure they were not binding. They had probably said, "Well, if we come here, we'll do certain things, or recommend they be done." But anyway, that settled it. It was one of these antiofficialdom conventions. They voted overwhelmingly then to accept the minority report. It isn't an unheard-of thing for Southern Baptists to vote to adopt a minority report. Sometimes I think, personally, the Convention makes mistakes in doing so; sometimes it does the right thing. Now in that case, I think the Convention made a mistake in not voting to adopt the report of the committee on the Kansas situation. It was an honest mistake. They didn't have information that the committee knew. Had they done so, they might have voted otherwise. But nevertheless they did vote down the committee's majority reports.

T: It could not have been told, though?

H: No, it could not have been told. On the other hand, I think the Convention did the right thing in voting down the majority report on the assembly. I think Glorieta is the ideal place for the Assembly for a lot of reasons. One is the climate, another is the scenery, another is the fact that it is more equidistant, I mean, the Arkansas site would have been too close to Ridgecrest. But as it is, we've got one on the East Coast and one in the Far West that are better able to serve the needs of Southern Baptists. So I think that in the assembly matter the minority report was right. The other is open to question, certainly.

T: Are there other things that come to mind about the 1949 Convention and what went on at it?

H: Well, Brother Tonks, we've been talking more or less about the official actions of the Convention and trying to evaluate them. But I think one of the most significant things that happened in the 1949 Convention was the fact that Dr. E. W. Perry, Sr., was invited to preach at the Convention. Dr. Perry was a Negro preacher. He had

been pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, at that time, I guess, for between thirty-five and forty years. Eventually he was pastor there for fifty years. When he became blind, his son became co-pastor with him. The old Doctor is dead now, and his son is still there. But the point is, he was the first Negro ever invited to preach a sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention. We'd had Negroes on the staff, like on the Home Mission Board, that might bring a report. But he was the first Negro outside of our fellowship to be asked to preach at the Southern Baptist Convention. And that was, I remind you, before the Supreme Court decision on school segregation, which shows that Southern Baptists have not been the so-called bigoted, segregated people that some would have the world to believe we are. Dr. Perry was asked to preach. He preached on the Resurrection. He was born and reared in Mississippi. Dr. R. G. Lee was the president of the Convention at that time, and he was born and reared in South Carolina. And so when Dr. Perry got up to preach after Dr. Lee had presented him, he said, "Mr. President, I've been seventy years getting where I am right now, so please sir, don't use that gavel on me till I get through." The crowd laughed, Dr. Lee put his arm around Dr. Perry and Dr. Perry put his arm around Dr. Lee, and they had a love feast. Dr. Lee said, "You go on and preach as long as you want." Well, I happened to be standing in the wings of the auditorium where we were meeting, and could hear what went on. The choir of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Dr. Perry's church, sang just before he preached. Dr. Perry began to preach. But he was trying to preach like a white man. Anybody who has ever heard Negroes preach know they can outpreach white people all over the place. But he was trying to preach like a white man. I was thinking, "Now this is not going to be very much." I had just barely met Dr. Perry at the time, because I had just come to the city. But I could hear his choir back there talking to him somewhat under their breath. I dare say the audience couldn't hear it, but I could. And it went something like this. "Come on, come on, you can do better than that. Come on, you ain't said nothing yet. Come on, come on," they just kept talking to him. And finally he caught fire. He forgot where he was, and he caught fire. He began to preach as only a Negro can preach. And I'm telling you, people, wherever I go even today, and that's twenty-five years after the event, still say, "I'll never forget that sermon that Dr. Perry preached in Oklahoma City. It was on the Ressurection, and you could just see the graves opening and the dead coming forth. It was one of the most thrilling things I ever saw." He would preach awhile, and then he would sort of sing, or chant, a little while, and then back into preaching. By the time he got through, he had preached a great sermon, and he had that congregation up on cloud nine. So I think that was one of the significant things about the 1949 Convention.

T: Did you have any part in having him invited to that Convention?

H: No, I didn't have any at all. You see, the program was prepared by the Committee on Order of Business before I came to Oklahoma City. I didn't even know Dr. Perry. Later on, I think it was that year, I was appointed chairman of the Committee on Order of Business to prepare the program for the Chicago Convention. But I had nothing whatever to do with the one in Oklahoma City.

T: Was it a big decision to take the Convention to Chicago in 1950, or was it just an obvious move?

H: Well, it was somewhat both. It was a big decision. It was the first time the Southern Baptist Convention had ever met outside the traditional Southern Baptist territory, because at that time we had nothing in Chicago. We didn't have any churches in the Chicago area. We had some in Southern Illinois and none in Chicago itself. There was no organized work in Indiana, like an association or a convention. But we had gotten to the place where it was difficult to find a place with enough hotel rooms and a large enough meeting place to accommodate the Convention. We had, as I said earlier, difficulty finding places for people to stay at the Convention in Oklahoma City. And that may have influenced the people as much as anything.

Going to Chicago was quite a departure and an adventure in a way. I was chairman of the Program Committee, or the Committee on Order of Business that year, and I was asked to preside at the Oklahoma City meeting of the Pastors' Conference when Dr. Dodd was unable to preside. The Nominating Committee wanted to nominate me for chairman. They called it chairman in those days, they call it president now. They figured, I guess, that Dr. Dodd would never be able to be active anymore, so they wanted to nominate me as chairman. I said, "No you won't either. A man that's carried this thing for seventeen years and the first time you find him flat on his back, you're not going to put him out of office. No, I won't be a party to that, but if you want to make me co-chairman with the understanding that if anything happens to Dr. Dodd that he cannot function, you'll have somebody responsible that can function, then I'll let you do that." So they did. Well, anyway, he planned the program for the Chicago meeting, but again was unable to attend, and I presided.

At the same time I was chairman of the Committee on Order of Business for the regular Convention. We weren't concerned about the number of messengers that would be there for the regular session of the Convention, but we were concerned about the closing night. As I have indicated earlier, in those days, we closed the Convention with an evangelistic service on Friday night. The question in our minds was, "Will all the messengers start home as they usually do before that time and leave us with nobody for an evangelistic service?" In order to get around that, the Committee on Order of Business worked to plan that service. We enlisted the cooperation of the various Baptist groups in and around the Chicago area. There were the Negroes, the American Baptists, and various ethnic groups that had their Baptist conventions. All in all there were about forty separate Baptist bodies in the greater Chicago area. We got the cooperation of these people that they would sponsor the attendance at this Friday night evangelistic service. It was held in the Chicago stadium that would seat over twenty-five thousand people. We had a choir made up of Negroes; we set out to get a thousand-voice choir, and we pretty near had it. The speakers for that night were Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, who was pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago, and president of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Incorporated, and Dr. R. G. Lee. They were the speakers for the night, and we packed that thing. There were just a few vacant seats up in the back part of one little corner.

T: It was an integrated meeting, then?

H: Oh yes, everybody, no matter of what race. We were all there. We had a great meeting. We had people make professions of faith that night. But I was interested

in noting that on Monday night after we had had our meeting there, President Harry Truman came to Chicago and the Democrats had a rally in Chicago Stadium. They had a parade and wound up with a rally, and Harry Truman spoke. So I was interested in the attendance, and our meeting outdrew the President of the United States. But it was a departure, and, of course, it set a precedent. Since that time we've met in other areas outside of the Convention territory, such as Philadelphia, Detroit, Atlantic City, Portland. Of course, we have a strong work in Portland. In fact, we've got Baptist work all over the United States now. But I'm using these cities, San Francisco and all, to point out cities that are outside of the old traditional Southern Baptist territory. It might be said, in a way, that in San Antonio when we voted to take in the California Baptists, it was a decided step. We had in times past taken in Southern Illinois, which was outside of the old Mason-Dixon Line territory. So, I suspect, we might say, that in going to Chicago--actually the vote was taken in Oklahoma City in 1949--it was at that time that Southern Baptists in a sense really became national in nature.

T: There are a couple of things that rise out of this and come to mind. In 1949 the Southern Baptist Convention approved the acceptance of the Oregon Baptist General Convention of Oregon that became the Baptist General Convention of Oregon-Washington and now Northwestern. . . .

H: Yes. I quite well remember the speech by Dr. Milam on that occasion.

T: Can you relate some of your remembrances there on that?

H: Well, nothing specific, except that again there was that tendency to feel that we were going too far afield. Dr. Milam made a very impassioned speech at times. A preacher, you know, is not supposed to show anger, he shows righteous indignation. And I suspect there was a certain amount of righteous indignation that came out of Dr. Milam that day. He was a strong-willed person. He was a Texan originally, and yet, he could be rather blunt at times. He was a wonderful person, but he spoke his feelings in no uncertain terms that day. The Convention voted to accept Oregon, and our work is growing up there.

T: Why do you think the Convention accepted that when it rejected so many other things at Oklahoma City? They rejected the Committee report on Kansas, they rejected the decision on the assemblies, and yet accepted Oregon.

H: Well, I think they accepted Oregon on the same basis that they accepted the Kansas minority report; it was an expansion. Because there were so many of those people who were identified with the "leadership" that, again, that was in a sense a vote against officialdom.

T: In the 1950 Convention you were chairman of Order of Business Committee. I've heard it suggested that Southern Baptists would have adopted the name "American Baptist Convention" if their meeting had been before the Northern Baptist Convention, which changed the name. Was there any truth to that statement that you know of?

H: I don't know of anything that I could lay my finger on and say that this is where it happened, or this is where it was said, or who said it. However, I will say that I suspect that if American Baptists had not taken that name that Southern Baptists might have, because we were looking for a name, and, in a sense, still are, that will express more than our regional,. sectional ties. Yet, no name has ever come up that I have found. I have no objection to changing the name, I think that "Southern Baptists" is more than a sectional term, it's more or less expressing a school of theological thought than it does the sectional idea. If we ever come up with a better name, I would have no objection to changing it. But, frankly, I don't see any reason to change it just to change it, unless we have a name that we are willing to live with for a long time. Now "National" has been taken, that's out, because we have actually three Negro conventions that share that name. So when the Northern Baptists took the name of "American," that left us out. We've had some that wanted to call it "World." Well, that's taking in too much territory. The British Baptists and some others might object to that. So, I don't know, until we can find a better name, I don't see any reason to change it from what we have.

T: You don't know any, you haven't any evidence at all that they seriously considered calling the Convention the "American Baptist Convention."

H: If so, I'm not aware of it.

T: You mentioned Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, the president of the National Baptist Convention, Incorporated. Do you know Dr. Jackson at all; do you know him well?

H: Oh yes, I know Dr. Jackson very well. I would say intimately.

T: How would you describe him?

H: Well, I think he is a great preacher. I think he has a very good sense of humor, he has a sense of dedication, and a very serious side. I think he is a wise leader of his people. He is a conservative man, not given to extremes. One day when Harry Truman was out taking one of his famous walks the press asked him what he thought would come of the movement among the Negroes struggling for equality and so on. He said, "I don't think that there'll be a great deal come of it, because I do not know of anybody among them that is able to furnish leadership." This was after he was out of the presidency, he was just in Washington and was taking a walk. We were in the throes of racial disturbances. I wrote him a letter and I never got a reply. I said, "Mr. President, I'm sure you know Dr. Joseph H. Jackson." I told him who he was, and I said, "In my judgment he is the man. I think Dr. Jackson is the wisest leader in America today among his own race." That's my opinion.

T: Would you agree with the statement the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Incorporated, is the most poorly organized of all of the conventions?

H: Well, that's probably true, I'm not familiar enough with the organizational life of any of them to make anything like an authoritative judgment. I'm thinking more in terms of Dr. Jackson himself. For instance, in one of his presidential addresses,

at a time when so many of the Negro leaders were going around with their hand out, saying, "Gimmee, gimmee, gimmee, gimmee. Give to us because we are black, give to us." In other words they said, "We want a certain amount of the wealth." Dr. Jackson, along about then, delivered his presidential address to his convention. He made reference to that attitude, and then said, "Now we are about ten percent of the population of the United States. So we should create ten percent of the jobs, and we should produce ten percent of the wealth." In other words, he was telling them positively what they should do to fulfill their place in the American social scene, rather than what so many of them were saying that "you owe us something." Now a lot of the people of Dr. Jackson's race don't like him. They call him "Uncle Tom." His church has been picketed, as the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City on one occasion was picketed. So he's not altogether popular in his own race, but apparently he is in his own convention, as shown by the repeated times he's been elected to lead them.

T: A couple of other people that come out in this period--you mentioned President Truman. Do you remember the incident when he was disassociated from the Southern Baptist Convention for some of his language and actions. Do you remember anything behind that particular action, that would be about 1951, or would it be 1949?

H: Well, of course, Southern Baptists were upset by his language, his statements about poker playing and drinking whiskey and all. There to my knowledge was no movement at the Southern Baptist Convention level to do anything about it, because it would be totally contrary to our church polity. Missouri Baptists, perhaps as much as anybody, were concerned about that because he was a member of a church in the Missouri Convention. But I don't know of any concerted effort to kick him out of our Baptist fellowship. On one occasion, when I was in the office of President Kennedy, the discussion came up about Harry Truman and his efforts to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican. To my delightful surprise, President Kennedy was very much opposed to having an ambassador to the Vatican. He said--since both men are dead, I guess it's all right to say it now--he said, "I never could understand why Harry, a Baptist, wanted to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican. It's the biggest fool thing I ever heard of." He also said that as far as he was concerned the Constitution is quite clear in forbidding the use of tax money for religious schools. He said, "As far as I'm concerned there's no room for argument." The interesting thing to me is that we were so concerned about a Catholic being elected president. When all the while when we had Protestants in there they were trying to play up to the Catholics in efforts to have an ambassador in the Vatican and to get tax money for parochial schools. When we got a Catholic in there, he took the very opposite position. On that occasion I thanked him for the stand he had taken in keeping with the principles that Southern Baptists hold very dearly.

T: Were you at the meeting of the Houston pastors when Kennedy spoke?

H: No. I was not there.

T: We will want to talk more about the 1960's. Let me ask you about a couple of other men in the 1940's and 1950's who would have been involved in the Executive Committee. One is E. L. Compere. Do you remember E. L. Compere and can you relate anything about him, the missionary to the Indians in Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma?

H: I just remember him and I knew him, but I didn't know too much about him.

T: What about W. R. Pettigrew, do you know him?

H: Pettigrew I did know very well. Pettigrew, of course, at one time was pastor of the Citadel Square Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and later he went to Walnut Street in Louisville, and was there until he died. He preached the Convention sermon one year. And he preached a very fine sermon. I shall never forget his description of the blood from the cross as it dripped to the ground, and he used sound effects on it. It was very effective. The interesting thing about this is that the year before when he was recommended to the Convention to preach the annual sermon, a friend of mine who was on the committee said, "Hobbs, I just did you a favor." I said, "What's that?" He said, "We put you on as the alternate next year for the sermon." I said, "Did me a favor, my hind leg! What you did, if I ever have any chance of being asked to preach that sermon, you've delayed it ten years." Of course, this was all in fun. But the year Dr. Pettigrew was to preach the sermon he came down with a bad case of bronchitis about a week before the Convention. The report would come, "He's better, he's worse, he's better, he's worse." I had to be prepared to preach in case he couldn't. The Convention met in St. Louis that year. And after I got there I was keeping tabs. He hadn't even come to the Convention but stayed at home until the last minute. I'd get word he was coming, he's not coming, he's coming, he's not coming. Finally I saw him walking across the lobby of the hotel. I went over and spoke to him and told him I was glad to see him. He said, "Well, you know, I'm still not in too good shape, and for all I know, you may have to get up right in the middle of my sermon and take over, because if I have one of those bad coughing spells, you'll have to do it." Well, I sat there all during the sermon, at least until he got well into it, not knowing whether or not I was going to have to get up and preach. But he got through in fine shape, didn't have any trouble. But I went through all the agonies without preaching the sermon. Since then I have been one of the founders of a society whose goal is to publish a book of sermons and call it Sermons Not Preached at the Southern Baptist Convention. That would be the sermons of the alternates. But to show what a prophet I am, I told this friend of mine, "If I ever had any chance of doing it, you've delayed it ten years." And exactly ten years later I did preach the annual sermon in Louisville. So one never knows.

T: Did you know Dr. Norman W. Cox?

H: Oh yes, I knew him well. I came to know him when he was at First Baptist, Mobile. I knew about him when he was at First Baptist, Meridian. Then he went to First Baptist, Mobile. My wife and I were in Howard College. He came up and spent a week preaching on the campus, and that's the first time I came to know him as a person. It was after I got out of the seminary that I really came to know him as a friend. Well, I came to have the greatest respect for him. Now he was a man with

a historic perspective and appreciation.

T: Can you relate any particular story that relates to his ministry? Were you involved in his selection as secretary of the new Historical Commission?

H: No. I had nothing whatever to do with it, and yet I was pleased with it. I remember a story that Dr. Cox told in a sermon about how God even uses little things to change the course of history. He referred to a number of things, but he came to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. When the armies of Europe could not stop him, God stopped him with a little delicate thing called a snowflake. He described the snowflake -- you could almost see one--and how those billions of snowflakes were used of God to stop the ambitions of conquest of Napoleon Bonaparte.

T: I'd like to move on if we might into the 1950's when you became quite actively involved in the life of our denomination as pastor of a large church and then preacher on the Baptist Hour. I wonder if you could relate, and let's come back to the 1950's a little bit later, but if you could relate some of the experiences and what really led to your election as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. You had tried for the presidency before, hadn't you? Had you tried or had your friends urged you to try?

H: I had never tried. J. D. Grey and I have laughed about an incident. In Chicago at the Convention, 1950, J. D. Grey was coming into the picture as a presidential possibility. In fact, he was elected the next year in San Francisco. He was the vice-president at the time. But J. D. and I were walking down the street. A newspaper reporter took our pictures and ran it in one of the Chicago papers. The story said that both of us were candidates for president of the Southern Baptist Convention. We've laughed about it ever since. You know, you don't run for the office of president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It's like a woman, she doesn't court a man, she may be perfectly willing, but she has to let him do the courting or think he's doing it. I never sought the position, I never had any particular ambition or any idea that I would be president.

T: You did have a little bit of ambition that you'd like to be?

H: Well, I think that any man that's worth his salt appreciates the privilege. It's like I've often said, I wouldn't take a million dollars for it, but I wouldn't give you a dime to repeat it, after having done it. But three times prior to my election, every two years when we'd elect a new man, I would refuse when friends would want to nominate me. A group from Alabama wanted to nominate me, and other groups, also.

T: When did they want to nominate you? 1957?

H: No. In Houston, in 1953, I guess it was, when Dr. Storer was elected to succeed Dr. Grey. But I always would say "no." Well, for one thing, for instance, J. D. Grey and I are very close friends. I wouldn't let my name go up against J. D. Grey's, just as a friend. Another thing at that particular time, if I had gone up against J. D., he would have beat me, because J. D. was known far and wide, and I was just beginning to emerge in a way in the Convention picture. I said three times. It was longer than that. It started in 1953. For ten years I refused to let my name be placed in nomination, and every time there would be somebody that would want to do it.

T: Did they ever do it without your permission?

H: No, they never did. For one thing, I felt that other people should come before me. I thought there were other fellows that, if you're going to take them in the order of age and experience, should come before I did, even if I ever did. Casper Warren, for instance, and Dr. Storer, and Ramsay Pollard, and so on. Then there were cases of friends of mine such as Ramsay Pollard. Ramsay and Della and my wife and I are very close friends. The year he was elected president I had some people who wanted to nominate me, and I wouldn't let them. And Ramsay came around after that.

T: Who are these people that always suggest that you be nominated?

H: Oh, just some friend, or two or three friends got together and said, "We think you ought to be nominated," Ramsay came to me the year he was elected and said, "I want to thank you for not letting your name go up." I said, "Why?" He said, "You would have been elected." I said, "Well, I don't know that I would." He said, "I think you would." I said, "No, I don't agree with you." He said, "But this is my year." You see, he'd been up, I think, twice before. And he said, "If I had not been elected this year, I never would have let my name go up again." Well, I mention that merely to show you something of the pattern. Usually a man expects to go up and be defeated a time or two before he's elected. In my case, I was elected the first time I was nominated. In 1958 I was asked to go on the "Baptist Hour," first for thirteen weeks and then for six months. Then after three six-months' periods, I was asked to take it on a permanent basis. This meant that when someone asked me how long it was permanent, I said, "I'm permanent on that like I'm permanent pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City. I may be there twenty-five years, I may be out at the next business meeting." But that gave me an exposure to Southern Baptists. When a man goes around speaking at the state conventions, and especially at the evangelistic conference, he becomes known to the preachers. There was a saying back a few years ago, you know, that when a man started making the rounds of all of the state evangelistic conferences, "Well, he's running for president of the Southern Baptist Convention." That just isn't so, because as I said, a man doesn't run for that. If it becomes evident that he is running for it, that's a sure sign he's not going to get it.

T: There have been some who have tried to run?

H: Well, some that are always running are never elected. I don't know of anybody that has been elected that was actively running. Now one may be available and willing, but in the sense that we say a man is running and he really puts forth an effort himself to get it, I don't know of a man that has ever been elected on that basis. But the fact that a man goes around to all of these evangelistic conferences doesn't mean he's running for the job. It means that he is being asked to speak at these conferences. There's no collusion between all these state evangelism secretaries and the man, but here's a man they think they want on their program. And the first thing you know, they all want him. I went the rounds. There were only two or three state conventions in which I was not asked to speak at their evangelistic conference. But in getting before those people, you get to be known through the rank and file of preachers of

the city, town, village, and country churches. So when that person's name comes up at the Convention, they say, "Well, I know him, you see." He may not know them, but they know him. So when I was finally nominated, there were only three nominations.

T: Who were they?

H: W. O. Vaught and Roy McClain. Right or wrong, when each man was nominated, his friends would clap. Usually when they elect a new man there are a dozen, maybe more, nominees. But for some reason, there were only three that year. When they nominated Vaught, for instance, he got a pretty good hand. When they nominated McClain, he got a very small hand. Carl Bates nominated me, and I got a very heavy hand. Well, McClain saw the handwriting on the wall and immediately withdrew. Vaught stayed in. They had this vote by ballot. The committee came back to report within ten minutes. Usually, you know, they come back in the afternoon session and announce the result, but they were back within ten minutes and announced that I had been elected. There was some question raised later about it, I think, in Arkansas. They felt, "Well, now, there's something wrong. They couldn't count those ballots in that length of time." In fact, the Arkansas Baptist editor, who happened to be a good friend of mine, wrote an editorial raising the question.

T: You're speaking here of McDonald?

H: Yes. Erwin McDonald. He wrote about how they could bring in a report so soon. Actually, his point was that they ought to report members, not just say that one is elected, and leave the Convention in the dark, whether he's elected by a landslide or by one vote. One of the members of the committee told me what happened. They got in the ballot room and said they were going to separate the votes into piles--Hobbs, Vaught. When they got through, I had a great big pile, and Vaught had a little pile. So they said, "There's no need of counting them. We know who won so we'll just go in and announce who won. Then we'll count them for the record, which they did. And that's how they announced so soon that I had been elected.

T: Now this was 1961 you were elected?

H: That's right. I had been on the Executive Committee at that time for ten years. I had had practical experience in the operation of the denomination from that point of view. I had been speaking in state conventions, I had been in most of the state evangelistic conferences. And, strange to say, the states in which I had not spoken then, and have not to this minute, that is. spoken in an evangelistic, are West Virginia, District of Columbia, Maryland, Texas, my next-door neighbor. I've never been asked to speak at their state evangelistic conference, though the state Secretary of Evangelism in Texas is a very good friend. I've spoken at the Texas State Sunday School Convention, Training Union Convention, and state convention. But just some way or other, I've never spoken at their evangelism conference. But anyway, that was one factor, the fact that I had had wide exposure. But I think the "Baptist Hour" perhaps as much as any one thing was the thing that led me to be elected the first time I was nominated on the first ballot. The brethren felt that

they knew me, even though some of them maybe had never seen me. It's like you hear a voice coming into your home every week over your radio, well, you think he's sort of halfway a member of your family.

T: Now you were elected at the 1961 Convention and you've been described by several people as one of the men in recent times who's had a very clear grasp of the presidential office of the Southern Baptist Convention. Is there any way you can respond to that in saying what your views of the president of the Convention are? What function does he serve? He doesn't really have any power in and of himself, it isn't his administration. How would you describe the office of the president, having been in it?

H: Well, I want to start and come around by way of right field in answering that question. Soon after I was elected to the office I was asked to appear on a fifteen-minute radio interview on N.B.C. In the course of the interview the interviewer asked me, "What authority do you have as president of the Southern Baptist Convention?" I said, "I have none whatsoever." It's like something I read the other day that some fellow said, "I'm looking for somebody around here with a little authority." And a man said, "Well, I've got about as little authority as anybody around here." The interviewer said, "You mean, you don't have any authority as president." I said, "No, the only authority that I have, if I have any at all, is the authority of leadership. If the people trust me and respect me, they will follow my leadership. But as far as having authority, that's sort of a foreign word to Baptist ears." He said, "Well, aren't you the head of the Southern Baptist Convention?" I said, "Well, I've been elected their president for a year with the possibility of another year, but as far as being head, we sort of shy away from that idea too, because we think Christ is the head of the church, the only head of the church." He said, "You mean Southern Baptists don't have a head?" I said, "No, if you mean like the Pope, no, we don't have a head." And yet you are the head," he said. I said, "Yes, if you're going to con sider the man who is in the office of president the head, then I guess I'd say 'Yes, I'm the head.' But I'm the head of a denomination that doesn't have a head.'" In other words, you're the head of a headless denomination," he said. I said, "That's right, and I know what that makes me, it makes me nothing. If you're the head of something that doesn't have a head, then you're nothing." We laugh about it, but my own feeling about the presidency, the office, I think it is more than just somebody to preside at the annual sessions, and to go around and make a few speeches to grace certain occasions with the dignity of the office. I think that the president ought to be a positive leader. He doesn't necessarily have to form a crusade and lead in that. But whatever the issues are at that time, whatever the need is, I think he ought to provide leadership.

I mentioned earlier all of these times when I said that I refused to let anyone nominate me for president. When Ramsay Pollard was elected for his second term in Miami Beach, I happened to be sitting on the platform, and I leaned over and said, "Ramsay, who's going to nominate you?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "You mean you haven't gotten anybody arranged to do it?" He said, "No." I said, "Well then, you may not be reelected." He said, "So, okay." I said, "Well, I'll nominate you." I nominated him to a second term, and he was, of course, reelected.

T: Now, are you saying you arranged your nominee in 1961, the one who was to nominate you?

H: Well, I'll tell you how that happened. After the session was over, my wife and I were in a cab going back to the hotel. I told her, "As you know, hon, for the last ten years I have refused to let my name be placed in nomination for president. I wouldn't turn my little finger to get the job or to influence anybody to nominate me. But if there is a person or group of people who want to nominate me next year, I'm going to permit it. Because somehow I feel that this is the time when it should be, if I'm ever going to be nominated, I should be next year." So we came on home after the Convention. The following January, I remember that very well, I got a phone call one day, I had never said anything to another soul about it. Well, I got a phone call from Wayne Dehoney, who was then at Jackson, Tennessee. He said, "Some of us have been talking about the possible new president for the Southern Baptist Convention, and we feel that you are the man. Would you permit your name to be placed in nomination?" I told him what I had already told my wife, and I said, "On that basis I will permit it. I've refused before, but I will permit it now. But I tell you now, I will do nothing whatsoever to get elected." He said, "We don't want you to. All we want you to do is give your permission." I said, "Well, you have that." He said, "Well, now, who do you want to nominate you?" I said, "Well, I haven't thought about it, naturally. It ought to be somebody who knows me and has confidence in me and who would feel like they were a friend. It would be better if this person was acquainted with people in various parts of the Convention. So just thinking of it from a practical standpoint, one of my good friends is Carl Bates. He is a native of Mississippi, he has been pastor in Florida and Texas, and now in North Carolina. It seems to me that he would fill the bill. I'd be very happy, if I am going to be nominated, for him to do it." And so Wayne said, "Thank you, that's all I want to know." And he hung up. It wasn't too long, a matter of days, until I got a letter from Carl asking for the privilege of nominating me. I wrote and gave it to him. That's the last I said or did about it. People would come up and say, "I hear you're going to be nominated." I said, "Well, maybe so, I don't know." But as far as anything else is concerned, I didn't push the cause. I know when it became known around the church here that I was going to be nominated, my secretary wanted to go to the Convention. She had not been going to the Conventions in the past, and she wanted to go. She said, "I think you'll be elected, and I want to be there." I said, "Lucy, if you want me elected, then you stay at home. Because I know how these things work. If you go, it will be known that I brought my secretary along. It will go like wildfire, you see, that he's already got things set up, he's going to be elected, he's even got his secretary here to go to work. One of my deacon friends came to me and said, "Preacher, we hear you're going to be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention." I said, "Well, now, that's assuming a lot. I have consented to let my name be put in nomination." He said, "Well, the deacons are going to charter a bus and we're all going to the Convention." I said, "Well, now, if you don't want me elected, that's the best way I know to keep me from being elected. Because it would be known that I had even brought my deacons along to campaign for me. So if you don't want me elected, then you just go ahead and do that." Well, of course they didn't do it, but that's as far as I went.

When I was nominated, I was sitting out in the audience with my wife. There were some members of our church who happened to be there--the W.M.U. president, the business administrator, and one other, I forget who it was now. But after the ballots were turned in, one of these women remembered she had to put a dime into the parking meter by her car. So the business administrator said, "Well, I'll go with you." They figured it would be that afternoon before they would announce it. When they got back, they asked, "Where are Dr. and Mrs. Hobbs?" The other lady said, "Well, you just missed the whole thing. They've already come back and announced he was elected, and they've taken him and Mrs. Hobbs into the press room. He's in there now in a press conference." Well, that's about the way it was.

T: You mentioned that Dr. Dehoney raised the matter with you that there was a group thinking about who would be the next president. Does this happen quite frequently, and have you been part of any group to suggest people?

H: Well, when you say "group," it doesn't mean any organized group, just fellows that talk and maybe write letters, or over the phone, maybe meet somebody somewhere, and ask, "What do you hear about the new president?" I'm hearing that same question asked right now. I tell them, "Well, I've heard two or three men's names, and beyond that I don't know anything." So it's sort of that kind of a thing. Maybe a few of the fellows, like those friends of mine, say, "Well, we think it's the time for Hobbs to be elected." It's not an organized campaign committee like the Democrats and Republicans have; it's more just a consensus of opinion. The only time that I know of--and I'll not call names--but the only time I know of in my experience where a definite campaign was put on, where letters were written all over this country, and even people enlisted in some associations to work to get votes for a person. That person went down to a miserable defeat, because it was known that this was an active campaign. And Southern Baptists just don't like that.

T: Would this be Jess Moody?

H: You asked the question, and I did not dispute it. Now when I agreed for my name to be placed in nomination, I was at that time chairman of the Program Committee of the Executive Committee. In the meantime, you know, they had reorganized the Executive Committee under the Booz, Allen, and Hamilton Program. J. D. Grey called it Booz, Allen, Budweiser Program. They had a finance committee, but it was purely to review financial policies and investments. Then they had what they called a Program Committee, for want of a better title, it covered about everything. It's the busiest and, I think, the most important committee in Southern Baptist life. Every problem between agencies is referred to that committee for study and working out. They receive requests and work out the suggested allocations for the budgets of the agencies every year. It's just more or less the heart of the Executive Committee. Well I was chairman of that committee. I don't remember how many years now. When Louie Newton rotated off, Doug Hudgins became chairman. He was chairman just of the Finance Committee under the old setup, and then he rotated off at the time they changed the name. I was the first chairman of the Program Committee as it is now set up. But when I agreed to let my name go up for president, I felt that since I was chairman of this committee, which was sort of at the heart of Executive Committee work, that I should let Porter Routh know about it. I went in and told him, "Well, I want you to know that I have agreed to let my name go up. But

of course, that doesn't mean I will be elected." He said, "Well, I think you'll be elected. From my position through the years I have seen that some men are always running but never elected. But there is some man, he goes on and does his job that he is asked to do, he asks no favors, just goes on and does his job, and all of a sudden things begin to fall into place, and that's his year. I think I see that in your case." Well, if you look back on it, you notice that certain things happened along about that time. I had been on the Executive Committee for ten years. The brethren knew that I knew the inner workings of the Convention life, having been chairman of the Program Committee. I'd made the rounds of most of the evangelistic conferences and many of the state conventions. I had become the permanent preacher on the "Baptist Hour." So all of those things just began to fall into line. Men that were on the horizon that were potential presidents, such as Ramsay Pollard, Casper Warren, and Jim Storer, those were all in the past. So it was just sort of like my number came up, in a sense. But still, I did not seek the job. I'm honored that I have had the privilege. But I think any man that seeks that office is not worthy of it. I think the office ought to seek the man. If he's seeking it, he isn't big enough to fill it once he gets it.

T: You mean overtly seeking it?

H: That's right. Well, when I say seeking it, now a man would be a liar to say, "Well, I don't ever want to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention." I don't care who the preacher is who says that, or even an active layman, I'd have to take that with a whole box of salt. If a man has got any get-up-and-get and spunk about him, he aspires to places of leadership, it's a part of human nature. But there's a difference between that and a man who maybe has not paid the price in blood, sweat, toil, and tears to get ready for it. A fellow who just says, "I want to take the short cut, and I'm going to get it by running for it, putting on a campaign and getting my friends to work for me, and all that. That's the difference that I make. If there is such a thing as earning something in the spiritual life, I think a man ought to earn that position, not by conniving for it, but by going and working until the brethren recognize it and say, "This is the man we need at this time." And, as I look back over the years of my own experience, when I've been sort of close up, I have noticed that a man is elected sometimes unexpectedly, and that he is the man for that particular time.

Now by every human calculation, I guess people would have said that in Louisville Ramsay Pollard would have been elected; it looked like it was Ramsay's time. But out of a blue sky like a dark horse, or whatever you call it, here comes Books Hays. Brooks had been somewhat active in our work, but not too much so. He was a Congressman. He didn't have time to do a lot of the things that an average preacher involved in denominational work does. Yet out of a clear blue sky to the surprise of most of us, Brooks Hays beat one of the best-known men in the Southern Baptist Convention. Now, at the time some of us were disappointed and, frankly, just a little bitter. Not at Brooks. But we just felt like Ramsay had been robbed of the prize that rightfully belonged to him. But looking back, I see the hand of God in it. Because in Brooks Hays' time the Little Rock racial crisis came, and Brooks Hays was the only Southern Baptist I know anything about, who was active in the leadership and could have gotten the ear of the President of the United States. Now it cost him

his job in Congress. But at the same time I think he was elected to meet a need at that time.

On the other hand, Ramsay Pollard was elected at a time when a Roman Catholic was running for president. Well, now, it turned out all right in the long run; but Southern Baptists were greatly disturbed. If Brooks Hays had been president at that time, being a Democrat and a Congressman, he would have more or less had to keep his mouth shut. At least expediency would have told him to do that. But as it was, Ramsay Pollard was free to speak his piece. Now Ramsay would be the first to admit what I am about to say. Ramsay is a great preacher and a great pastor of one of our greatest churches at the time of his retirement, and an evangelist, one of the best. But Ramsay is not what you call a "scholar." His seminary training doesn't equip him for that, and he'd be the first one to tell you that. One day when he, Della, and Frances and I were on a trip around the world, we were in Kyoto, Japan. The wives were inside a store shopping with a missionary lady leading them; Ramsay and I were on the outside walking up and down the sidewalk. We were looking in the windows where they had signs in Japanese. I said, "You know, Ramsay, this Japanese gives me a good deal of trouble. It gives me almost as much trouble as Hebrew and Greek." Ramsay said, "Huh, Hebrew and Greek don't give ma any trouble, I just don't have anything to do with it." Well now, you see, Ramsay was perfectly suited for the time he was in office.

T: Would this also be true of K. Owen White who succeeded you?

H: Yes, I think so. I was elected before the storm broke about the Elliott book. I think that book was the occasion, not the cause of the storm. Now, right or wrong, the brethren said that I was the person to be president during that two-year period, because I did have the academic training. I have the degree, I never drag it out and show it off, but I have a Ph.D. degree in New Testament Interpretation, a degree that the seminary professors would recognize and respect. If it were just a D.D. they wouldn't. But here's a man, he's gone through the mill, he's paid the price in brain sweat, and he has the same degree they have. So they have to listen to him when I speak in his field. Then I had also been writing books, and had shown a certain amount of ability to express myself on theological matters. Then I have always been more or less of a commoner, just an old shoe, an old country boy. So, as the brethren said, I not only had the ear of the scholars, but I had the ear of the preacher back down at the forks of the branch.

T: You also were a southerner from the deep South.

H: Yes. So they said I came to the position at a time when I could give leadership that was needed. Now I'm not saying I was the only one that could do it, but it just happens that the Lord picks up any old chunk that's around to use. I happened to be the chunk he picked up at that time. Frankly, I thought Carl Bates was the ideal person to follow me when I went out of office. We had pretty well put those theological problems behind us, and we needed a man to come in and love the people, more or less heal the wounds, and pull them together again. I felt that Carl was that type of man. Some of his friends asked him if he'd let his name go up. He agreed, and he only

lacked 335 votes of getting elected on the first ballot in a field of, I think, about 12.

T: You were talking, Dr. Hobbs, about the presidency and your view of the presidents of the Convention. Maybe there is something you want to tie in here and suggest on your presidency.

H: Well, as I said, we're going to go way out into right field and I think out the ball park before we got to it. In this sort of thing, you just sort of let your mind go in free wheeling and follow it wherever it leads. Yet we want to tie the ball of yarn together. I think everything has been said is in a sense related to the question as to my concept of the presidency. I can answer it in the light of that by saying that I think the president of the Convention should be more than just a figurehead. He is the only person who is elected by the messengers directly and to whom he is responsible directly. The executive officers of the various agencies are elected by their boards of trustees. The Southern Baptist Convention can vote all day long to remove Jim Sullivan, let's say, as executive secretary of the Sunday School Board, but they can't remove him legally. The Sunday School Board has to do it. Back in the controversy days during my presidency, there were people saying we ought to fire this person or that. Well, I got a lawyer in Missouri, the state which was connected with Midwestern Seminary, and I asked him to give me an opinion. He researched it, and said, "The Southern Baptist Convention cannot fire anybody up here. Under the charter of the Convention and under the bylaws of the Convention and the charter of the institution in Missouri, you elect the board of trustees, and they run the school. Now the trustees can dismiss an employee. You can't even fire the board of trustees, you set up a means of adding to and taking from by the rotation system. Now you can rotate men off as their time comes and not reelect them, but you can't fire one of them."

T: The Board could not be removed at any one Convention, you think?

H: That's right. By the charter and the bylaws of the Convention itself, the charter of the institution and the bylaws of the convention. So the president is the only person that is elected by the people directly and is responsible to them directly. The other thing is, if we leave the leadership of the program and all the rest in the hands of the agencies and the heads of those agencies and their staffs, we are inviting a professional organization or a clique kind of a thing that excludes the people. I think as long as the president is involved in policy making and program making, the people through him have a direct voice. I think that the president ought--whatever is the need of that time, in my own case it was for us to get through and out of the choppy waters of theological dissension and debate--I think that the president should address himself to those things. There wasn't a single person in the Convention that could have done what I did. I'm not saying, "Look what Big I did." I'm talking about the presidency now, that in this instance I was the only elected official. If there'd been other people elected to fill this office at that time, they could have done what I did, and maybe perhaps a lot better job. But I'm saying that out of all the elected officers and officials of the Convention at that time, the president was the only one who could provide the leadership and guidance in that particular situation. Now with all due respects to the executive secretary of the Executive Committee, who is one of the, well to me he's one of the greatest Baptist men I ever knew, but he, by virtue of

his office, he could not lead in that. To begin with, Porter Routh is a layman, he doesn't know fine nuances of theological matters, and so on. The seminary presidents were even unable to lead in this. The Convention refused to put them on the Committee on the "Statement of Baptist Faith and Message," the revised form. So that's why I say that the presidency ought to provide leadership.

I have opposed from the floor of the Convention, and I still oppose, the idea of limiting the office of president for one year. Dr. James, bless his heart, said that we ought to limit it to one year. One reason was that it is too hard on the man, it would just kill the man. So when I got ready to speak my piece in rebuttal, I got up, hobbled up to the platform, and barely spoke in a whisper. I told them that I was just about dead. Then I came out with a full blast of my voice and got a laugh. But I went on to give my reasons for opposing his idea. The main reason was that if we want a president to do anything besides preside and be an ornament, then we have to give him more than one year. It takes a man a year to learn how to be president, and to get more or less what he wants to do under way. It takes a second year, then, to get it done, or to see that it's done. If we put a man in for one year only, he's a lame duck the minute he goes in. All he can do is stand around and look nice, and preside at the annual meeting. Dr. James also said that it was too much to ask of a church to give up its pastor for two years. I said, "Well, now that's a sacrifice the church has to make." I told my church after I was elected, "Now you have a ministry through me." The Sunday after my election, one of the deacons got up without anybody asking him to do it, and made a motion, and the church voted unanimously, to say and recognizing that in the election of their pastor the church had not only been honored but it had also been given a responsibility. They voted to release me from all pastoral duties necessary to carry out the duties of this office, and that the people would take up the slack themselves. And they did. We had two of our best years in my whole twenty-four years here, the two years that I was president of the Convention. So that's why I think that the presidency should be more than just a figurehead. In the American Baptist Convention, for instance, their term is limited to one year. I think a comparison of their program with ours is a pretty good example of the difference. Their programs are run by agencies. They are organized on the basis of agencies. We're organized on the basis of local churches. If we go the route of just a one-year presidency, then we are asking for a change in our whole concept, that is, the emphasis is on the agency and not on the churches. I feel that the office, the position of the president, gives a measure of leadership, or can if it's allowed to do so. I would have to be less than honest if I didn't say that I think some of the opposition to the two-year term comes from a feeling within the more or less employed staff at certain levels and certain areas, that a strong presidency in a sense weakens their own position. Frankly, I think that's what the Convention wants. I mean, they don't want a strong hierarchy. They want a democracy.

T: Did you expect this controversy to emerge while you were president?

H: No.

T: You had no wind of it?

H: No. I guess it's a good thing I didn't, I might have begged to be excused. But, you see, as I pointed out earlier, this book, The Message of Genesis, in my judgment was not so much the cause of all of this, but the occasion. It was the spark that set off the powder.

T: You're suggesting the Convention was in the 1949-type mood again?

H: That in a way. There had been a growing feeling for a number of years that Southern Baptists were getting away from their traditional conservative position. There was a rumbling when the Convention met in Miami Beach the year before I was elected in St. Louis, Ramsay Pollard's last year. Ramsay made the statement in his presidential address that if there are men teaching in our colleges and seminaries that are not teaching according to the beliefs of Southern Baptists and the Bible, and so on, then the matter should be looked into, something of that sort of thing. The press got onto Ramsay about the "if," you know. They wanted to know what seminary, what college, what professors, you see. Well, Ramsay didn't have any specifics. Some of them tried to belittle Ramsay for it. Actually, Ramsay was right. It was like you feel electricity in the air though it hasn't struck any tree yet. It was there. Everybody knew that there was unrest and unhappiness, that things were being taught that a lot of the brethren didn't agree with. On the other hand, some did agree with them. So the book only gave a means of letting off the steam. Hersey Davis was asked about why he didn't write more books. He said, "If you don't write it down, they can't get you with it." Well, he was just joking. But here was a book--Elliott wrote a book that they could get him with, you see, and so it brought forth the explosion. But I frankly had not seen or read the book until after the Convention. You can bet your boots I read it pretty soon after the Convention, because it exploded in our face.

T: That was after you were elected president?

H: That's right.

T: You didn't know anything about the origin of the book or how the book came to be written and published by Broadman?

H: No, not at that time. In fact, I don't know of a whole lot now that could be said other than that Broadman Press has never confined itself to one theological stance in the books it publishes. Here came along a book by one of our Southern Baptist professors, and they voted to publish it. Other books came along by, maybe a pastor that is conservative in his position, and they vote to publish it. Broadman Press has never gone one way or the other. They pretty well stay in the middle of the road like Southern Baptists as a whole. But they publish the book. Obviously the men who worked with putting it out knew that it was not the position that was held by the rank and file of Southern Baptists.

T: You say it was a position held by the majority of the leaders of the denomination?

H: No. Many of our Old Testament professors did not and do not agree with the extremes in the so-called documentary hypothesis. I don't know of an Old Testament scholar of any reputable standing today that takes it as it was taught originally. Now they still use the framework and terminology, which I personally wish they wouldn't use, because it's just like throwing a red flag in a bull's face to some people.

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T: There was not any difficulty with the ideas, just simply the terminology?

H: No, I don't have any difficulty with the basic ideas in the Documentary Hypothesis, except that I don't agree with the late dating of the Pentateuch. I think the more they know in archaeology, there is a moving back of the dates now nearer and nearer to the time of Moses. Regardless of who you say wrote the books, the tendency now is away from the eighth century B.C. back more to the times of Moses or approximately therein. So, I think that Dr. Elliott, for instance, wrote his book more with scholars in mind than the average Southern Baptist reader, and the average Southern Baptist reader wasn't prepared for that. A lot of preachers weren't prepared for it. And even a lot of preachers that had gone to the seminary and studied it, still didn't believe it. But still I don't think that book was the cause, it was merely the occasion. This had been building up for a long time.

H: Now before we get too far afield, I want to go back to the time when I became the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. I mentioned the fact that after I was called a group said to Dr. Ray Summers that they were going to keep quiet until a new pastor was on the field, and then they were going to face him with this matter of bringing this couple back into the church. I accepted the call at the morning service, and after the service that morning, Bill Reynolds took me by the hospital to see a man. I didn't know the man, in fact, I didn't see him. It turned out he was the president of the Anderson-Pritchard Oil Company which is now known as Apco. He was a very wealthy man. I saw his wife only. I saw him by just looking in the room, but I did not go in. He was in the last stages of throat cancer. So the first pastoral visit I made was to see this man and his wife. Later, after his death, shortly after I moved on the field, Rupert Naney and I conducted his funeral. Rupert was a longtime friend, and I was the new pastor. In the course of events, this woman, his wife, my wife and I became the very closest friends. I'd lost my mother, and my wife had lost her mother. We lost her mother while we were here. During the time after we came here, this woman lost her only son and only daughter, both of them in tragic circumstances. So, in a way, we had taken the place of her children and she took the place of our mother. Though she was a very wealthy woman and we were just a poor Baptist preacher and his wife, we were very close friends. I remarked one day about the fact that our difference in economic conditions didn't make any difference in our friendship. She said, "That's because you and Mrs. Hobbs came into my life at a time when you gave me something that I needed that all of my money couldn't buy, and that was comfort, assurance, and love." As a consequence she gave worlds of money to this church. Now we didn't just go out to get her money. We cultivated her as a friend. But she gave the Louise Pritchard Chapel, which is our beautiful chapel here. By that she learned the joy that it was to give money away. In the course of years she gave--oh, I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars that she gave the church. For instance, she'd put a check for $45 or $50,000 in an envelope, put a stamp on it, address it to me, and drop it in the mail. She didn't make any big affair of it. But when she died, she left most of her estate to OBU. I'd like to go into that at a later time. But after that visit to her husband in the hospital, Bill and I ate lunch and I went back to the hotel. As soon as I lay down the doorbell rang. It was the bellboy with a special delivery letter for me. It was written by a man in the church who is now dead. But I had never read a letter that had more venom in it--not against me, but against the deacons. Because they had treated this man and his wife in such a way. I refer to

the couple that was asked to leave the church. He wanted to get them back into the church. He thought that the first thing I ought to do when I got on the field was to tell the deacons to get them back in the church.

Well, I went on back to Mobile. When we moved out here, we hadn't been here but a few days when I got a phone call from a lady asking if I'd drop by her home. She had a very beautiful home. And she told me the story about this couple and how they were asked to leave the church. She said, "And I am one of many that would like to see you as the new pastor to ask the deacons to invite them to come back into the church." Well, if any poor preacher was ever led of the Holy Spirit as to what to say, I was that day. I said, "Mrs. So and So, that happened before May 1, 1949, didn't it?" She said, "Yes." And I said, "Well you know, I am not interested in anything that happened in this church prior to that date, but I am very much interested in everything that's going to happen in this church after that date." She looked at me a moment, smiled, and said, "You know, that makes sense." So I went on my way. In a few days I got a call to come to see another lady. She told me the same story. I gave her the same answer, and she gave me the same response. And except for one poor old man, who was practically out of his mind who had been befriended by this man, I never had anybody to mention that to me again. Shortly after coming I got an anonymous letter, not attacking me, but praising this man. It was traced to a typewriter on which anonymous letters had been written that came to Dr. Willis Howard. I called the chairman of deacons. I said, "I got an anonymous letter praising this man and suggesting that I ought to get him back in the church. What should I do with it?" He said, "Well, send it to Homer Hurt, he was formerly vice-chairman of the deacons, a lawyer, and he has a file on all of this." The next day when the mail came, I happened to be out in the main office and saw another letter. I recognized the typing. I took it and opened it, and, sure enough, it was another anonymous letter. I called the deacon chairman and told him I had it. He said, "Oh my soul, you're going to get disgusted and leave just like Dr. Howard did." I said, "Disgusted? Man, when I get one of these I'm just like a kid on Christmas morning opening his stocking. I can hardly wait to see what's in it." Well, soon that word got around, and from that day to this I've never received another anonymous letter about that matter. Now like any other public figure, I've gotten anonymous letters, but not about that. When they found out it didn't bother me, they quit writing them.

The point is that these two women that asked me about getting this couple back into the church are two of the most loyal women in the church, and two of the dearest and best friends that my wife and I have. One of the ladies has just agreed to a request, not mine, the request of Jimmy Morgan down in Fort Worth. He has a radio program, and gets people to pay for publishing books or the printing of books. Then he gives them to his radio audience. So he asked this lady if she would pay for the printing of four thousand copies of my book The Life and Times of Jesus. It would be in paperback, and she asked for a copy of the book. I had one and I let her read it. She told me just now that she had agreed to pay for the printing of the book. It cost around $3,500. That's the kind of people they are, you know--good people. Wonderful people! And yet there was a moment of crisis in which I took a decisive stand, and they saw the common sense of it. That's the reason I say that it came to me of the Holy Spirit. Because I don't have sense enough to think of that. Now we can more or less focus on such matters as some of my extra-church activities in the denomination.

I think there are some things that would be of interest about "The Baptist Hour," then my work on the Executive Committee, the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Elliott controversy, the Baptist World Alliance, perhaps, my writing ministry, anything else you want to talk about.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you were mentioning earlier some of the different people that you have known in your church and some interesting experiences. I wonder if there's any one that particularly stands out that would be worthwhile to record.

H: Yes. In fact, as you asked the question, two came to my mind. I'm going to mention one just briefly. We had a man in our church by the name of Billy Atkinson, an oil man. He was the youngest man in the history of Oklahoma City ever to make a million dollars. But he lost it in the Depression and wound up $350,000 in debt. But he went to all of his creditors and told them that if they'd be patient he'd pay them back with interest. For years he drove an old beat-up Chevrolet car. His wife would sew up the elbows of his coat so he could have a coat to wear. He never ceased to come to church and Sunday School. He taught a class of young people. The first thing he did was to go to his auditor, and said, "Now I want you to fix my income so that my creditors can't keep me from tithing." Well, through the years he kept plodding along, and finally he discovered a big oilfield down in Southwest Oklahoma. At the time of his death he was a very wealthy man. After I became his pastor he paid off the last $20,000 of this debt that he had owed. Instead of jumping out of the window as so many businessmen who lost everything did, he had a faith in God that held him to his senses, and he went on to win. We were going through a critical period in our church. Some people were unhappy because we were grading adults, and had said they were going to quit contributing. We owed about $900,000 at that time after a big building program. One said, "We'll really hit them in the pocketbook, they'll hear that." Well, one Sunday morning this man came to my study. He called me "Preacher Hobbs." He said, "Preacher Hobbs, I've heard what some have been saying, and I know it disturbs you especially with this debt. But I want you to know that I have set aside out of my operating funds $100,000. It's in the bank just drawing interest, but it's there if we need it to meet the payments on this debt." Fortunately, we never had to draw on a penny of it, but it stayed there until that debt was paid.

Now the other person I mentioned earlier was Mrs. Louise Pritchard. Her husband died leaving an immense fortune. It was tied up in a trust fund that was to go to his son at his wife's death. She had the income as long as she lived. In case of his son's death, it went to his grandson. Well, he died in a tragic accident, and the trust fund went to his son. Nobody ever really knew how much it was. It was estimated to be all the way from fifteen to twenty-five million dollars. But Mrs. Pritchard also had money in her own right. After her husband's death she told me that she had always wanted to tithe but never had been able to. He had always given her everything she wanted, but he had never caught the vision of stewardship that she had. I remarked that she could now tithe. And I kidded her, "You can catch up on some of your back tithing if you want to." Well, we laughed about it. My first year here we started out to raise a budget which was nearly double what it had been the year before. I wanted to get five people to pledge $5,000 apiece, so we would have that much on hand before we ever started the Every-Member Canvass. I selected people and she was one of them. She agreed to do it. Then when we were building a building which

included a beautiful chapel, I went to her one day, and said, "I want you to give the chapel." It was already under construction. She said, "How much would it cost?" I said, "$107,500." She said, "When would I have to give it?" I said, "Anytime you want to." She said, "All right, I will." I said, "Will you give me a letter that I can read to the church next Sunday and tell them?" She said, "Yes." I read the letter. The next day a man called and said, "My wife and I were talking on the way home about that wonderful gift. We've decided that the chapel needs a nice pipe organ, and we want to give it. So you and the committee pick out the organ you want, and send us the bill." His name was Roy Staton.

A few days later I met another lady in the hall whose husband had died. I said, "Why don't you memorialize your husband in this building?" She said, "How?" I said, "Furnish the parlor." It is the beautiful parlor adjoining the chapel. She said, "How much would it cost?" I said, "Oh, fifteen or twenty thousand dollars." This was Mrs. W. E. Price. Anyway, she said, "All right, I will." Just that quickly. I was going in for the service, I said, "Can I announce that this morning?" She said, "Yes." So I did. I went to see a man whose wife's father and mother were pioneers in the state, he was a pioneer Baptist preacher. Brother and Mrs. Howard from Kentucky. He was the founder of the Baptist Children's Home here. I asked this man if he would not like to memorialize his wife's parents in this building. He said, "How?" I said, "Furnish the chapel." He said, "How much would it cost?" I said, "About $30,000." And he said, "All right." The money was raised just that easily.

It all started because this woman gave that $107,500. Through the years she gave us tremendous sums of money. But always she would say, "Now I want a certain amount of it to go to the Cooperative Program." We have a lovely lodge at Glorieta. She called me one day and said, "I've got $125,000 to give to the church, where do we need it?" And I said, "I know you want a certain amount to go to the Cooperative Program." We agreed on an amount, but we had about $75,000 left. I said, "We need to build a lodge on a lot that we've leased out at Glorieta." We had leased it from the Sunday School Board, and were supposed to build on it within two years. It had been five years, but they had agreed to let us hold it because I told them we wanted to build something nice, not just a shack. So I said to this lady, "We need $75,000 to build that building." She said, "Well, let's build us a lodge at Glorieta." And that's how we got that beautiful lodge that I think is the prettiest thing out there in the way of private lodges.

Later in her life she fell and broke her hip. When she got up from that, one day a lady took her to lunch. They were getting in the car after lunch, and a strong March wind hit her, blew her down, and broke the other hip. For that reason, though she got over it, she never would leave her apartment except in a wheelchair to go down-stairs to eat. She was afraid she'd fall again. She was getting on up in years. My wife and I through the years had been with her through much sorrow, and had formed a tie which was more that of a mother and child than that of pastor and people. When she was in bed with her second broken hip, we would go by every Sunday after church to see her while we waited for the cafeteria lines to thin out.

One day, her sister, Mrs. Lawrence Wilson, from New Orleans, was visiting her. While we were there she took me in the living room to show me something. I learned later that while we were in there Mrs. Pritchard told my wife, "Honey, I'm making a

new will. Do you have any suggestions?" My wife said, "I've got one. When my husband and I were in college, some man whose name we did not know had left a fund to be used as ministerial aid. When we had gone as far as we could go, we'd go and get a few dollars out of that fund. Without that I doubt if we could have made it through college. So I've always hoped to see somebody establish a scholarship fund, a ministerial scholarship fund, at Oklahoma Baptist University." Mrs. Pritchard said, "You know, I like that." That was all she said. Well, my wife had in mind $100,000, though she didn't mention the figure. After Mrs. Pritchard's death and her will was probated, it was found that after making a few family bequests to receive income of a certain sum until their deaths, she had left the residue of her estate to Oklahoma Baptist University as a ministerial fund, or a scholarship fund, for ministers of the gospel, students preparing for the gospel ministry or for the mission field. If a person who is studying plumbing and going out to be a plumber on the mission field, he qualifies. He could come from Mars if he could get here; as long as he was in those two categories, he would qualify. As a result, OBU has the largest number of ministerial and missionary students, I guess, of any Southern Baptist college. The amount totaled around five and a half million dollars. Eventually, as these people die off, it could go as high as seven million dollars. I mention that merely as an incidence to show that we had gone to her and asked that she give a sum of money to that cause, she probably would have turned us down. She was just that way. Preachers would come to me and say, "Would you mind if I talked to Mrs. Pritchard about giving some money to my church?" I said, "No, I don't mind, that's the best way I know for you not to get it." But this large gift was the fruit of a cultivation of friendship. We had no idea of getting money, no ulterior motive. In fact, when she died one lady asked my wife if she left us anything in her will. Of course she didn't. We wouldn't have expected it. She was very kind to us in our lifetime. When I would travel on trips around the world, she and this Mr. Atkinson would see that my wife went. Mr. Atkinson told me one day that she wanted somebody else involved, so that people couldn't say she was doing it alone. He said, "We always make rabbit stew--one horse and one rabbit. I put in the rabbit and she puts in the horse." But anyway, it was because of friendship, not because we had gone to her seeking money for any cause. And until Jesus comes again, she'll be serving the Lord through this gift that she made. I think it is a story worth preserving, not only because of a wonderful person but because it's a lesson in stewardship--how a person can live on through their gifts made while they're still in this world.

T: We need to talk about your involvement with Oklahoma Baptist University, and then I would like for us to move to some of your denomination experiences, particularly after you became president of the Southern Baptist Convention when the controversy broke on Ralph Elliott who was professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Seminary. We talked on this yesterday. You said that you did not expect this when you accepted the presidency. You also said that you felt this was more the occasion rather than the cause for controversy. Would you relate how this first really broke as far as you were concerned as president?

H: Well, actually, I think it might be well to begin even a little before that. There was an incident that happened which is recorded in all of our Baptist papers, and I think it ought to be a part of this historical record. Right after I was elected to the presidency, I went with a party on a tour of the Middle East and the Holy Land as the Bible

teacher. I debated after being elected as to whether I should go, but I decided that I would just make it a visit to the missionaries in those areas along with doing what I had committed myself to do. They had built a party around the idea that I was going along to teach the Bible. And so I went. While in London on my way back, Dr. T. B. Lackey, who was then state executive secretary of Oklahoma Baptists, came to me with a letter from Albert McClellan about the controversy that had started at OBU during the summer Preachers' Bible Conference. Dr. Dale Moody, of Southern Seminary, was there teaching the Bible. One day in a rap session out under an old tree, he was sitting there with his "big New Testament" as it was later described to me. He and some preachers were debating an issue where they didn't agree with him on something theologically. It got into a friendly, but heated, debate. As a result some of the preachers in Oklahoma were upset and were prepared to bring charges against Dr. Moody. Well, when I got home I got into my office on Monday morning. Having been gone for over a month after being elected president of the Convention, letters were coming from everywhere--congratulations as well as the usual letters--and so my desk was almost covered up. I was sitting there trying to sort out things to get started reading the mail when the phone rang. One of the pastors said that a matter--he told me about it--was coming up at the Pastors' Conference that morning and he thought I might like to be there because I might have to deal with it at the Southern Baptist level before it was over. I didn't want to go because of this mail and all, but I went anyway. It turned out that the week before they had spent their time in the conference discussing the matter, and had agreed on certain charges to bring against Dr. Moody. A committee had been appointed to draw up the charges, and they brought their report. The group said, "Well that's what we agreed upon. Now what shall we do with this paper?" There were two ideas. One group wanted to release it through the public press, just hit the papers with it. Another group wanted it given to Dr. McCall, president of the Southern Seminary, and let him handle it through the trustees, or personally, any way that he wanted to handle it. And so, finally, a motion was made that a committee be appointed to take this to Falls Creek the next week, when Dr. McCall would be speaking, and to give it to him. It was even suggested that they wait until after the Friday message, because he was coming to render spiritual service and they didn't think he ought to be upset by this before that was over. And there were "Amens" all over the house. So, anyway, the motion before the house was that a committee be appointed to deliver this paper to Dr. McCall. It didn't involve what was in the paper, but what to do with the paper. When they called for a vote I was sitting there with my arm stretched out across the back of an empty seat next to me. When the presiding officer said, "All in favor, raise your hand," I just raised my hand and put it down. Well, I was voting to give this paper to Dr. McCall, which was the proper way to handle it if there was anything to be handled, and not to hit the papers with it. I would vote that way 365 days a year. I was sitting there as a local pastor, but not as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. But the whole tone was that this was not to be made public, but to be handled through channels--and quietly. To my surprise the following Wednesday morning I got a call from Dr. Erwin McDonald of the Arkansas Baptist Magazine telling me that he had received a Baptist Press release about the story. The story listed the charges, and said that Dr. Herschel Hobbs, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was present and voted for the resolution, meaning that I voted to approve the charges. Well that, to begin with, made me look like a fool, because I was in the Middle East when it happened. I didn't hear what Moody had said. I knew nothing at all about it. But unfortunately, in reporting, sometimes, you know, in a brief article trying to compress all of the story into brief

statements, it doesn't really give the true picture. Well, of course I hit the ceiling. I said, "That isn't the true story at all. I was not voting on the charges, I was voting to take the paper--the charges that they had agreed on in my absence--and deliver it to Dr. McCall and not to put the charges in the public press, and I hope you won't run that story." He said, "Of course, all the other editors will run it, so I've got to run it." So I said, "Well, I'm going to send out an explanation and let the editors run that." But, of course, it appeared a week later. I called Nashville and talked to W. C. Fields. I taught W. C. in Louisiana College when I was pastor at Alexandria. They asked me to help them out for a while during the war when they were short of teachers, and I taught a class for two and a half years without pay. He was in the class. I've always been proud of the fact that men like W. C. Fields, Malcolm Tolbert, professor at New Orleans, H. C. Brown, who was professor at Southwestern, and Jaroy R. Weber, pastor now at Lubbock, First Church (later elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention,) and men like that were in this class. But anyway, I told W. C., "Now W. C., I'm going to talk to you just like a daddy to his son. You've called me on occasion to ask me questions where mail would have been sufficient. They were not pressing matters. But here comes a story that involves the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and which has the potential of even splitting the Convention. Because as long as these pastors were against Dr. Moody, or him against them, it was more or less just a dog fight, but when you involve the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, then that takes on a different matter. And you didn't even call me to verify that that was a true story. Even the secular press would have gotten my side of the story and run both of them in the same article, but you have embarrassed me, you've embarrassed the presidency." Well, he was apologizing all over the place, and I said, "Well, I appreciate that, but that still doesn't undo what's been done. I told him, "Now in the future if there is any story that comes out involving me that has any kind of possibilities of controversy, I'd appreciate it if you would call me and check with me. Of course, he said he would. Well, nothing like that ever came out later. I called Dr. McCall and told him about it; he hadn't even heard. I said, "I want to apologize to you, I want to apologize to the trustees, and I want to apologize to Dr. Moody for something that's going to be embarrassing to you and which involves my name. Though I am innocently involved, I'm embarrassed." And he said, "Well, you don't have to apologize to us, we know how those things happen."

Well, anyway, Dr. James of the Baptist Standard traced Dale Moody down, found him at Glorieta, and told him about it. Dale didn't have his files. He and I had had quite a round one time, just the two of us, friendly, but still quite a round over a manuscript of mine on Hebrews, in which I was denying that apostasy idea that is so often associated with Hebrews. Dale, of course, held to it. It was a friendly discussion, but still we were pulling no punches on one another. Dale fired back with some statement, I don't know what it was now. But it was sort of a defense firing back at me. I wrote Dale a letter and explained the situation. He wrote back and said, "Well, that throws a different light on it." He said, "Frankly, I thought--remembering our discussion years ago--I thought that you had waited until you had got into position to do it, and you really hit back at me." I wrote and told him, "Well, I didn't do that, and frankly, I'm disappointed that you would think I would do such a thing." But that's by the board. This was along in the middle of August. In September the Baptist Men's Brotherhood had a Southwide meeting in Memphis. Dale and I were both on the program. We agreed to get together. He came to my room one night about 9 o'clock, and we sat and talked

about this matter until 2:30 in the morning. Of course, we were friends before then, all through it, and we still are. But it was a misunderstanding. Even though the editors ran my explanation, I got quite a bit of critical mail about it before this explanation got out. When the story got out, everybody seemed to understand. But two years later when I went out of office, having presided at two very controversial Convention sessions in San Francisco and Kansas City, the editor of the Illinois Baptist--the one that was there at the time, he's not presently there--wrote an editorial about my presidency and how well I had handled the situation in both cases. Especially he was complimentary of the Kansas City Convention. But still he closed it with this remark. "It was quite a different Herschel Hobbs from the one who signed a resolution charging Dr. Dale Moody in certain theological matters." So you see, by that time I had not just voted, I had signed it. I wrote him a letter and said, "My friend, I think the first thing an editor should do is to do his homework before he writes an editorial. And if you'll go back and check the record, you'll find that I didn't sign any charges. Furthermore, I did not vote to approve the charges, I voted as to what disposition to make of charges that had been arrived at by a group of which I was not a part." I have to say for the record that I never got a reply to that letter.

T: This was E. H. Moore?

H: Well, you called his name. To me, I think it's a fault of the press--generally I have found it to be true not only with the public press but quite often with our Baptist Press, not always, but quite often. They'll make a statement and maybe make a mistake, and put you in a bad light. But when you write and correct them, either they don't print your correction or they put it somewhere where nobody ever finds it. I think, for instance, if a Baptist paper comes out with a story charging somebody on the front page with big headlines, and it's a false story and is proved to be such, then they ought to run another front page article with big headlines exonerating the person and admitting their mistake, but that, unfortunately, is not done too often. When I'm interviewed by anybody, I always hold my breath until I see it in print.

Not too long ago, Dr. Maston wrote an article in which he was prophesying what could happen in Southern Baptist Convention life if certain trends were not changed. The article read as though the average reader I was afraid might think, "Well, these are conditions that exist right now." He was talking about hierarchical situations and the fact that denominational workers living in nice neighborhoods were getting away from the people and not sympathizing with people, and so on. Also that the Baptist papers just printed one side of the news, and that the Sunday School Board printed and published only books that would sell, not thinking in terms of overall needs. So I wrote an article trying to present the other side of it as I saw it. I was asked to do it by Dr. Gritz of the Baptist Messenger of Oklahoma. I was fixing to go to Fort Worth to record some "Baptist Hour" sermons, and he had to have the copy by a certain time. I said, "Well, I tell you what I'll do, I'll write it and get it to you." He said, "Well, now, you could dictate it over the telephone. We have a machine we can turn on and record it." I said, "Well, all right, I'll just do it." So I wrote it and dictated it while the secretary listened. She, then, transcribed it. I said, "Well, now, I want you to mail me a copy of it." She did, I got back from Fort Worth the next afternoon and there was my copy. I read it to see if it was correct. There were several minor mistakes, but one major one. It had to do with a statement by Dr. Maston that ultra conservatism was taking over the Convention. I remarked that during my presidency

I had observed the percentage between conservatism and so-called liberalism in our Convention. I said, "I do not care for labels myself. Labels are deceptive." When I read the copy it had come out "Liberals are deceptive." Well, I got on the phone. I couldn't get Dr. Gritz, who was at prayer meeting. Finally I got his secretary and told her about it. She said, "Oh my goodness, that would be a terrible thing." I said, "You're talking about a terrible thing? Dr. Gritz told me that if I got any volume of mail on it that he'd furnish secretarial help to answer it. There are not enough secretaries in Oklahoma City to answer the mail if that statement goes out like that." She said, "Well, I'll call right now and stop the presses, and we'll correct it in the morning," which they did. But that was an honest mistake. It wasn't deliberately done. However, when people read something in print, they accept it as printed. I wrote a little book Showers of Blessings, and I was talking about God. I said, "He is in the Universe but not contained by it." When the book came out--I'd read the galley proof even and missed it--but when it came out in bound form and I read it through to see if it was all right, lo, and behold, it said, "He is the universe, but not contained by it." In other words, that makes me a Pantheist. So I wrote the publisher, "For goodness' sake, in the next printing change that so that people won't think I'm a Pantheist." Strangely, I've not had one letter about it. But anyway, you will never make me believe there's not such a thing as a printers' devil. Even if I doubted the devil as such, which I don't, I would know there's a printers' devil. I've had too much experience with him.

T: When did you really first become acquainted with the Elliott Controversy as it was called?

H: Well, frankly, it was after this other. You see, I was elected in June, 1961. About a week later I went on this tour of the Middle East. I came back, and then this matter hit. Well, that was the big news of that particular time.

T: Now this was 1962?

H: No, 1961. In the meantime, Dr. Elliott's book had been released, and a world of people had read it. The rumblings had started, but I did not become too much aware of it until early in the fall of 1961. I immediately went to the bookstore, got a copy of the book, and read it. Then, the Baptist Press began to carry stories about it and about the opposition to it. There was a rising tide of conflict. Some of the editors editorialized about it, some for it, some against it. We saw the thing snowballing. Some were already saying this perhaps would be the major issue at the next Southern Baptist Convention session in San Francisco. So one day Dr. Porter Routh and Dr. Albert McClellan came out to Oklahoma City, and sat in my office one entire afternoon as we talked about what could be done to head off an explosion in San Francisco. As I said, this book was not the cause but the occasion for all of this. It was just the thing that those who had harbored feelings of concern for a long time used as the occasion to let their feelings out. We saw the thing building up a head of steam. How could we avoid an explosion in San Francisco, and to give opportunity for the thing to be worked out. Finally, Dr. Routh said, "Well, you know we've got the 1925 statement of Baptist Faith and Message." Frankly, you didn't hear much about it back in that time. It had been drawn up by a committee chaired by Dr. E. Y. Mullins and adopted by the Convention in Memphis in 1925. The big issue then was evolution. One of the

famous debates of all time, I guess, among Southern Baptists was between Dr. Mullins and Dr. Staley, then editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger (and father to Dr. Syd Staley, who later became Dr. Mullins' fellow in theology, and went on to be a professor at Southern, and finally president of Southeastern Seminary.) I heard Dr. Staley, Jr., give a classic one night on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Messenger. It was about his dad. He was fair to his dad, but he wasn't overly so; I mean, he told it like it was. It was not only interesting and informing, but it was humorous. Well, anyway, here's something that I know I've never read in anybody's record. And I think it ought to be in the record. Somebody told me that Dr. Staley became aware of the fact that the Convention was going to vote with Dr. Mullins and the committee rather than with him. They had proposed to state that man is a special creation of God, and the Convention was ready to take that. So Dr. Staley said, "I will accept that provided you will add the words 'and not by evolution.'" Dr. Mullins gave what I think is a classic statement that ought to be preserved. He said, "Brethren, if we are not going to tell God how he did create man, we should not tell him how he did not create man." And the Convention went on to vote to adopt the statement. Well, that statement in my judgment anchored Southern Baptists during the storms that swirled about so many denominations in the latter 1920's when "Modernism," as it was called, was running rampant, and many of the denominations were swept away from their traditional theological moorings. But Southern Baptists were not. And I think that statement was one of the major contributing factors to that. Well, by 1961, there were those who were saying that Southern Baptists had changed in their beliefs, had gone the liberal route, more and more of them were. So Dr. Routh said, "You know, I think we need to find out if that is true or isn't true, and the best way I see to do it is to have a committee to study the 1925 Statement of Faith and Message and report its findings."

T: Now was this Dr. Routh's idea to begin with?

H: Yes. Dr. McClellan and I both agreed that would be the thing to do. So then we talked about what type of committee that should be appointed, if such were appointed. It was finally agreed that it should be a committee with the president of the Southern Baptist Convention as chairman. Then, in order to get back as nearly to the grass roots as we could, to have as members of the committee the presidents of the state conventions which were qualified by the bylaws, and that was most of them. You know you've got to have a certain number of members in a state convention for participation on Southern Baptist Convention. We felt that the man in each state who enjoyed the confidence of the people enough to have been elected their president the previous fall would be able to represent the prevailing views in his state. So it was agreed that that would be the suggested committee. Then the question came up about the theological education community being represented in a matter so delicate as this. Therefore, we agreed that the presidents of the six seminaries should be on the committee. We agreed that we would present this matter to the Executive Committee when it met in pre-Convention session in San Francisco. An ad hoc committee was formed to go with us to the Executive Committee.

T: Who was on that committee?

H: I don't recall who the ad hoc committee was. But they were members of the Executive

Committee, because we had to have somebody that could present the matter to the Committee. When we got to San Francisco the word had gotten around as to what we were going to recommend. The night before we were to present it to the Executive Committee, I walked into the lobby of the St. Francis Hotel which was the headquarters hotel. A number of state Baptist paper editors came to me. Dr. E. S. James was the spokesman. He said, "We have supported your presidency, and we want to continue to do so. But if you recommend to the Executive Committee and they recommend to the Convention that the six seminary presidents be included on this committee, we're going to have to oppose you. The other editors said they agreed with that. Dr. James used the illustration that if the Baptist Standard were being investigated, he should not be a member of the committee. And he said, "Whether true or not, the seminaries are involved in this controversy. Some are accused of teaching things that are not in keeping with Southern Baptist traditional beliefs. Therefore, the presidents are themselves a part of the problem by virtue of their office, not by anything they have done." And it dawned on me that they were correct. I said, "Well, friend, I think you're right and I appreciate it. We're having a breakfast meeting of our ad hoc committee in the morning, and I will recommend to them that we not include the names of the seminary presidents." At the breakfast meeting when I proposed that I found a great relief on the part of everybody else, because everybody there, including Dr. Routh and Dr. McClellan, had come to feel that the presidents should not be on the committee. So I found that we were in agreement on it. It went to the Executive Committee that way. When the report recommending such a committee was made by the Executive Committee to the Convention, J. T. Ford, as I remember, moved to amend the report that the six seminary presidents be added to the committee. The Convention voted his motion down overwhelmingly, which showed that these editors had the sense of the Convention.

T: Who is J. T. Ford?

H: Well, he was then pastor of the Wieuca Road Baptist Church, in Atlanta, Georgia.

T: Was this a test? Had this been arranged?

H: No. I think he did it on his own. Because the Convention didn't know we were not going to include the seminary presidents. He may have heard that they would be included because of the previous plans. But to my knowledge there was no organized effort to do that, and I rather question that there was.

I might add this before we get back to the Elliott matter. After the Convention was over some of the editors raised the question in editorials about whether this committee was qualified to deal with the "Statement of Faith and Message," which was a highly technical theological, doctrinal matter. Dr. Gritz, of the Baptist Messenger of Oklahoma, did a very wise thing. He had one of his assistants to do research on the men on the committee--as to who they were, where they were, their education, the degrees that they had. It revealed that a sizeable group in the committee had their earned doctor's degrees from one or other of our seminaries. I had one, Dick Hall had one, the man from Virginia had one, and I don't know, I can't recall now all of them, but it was a sizeable number.

T: Did he print this in the Baptist Messenger?

H: He ran it in the Messenger, and the other editors picked it up. Others who did not have earned doctor's degrees had the Th.M., which was the old standard Seminary degree. Others had honorary doctor's degrees. Only one, as I recall, was on the committee who did not have any seminary training.

T: Of the preachers?

H: Yes. Well, they were all preachers. So after that article went out, you could sense--in fact the editors stated--that we had a good committee and Southern Baptists could be confident that they would do a good job.

T: Were there any laymen on the committee?

H: No, not a single layman. It wasn't by design, it just happened that no laymen were presidents of any convention that year. We'll get back to that later.

Coming back now to the Elliott Controversy, I use his name because that's what the controversy is known to be. I don't use it in any discriminatory sense. I had written out my president's address. Prior to this time the president's address had more or less been a rather brief message, never more than thirty minutes. Oftentimes it was much less, in which the president just said what he wanted to say. It might be a sort of a state of the Convention message. Or it might be, as in the case of Casper Warren, a challenge to the Convention to put on the "Thirty Thousand Movement" for new churches. The president's address had not really occupied a place of great importance as a whole in the Convention proceedings. Well, this year I felt that the best way to deal with this matter was to come--and I want to keep in perspective the fact that the matter was much larger than one book; no one book would have caused that controversy, it was something that had built up through the years. I felt that it had been more or less soft-pedaled long enough. This thing had come to a boil; the only way to handle it was head-on. So I prepared my president's address to that end. I wrote it out. Those who know my style of preaching know that I do not write out my sermons. I write out the "Baptist Hour" sermons, and occasionally a message where I felt that I had to speak with exactness. But it was not my normal style, and the people that knew me knew that. I explained to them that I had written out my message for three reasons, the old three classical reasons: before I speak I want to know what I'm going to say; while I'm speaking I want to know what I'm saying; and when I get through I want to be able to prove what I said. I told the Committee on Order of Business that I wanted an hour for the president's address, and they gave it to me. The address recognized the problem, faced it, and then sought to analyze the situation. For instance, I went into the matter of historical criticism. So many preachers didn't even know what historical and textual criticism were--those that had not been to the seminary. So I went into that. I came to the conclusion that the Bible has been profited more by historical and textual criticism than it has been hurt by it, authenticating the Scriptures, and clearing up disputed passages, etc. I showed what archaeology has done. I dealt with clear-cut theological issues. Dr. E. S. James came to the Executive Committee in pre-Convention session and said, "Brethren, I have read the president's address. I notice that it is scheduled to appear on the program after the first miscellaneous business session."

T: This was the Executive Committee meeting?

H: Yes. He said, "I think if you would request the Committee on Order of Business to schedule the president's address before that first miscellaneous business meeting /when everybody expected the thing to explode/, I think this address will help to head off a lot of debate and maybe all of it." They voted then to request that that be done, and it was. So I delivered my address before the first miscellaneous business session. Naturally, I did it with fear and trembling. It took me one solid hour to read it. I didn't just get up and mumble words, I preached it. But I read it. Everybody knew what I was doing. When I got through, to my great relief and joy, the Convention--as far as I could tell--to a person gave me a standing ovation. The records, I think, will show that that had never been done. There had been no need for it, no occasion for it. I'm not saying that I was such a hotshot. But here was a crisis situation and this message had dealt with it forthrightly. The Convention recognized that, and that's why they gave the ovation. A motion was made that it be printed in its entirety in the Convention Annual of that year, which again was something that had never been done before, and it was voted to be done. While mentioning that, I will say that the next year I did exactly the same thing. I took an hour to read my message. It was of a little different nature, yet it was still sort of winding up the ball of yarn on this problem. Because by that time the statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" was ready to be presented. Again they gave a standing ovation, and voted on motion to print the address in its entirety in the Convention Annual. To my knowledge, those were the only two that had ever been done up to that time. It's a costly thing to put out that annual, especially when you give it away. So I think that the Convention recognized that these messages, whether they did it or not, at least they had attempted to face the issue.

Now, Dr. K. O. White, at the miscellaneous business session that morning brought a motion that we reaffirm our faith in the Bible and that we instruct the institutions and agencies to abide by what was traditionally recognized as the conservative position of Southern Baptists. Now anybody that says that he will not become frustrated and e excited while presiding at a crucial session of the Southern Baptist Convention has never done it. And though I had studied carefully the Convention's bylaws and the parliamentary book that we used when this motion was made I offered opportunity for discussion and then called for a vote. It passed. Well, a dear lady whose name I cannot recall--she was the president of the Woman's Missionary Union of Georgia--rose to her feet and said, "Mr. President, do not the bylaws of the Convention say that any matters of business not contained in the adopted order of business are to be referred to the Committee on Order of Business, and, in turn, scheduled for discussion and action later, the time to be announced when it will be done?" And I said, "My dear lady, you are exactly right, and the chair is in error. Therefore, I declare the action just taken null and void." There were a bunch of "no, no, no" over the Convention. I said, "Now Brethren, the Chair has made a mistake, and we must follow our bylaws. You can still vote this motion if you want to when it comes up. It's not in any sense taking away from your rights. It's merely correcting an error that the Chair made." I ruled that the vote was out of order, and the matter was referred to the Committee on Order of Business. Later, I wrote this lady and thanked her. She wrote back and said, "You know, that's the first time I ever got up and spoke at a Southern Baptist Convention in my life." She had presided at the women's meetings, but certainly at the Southern Baptist Convention, "no." And she said, "I was frightened to death." I wrote her back and I said, "Lady, you never did the Southern Baptist Convention a

greater service than when you pointed out to the presiding officer his mistake."

Well, they announced that this matter would come up the next morning. If I slept five minutes that night, I don't remember it. After I went to my room following the evening session that thing weighed heavily on me. I said, "Now, if it's presented, the motion calls for us to reaffirm our faith in the Bible and to instruct agencies. I know that Southern Baptists will vote in a second to reaffirm their faith in the Bible. But they would vote also in a second to refute the idea of the Convention instructing the agencies, because the general pattern with a few exceptions has been that the Convention does not instruct. It requests agencies and their trustees to do certain things." I could just see the news headlines saying that "Southern Baptists Vote Not to Reaffirm Their Faith in the Bible." That would have been the newspaper headline across this nation. And the blessed people back home, not knowing what was going on, would be appalled and up in arms. I did not know how to keep Southern Baptists from doing something that I knew that they didn't want to do. So I rolled and tossed and prayed. My wife knew I had been wrestling with that problem because I had talked with her about it before we went to bed, and I guess she was awake as much as I was. So the next morning while I was shaving, all of a sudden it came to me just as if somebody turned on a light in my head that Dr. White's motion was in reality two motions and could not be voted on together. One was a motion to reaffirm, and the other to instruct. I told my wife, "There it is! I'm going to rule that this is really two motions, and we're going to vote on them separately." So she said, "Well, I think you're right." I think the Lord led me to that answer. Again, I wasn't smart enough to think of that or figure that out. I had rolled and tossed all night trying to figure it out, I had prayed and prayed, and it just came to me like a flash while I was shaving. I wasn't even thinking at the moment about it, I was thinking about not cutting myself. But I went to the Convention Hall before that time of the session. Dr. White was there. He also was there early because he knew this was going to come up as one of the first things. He was going to speak to his motion. I told him what I had decided, and he said, "I think you're right, and that would be perfectly agreeable to me." So I did rule that it was two motions. The Convention voted to reaffirm its faith in the Bible; it voted not to instruct the agencies. That pretty well settled that issue at that Convention, because we had, in the meantime, voted to appoint this committee. The matter was in the hands of the committee that was to report the next year.

I want to say this about Dr. White. Some people do not know Dr. White, maybe those who were on the other side of the issue--some were rather unkind in their comments about him. He wrote an article--you may remember that it appeared in the papers as "Death in the Pot." It dealt with liberalism coming into our Convention. Some looked on him, I guess, as being a rabble-rouser kind of a person. Well, I've known K. O. White since seminary days. To begin with, Dr. White is a scholar. He has his earned doctoral degree in Hebrew Old Testament. He was a Fellow in Junior Hebrew in the seminary, a choice student. He's a Canadian by birth and as much of a Christian gentleman as I ever hope to know. Mild, meek, and humble as any person, but a man with deep convictions. He was not trying to rabble-rouse the Convention or stampede it into something; he was expressing the deep conviction of his soul. Just as others on the other side of the issue were expressing theirs. Because after all, I have found through the years when there's difference of opinion, there are

three sides: yours, mine, and the right one. It was that right side that we were trying to find. That's why we asked for this committee: to have time to study the problem, and not to do something on the spur of the moment, but to let a committee spend a year prayerfully, carefully studying this statement, and recommending what it was thought should be done.

Now in the meantime, after the Convention was over, Dr. Berquist asked me if I would meet with him and Dr. Malcolm Knight, who was chairman of the trustees at Midwestern, and with Dr. Routh in Kansas City. We spent a whole day with Dr. Elliott. I think it might be well to go back at this point and make one other statement.

When I saw this pot boiling in the fall of 1961, we were at Nashville for the Executive Committee meeting. All of the seminary presidents were there, and I asked them to be my guest at breakfast one morning. We ate breakfast together and then I told them, "Now, Brethren, every one of you is a personal friend of mine--Dr. McCall, Dr. Berquist, Dr. Graves, Dr. Eddleman--we were all of the same seminary generation at Southern Seminary, and, of course, I knew Bob Naylor from way back. He is an Oklahoman, his dad was one of the pioneer preachers from southeast Oklahoma. I knew him when I first came here; he died not too many years later. And I knew Bob from his pastorates in South Carolina and Arkansas. Then I had known Dr. Binkley at Southern Seminary as a teacher. He was not teaching when I was there, but I had known him through the seminary relationships. But I told them, "Now, Brethren, this is a problem that you are dealing with, I know, in your own hearts. I know that you are men of integrity, and your faith in the Scriptures, as far as I am concerned, is without question. Yet, you've got a problem on your hands." All of us knew about the experience that Dr. McCall and the Southern Seminary had gone through when thirteen professors were dismissed. While it was reported that it was primarily because of insubordination to the administration and trustees --that perhaps was the final issue--the root of it was theological. Good men differed in their beliefs--incidentally some of these men had gone to Midwestern, one of which was Dr. Elliott. I think maybe Dr. Elliott went to Midwestern before; he was not one of the thirteen, but he was in that same trend of thought at Southern Seminary.

T: He was a Fellow, I believe, in the Old Testament Department with some of these other men?

H: Yes. Of course, one of the big issues back then was not so much theology, and yet that was involved in a way. It was the administrative procedures. Prior to Dr. Fuller's coming to Southern Seminary, the president to the public was the president, but within the faculty he was the chairman of the faculty. Dr. Sampey used to talk about that in chapel. His favorite expression was, "We are like among equals." But when Dr. Fuller went there, he said, 'If I'm going to be the president, I want the authority to be president." And the trustees granted it. When he began to exercise it, the fat was in the fire, and there was quite a bit of turmoil.

T: Was this Dr. Fuller or Dr. McCall?

H: Fuller. In other words, every faculty member prior to that time pretty well set his own schedule. If he wanted to go off and be gone for a revival or a Bible conference, he just went. But Dr. Fuller said, "No, there's just a certain amount of time you

can be away." Other restrictions were placed on the faculty that they had not had prior to that time, and they chafed under it. That created the friction that brought on a crisis situation. Some say that Dr. Fuller's heart attack was one of the results of the tension and stress under which he lived in those days. He was a very tense man anyway. When he preached he was just as tense as he could be, but a great preacher. When Dr. McCall came, he came under the same circumstances, that he was the president with authority.

It's of interest that when Dr. Fuller died, they began searching for a president. Dr. McCall knows this, so it isn't letting out any secrets. They began a search for a president, and out of a list of possibilities they began to strike off names. Dr. McCall's name was on the list and they struck it off on the first go-round, because some of the faculty members objected to him. It finally boiled down to two people. Wallace Bassett was on the committee, and he came to me one day at our state convention in Ardmore, Oklahoma. He was speaking at our Convention, and asked to have dinner with me. He said, "I'm on the committee to nominate a president at Southern Seminary. Would you be available?" I said, "Doctor, I never dreamed of such, and I certainly would not try to get it. But if I were elected, I guess I would consider it a draft from the denomination." I would have felt that way about Southern as my alma mater; I would not have felt that way about any other seminary.

Later on--again, Dr. Eddleman knows this, so I'm not telling anything out of school--the committee to nominate a successor to Dr. Leavell called me and asked me to come to New Orleans and visit with them. They had agreed that I was the man they'd like to recommend. But I had committed myself to the pastorate. I felt that I could do more for the Kingdom of God in the pastorate than I could from a denominational position. I often said that that's the only thing Dr. George W. Truett and I had in common was that conviction. I told the chairman, "I do not feel that I would be available. It would not be fair to the committee, or to whomever you get, for me to come down there. It would become known, and whoever is gotten would know he is second choice." I said, "Who else have you got on your list?" And he said, "Well, Dr. Eddleman is the next man on the list, and Dr. Nelson over in Birmingham is on the list." He was then at Greenville, South Carolina. I said, "Well, Dr. Eddleman is your man." I recited his background, his academic degrees, his missionary experience, professor at the seminary, pastor of a church, president of Georgetown College. And they turned to him, and he came, of course.

But anyway, going back to Louisville, it became known that they had boiled their list down to two men, mine and Dr. M. Theron Rankin, who was then secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. A number of my friends and other men in high places--one at the time was president of the Southern Baptist Convention--contacted me and said, "I understand you are being considered for that position, do you want me to do anything?" I think maybe one used the term, "Do you want me to go to bat for you?" I said, "No, I don't want you to do a thing. They know where I am, the Lord knows where I am, and if the Lord wants me there, they'll find me. I don't want you or anybody else to do one form thing." When we came to San Francisco where they were supposed to elect a man, the committee had locked horns even-Stephen between Dr. Rankin and me. When the trustees met, they went in and recommended that they even used names in the meeting, but I knew this from other sources--they recommended that they be given more time, that they were just going to drop these two names and start over.

The trustees voted that. While they were in session, the Convention was electing its officers. I was on the platform sitting next to Duke McCall. Duke leaned over, and out of the side of his mouth said, "I understand somebody else is being elected about now." I said, "Who?" He said, "You." I said, "To what?" He said, "president of Southern Seminary." I said, "Oh no." "Oh yeah," he said, "you know in my position as executive secretary of the Executive Committee I know what's going on. And that's what's happening right now." I said, "Well, all I can say is, if they do, they'll do it without ever having said a word to me about it." And then I said, "I understand your name is on the list, but they struck it off because some of the faculty objected to you." He said, "That's right." And he said, "But, you know, in my position, I'm familiar with the financial problems, doctrinal problems, student-faculty problems there. And a man knowing what I know would be a fool to take that job." Well, of course, before the Convention disbanded, they went to Duke. They had said, "Well, we're going back to him, whether the faculty wants him or not." By that time the committee had solidified in its unity, and they were going to get a president and forget about these factions. They went back to Duke.

Duke said, "Well now, Brethren, I'm going on a vacation. And I don't want to be bothered with it. When I get back home I'll get in touch with you, and we'll talk about it." So about a month after I got home, I read in the paper where he'd been elected. I sat down and wrote him a letter. I said, "Dear Fool," and went on and told him I was praying for him. I got a long typewritten letter back explaining all about it, because he thought I thought he'd been leading me on. I knew he wasn't, but he explained how it all happened. Well, later on, after the thirteen men were dismissed and the seminary was brought on the carpet by the AATS and put on probation, he called the faculty and student body together to explain what had happened. He told that story, though he didn't use my name. But he said, "I was tempted to send him a telegram and tell him what had happened, and sign it, the Fool." Well, of course, Dr. McCall's made a great president. He was the man for the job. I felt that my position as pastor gave me a base of operations better than being on the payroll of the denomination, because you accept certain limitations when you do that.

I mention that merely to show my conviction about the pastorate. I told the seminary presidents, I said, "Now Brethren, I'm not asking for the job, but if you want me to, I will come to your campus at a time to be decided, meet with your faculty, and just discuss this whole matter--the problems that we're having. Every one of them jumped at it. So I spent the greater part of the time from then until I left--my wife and I left on a trip to the mission fields for the Foreign Mission Board in February--visiting the seminary campuses. We sat down from two and a half to four and a half hours, depending on the size of the faculty. I would take the first hour and a half just to talk to them about the situation as I saw it, trying to interpret to them the thinking of Southern Baptists. Then we would take the rest of the time for dialogue. Without exception the faculties thanked me. They said, "We never thought we'd see the day when the president of the Southern Baptist Convention would be interested enough in our problems to come and spend this much time talking with us." I found, for instance, that they chewed on one another over theology, if some one of them got a little bit off center on something.

There are some stories I could tell there, I won't do it now, but if later you want me to tell some of them, I will.

But, anyway, another purpose that I had was not only to try to interpret to the faculties the Convention's attitude but to learn their attitude, and also to determine what I already felt was true. I wanted to be able to say it not from "I think" or "I'll bet," but "I know." I wanted to say in my president's address in San Francisco--and I did, I told of this experience in a brief way of going to the seminary campuses, and I said, "Now, I am here to tell you that 95 percent or more of the professors in our seminaries are in their classrooms teaching as Southern Baptists would want them to teach, and they get no recognition from us whatsoever. But maybe anywhere there are from 1 to 5 percent of them that may at times say something or write something with which many do not agree. They get all of the headlines and attention. But our seminaries are not hotbeds of liberalism." I said, "In my judgment we've got 5 percent on either to the right or left of center, and not very far either way, but 90 percent of our people are going right down the middle of the road where they've always been as Southern Baptists, and that is as conservatives in their theology." I spent that time so that I could make that statement, not from hearsay or just as a guess, but at least as an educated estimate by experience. And I still think it's true. Somebody said, "Well, we've got more liberals than we used to have." Others say, "We've got more conservatives than we used to have." I said, "Yes, and we've got more Southern Baptists, too. But the percentage is still the same." To show you how balanced this thing is, when I was in the presidency I got my mail just about balanced off between those who said that the liberals have taken over the Convention and the others who said the Fundamentalists have taken over the Convention. The fact of the matter was that neither has, and I don't think ever will. Southern Baptists will go on having their problems. That's a sign of theological health, because our faith is a living faith. If we did not have tension--I used the illustration in my address--if a muscle loses its tension, it loses its usefulness. And it's the tension in our theology that makes it vital and living.

T: One place we need to pick up with, Dr. Hobbs, when we meet together again is this meeting you had in Kansas City and relate some of the events that went on in that meeting.

H: First, would be this conference with Elliott, and then after that would be the meeting of the trustees which came after that, and to which I was invited. Of course, as president I was an ex-officio member anyway, but they were especially anxious that I be there. I think the events there are most revealing, and are things that ought to be preserved for history.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Southern Baptist Convention Presidents

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: Herschel H. Hobbs

INTERVIEWER: A. Ronald Tonks

DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 11, 1974

PLACE: First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City

T: Dr. Hobbs, before we began to record this interview you were telling me about a couple of experiences you had in your early life--one of them was with your dog. I wonder if you'd relate this experience.

H: Well, we had a neighbor who lived about three hundred yards from our house, and he set some duck eggs under a hen. A dog or something sucked the eggs. Without any proof whatever, he said my dog did it. So he came down the road with a shotgun; he said he was going to kill my dog. I told him the dog didn't do it. I kept begging him not to shoot my dog, but it did no good. So I told the dog to run, and apparently the dog from the tone of my voice sensed something, and he started running. This man leveled down on him with a shotgun and hit him in his hindquarrers. He fell in the road, and the man went on down and shot him again, killed him, picked him up by his hind leg, and just threw him over in the pasture. Well, that was quite a traumatic experience for me, naturally, a small boy. I was about 8 years old at the time.

Years later, I was in college in Birmingham. This man in the meantime moved to Birmingham, and as quite an elderly man, died. Well, along with my family, I went to the funeral. As I went by the casket and looked down at the man, the thought went through my mind, "You shot my dog." That shows the sensitive nature of a child and the deep trauma that this incident caused. I had no bitterness in my heart

toward the man. At the time it happened, of course, I was heartbroken, but a child, like Bim Gump's mother-in-law, bruises easily but heals quickly. Now if you don't know who Bim Gump was, years ago they had a cartoon in the funny paper called "Andy Gump." He had an uncle named Bim Gump who was fabulously wealthy. His mother-in-law would get hurt at the least little thing, and he'd give her a lot of money or jewels or something, and so she would say, "I bruise easily, but heal quickly." That's the incident out of which I drew that statement. Nevertheless, it left a lasting scar in my memory, which I think again just shows how careful we should be in dealing with children.

T: Dr. Hobbs, in our first series of interviews, you related most of the things in your early life up to the beginning of your move and pastorate to Oklahoma City. You've talked on a few things relating to that, but I wonder if you would like to add any items or thoughts in that period that we've not covered that have come to you that would be of interest here.

We'll need to pick up some things again, maybe the simplest thing is for us to just go on--I wanted you to see what an Oral History interview looked like in written form. We talked last time up to the period of about 1952 when you became active in the role of a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. It might be helpful if we asked about some of the men of the Executive Committee. Are there particular men that stand out to you, some who were your friends that you can tell me something about? What about Louie D. Newton? Was he on the Executive Committee when you were there?

H: Louie Newton was on the Executive Committee. In fact, he was chairman of the Finance Committee which is now known as the Program Committee. I think it's the hardest working committee in Southern Baptist Convention life. When I went on the Executive Committee, they appointed me to that subcommittee, and I served on it all the time I was on the Executive Committee, eventually becoming its chairman. Louie Newton, I call "Mr. Southern Baptist." I don't know of any man more familiar with the life and the history of Southern Baptists than he is. For instance, I held a revival meeting for him when we had the crusade east of the Mississippi in 1951. I was there two weeks, and a great deal of that time was spent listening to him relate incidents in the life of our denomination about which I had read, but in which he had participated. For instance, Dr. Newton was on the committee that went in and discovered that money had been taken by Mr. Carnes who was with the Home Mission Board. I felt that I had actually walked through some of the great events in Southern Baptist history during that week. Dr. Newton, of course, is a devoted Southern Baptist, and his wisdom was always a balancing factor in the Executive Committee as well as in the Finance Committee. He served on the Executive Committee, I think, for sixteen years. Then, you recall, they put in the rotating system, and he rotated off. Well, through circumstances, I was on the committee eleven years; and I suspect that I may have been next to him in length of service on the Executive Committee.

My being on it so long was through a series of circumstances. To begin with, I was put on in the fall to fill out a term for Dr. Henry Bennett. Dr. Bennett was president of what is now Oklahoma State University and was an assistant secretary of state in charge of the Point Four Program, which was a program dealing with

improving agricultural work around the world. He and Mrs. Bennett were on a trip in that connection, and their plane crashed in Iran as it was coming in for a landing, and they were both killed. They asked me to serve out his term, which had two and a half years to run. So I served those two and a half years. Then I was eligible to be elected for a full term of my own, of three years. After that, I was eligible to be reelected to another three years. Well, in the course of this time, they put in this new rotating system. I might say that prior to that time while you were put on for three years, then could be reelected immediately for another three. When they put in the rotating system, you had to be off of the Executive Committee, or any other Southern Baptist board or commission, at least one year before being eligible for reelection. It provided that if a man were put on for less than a full three-year term, he would serve out the time that he was asked to serve, and then would be eligible for two full three-year terms. I was put on to serve two years, which meant that I had actually served on the Executive Committee for five years before I was ever put on to serve in my own right. Then I was elected for three years and then for another three-year term. I was elected president of the Convention before that second three-year term ran out, but I was an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee then for two years. It all adds up to eleven years, give or take a little bit, and that's how I happened to have been on that long at that period of time. Other men that I worked with very closely on the Executive Committee, of course, were Porter Routh and Albert McClellan.

T: You had known them in Oklahoma?

H: Well, Porter left Oklahoma before I came out here. Albert left just about the time I came here. Porter had been the editor of the Baptist Messenger in Oklahoma; he was a member of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and on the board of deacons. Albert had been pastor of churches in Oklahoma, I think his last church here was Kellam Avenue Baptist. Then he became the editor of the Baptist Messenger. Shortly before I came here, oh, I guess it was about the time I came, he went to Nashville. John Williams, of course, is another that I worked with, also W. C. Fields, who is in charge of our Baptist Press relations. In fact, I taught W. C. Fields in Louisiana College when I was pastor at Alexandria. I was asked to help out--they were short on faculty during World War II. I agreed with the understanding that I would not be paid for the work. So for two and a half years I taught a class in Bible interpretation at Louisiana College. In that class were men like W. C. Fields, Malcolm Tolbert, who is now teaching Greek New Testament at New Orleans Seminary, H. C. Brown, Jr., who was professor of preaching at Southwestern but died last spring, and Jaroy Weber, who is now at First Baptist Church, Lubbock, to name only a few. I've always been proud of what I call my boys. They, every one made good, each in his own way. Well, Porter Routh is to my judgment a walking encyclopedia of Southern Baptist life. I've sat in committees with him when matters would come up, and he could almost tell you the page of the annual of a given year where you'd find the answer to a problem--some action the Convention had taken.

T: Was he a student of this? Did he remember it, or did he brief himself well before he went to these meetings?

H: I would say that he was a student, because things would come up just out of thin

air. There was no way he could have briefed himself ahead on a given matter.

T: Can you think of a specific example where this stands out in your mind?

H: Well, it's hard to recall any specific one. But I do think of many instances where we would be dealing with the business and financial plan of the Convention, and he could cite the provisions of it. Or he could tell you of another situation that had come up involving a problem around it, things of that sort. I think Porter Routh is not only a big man physically, but spiritually and otherwise. It's been a choice experience of mine to know him and to work with him. I knew Dr. Crouch only in a passing sort of way. He was going out as my generation was coming in. Duke McCall, of course, I've known since seminary days. He was and is a tower of strength. But I think Duke's where God wanted him eventually, and Porter is where God wants him. Albert McClellan--well, you just can't say enough about Albert. In my judgment he's one of the most underrated men in Southern Baptist life. I don't mean that he doesn't have a standing, I just mean that the average person is not in position to appreciate Albert and what he does. He is decidedly a detail man, and is a perfect complement to Porter.

T: Did they know each other well in Oklahoma?

H: Oh yes. In fact, it was Porter who brought Albert over there, when he became the executive secretary. Albert has a mind for details; when you talk to him, he doesn't excite you and makes you want to go out and pull up stumps or fight windmills or anything, but you soon sense that he knows what it's all about. I'll give you just one example of which I could give many. I was chairman of the Program Committee when we were assigned the responsibility of writing the Operations Manual, which was to be a guide for all Southern Baptist institutions and agencies. Through the years the Convention had taken many actions, and the thing had gotten sort of entwined to where agencies were overlapping without meaning to. So the Operations Manual was to be the solution to that problem. Frankly, if the chairman of a committee doesn't know before a committee meets how to tackle a problem, the committee is in big trouble. I had no earthly idea of how to take hold of that problem. It was like trying to pick up an elephant, you just didn't know where to take hold. But when our committee got together, Albert McClellan, who was assigned by a staff appointment to work with the Program Committee in all matters, had gotten his staff together, the secretaries and all. They had gone through and researched the entire matter of the agencies and their assigned duties, and had ready to lay in our hands in mimeographed form every action taken by the Southern Baptist Convention from 1845 to that time that dealt with any one agency and assigning to it a responsibility. Well, our homework was done. It was just a matter then of arranging and interviewing people involved and coming to some kind of conclusion.

T: I believe the Historical Commission was responsible for preparing that booklet.

H: Well, I'm glad to know that. They say an educated man is not the one that knows the most but knows where to find it out. There is another incident, and I'm quite sure this was Albert's doing. In 1963 we were going to present the proposed revised form of "The Baptist Faith and Message." Albert anticipated debate on the matter of the church. How he was able to do that, I don't know. But it happened that the

only thing in that report that was debated was one sentence which said that the word "church" is sometimes used in the New Testament to refer to all the redeemed of all the ages. Well, Albert apparently figured that would be one of the points of attack, if it were attacked. He came to me the night before, knowing I as chairman was going to present the report, and handed me pages out of books on Baptist doctrine. Strong , Mullins, Tribble, McDaniel, Pendleton, and others that I don't recall at the moment. He had not simply had somebody to type quotations from these books dealing with this one idea of the church in the general sense, lest somebody might say, "Well, you mistyped it, or I don't believe it," or something like that. He had taken a razor blade and cut the page out of each book that had the statement dealing with that matter. He said, "Now, you might find these useful, but I want them back."

So the next day when the report was presented and the debate started, it was on that one issue. Finally, after I thought we had kicked it around enough, I told the Convention that I had these pages. I explained about them and said that I could read every one of them if they wanted me to; but in order to save time I was going to read one sentence from the first page in J. M. Pendleton's Church Manual. I knew that he was sort of the patron saint of those who feel that the word "church" is used only in a local sense in the New Testament. I read one sentence in which he said that the word "church" is sometimes used in the New Testament to refer to "the redeemed in the aggregate." Well, when I read that, that settled it. Dr. Ray Summers told me later that he was standing at the back of the platform with a ten-page typewritten statement on the nature of the church and was going to ask the privilege of reading it to the Convention. But when I read that one sentence, he folded his paper and put it in his pocket. Now he called it "a stroke of genius." Well, the genius in that stroke was Albert McClellan, not Herschel Hobbs. I merely used what he had provided. It never occurred to me to get it.

T: Tell me something about Doug Hudgins.

H: Doug, of course, is the son of the former Sunday School Secretary of Tennessee Baptists. He and Blanche were in the seminary at the time my wife and I entered. We all lived in Rice Hall. He and Blanche lived on the first floor; my wife and I lived on the third floor. Dr. Sampey used to say that the first floor was the "social floor," the second floor was the "intellectual floor," and the third floor was the "spiritual floor." Anybody who could walk up three flights of stairs had to be spiritual. I've often kidded Doug and Blanche about that, that they lived on the social floor. Well, of course, Blanche was and is a wonderful musician. She was the pianist for the chapel services at the seminary. Frances and I came to know Doug and Blanche in the fall of 1932. They had a club known as the Dodeka Club--it's the Greek word for twelve and the club was patterned after the twelve apostles. It was supposed to be made up of married students, and the membership was based on your scholarly record in the seminary. So it was quite a privilege to be selected during the first year as members of that club on the part of my wife and myself. Well, Doug and Blanche were in that club, so we began to know one another more closely there. Since that time we have remained close friends, getting closer, I guess all the time. Doug was vice chairman, by the way, of the Committee on "The Baptist Faith and Message." At that time he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, and president of their convention. He started in on

his graduate work, and was Fellow to Dr. Tribble in theology. But during his first year he was called to be pastor of the Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth. And, believe you me, that caused quite a ripple over the campus that a student would be called to that tremendous church. He went to Broadway, where he did a great work, then went from there to First Baptist, Houston. He also did a good work there. But he really found his place when he went to Jackson and stayed there until Chester Quarles died. He was asked to take the executive secretaryship of Mississippi Baptists, which he did until his retirement recently. Doug is a man that Southern Baptists have never appreciated as they should. It's no fault of his. Doug is a committee man. I don't know all about his engagements, I don't recall that he has ever done a great deal of preaching on the state evangelism conference circuit. They said at one time that that was the path that led to the "throne." When some fellow would be speaking at all of these, some cynics would say, "Well, he's running for president of the Southern Baptist Convention." Well, anybody who knows anything about the denomination knows that you don't run for that office. If you do, you don't get it.

T: You mean if you don't run outwardly?

H: Yes. Well, a man has to be willing, of course, to let his name be presented, but he doesn't do any pushing himself. I'll go into that later on, when we get to talking about my own experiences. But, anyhow, if a man goes around and speaks at all of these evangelistic conferences, he gets to know the preachers and they get to know him, I mean down at the grass roots. And when you come to the Southern Baptist Convention, the pastor at the forks of the branch has as much vote as the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas. They know the man that's been out there with them, and more likely than not some of them will get his vote. But here's Doug Hudgins, who has spent untold hours into the wee hours of the morning--I've sat with him, I know--wrestling with denominational matters and problems. But when you come to the Convention, they don't know that.

I nominated Doug for the presidency of the Convention in Louisville in 1959. When I arrived in town, some friend in Louisville met the plane and said, "I hear you're going to be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention this year." I said, "No I'm not, either, I'm going to nominate somebody." I nominated Doug Hudgins, but he dropped out on the first ballot. But Doug would make a wonderful president of the Southern Baptist Convention. However, the masses of the voters don't know of that committee work. The same thing happened to John Buchanan. He was nominated for president in Memphis against Dr. Lee. At least he and Dr. Lee were nominated; I won't say <u>against</u>. Well, Dr. Lee, of course, was elected. I love Dr. Lee, and I was scheduled to nominate him. But when I learned that Dr. Buchanan was going to be nominated, I asked to be released from the responsibility because Dr. Buchanan was my mother's pastor. He was my fellow-pastor in Alabama at that time, and not long before that had buried our baby. So I wrote the man who had asked me if I would nominate Dr. Lee, and said, "I just can't nominate anybody against Dr. Buchanan." Well, he understood, and Dr. Lee did. But Dr. Lee, bless his heart, he's the great orator, he's the great preacher. He gets up before the crowds and sways the multitudes. Dr. Buchanan is a committee man in the back room. Dr. Buchanan knew more about the life and working of Southern Baptists in a minute than Dr. Lee did all day. That's not to Dr. Lee's discredit. It's just a matter of the

temperament of the men and the kind of work they had done, the contribution they had made to Southern Baptist life. I wouldn't put one contribution above the other, but they're just different kinds of work.

Dr. Lee was a great power during that time. The fact that he was elected for a third term, which in modern times is unprecedented, showed the wise leadership he gave the Convention during a very delicate period. But he was bored to death sitting in committees. Louie Newton told me one day about Dr. Lee sitting in a committee, and Dr. Lee said that he had to spend so much time sitting in committee meetings. And Dr. Newton said, "Well, Dr. Lee, you are just getting a taste of what the rest of us have had all through the years. You are the great Dr. Lee who walks in at the last minute, stands on the platform, and we all look upon you in awe and listen to you in an awesome atmosphere as you preach a great sermon to us. Then you walk off. And you don't know anything about all this detailed committee work that we do." He was kidding him, of course. But there was a certain amount of truth in that. Well, it just shows, I think, two parallels between Dr. Buchanan and Dr. Hudgins, either of whom would have made excellent presidents of the Convention. But you just have to have the exposure, and you don't get that in a back room in a committee meeting.

T: Would Dr. Hudgins know the background and behind-the scenes activity of Southern Baptists perhaps as well as anyone in the early part of the mid-twentieth century?

H: I would say, "Yes," without question.

T: Is he an open man?

H: Oh yes.

T: Would he relate these kinds of things in an oral history interview?

H: I think so. Dr. Hudgins succeeded Dr. Newton as chairman of this Finance Committee, and I succeeded him when he rotated off. He was at one time the chairman of the Executive Committee, which in my judgment is perhaps the second highest office in Southern Baptist life. He was entirely conversant with the business side of Southern Baptist life. He is at the present time president of the Foreign Mission Board. So, I say again, he would have made an excellent president, but he didn't have the public exposure that would get him elected.

Now Carrol Chadwick was another man with whom I worked on the Executive Committee. He was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Center, Texas, and could have been pastor of the largest church in the Convention, I guess. But he got involved in oil over there in east Texas, was fortunate, and made quite a sum of money. He became involved in most of the banks in east Texas. Someone told me recently that he was working on a deal right then with another man to buy into one of the largest saving and loan companies in Dallas. I used to kid Carrol about the income tax he had to pay. One time I said, "Carrol, you could be pastor of most any church. Why did you stay in Center, which is a small town?" He said, "Well, of course, I like it over here, but also I have all of this business interest here, and I couldn't look after it in other places. So I just chose to stay here." This was on the occasion of his 25th anniversary there. I was there to speak during the week. He said,

"I've been here so long--most of the churches in this part of the country, the country churches, have pastors that live off the field--I guess I conduct more funerals for people all over this county than any other man." Well, he was at one time president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which does show the caliber of the man. I could go on and on relating other men, but those are some who stand out in my memory.

T: Let me ask you one thing about the committee, and then talk about a couple of things you've raised. Once you raised the matter of the finance and program committees and the responsibility that these committees have in being such a really taxing kind of job. How do you react to the method by which the agencies appeal for funds and the distribution of funds? Was there behind-the-scenes lobbying when you were on this committee to get a larger share of the Cooperative Program allocation?

H: If there was, I never knew of it. And as chairman of the committee at one time, I think I would have known. The pattern followed is that each agency draws up its budgetary needs. The Foreign Mission Board is an example. Each mission station or area all over the world makes up a list of its needs, including operation, new work, and new equipment. Then all of these are turned in, and a committee from the Foreign Mission Board goes over them. They know that the amount requested is beyond the realm of possibility, so they scrimp wherever they can. "Some things," they say, "you'll have to postpone a year" or "This you can't have." Well, anyway, then these agency heads come to the Program Committee. Each comes in one at a time to present his request, leaves it with the committee and leaves. When all of the requests have been presented, then the committee itself in executive session takes all of these requests. They project the amount of money expected to be received in that particular budget year, and on that basis try to distribute the funds as they anticipate receiving them. But the requests were trimmed after they got to our committee, because we had to cut the cloth to fit the pattern.

I recall one day Dr. Ed Solomon, one of the grand old men of the generation before mine. Dr. Solomon had an impediment in his speech. He and I were walking up the street one day going to the Executive Committee meeting. He was editor of the Baptist Witness in Florida at that time. He said he could remember the time when they would come to the Executive Committee meeting and try to divide pennies they didn't have. I said, "Well, Doctor, the only difference is that now we come up here and try to divide dollars we don't have." So it's always been that way. I think any business firm has the same experience. These departments request more than they get. It's like a family of children, you have to try to give every child his basic needs, and then provide for the extras after that.

T: Would it be fair to say then, that you expected the agencies to ask for much more than they had hopes of getting?

H: Yes. That was, I think, an understood fact. In other words, in presenting a request for a certain amount of money and showing us what the request was for, at least let's say they were putting on the assembly line the items; if they didn't come up that year, they would come up the next year, or the next, or the next. They made us aware of these needs. And I'll say this, I don't think that any of our agencies waste money. I believe Southern Baptists get more for their Cooperative Program dollar than anybody gets for money that they spend. Yet the only way they could make us aware of

the need is through making these requests. Then we would have to look at the amount that we anticipated being available, and then prorate it according to the needs. For instance, we would say to the Foreign Mission Board, " You will get X million dollars." Now within that framework of that they would have to take that, plus other anticipated receipts like the Lottie Moon Offering, and then mold their program to fit the amount of money. But there was never any finagling in the background that I ever knew of, one agency trying to slip in and get money that might be gotten at the expense of another agency. In fact, I've known the Foreign Mission Board willingly to forego some requests in order that another agency that had a much more pressing need might be able to get money to meet that need. There's always been a good spirit among the agencies. The seminaries of course, all of them, need more money. In fact, every agency we have needs more money. I've told the people in Oklahoma City for years, "Don't be afraid of giving too much instead of giving too little."

Take, for instance, the seminary presidents. Back in the early years when I was on the Executive Committee, there was no basis on which to allocate funds for theological education. We would have to sit up until 2:30 or 3:00 in the morning, listening to and replying to the seminary presidents as they would plead for the money they needed. Finally we said, "Well, now this has gone far enough. We want you seminary presidents, and whoever you need to help you, to draw up a formula by which money will be divided. We are going to allocate X dollars for theological education. Then you divide it on the basis of that formula." So they came up with a formula that had a basic amount that any seminary would need to keep the doors open. From there on it was based on the number of full-time students that they had enrolled. It works a hardship on the seminaries with a small enrollment, but it isn't a picnic for the larger seminaries. It's never been fully satisfactory, and I wouldn't be surprised to see them make an adjustment in it. But, at least, it seemed to be the most equitable manner in which to handle the matter. Insofar as I know, that is still being done.

T: I wonder, too, if you'd comment on whether in your experience there had been always a dollar allocation as opposed to a percentage increase of a cross-the-board percentage increase to all agencies.

H: There has never been what you call a cross-the-board percentage increase.

T: You always programmed budgeting?

H: That's right. Now we try to follow this formula, that the Foreign Mission Board would get 75 percent, the Home Board 25 percent of any overage after certain needs have been met. But we tried to aim at giving the Foreign Mission Board 50 percent of the total allocated funds each year. We didn't always hit it right on the mark, but that was sort of a target. We thought that their needs, widespread as they were, called for more money. So we tried to follow that pattern. But just to say "cross-the-board we're going to raise everybody 5 percent or 10 percent," that was never done in my time, and I don't know that it has ever been done. I don't think it would be fair to do it that way. Some agencies could use a 50 percent increase, and some of them might be able to get along with a 1 percent increase. But it's always been, at least back then and I'm assuming it's true now, it's been

again like a parent with a child. You don't say, "Well, I'm going to give each one of you children X percent increase in the amount of money to feed and clothe you." You look after the child individually. If one child has shoes worn out and the other hasn't, you buy the one child shoes, you don't buy both of them shoes.

T: What was the most appealing argument to you as chairman of the Program Committee from an agency?

H: The most appealing argument? Well, I don't know, you've caught me there. That would be hard to single out, but I'll give you two or three examples. Of course, anybody that's ever heard Baker James Cauthen appeal for foreign missions knows that that breaks your heart. You just want to give him everything you've got and part of your clothes. And yet, you have to--when you're dealing with budgets--you have to let your head as well as your emotions enter into it. Duke McCall came to the Program Committee one time. It was when we were dealing with the Operations Manual preparation. Now we didn't finish it while I was chairman, it was later finished under another chairman. But we were dealing with the Southern Seminary and its program. At any rate, Dr. McCall in the course of talking with the committee went into the sad experience of having to dismiss thirteen professors at one time and its aftermath. I remember how his voice would break as he would relate the incident. He didn't try to blame one side and not another; he didn't try to make himself look lily white and others black. It was a very forthright presentation of the matter. When he got through, he said that during that time there were times when he just wanted to quit. Some of his friends said, "Why don't you just get out of it?" But he said, "I had a feeling that somehow in that particular moment of crisis, the future welfare of the seminary was tied to what I did, and I just stayed in there and took what I had to take in order to try to see it through." And when he finished--as a rule Duke is not overly emotional--but when he had finished, he sat down and sobbed like a baby. It was one of the most moving of experiences. You saw a man bare his heart, not asking for money, but simply trying to inform a responsible group about the inner workings of a situation that everybody admits was a tragic one in the life of our denomination. It's sort of like having an operation, you have to go through it, but you regret having do do it at the time, and maybe the scars even remain after the operation is over.

T: Were there times, that you knew of, that one agency would indicate to another that it was not making a large appeal in the interest of somebody else? You mentioned the Foreign Mission Board.

H: Yes, in fact, it was the Foreign Mission Board. They told us that they were making a very minimum request for an increase in order that we might help out the seminaries who were in a money crisis at that time. People have the idea, I guess, just standing off and looking at them, that with the heads of the agencies it's dog eat dog. But that isn't true. Now there are problems that exist. We sat for hours dealing with problems, for instance, between the Foreign Mission Board, the Radio and Television Commission, or the Sunday School Board and the Radio and Television Commission. It was not a matter of personality, but a matter of strong men with strong convictions as to their mandate from the Lord, first, and from the Southern Baptist Convention, second.

T: Could you relate a couple of these incidents that you were involved in between the Foreign Mission Board and the Radio and Television Commission and then the one with the Sunday School Board?

H: Well, actually the one with the Sunday School Board came after I got off the Executive Committee. But the one with the Foreign Mission Board and the Radio and Television Commission came while I was chairman of the Program Committee. I was somewhat aware of it, for one thing, as the preacher on the Baptist Hour. Then as a member of the Executive Committee, the Program Committee, I was aware of it. One of the jobs of that committee is to try to iron out differences between agencies, if they have a difference, as to what their duties are. But it had been more or less under the table talk, I mean, nothing out in the open. It was when we began working on the Operations Manual that it came out into the open.

T: The conflict really centered on the distribution of television and radio programs overseas?

H: That's right, in the areas where the Foreign Mission Board did work. Now the Program Committee decided that the best way to get at this big job was to start and cut our teeth working with the Commissions, which were smaller in scope; and then to tackle the problems dealing with the Boards. And as I remember, the Radio and Television Commission was the first one. Immediately we became aware of the fact that there was this conflict of interest between the two agencies. So we asked Dr. Cauthen and Dr. Paul Stevens and any of their associates that they wanted to invite to come and meet with us. We just opened up the can of worms and talked frankly, in Christian love, but frankly, about the problem.

T: What did you see the problem really to be?

H: Well, the problem was, on the one hand, the fact that Dr. Stevens and the Radio and Television Commission felt that the Convention had assigned to them the responsibility for preaching the gospel by means of radio and television without any fixed limitations as to boundary. For one thing, they said, "You can't put a boundary on radio and television waves and say you can go up to the border of this country, but you can't go any farther." On the other hand, the Foreign Mission Board went back to the original action of the Convention in 1845, which assigned to them the responsibility of carrying on all mission work outside the Continental United States. Now, I think that is one of the things that may be involved in this report of the Committee of 15 that is pending right now. I have not read the report. But I do know that they are recommending that the Foreign Mission Board review its program and methods of doing work, and that could well be involved. Dr. Cauthen and his group contended that any radio and television work done in these areas where we have Foreign Mission work should be done by the Foreign Mission Board. They mentioned, for instance, the care with which they had to deal with the Nationals. They had their cultures and political ideas, prejudices and problems, and so on, and anyone not familiar with them could do more harm than good. They also pointed out that in these areas where nationalism was high, television, or radio, for that matter, voices and characters presented by radio or television from the western world could not be as effective as using native people. All of that, I think on both sides, it was all good. I've always gone by the rule that there are three sides to every argument, yours, mine, and the right one. I've always been a sort of a middle of the roader, never given to extremes either way. And it came to this. Dr. Stevens said, "We don't want to

turn loose in radio and television in foreign countries where we have mission work. What we want to do is to work with the Foreign Mission Board. We have the technical know-how, and what we would like to do is to help them to produce the kind of radio and television programs that would be of professional standard and up to the requirements of the stations where they would be used. The missionaries, for instance, were trying to put on radio programs. And yet it's just like I would be if I came in and said, "Well, I'm going to put on a radio program. I've got me a tape recorder, and I'm going to record a sermon, put it on the radio." Well, you know, it would be a very amateurish job born of necessity. Dr. Stevens in the course of this time made a trip around the world and visited missionaries along the way. They pointed out that they were doing the best that they could with what they had. For instance, he went to Ruschlikon and found that they were producing, or trying to produce, a radio program, and they wanted to get it on the station at Monte Carlo. But the Monte Carlo station wouldn't take it because it was below their standards. So Paul and the missionary got in the car, drove down to Monte Carlo, and went in to see the manager. And Paul, with his technical know-how, just snapped it off like that, and said, "This is what we can do"-- And the man said, "If you can produce that kind of a program, we'll take it." So that was one basis on which the Radio and Television Commission felt that it could be of help. Well, as a result of that the Foreign Mission Board has studios in the major missionary fields, and the Radio and TV Commission has been helpful in training these people and helping them in various ways. In fact, the man that used to be chief engineer at the Radio and Television Commission when I first went on the "Baptist Hour" is now under appointment by the Foreign Mission Board, and in charge of radio work in Europe stationed at Ruschlikon. So back then we thought we had the matter worked out. Both sides agreed to the conditions that we had brought out in the discussion.

T: That was that the Foreign Mission Board assume major responsibility with the technical assistance of the Radio and Television Commission.

H: That's right. In other words, as Dr. Stevens said, "You write the script. If you want a television program or you want a radio program, you write the script. You choose the people to speak or act, or whatever it is. But let us help you with our technical knowledge in producing the kind of program that will be acceptable." They started out, I think, in good faith. But along the line somewhere, the cogs began to slip again. It came up again and again after I went off the Program Committee. Drs. Cauthen and Stevens are on the best personal relationships. But in the matter of their agencies, each of them is zealous for what he is trying to do. I wouldn't give you a dime for a man that was on the job and wouldn't fight for it, even if he fights me. If he was not interested enough in it to fight for it, then he's not the man to do it. So it isn't the fault of either of these men, it's a virtue. Yet it's a case like Paul and Barnabas where two strong Christian men with strong convictions have a difference. They worked theirs out by going in different directions. I think, to my knowledge right now, the situation has been pretty well worked out, and they're working together getting the job done. For instance, I talked with Dr. Cauthen about the Foreign Mission Board paying the station time for the "Baptist Hour" on a station in the Arab world. But after his staff did its research, they decided there weren't enough English-speaking people in the Arab world to make it pay or to be worth the cost. So they went ahead and worked out with the Far East Broadcasting Company

to put the "Baptist Hour" on a station out of Manila beamed to India, where English is the most common language understood by most of the people. So the Radio and Television Commission produces a program, and the Foreign Mission Board pays for the station time.

T: I think I hear you saying that you were impressed, as the Chairman of the Program Committee, with a forceful, dynamic statement from the agency head or executive who was committed to its cause and wanted to convince you with all of his power of the importance of his cause.

H: Oh yes. The first time Paul Stevens came before the Committee to make a request for funds, I never felt so sorry for a man in my life as I did for Paul. He went from First Baptist Church, Ada, Oklahoma, to this position, and I knew him in Oklahoma. And Paul is a man with big ideas. I've always told him that if he were boiled down to a half pint, he'd be a half pint of imagination. He has big ideas and dreams, and is perfect for the position he's in. Up until that time the Radio Commission, as it was known then, was in the budget of the Cooperative Program for $25,000 a year. Paul came in and asked for $75,000. Most of the committee almost fainted. But he made a strong pitch for it. After he left and we got to talking about it, most of them were opposed to that increase, certainly that much--to triple it. I know one member of the committee said, "Well, what is the 'Baptist Hour,' anyway?" That was the only program they had then. He said, "the 'Baptist Hour' is not that program, it's the hour in which Baptist churches all over the country are on radio on Sunday morning."

Well, I learned when I was a kid on a farm that if you have a team run away, as we called it, you don't get out in front of them and try to stop them, or you'll just get run over. You just sit in the buggy or the wagon and get a tight rein on the lines, and try to hold them in the road till they run until they get tired. Then you can handle them. Or a cattle stampede. You run alongside of them and try to keep them from getting too far afield until they get tired of running, and then you round them up. Well, I sat and listened until everybody else had had his say. I'm not asking for any credit for this, I'm merely relating what happened. I then began to talk to the Committee about it, this was before I was on the "Baptist Hour," I guess eight years before, so there was not any selfish motive in my action. But I began to talk about the Commission and the possibility of preaching the gospel by radio. Television was practically unheard of at the time, so I didn't even mention that. While I don't remember what I said, I just remember that it was a general trend in that direction. So finally, they voted to give him the $75,000. And every year since then, to my knowledge, he has asked for more money and has gotten more money. On one occasion he was talking to me and was somewhat upset because he asked for a certain amount that he needed in order to put out thirteen 30-minute television programs in the "This Is the Answer" series, or "Christ Is the Answer" series. When he didn't get that amount he was quite upset. You've got to have that kind of temperament to do that kind of work. He wasn't attacking anybody, he was just giving vent to his feelings. I let him get it out of his system, and then I said, "Paul, you got a nice increase. And I want to remind you that if you take the amount allocated for the theological education program of the six seminaries, and divide that up as each will get its portion, you'll find that the Radio and Television Commission is now number three in the amount of money allocated of all the agencies, Foreign Mission Board, first, Home Mission Board, second, and then the Radio and Television

Commission." Well, he apparently hadn't thought of that. He said, "Well, you know that's right." And he calmed down.

You mentioned a moment ago that two or three years ago they did allocate on a percentage increase basis. Frankly, I haven't kept up as closely with details like that as I once did. I do remember now reading about it, but had forgotten it for the moment. But I tell some of these young fellows that we older men have had our turn at wrestling with all of these problems, it's their time to do it now. When I first started out in the ministry, I thought if I could just get appointed on the Associational Committee I'd have it made. Well, after forty-five years of serving in nearly every position that Southern Baptists could ask you to serve, or one comparable to it, and in the second highest office in the Baptist World Alliance, I know now that being on committees, commissions , and boards is just a lot of hard work with little or no honor. It's a lot of work that very few people know about and care less about. I don't say this bitterly, I'm merely stating it as a fact. Every young preacher, I guess, dreams of the day when he can be on this, that, and the other, and that's all right; I wouldn't take that out of them for anything in the world. If I were young again, I'd have the same dreams. But experience looks back, and you know that everything is not as beautiful as you painted it in your aspirations.

T: It's not all glory.

H: No. But it's a job that has to be done. I've always felt that--for instance, when I was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City--I always felt that I was doing my work as pastor of this church just as much when I was serving on a denominational committee or board, and giving time to such, as I was when I was on the field doing pastoral work. Because, as I often said to the people, "I'm not asking to do this because I'm Herschel Hobbs. If I were Joe Doaks and were pastor of this church, the same thing would be true. Our stronger, older churches of necessity are called upon to give leadership, and I think it's as much a part of the stewardship of this church as the work it does in its own community."

T: You mentioned that the Radio and Television Commission also had some disagreement with the Sunday School Board. This is now totally over, I suppose, in the sense of its being past tense, but could you relate some of that in which you were involved?

H: Well, it's largely, I think, centered in the matter of production and distribution of records. At one time they may have gotten a little bit into the matter of publishing certain packs of literature. But I think the major problem lies in that of making, producing, and marketing records. And again, it's just a matter of two agencies with each doing what it feels is its job. And yet there's a conflict. It's a friendly conflict, like a friendly suit in court, you know. But it's something that the denomination has to work out and resolve. When a solution is agreed upon, I'm sure that the people involved will follow it, because their very sense of mission is born out of a sense of integrity. I don't think any problems that Southern Baptists have are insoluble. It just takes cool heads and warm hearts and a lot of brains, sweat, and patience. I found through the years that the little old word "wait" solves a lot of problems.

T: Let's go back and pick up some of these people that served with you on the Executive Committee. You mentioned Dr. Lee and Dr. Newton as having conversed with one another. Were the two men, and this is probably not the right word, but were the two men adversaries? Were they at different poles, were they often in conflict with one another or were they warm friends?

H: I wouldn't say that they were in conflict with one another, they were warm friends. And are. Because they both love the Lord. They, in a way, represent two different points of view and approaches as to how to get the job done. Dr. Lee, of course, as I indicated, is an orator. He's an evangelist, a great pastor, and has built a great church. Dr. Newton is more of the, well, shall we say, prosaic type. He was formerly a newspaper man, a journalist, editor of the Georgia Christian Index, a layman. He was superintendent of the Sunday School of the Druid Hills Church when the pastor, Dr. McConnell, died. The church just said to Louie, "Well, we want you to be our pastor." He said, "Oh no!" He had never dreamed of such. They wouldn't take no for an answer. So they ordained him, and he was pastor of that church until he retired. But I've never seen any evidence of conflict between the two men. It's just their difference in points of view.

T: Style?

H: And style. Yes.

T: You mentioned, as well, the dismissal of the thirteen professors from Southern Seminary in 1958 or 1959. Were you involved at all in any of this issue? You were a member of the Executive Committee but had not yet become president of the Southern Baptist Convention, were you involved at all in that controversy?

H: No. You see, what happened there is that they never brought that to the Executive Committee, and I think rightly so. I don't recall exactly how it was done, but they did apprise the Executive Committee of the fact, and I believe requested, because the Executive Committee is the Convention ad interim.

T: Let's hold that, I'd like to discuss that with you a little bit further, this concept of the Convention ad interim.

H: We'll come back to that. Let me finish this other. I think, as my memory tells me, they requested through the Executive Committee that the present president of the Southern Baptist Convention and former presidents serve as a committee to meet with the trustees and help them to work out their problems. As you indicated, I had not been elected president of the Convention then and so was not involved. I knew only that part of it. They did not bring it to the Executive Committee for them to do anything about it, and I think rightly so. The Convention elects trustees and they, in turn, elect the executive head of an agency. The trustees are charged with the operation of the institution, and the executive head is responsible to them for how he carries out his administrative duties. So I was not involved, even at a distance, in that. I was merely a spectator.

T: From your understanding of the situation, what really happened and what were the issues involved as you saw them?

H: Well, it's surprising how much you can talk on a subject when you don't have all the facts, and what I say would be largely surmise. Some might question this, but I think quite definitely there was a certain amount of theological difference involved. But I also think there was another matter. Really the more critical issue that brought on what happened was a difference between the Administration and trustees on the one hand and these faculty members on the other as to the authority that was resident in the position of the president, as over against the trustees. Prior to Ellis Fuller's presidency, there had been an arrangement within the seminary family, faculty family, that whereas the president of the seminary was known to the public as the president, within the faculty itself he was the chairman of the faculty. Dr. Sampey used to speak in chapel quite often when I was a student on this matter. His expression was, we are "like among equals." That meant that the president did not have the authority to say to the New Testament professor, for instance, you can be out so many weeks in the year and you can't do this, you can't do that. Well, now, when Dr. Fuller was asked to take the seminary presidency--again this is hearsay--but my understanding was that he told the committee or the trustees that the only basis on which he would accept would be that he would be president in fact, which meant that he would have administrative authority over the faculty. They agreed to it, and all during his presidency there was within the seminary family difference. It may at times have been a struggle. The faculty resented being told by the president what they could or could not do.

I think a part of that may have centered in the fact that Dr. Fuller didn't have an earned doctorate. It is my understanding that he completed his work for a doctorate short of a thesis. He passed his oral but like so many men said, "Well, I'm going out and be pastor of a church. I'll write my thesis on the field." They get out there and get so busy, they never do write it. Dr. John Buchanan was such a person, and I could name others. I was tempted at that point, but remembering their experience compelled me to stay on at the seminary until I had finished my thesis. But, anyway, Dr. Fuller had been a pastor and an evangelist. Although he didn't have the academic degrees--and, of course, whether at the seminary, college, or university, those things are important in the field of education, moreso perhaps than anywhere else. I think perhaps there was some resentment there, that the man that had a lesser academic degree was over these other men. Well, when Dr. Fuller died, Dr. McCall was elected. My understanding is that there were about sixty-five men that were on the list to be considered when the committee started working to seek a successor to Dr. Fuller. The reason I say that is because my name became involved. As they went through the list, there were certain men on there who were objectionable to the faculty. They still wanted this "like among equals" approach. They wanted to go back to that. After the experience they had had during Dr. Fuller's presidency, I don't say that to his discredit. I merely state it as what I understand to be a situation. So Dr. McCall's name was stricken from the list, and later they finally got down to two men, of whom I happened to be one of them.

T: Who was the other, do you know?

H: Dr. Rankin, M. T. Rankin. The Committee locked horns. Now I know this because Wallace Bassett was on the committee, and Wallace had asked me if I would consider that position if I were asked to take it. I said, "Doctor, I have no ambitions in that direction. I have always felt my best ministry for the denomination in the Kingdom

of God should be from the pastorate. But if I were asked to take it, I probably would feel it was a draft from the denomination to be the president of my alma mater. I wouldn't feel that way toward any other seminary." But I said, "I want you to know I am not in any sense interested in becoming president, and I certainly wouldn't do anything to get it." He said, "Well, that's all I want to know." It happened I was with Louie Newton in his revival about that time, Louie had heard about it. He said, "Do you want me to go to bat for you?" I said, "No." Dr. David M. Gardner, who was then the editor of the Baptist Standard and the man whom I earlier had said was chairman of my ordination committee, came from Hapeville, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta, where he was in a revival the same time. He came to my hotel room after service one night and stayed with me until 2 o'clock in the morning, and talked about this. He wanted to go to bat for me. I said, "No, let it alone." Dr. J. W. Storer, who was at that time president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called me and said, "I understand that you're being considered. Do you want me to go to bat for you?" I said, "No, Doctor, the Lord knows where I am and the brethren know. And if the Lord wants me, I don't want anybody doing anything about it."

Well, anyway, I mention that since I inadvertently brought my name in the picture. I had to do it in order to tell about how Dr. McCall came to be elected. His name was taken off the list earlier because some of the faculty members objected to him. But in San Francisco the Committee locked horns over Rankin and me. Neither side would give. So they went to the trustees of Southern Seminary and reported their stalemate and asked for more time, stating that they were going to drop the two names and start over again. Before they left San Francisco, they contacted Dr. McCall. He told them that he was going on vacation and didn't want to have that on his mind, but that after he got back off his vacation he would get in touch with them and let them know his decision as to whether or not they could go ahead. Well, a month later, he did give the "go ahead" sign and they elected him. One of the faculty members, whose name I would prefer not to call, came up then and said, "Well, Doctor, I'm sure you know that I was opposed to you, and I want you to know it was nothing personal. I just knew that if you were elected president, you would want to be president." Dr. McCall said, "Brother, you are so right!" He was not one of the thirteen, but was an older man. He didn't stay there too long, but he went somewhere else. He was a good man. It wasn't a matter of the good guys against the bad guys, it was men with different opinions and strong convictions. When Dr. McCall came on the job this problem was there. He didn't bring it with him, it was already there, only it was in the mumbling stage, the murmuring stage--unhappiness existing. I understand that some of the members of the faculty were opposed to me, and the committee members to whom they had a pipeline knew that it was for the same reason. The strange thing is, they thought Dr. Rankin would fit into their ideas. Dr. Rankin was one of the sweetest men you ever saw, but he could be stubborn as a mule when the situation called for it.

T: He was Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board?

H: That's right. I was on the committee that voted to nominate him. And it was one of the clearest evidences of the leadership of the Holy Spirit I ever experienced. I'd like to go into it later, but that was the funny thing to me. These men wanted Dr. Rankin because they thought he would be willing to let them do more or less what

they wanted to do. Apparently they didn't know Dr. Rankin as well as some of the rest of us did. While Dr. Rankin was nice and sweet, when the occasion called for it he could be as adament as anybody. I have an idea that had he been elected and accepted the position, they would have found that out. But anyway, the older men that were involved in that unhappy situation either had moved on or had retired in time.

T: There really were three of them weren't there? About this time who would have been really strongly opposed to Dr. McCall?

H: I know of two at the moment, and possibly another one. Well yes, I know, yes, there were three. These younger men had the same attitude. There was the matter of administrative differences. They wanted to be free more or less as faculty members to do as they wanted to do, instead of being told by the president what to do and what they could not do. I think since that time there has been moderation on both sides, so that there's a happy working relationship with the usual family differences. But these men just more or less banded together, and when "push came to shove," the trustees backed up the president as they should have. They either ought to back him up or get another president. So they stood with the president, and these men were out. I have an idea that there would have been more than thirteen had some others not been out of the country at the time, one on Sabbatic leave and one in Palestine. They are good men, but I think they would have stood with these because they were all friends. They would have been bound by conscience to have stood with these other men. So there probably would have been some more. Dr. Elliott, whose name became so prominent in Southern Baptist life a short time afterwards, had already gone to Midwestern. Had he still been there he probably would have been added to that list.

Dr. McCall later, while I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, told me--he and I discussed this matter because at that time we were wrestling with theological problems. Mrs. Hobbs and I were in Louisville, I delivered the Commencement address in 1962, and then we flew directly to San Francisco for the Convention. The night before the Commencement we had dinner with Dr. and Mrs. McCall. And after dinner, the ladies got off and did lady talk, and he and I got off and did preacher talk. We were talking about this problem that centered in a man who had been on the faculty at Southern, and got out just under the gun in a sense. He didn't run, but it just happened that he was asked to take the position at Midwestern, and did prior to the stringent action that was taken. Anyhow, speaking about the theological differences, there were no super-heretics among these men. They differed among themselves theologically, as all of our seminary faculty members do. If every one of them had a rubber stamp, they wouldn't be scholars. Dr. McCall told me that he felt that this whole thing was brought about by the Depression of the 1930's. I'll have to explain why. The old giants as we called them, Sampey, Mullins, Robertson, and Carver were passing off the scene. Age was taking its toll. Dr. Hersey Davis had been brought in, I believe in 1918 if I'm not mistaken, to work with Dr. Robertson. Dr. Yates was working with Dr. Sampey, Dr. Tribble took Dr. Mullins' place, Dr. Weatherspoon took Dr. Carver's place, and, of course, Dr. J. McKee Adams (he'd been there for some time) was the head of the Department of Biblical Geography and Archaeology. Southern Baptists didn't have money to secure faculty members to come in and work with these men, and, in a sense, catch pace with them and absorb in a way the Southern Baptist tradition. So, as a result, for instance, Dr. Davis died.

After, of course, Dr. Robertson died. Dr. Sampey retired and died. Dr. Mullins had died. J. McKee Adams died. Davis, who would have been the steadying force in the New Testament Department, died prematurely of a heart attack. So did McKee Adams. Dr. Yates went into the pastorate. Dr. Tribble went to be president of another school. And, of course, Dr. Carver stayed on awhile, but he also went the way of all flesh. They brought in Dr. Goerner to work with him and were able in a sense to bridge that gap. But all of a sudden Southern Baptists found themselves having to replace mature giants of men like that with men for the most part coming right out of the classroom.

Once a man gets into a pastorate and establishes a pattern and a standard of living for himself and his family and incurs obligations like insurance and all of those things, it's difficult for him to make the necessary sacrifices financially to go back into the classroom. Our presidents of seminaries now, everytime I get with one of them, talk about that problem even now. I happen to know of men who have been asked to take as much as an eight and ten thousand dollar cut in salary to go from the pastorate to teach in one of our seminaries. So even though a man may be as devoted as can be, certain obligations have been incurred, and the financial world is not as devoted to spiritual things as we would like to think we are. It's just one of those things. So, they tell me even today, about the only way we can get men is to take a man when he gets his doctor's degree, put him right in as an instructor, and then he becomes an assistant professor, later an associate professor, and finally a full professor. So men that have had little or no pastoral experience--so often they have been in the academic halls from the time they entered college until they become teachers in the seminary. This isn't always true in every case, I understand, but we were talking about the general pattern.

And so here were men who had not caught the tradition that had been associated generally with Southern Baptists. If you'll notice my generation--its heroes are Mullins, Sampey, Robertson, Carver, and so on. Their heroes so often scholars other than Southern Baptists. For instance, Dr. McCall said that one day he was walking down the hall and happened to meet one of these New Testament professors. I won't call his name, but he was one of the thirteen. They happened to meet right under the portrait of Dr. A. T. Robertson, and stopped and chatted a moment. This professor looked up at this portrait, and said, "Tell me something. You knew Dr. Robertson, was he really a great scholar?" And Dr. McCall said, "Well, he was recognized by his colleagues the world over as a great New Testament scholar. He wrote fifty or more books in the New Testament field that were accepted by his contemporaries as scholarly works on the New Testament. Oh, I don't know whether you would call him a scholar or not, but until you have achieved the same things, I suggest that every time you pass this portrait you tip your hat." And he turned around and walked off. He used that to illustrate that these men were not in position to know and appreciate fully these great old giants. And he said, "If we had had the money back then to have gotten men and put them in there, and let them work with these men, they would have caught their spirit. I don't mean it would have just been "me too" all the way, but at least they would have had a greater appreciation for them. For instance, Hersey Davis had been giving in a class some exegesis of a passage that had thrilled us all, and I went up and I said, "Dr. Davis, why don't you put things like this in a book?" "Oh, Hobbs, I'm going to do it some day," said he, "but Dr. Robertson and I don't agree on a lot of interpretations, and out of respect for him

I'm not going to put it in a book until he dies." Well, he never did put them in book form. He was the kind of a fellow who was always looking for new ideas. But it does show, you see, even though they didn't always agree on everything, they did walk in the same tradition. But these young men, they were thrown out--really, they ought to be sympathized with more than censored--they were pitched out in the pond and told to swim or drown, without any previous lessons from the lifeguard.

So I think the final showdown was a matter of administrative matters. I think they could have worked out and lived with any theological differences. There might have been one or two that would have been too far out. But as a whole, I think they could have worked those out. But whenever a group of faculty members, or any group of employees, of a seminary or any other agency or business, band together and defy the authority of the administration and the trustees, something has got to give. If two men ride the same horse, one, only one, can ride in front. Wallace Bassett has a habit of calling in a person who had come to work on his church staff. He'd say, "Now, we're going to work together, we're going to get along. We'll have differences of opinion, sometimes we'll argue about them, resolve them, and compromise and work together. But if there ever comes a time when one opinion has to prevail over another, then my opinion's going to prevail." I think that would be an accepted principle. And so when it came down to it, the actual dismissal of these men, while many will deny this statement, in my judgment the actual dismissal of these men was over defiance of administrative authority more than anything else. And I speak thus out of experience, not in that incident but in the Elliott Controversy. At a later time you will probably want to go into that. But I'm not just speaking off the top of my head. Though I was not involved close up, I have been involved closely with people who were involved. In that sense I think--it may be a guess, but I think it's an educated guess.

Before I leave this, I think you'd be interested in this. That same night when we were in Dr. McCall's home, he told me, "I am building the New Testament Department of the seminary around Dr. William Hull /of course, he's now a dean/. Do you know who his hero is?" I said, "No, who?" He said, "Dr. John A. Broadus." Now Dr. Hull and Dr. Broadus wouldn't agree on some things, at least at the time Dr. Broadus lived. If he were living now they might agree more than we would think. But still, I think that is getting back into the Southern Baptist tradition, and I think that's helping. Now there are some who don't agree with Dr. Hull on some things. For instance, an article he wrote on "inspiration." It was a sermon he preached, and it was later put in article form. Personally, if he had asked me before he did it, I would have advised him not to.

T: Not to have preached it or not to have written the article?

H: I would not have written the article if it had been up to me. But that's a decision he had to make. I don't criticize him for it, I merely state it. He and I are the best of friends, but I think that he asked for criticism there. Sometimes a man has to stand up for his convictions and take the consequences, and I think he's the type man that would do that.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you've made a strong plea for the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention here, where you have asserted the value and need and importance

of history, maybe we can get you to write this down in article form and have it in our Baptist History and Heritage. I think you've really said the kinds of things that we believe in and are trying to do.

H: Well, I've always been interested in history. When I was in school I was not exactly a whiz in math. I didn't like math. If I studied it I could get it, but I just didn't like it and I wouldn't study it. I didn't particularly burn up the woods in chemistry because of the same reason, all of those equations. I didn't like that sort of thing. I failed one semester of chemistry in high school. My teacher was the sister of the man who later became my brother-in-law. He married my oldest sister. By that time my wife and I were in college. We took chemistry there and both made straight A's. By that time we had a purpose for our lives, and we were really working at it. Back in high school, if I didn't like a subject I just didn't bother with it. And so I used to kid this teacher, Peggy Ebernardt she was then. She now lives at Henderson, Texas. I forget her married name. But, anyway, I used to kid her and tell her, "Now under you I failed chemistry, in college I made a straight A. That proves that the fault was with the teacher, not with the pupil." She laughed and said, "You didn't study in high school." Well, that's true. But I've always loved history, and I've never had any problems in school in history. I just ate it up. I think because of that I have a certain amount of a sense of history and its value.

I think we get into a lot of problems because we don't know our history. When I wrote this book The Baptist Faith and Message interpreting the statement of faith and message, the first chapter is on "The Rock Whence We Are Hewn." Baptists oftentimes forget that our basic Baptist belief is not the infallibility of the Scriptures as some call it. It is not even the deity of Jesus Christ, though I believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures and I believe in the deity of Christ without question. The basic belief of Baptists is the competency of the soul in religion. When we forget that, then we get into all kinds of trouble. When I mention that nowadays, young preachers look at me like a calf looking at a new gate. It's just something foreign to them. About the time I finished my presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, W. W. Leathers, Jr., Bill Leathers--we were in the seminary at the same time--wrote me and said, "Somebody needs to write a revised form of Dr. Mullins' The Axioms of Religion. You know how to do it." Well, I contacted Dr. William Fallis about it; he wrote back and said, "I agree that these axioms ought to be emphasized again, but I'd be more interested in what Hobbs had to say about them today than what Mullins said about them more than fifty years ago." So we kicked the thing around back and forth for years and years. Duke McCall said in his column in The Tie recently about certain men who had potential greatness, but that no man had really blossomed into the greatness that we associate with Mullins and Truett and Scarborough, and so on. He was kind enough to mention my name among those who had the ability to do it. I wrote and told him, "You've inspired me to do something that I've been putting off for years. That is to write a book on these axioms that Mullins set forth. I wrote Dr. Fallis and he kicked the thing around with his committee, and they came up with the conclusion that the world today is not interested in the philosophical approach to such things. They didn't think that there would be a market for such a book. So I have dropped the idea. I told Bill Fallis that the only people that should publish this book would be Broadman Press. If one of these nondenominational or other than Baptist presses published, it would not be as effective. But I feel we've reared a generation or several of them, that doesn't know these axioms. They're

strangers to them. Dr. Mullins' book came out in 1908, and they're strangers to them. I think that one of the major contributing factors to the disturbances and almost fights we've had in a few sessions of our Convention in the last fifteen years is the fact that our Baptist people don't know their history. I may write that book yet and mimeograph it.

T: How about writing an article for our journal along this line?

H: You write me a letter and ask me to do it, and I can't say "no."

T: You raised the fact that you felt that the Executive Committee was the Convention ad interim. Do you want to elaborate on that briefly?

H: Well, of course, the Southern Baptist Convention actually doesn't exist except for three or four days out of each year. The people come as messengers from the churches; they register, they meet, they vote "aye" to a motion that they comprise themselves the "X" session of the Southern Baptist Convention; they receive reports, discuss matters, debate issues, vote, elect trustees of various agencies, and lay down the principles about the budget and so on, and then they adjourn. And until the next year when a similar group meets and votes themselves into existence, there is no Southern Baptist Convention. The institutions and agencies have been set up. Their trustees and the administrations of them they operate, but they operate within the framework of the constitution and bylaws of the Convention and any mandates or any assignments made to them by the Convention while it was in session. Each is responsible to the Convention when it meets again. The Executive Committee, then, is considered as the body that carries on the work of the Convention, not the work of the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Board, the Historical Commission, etc., but the broader aspects. They implement in between sessions of the Convention each year the things that are voted by the Convention, whether it be the principles or specific programs. They cannot exceed the authority granted to them by the Convention in its annual session, and they have to report if matters come up during the year that were not included in things referred to them on which to act. They may be given the power to act on a thing. They might be given the power to work out a proposed solution or proposed program and bring it back the next year. Matters may come up during the year that were not anticipated, and they can act on them in emergency situations. But they have to report to the Convention and get its approval of their actions. So the Executive Committee is not an authority unto itself, it is merely the group that is designated by the constitution and bylaws to act for the Convention in between annual sessions. I repeat, if you get down to the nitty-gritty of it, there is no Southern Baptist Convention except during the times that they gather and meet as such once a year.

T: You probably read that this matter was debated very aggressively about a month ago when in the Executive Committee meeting and the Committee of Fifteen Dr. James Sullivan of the Sunday School Board asserted that the Executive Committee was not the Convention ad interim, that the Convention gave to the agencies responsibilities for programs, and the Executive Committee was only responsible for matters not already assigned to the various agencies. How would you . . . ?

H: I would agree to that. That's in a measure what I meant. I may not have said it. The Convention assigns certain programs, say to the Sunday School Board. Now the Executive Committee can't come in and say at its next meeting, "Well, we're going to change all that." No, No! The Sunday School Board is still under a mandate from the Convention to do certain things. Now matters come up at the annual Convention where maybe more study is needed before a decision can be made. It may be something that is of such nature that it cannot be really settled in a public debate with twelve or fifteen thousand people involved, and it needs a more careful study by a smaller group that can later recommend. It may be that the Convention will vote for the Executive Committee to assign it to a committee, usually the Program Committee, unless it deals with a specific field that's covered by other committees, and the Convention gives it power to act. Suppose there's a conflict between the Sunday School Board and the Radio and Television Commission. Somebody's got to be the referee, so to speak. The Executive Committee cannot reverse or cannot erase an action taken by the Convention itself; it only acts under the authority of the Convention that has been granted to it in specific areas.

T: One of the men that you worked with, certainly in Oklahoma and also on the Executive Committee, was Dr. J. W. Storer, also president of the Southern Baptist Convention and one with whom we never had opportunity to hold Oral History interviews. Tell me something about Dr. Storer, Dr. Hobbs, and your relationship to him, what kind of a man he was and the presidential years in the fifties when he was president of the Convention.

H: Well, of course, to begin with Dr. Storer was a westerner in the real sense of that word. He came from the state of Washington. In his younger life he had been a cowboy. Those who knew Dr. Storer in his later years might find that a little difficult to believe because he was such a gentle and genteel person, but he had actually been a cowboy. I first came to know Dr. Storer when we were both members of the Foreign Mission Board. At that time I was pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Alexandria, Louisiana. He was at First Baptist, Tulsa. I knew him by name and by sight, and I had known him in the workings of the Foreign Mission Board for a short while. But I really came to feel that I was getting close to him and knowing him when he and I were coming back from a Foreign Mission Board meeting during World War II. We rode the train from Richmond to Washington and then caught a train from Washington to St. Louis. He caught one back to Tulsa and I caught one down to Alexandria. For quite a long while, hours and hours and hours, we sat together in a chair car. Naturally we talked and got to know one another very well and from that time on were very good friends. I had an experience that did not involve him except indirectly that might be of interest. Those who knew Dr. M. T. Rankin knew him as a gentle, kind, sweet kind of a person. In fact, if you didn't know him, if you just met him casually, you might even think he was a little on the effeminate side, though he was not. He was all man. Anyway, back in those days they asked us to share a room when we went to the Executive Committee.

T: This was to save money?

H: Now, all of us "chillun" have private rooms, but back then they'd put two in a room.

We were staying in the old Davis Hotel in Nashville. I came in one night late. The Executive Committee didn't meet until the next morning, but I came in late one night--I say late, it was around 10 o'clock or 10:30--and when I went up to the room, I didn't know who my roommate was going to be.

T: You hoped it would be a man?

H: Well, I was sure it would be a man. I opened the door and there was Dr. Rankin in his pajamas, in bed, propped up reading of all things a western story magazine. One of these paperback western stories. Well, there was the gentle missionary to the Orient, now the Executive Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, reading a wild and wooley western. I asked him what he was reading and he told me. I guess I must have shown my surprise, because he said, "Well, you know I'm a western story fan, and Dr. J. W. Storer is one, also. He and I for years have exchanged books. We have a list of authors, each of us, so that we don't duplicate. He buys the books by certain authors, and I buy them by certain others. We read them and then package them up and send them to one another through the mail. And that gave me a new insight on Dr. Rankin. In fact, I came to see that there was more he-man than that effeminate nature that someone might see in him if they didn't know him well. Dr. Storer, of course, had a keen sense of humor. When I first came to know him he was writing articles for the Baptist papers, always with a little humor in them. Always he would follow up the Southern Baptist Convention with some such article. Now this was before he was elected president of the Convention. But he would see the funny side of things, a little bit of satire and irony in it. It helped to see another side of what we were doing. But I think one of the cleverest things he ever wrote was when W. A. Criswell was called to the First Baptist Church, Dallas. The newspaper story said that he was chosen out of sixty-five men considered for the pastorate and that he was practically an unknown, whereas many of the men on the list were widely known. So Dr. Storer wrote this little, about a one-page, article, I guess, in that vein. It pictured the other sixty-four men in a meeting, trying to figure out what happened. They compared their qualifications with those of W. A. Criswell, this unknown. Finally, after a number of comparisons, one of them said, "Well, what does this young man Criswell have that we don't have?" And with one accord they all answered, "The Call." I think that shows something about Storer's sense of humor. He was able to see the funny side of everything.

They tell a story here in Oklahoma about him when he first came to Oklahoma. He was at the First Baptist Church in Tulsa, I believe, twenty-five years before going with the Baptist Foundation in Nashville. Shortly after he came to Oklahoma they had him on the State Convention program to bring the closing address. Everybody wanted to hear the new pastor of the First Baptist Church in Tulsa. Well, as Baptists will do, on that closing night they got into a big hassle about something. The debate went on and on and on and on and on until, finally, the presiding officer got up at about 11:00 o'clock at night to present Dr. Storer to bring the closing address. He got up, walked up to the podium, and said, "My Brothers and Sisters, you will notice that I am on the program to give you my address. The hour is late, everybody is tired, and I don't think that you would be in any mood to listen to anybody speak at this time. But I am here to give you my

address, and I think that I should do it. My address is J. W. Storer, First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma." And he sat down. Well, everybody laughed, but it endeared him to them, I am sure, from that time on.

When I first came to Oklahoma I found him to be a very helpful friend. There was nothing particular that threw us together, I mean in the way of our work, except just in the state. But there always was an encouraging word. When he was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, as I stated earlier, he learned that I was being seriously considered for the presidency of Southern Seminary. He asked me if I wanted him to go to bat for me, and I said, "No, Doctor, but I appreciate it. The Lord knows where I am and they know where I am, and if he wants me there, they'll find me." And we just left it that way. But it did show a man that he was his friend. He and Dr. Andrew Potter, who was state secretary of Oklahoma for many, many years, were very close friends. Dr. Potter nominated him for president of the Southern Convention in San Francisco, when he was not elected. Later, of course, he was elected, I believe it was in Houston. He was not what you'd call a great pulpiteer, but he was a good preacher and a marvelous pastor. And Mrs. Storer, they just don't make them any finer than she. My wife and I loved both of them dearly. Even after he went to Nashville, I would never see him but that we would have a little love feast.

You told me when we first started these interviews to let my hair down, what little I have, and forget any pretense of modesty. Since we're talking about Dr. Storer, I'm going to tell this. It hadn't occurred to me until you brought his name up. Following my address as president of the Convention in San Francisco--and I imagine we'll talk about that more at a later time--but following that address in which I tried to deal with the problems and issues involved in our theological differences and all, I dealt with the historical and higher criticism, among other things. I tried to interpret them in terms that a man who had never heard of them before could understand, and also to show that the Bible had been benefited from this type of study more than it had been harmed, as some were claiming. Later I met Dr. Storer on the street as we were going up to the Francis Hotel there in San Francisco. He stopped me, shook my hand, and thanked me for that message, and said, "I haven't heard anything like that at the Southern Baptist Convention since E. Y. Mullins." Well, I cherish those words, I'd be lying if I didn't say I do. I cherish those words, not only because of my great respect for E. Y. Mullins--though I never knew Dr. Mullins personally I think he was the greatest theologian Southern Baptists have ever produced. W. E. Conner would certainly be another great one, but it just happens he came in sequence after Dr. Mullins, and I think Dr. Mullins was perhaps recognized more widely and all as such. Anyway, I appreciated it also because it came from a man like J. W. Storer. I know if he hadn't thought it he wouldn't have said it.

T: He was that kind of a man?

H: Oh yes, he was not given to flattery. In other words if he had thought that it was a terrible flop, he wouldn't have told me that. But I knew that he wouldn't tell me that it was great or good if he didn't think so. Now integrity would be his middle name. Dr. Storer was very closely identified with Oklahoma Baptist University. In fact if you go over there now, you'll see one of the streets named Storer Drive around in the University Complex. He gave his library to Oklahoma Baptist University. He

was the chairman of their trustees two or three times. I was their chairman twice, I think he was perhaps more than that. Many things he did for the university tied his life with it. He and Dr. John W. Raley, the university president, were very close friends and worked hand in glove. They were contemporaries and very close to one another. The pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City changed, I mean pastors came and went. I'm not sure, but I think I've said earlier that the average length of a pastorate here was two and a half years until I came. Now Drs. Holcomb, W. R. White, and J. Howard Williams, in that order, stayed five or six years. But the average was two and a half years until I came, and the church got stuck with me for nearly twenty-four years. For that reason the mantle of leadership among Oklahoma Baptists, I think, fell on Dr. Storer more than it might have, if there had been a man at this church, First Church, Oklahoma City, who had stayed here long enough to be able to be such a leader. For instance, it's hard to believe, but I am the only pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City who was ever elected moderator of the local association or president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. It isn't because there were no men that had the qualifications, because there were some giants in those days. It was because no man stayed long enough to be asked to take such a responsibility. So for that reason Dr. Storer was sort of one of three men who were the stackpoles around which our work in Oklahoma was built.

As I said earlier, he had a sense of humor. One time he spoke to the Ministerial Association at OBU about the value of the long pastorate. When he got through, one of the young men who didn't have any better sense--and I say that in jest--but to ask Dr. Storer this question, "Dr. Storer, have you ever moved around very much?" And Dr. Storer said, "Oh my, yes, Mrs. Storer and I have collected silver all over the Southern Baptist Convention." Of course, you know the reference to collecting silver. When a pastor leaves they usually give him a piece of engraved silver. So he said, "We've collected silver all over the Southern Baptist Convention." I think that pretty well gives you an insight into the man, not only his greatness but his sense of humor, his down to earthness.

T: Now you served with him on the Executive Committee at the same time. Was he a committee man in working diligently behind the scenes, or was he more of a man in front?

H: Yes. I worked with him, not on the Executive Committee, but on the Foreign Mission Board.

T: I see. You came on the Executive Committee just the last year he was on the Committee, I believe.

H: Well, now he may have been on there, I'd forgotten that particular detail. But anyway, I do know from the Foreign Mission Board that he was a committee man, we worked together there. And I think this is one thing I should add. When Dr. Potter died suddenly, just a matter of less than a month after he nominated Dr. Storer in San Francisco, the Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma met to elect his successor. Dr. T. B. Lackey had been the assistant executive secretary for several years and well trained to pick up the mantle. But there was a movement among a certain group in the state to elect somebody else.

T: Who did they want to elect?

H: Oh, I don't recall. Yes, I do recall, too. I just don't know whether I want to call his name or not, because he is very prominent in our work now. Well, I don't know as there's any reason not to call his name, he was Harold Graves. Harold was not--it wasn't a plot or anything like that--Harold himself was not seeking the position. But there was a group of younger men who wanted a younger man as executive secretary. And, of course, Harold with his academic accomplishments, earned doctorate in Southern Seminary, pastor of one of our leading churches in the state at the time and all, would have been a good one and would have lent dignity to it and all that. But anyway Dr. Storer called me and he said, "I understand that there's a group going to nominate him, and they said he's a good man. But I feel that Dr. Lackey who has been in Oklahoma Baptist work all of his ministry one way or another, all the way from local missionary on up and down the line, knows our work. He has worked with Dr. Potter, he's proved himself capable, and while I have no objection to the other man or any other man, I just feel that Dr. Lackey has earned the right to succeed Dr. Potter. I also think that he would perhaps do the best job of anybody I know." "Now," he said, "If I were there I would go before the Board of Directors myself and speak on his behalf." /Dr. Storer was off somewhere in a meeting, I don't remember what the meeting was now, but anyway it was over in Tennessee, it wasn't in Nashville but somewhere else./ He said, "I believe if you will go over to the meeting and, as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, ask for the floor. You are not a member of the Board of Directors, you can't make a motion, but if you ask for the floor and speak on behalf of Dr. Lackey, I don't believe there'll be any other nomination made." Well, I went over. I don't remember the exact sequence of events, but the best I can remember, a motion was made that Dr. Lackey be elected, and I asked for the privilege of speaking at that point. I spoke favorably concerning Dr. Lackey, whether my speech had anything to do with it or not--I'll never know--no one else was nominated and Dr. Lackey was elected. Harold Graves was and is one of my dear friends. We were in the seminary together, and he and Frieda and Frances and I have been good friends through the years. So there wasn't anything of any objection to Harold Graves. It was a feeling that here was a man who had been in the state all his life and would be a hundred miles ahead of any outsider who had been here for only a few years. Besides, Lackey was a man who would have the support of the pastors over the state rather than feeling that maybe one that they liked had not been given his just desserts. When I mentioned loyalty and integrity earlier about Dr. Storer, I think that's an evidence of it.

T: You say you were acquainted with him beyond his Oklahoma years. Were you involved at all in his move to Nashville as secretary of the Foundation?

H: No, I had no part in that at all. I didn't even know he was going to do it until he had done it. Yet I think it was a wise move for him and for the Foundation.

T: He really built the Foundation.

H: That's right. You know, there's such a thing as having an organization that is not particularly looked upon with any degree of honor, and here comes a man of that

stature who lashes his life alongside it or to it, and gives it a stature that it never had before. And I think he did that for the Baptist Foundation. Because of their setup, they're limited in what they can do; they can't go out and solicit funds like the state foundations.

T: They're trying to change that.

H: I know they are, but they haven't up to now been able to do so. So it has been more or less a holding agency for funds that have been contributed to other SBC agencies. But still, when you think of the Baptist Foundation, Southern Baptist Foundation now, you think of J. W. Storer and, of course, Kendall Berry. Here's another man, a banker, a businessman, who hears the call of God to give the rest of his life to that sort of work. In talking about these men that I worked with on the Executive Committee, I should mention Kendall Berry and J. D. Grey. Of course, J. D. and I were good friends long before that. But I came to know Kendall Berry at that time, and to have the highest respect for him and his wife both. I was delighted when I heard that he had succeeded Dr. Storer.

T: He was from Arkansas?

H: Yes. From Blytheville, in Eastern Arkansas.

T: Are there other things you can relatein your experiences with Dr. Storer? Did you know him as presideat of the Convention? What kind of a man, leader, was he as president of the Convention?

H: You're speaking of the Southern Convention?

T: Yes. He was president of the Oklahoma Convention, too.

H: That was long before I knew him.

T: Did you know him when he was president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

H: Oh yes. I don't know of any particular thing to say. You know, if you go back and look over the nation and think of the presidents who would sort of classify as great presidents, it's strange but true that you pick out the men who were in office when the nation was in a time of crisis. You pick out Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, and Truman, when we were in a war or something similar. Now there wasn't a great deal in the way of controversy, open controversy, during Dr. Storer's presidency. For that reason it did not call forth that quality in him to rise up and meet such a situation. He had the quality of greatness to handle any situation, but he wasn't called upon to do it. There was no occasion to call it forth. I've always said, in fact, I wrote in my little book Moses' Mighty Men around the idea that it takes three things to make a great man. He must be endowed with a capacity of greatness, he must live in an environment that calls forth his greatness, and he must be surrounded by lesser greats who contribute to his greatness. Dr. Storer had the capacity; the historical environment did not necessarily call it forth. He was more of a plateau kind of experience instead of a mountain peak with low lands in between.

T: His role with Oklahoma Baptist University is also something that perhaps we should briefly talk about. Can you indicate some of his fine achievements here, and maybe some of the behind-the-scenes successes and failures, and so on, that he would have had at Oklahoma Baptist University and Dr. Raley?

H: I was not too closely identified with him in his relationship to OBU. I knew it from a distance. He was not on the Board of Trustees after I came to Oklahoma. He had been on time and time again, and had been chairman two, I know, and maybe three times.

T: But he was not involved at the time you were here?

H: No, not while I was here. Other than in a general way I just wouldn't have any particular one thing to point out.

T: Okay. Let me do this, and then I'd like to move to the philosophy of the pastorate that you have. I have a list of the names of the Executive Committee member men for the last thirty years, and I'd like to pick out some of these who would have been on the committee when you were there and appreciate your recollections and observations on any of these men that you might have. I'll start by the states chronologically, or alphabetically rather, in Alabama. Howard M. Reeves was on the committee at the time you were, did you know him?

H: Yes, he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Mobile. I went to Dauphin Way Baptist there on January 1, 1945; he came to First Church about May or June, 1945. I was down there at Dauphin Way recently in a Bible conference, and he and his wife came to a Sunday service. I mentioned this fact and said that he had the stuff that enabled him to stay. I had to leave. He stayed there at First Baptist, Mobile, until he retired about a year ago. Howard is a very capable person, highly educated, as he has earned his academic doctorate from Southern Seminary. He is a good preacher, not a great pulpiteer in the sense that some people might think of oratory and all, but a very sound, profound preacher, a wonderful pastor, and wise in his ways, and a valuable asset to Alabama Baptists as well as Southern Baptists through the denominational work. At one time he was president of the Alabama Baptist Convention, incidentally.

T: Are there any particular recollections you have in his role as a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention?

H: No. He and I did not serve on the same committees, and as you know, these committees meet separately and do their work. Then the chairman brings the report and the Executive Committee acts on the report. So I don't know of anything particular that will be related to him.

T: Charles C. Boles?

H: Oh yes. I knew Charlie Boles. He was pastor of the Hunter Street Baptist Church in Birmingham at the time. He later went to First Baptist, San Antonio, and died of a heart attack there. Charlie was a Texan, a good preacher, and at one time was, I believe, president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and just a

good team man. I don't know of anything other than that, perhaps, to say. I was scheduled to go down and speak while I was president of the Southern Convention at a men's dinner on a Monday night welcoming him as the new pastor to succeed Dr. Perry Webb. He was to preach on a Sunday and I was to speak the next night. Sunday evening just before the evening service, I got a phone call from the man in charge of the banquet telling that Charlie had had a heart attack that morning on the way to church to preach his first sermon as pastor. He got over it and lived on for several years; in fact, his wife predeceased him, and then he had another heart attack and died.

T: James L. Monroe?

H: James Monroe is now pastor down at Florida. He later was chairman of the Executive Committee. I think at one time he was chairman of the Program Committee of the Executive Committee. At the time he came on the Executive Committee he was pastor in First Baptist Church, Attalla, Alabama. Jim is a very strong person in his personality, very capable, sound judgment, and yet pleasant. He had just come on to the Executive Committee as I remember about the time I was fading from the scene out of its orbit and its work. But as I said, he later became one of the most valuable men on the Executive Committee.

T: Louis M. Smith?

H: Smith. This is still from Alabama? Louis Smith was a layman. He was the president of the Alabama Power Company, the big utilities electrical company of Alabama. He was a deacon in the Ensley Baptist Church where I was ordained. He was superintendent of the department where my wife was secretary when she was just a girl. Smith was never too active on the Executive Committee because of his heavy duties as president of the Alabama Power Company. He so often could not attend the meetings. While he was a wonderful man, because of his other heavy duties he never was able to be too active or make too big a contribution.

T: Harold W. Seever?

H: Harold Seever was originally from Ohio. We were in the seminary together--his wife and my wife and the two of us. He went from the seminary to a church, Bainbridge Street, I believe it was, in Richmond; from there to the First Baptist, Florence, South Carolina; and then succeeded me at Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile. Harold was a very capable man. He was handsome as a Greek god. You may or not remember the man who played Peter Gunn on television. You could have put Harold Seever in the role and you'd never have known any change had been made.

T: Craig Stevens?

H: Yes. Craig Stevens. But Harold, anywhere Harold Seever was, he would make a contribution. He was a strong person, he spoke out, and he spoke with good judgment. He later became chairman of the Executive Committee. There's a piano in the new Executive Committee room there; it was given by the Dauphin Way Church in his honor. Well, Harold did a good work in Mobile. He was a northerner with a northern

background in a deep South church. He had been pastor of the very dignified First Baptist Church, Florence, South Carolina, and when I say very dignified, I'm talking about formalistic. He went to be pastor of a decidedly people's church in the very deep South. You couldn't go very much farther south without getting your feet in the water. I think maybe that created some little frictional problems between him and some of the people. So that some people who were very active when we were there left and went to other churches. That could be good or bad, it wasn't good for Dauphin Way to lose them, but they later strengthened some churches. Just like while I was at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, we had some people move out when we graded the adults in Sunday School. They joined two other churches. They were two little struggling churches, you know, and looked like they never would get going. It was just like giving them a blood transfusion to receive these people. Now they are two of our strongest churches. Later, when the history of our church was written and they listed the missions or the churches that grew out of our church as missions, I said, "Those should be listed because we certainly did help them become great churches."

Harold was always very considerate of me. For instance, every chance he could get me back down there to be in the pulpit, he would do it. So often a predecessor is ignored by his successor in that regard. I don't mean that he owes him a thing in the world, but at the same time it's a courtesy, and I think that there are some people there that maybe would like to hear the former pastor preach every now and then. Just like here in the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Dr. Garrison is always after me whenever I have some time, a free Sunday, he tries to figure some way to get me to preach. And I appreciate it. But I don't want him to feel like he's got to do it. Well, for instance, on his tenth anniversary Dr. Seever had me down to preach on that Sunday. Instead of him being in the center of the spotlight, he brought his predecessor down and let him share it with him.

The church developed in many, many ways while he was there. For one thing they began to bring in people that were more of the professional type. I was down there just recently in a Bible conference in February, 1974. Some of the leading people in the church now were not there when we were there. They are professional people, many of them people with means so that the church has one of the strongest financial programs, for instance, of any church in the Southern Baptist Convention. One doctor and his wife--I worked my head off trying to get them to join the church. The doctor wanted to, but his wife, somehow or other, wanted to go to the First Baptist Church. As a result they didn't go to either one. He attended our church on Sunday night a good deal. Well, Dr. Seever landed them for Dauphin Way, but I couldn't. Now when we go down there they want to take us out to dinner and can't be too nice to us. We enjoy it. But they also added strength to that church and many others like that. Dr. Seever had a problem in that he couldn't seemingly delegate responsibility to his subordinates. Now he had a full staff, but he would do most of the detail planning for, say, the educational program--that's what I was told, I never sat in one of their meetings, but I was told that. Yet, whether that's good or bad is another matter. He did good work there.

It took its toll of Harold Seever. You recall when Bob Hope and Billy Graham both began to have hemorrhages on the inside of their eyeballs. The doctors said, "You're

going under too much pressure, slow down or it's going to get worse, you will even lose your eyesight." So they both slowed down and they got over it completely. Harold Seever had the same problem at the same time. The doctors gave him the same advice, but he didn't slow down. He went blind, and finally died in his sleep when he had a hemorrhage on the inside of his chest. Prior to his death, of course, when he went totally blind, he gave up the pulpit of the church. The church out of love and appreciation for him and Mrs. Seever granted them permission to live in the home that the church had furnished as long as either of them lived. She's still there in the floral business. When we were down there recently, she brought my wife a beautiful bouquet. And we just love her to death. And Harold the same way.

Prior to Harold's death, Paul Stevens was working out a deal with him where he would make brief television spots. In other words, you could look at Harold Seever and couldn't tell that he was blind. There wasn't anything wrong with the eyeballs on the outside; the trouble was on the inside where these hemorrhages had formed scars and left him that way. So there was practically a worked-out deal when suddenly he died, that he was to go periodically to Fort Worth and make television "spots." In other words, he could look right into the television camera, and in an informal sort of a way give a message that he'd been preaching all these years. He didn't need a manuscript. He didn't need to be able to see, but just look right into camera and talk right out of his heart, mind, and soul. And Harold, to my knowledge was just eagerly looking forward to it. Because you know, here's a fellow who feels like, "Well, I'm through." And then all of a sudden this opportunity opens up. But he didn't live to get to see it come to fruition. Harold was a great man.

T: Frank P. Samford was a man from Alabama who served only one year, 1958, on the Executive Committee. Samford University was named after him. Do you remember Mr. Samford?

H: I knew Frank Samford well. Of course, Samford University, formerly Howard College, is my alma mater. When I was pastor in Alabama after seminary days, I was on committees working with him, trying to raise money for Howard College, as it was called then. That was back in the latter part of the Depression years, and everybody was trying to raise money. Frank Samford was president, when he died he was chairman of the Board of Directors of Liberty National Life Insurance Company, and a member of Southside Baptist Church in Birmingham. He was a very active Baptist layman in Alabama, especially in Birmingham. But his many, many other responsibilities has kept him from being too active on the Executive Committee. So I don't know of anything particular that I could say about his work there, because to my knowledge he didn't do too much.

T: Since he just died about a year ago, can you relate any specific incidents about him with reference to Howard College, certainly his life or what you knew about him, incidents that you know in relationship to him.

H: Well, I was never what you might call personally related to him in the sense that you would of some "buddy-buddy." It was always more or less in an official or committee capacity, but he was chairman of the trustees for many, many years, I don't know how long.

T: Major Davis indicated at one point that when he was asked to be president of Howard College, he indicated that he would accept it provided that Frank P. Samford was named chairman of the Board of Trustees.

H: Yes. I was going to mention that, and also the fact that during his presidency, all the way through, Samford was chairman of the trustees and on into Leslie Wright's time. I was going to mention Major Davis as a part of that time. Major Davis, you know, had an honorary doctorate from the University of Alabama, conferred on him after he was elected president of Howard, which was after we left the seminary. But he let it be known that he wanted to be called Major Davis, not Dr. Davis. He said, "Now that doctor's degree was given to me, I didn't do a thing to earn that. But I earned the title of Major in World War I, and I've got a piece of bullet in my hip to prove it." So he insisted on being called Major Davis, and still does. He was Director of Internal Revenue for the state of Alabama and then he was asked to take this presidency. He finally agreed to take it under that condition. Well, you know, a layman who is used to saying, "Go and he goeth, and come and he cometh," and especially the collector of Internal Revenue for Alabama where all the biggest men in the state would bow and kiss your foot almost, you know, for him suddenly to be thrust into a position where he had to depend upon voluntary cooperation such as we preachers live with all the time, it was just almost like pulling a body block at a guy's ankles. I mean no disrespect for businessmen--God bless them and thank God for them, I don't know what we'd do without them--but at the same time these businessmen think they're tough. They are used to hiring and firing. When they say "scat" they've got a hole for every cat, you know, to run out the door. They think we preachers are a bunch of softies. But when you put one of them into the kind of a situation that we live with and don't even think anything about it, they melt like a candle in the sun. And Major Davis, bless his heart, had an awful time adjusting. People would promise to do things and wouldn't do them, or he'd ask them to do things and they'd say "no." John Buchanan was telling me this. Major Davis was a member of Southside Baptist Church where Dr. Buchanan was pastor and so was Frank Samford a member--and Dr. Buchanan said it got so Major Davis about once a week would threaten to him that he was going to resign. He told him, "Major Davis, you've just got to quit talking about resigning. You can't get students to come to that school if they're thinking that you're going to resign any day." And A. H. Reid, who later became the Executive Secretary of Alabama Baptists, was asked to give up the South Avondale Baptist Church in Birmingham to become a vice-president of Howard College. He was to help raise money which was needed desperately. It was sort of a side deal that he was to give Major Davis a leaning post on which to lean until he learned how to work with volunteer help. And it was right funny, I used to laugh to myself about it, but I think, it's nothing against Major Davis, bless his heart--he went on and made a tremendous president. He did something that few men that I know of have ever done, that is to move that college from one campus to another. When he stepped down, what was on that campus was paid for, and I don't know, $10,000,000, I think.

When they began to look for a new site--they had to move since they only had about sixty acres on the old Howard Campus--nobody in Birmingham would sell them a piece of land big enough on which to build a college. Dr. Gwalmey, editor of the Alabama Baptist, called me one day at Dauphin Way, and said, "it looks like Howard

College is going to have to leave Birmingham. I just thought you folks from Mobile might be interested." I said, "Doctor, we are, I'll see what I can do about it." So I called a meeting. Howard Reeves, First Baptist Church, pastor, J. O. Bedsole, one of his deacons, and Henry Kittrell, one of my deacons, and I met in my office and talked about it; we agreed that we wanted to ask the city to make an offer. So we went to the Chamber of Commerce, and they agreed to go along with us. We offered them a half million dollars and one hundred acres of land. I recall that it was a beautiful site overlooking Mobile Bay. When that happened, other cities in the state began to offer them sites and money. So Birmingham got busy. They finally had a state convention in Montgomery in which all these offers were presented. Birmingham matched our offer, the Mobile offer, and so Henry Kittrell and I who had started the whole thing for Mobile's deal voted for the Birmingham deal, because we knew the college should be in Birmingham. It's more in the center of the state. But Birmingham didn't seem to want it at that time, and Birmingham's my native city in a way, so I'm talking about my own folks. We put a burr under the saddle and got some things going. The only irony of it is that we were going to give our piece of land. But when the trustees met the first time after that convention, they reported that they were going to have to buy this land that was offered to them--a beautiful site. Henry Kittrell, a deacon of mine, was on the Board of Trustees and got quite upset about it, because we were going to give our land and the way their report was presented it sounded to us like they were going to give theirs. Then we later found out that they had to buy it. But anyway, it stayed there. Frank Samford--I don't mean that he was a part of anything that wasn't ethical, nothing like that, it was just one of those misunderstandings about wording--but anyway, Frank Samford was the chairman through all of this period and the raising of all of this money. That is the reason why I think the school was named after him. I still say I'm a graduate of Howard College of Samford University, which is true. They call it Howard College of Samford University.

T: Are their other incidents you could relate here on Samford or Major Davis, another name you've mentioned here, to your Alabama years?

H: Oh, I don't know of anything particular about Major Davis. I could talk on and on about him, but nothing of any unusual nature. I think the greatest thing that he did for Howard College, and later Samford, was that he stabilized the financial picture. He led people to have a great confidence in the school and its future, and the fact that it was strong and basically solid. Through his wise leadership and the influence that he had on people that could give money, he was able to move the school, build this new campus, and leave it, if not altogether free of debt, practically so. Of course, they've added to it since then. But I think this would be of interest to you. One day we were in a meeting talking about raising money for the college. Somebody mentioned him as having been the Collector of Internal Revenue for Alabama. He said, "Well, of course, I have no legal right to have kept any records on these people, these business people, and to know what their income was and all that, but I can't help but remember some things I know." And he used it to good advantage in raising money for the school.

T: Now there's a couple of other people from Alabama that were involved in the Executive Committee and they may have been there almost at the time you were going off. Did you know Hugh Van Eaton?

H: I didn't know him.

T: H. H. Groom?

H: Yes, Hobart Grooms, I know him. He's a federal judge down in Birmingham. His wife, Angeline Grooms, came there maybe from Kentucky, I'm not sure. Angeline McCrocklin, I think, is the way she spelled it. She has a gorgeous contralto voice. She was brought down from Kentucky by Dr. James Randolph Hobbs, no relation of mine, when he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Birmingham. I think he went there in 1919 and stayed there until he retired in the late 1930's. She met and married Hobart Grooms. He, of course, as I mentioned, was a federal judge there. They were quite active in the First Baptist Church for many, many years. She was the soloist there. While I was on the Executive Committee, Judge Grooms was not as active as I think he was later, because at that time we were going through some pretty stormy racial problems and these federal judges were pretty busy. Later, when they had this division in the First Baptist Church, he and his wife went with the group that organized the Covenant Baptist Church there in Birmingham. But Hobart Grooms is a wonderful Christian layman.

T: Did you know him personally?

H: Oh yes.

T: Did he have quite a transformation on the racial issue to have been the first native Alabamian to become a federal judge, and then to become active in this Church of the Covenant?

H: Oh, I don't know. You know, there are a lot of stories told about the South and its racial attitude that are accepted as typical when not necessarily true. There has been a transformation in the South as there has been in other parts of the nation with regard to race. I've had one myself. But at the same time, Judge Grooms was never an arch Negro opponent. Segregation was somewhat a way of life that was accepted by both groups. He, like so many others, had never been called on to face right up to the matter. I'm not surprised at all that he would take the turn that he did, because he's a strong man, fair-minded, genuinely Christian man. Now that isn't to say that people who take another view are not genuinely Christian. They just have a different approach and conviction. Again, I say there are three sides, yours, mine, and the right one.

T: There are a couple of other men who came really later than your time, but let me just quickly read them and if any of them are people that you knew and would want to comment on, it might be helpful. These also are Alabamian representatives. John Bob Riddle. Sam Granade.

H: Well, I know John and Sam. They belong partially in a generation behind mine. John Bob is pastor of the Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, and a very capable man. Sam Granade is from down south in Alabama, not as widely known in the denomination as John Bob, because he has not had as large pastorates. But both are good men.

T: You don't know anything specific about them that would be helpful to relate?

H: Not necessarily.

T: J. Lamar Jackson?

H: Lamar is pastor of the Southside Baptist Church, Birmingham. His father was a Baptist preacher in Alabama. When I first came to know Lamar he was pastor of the Ensley Baptist Church. Then he was called to succeed Dr. John Buchanan at Southside. I have a sister who is a member of that church, and they all think the world and all of Lamar. I have never worked with him close up, though I know him well. We've just never been on, like the Executive Committee, together. But I know from watching his work in the state, as well as Southwide conventions, that he is a very strong man, has a good mind, and I think is one of the stronger men on the Executive Committee at the present time.

T: Thomas T. Martin?

H: T. T. Martin is a deacon in the First Baptist Church, Mobile. As you might recall, his daddy was an evangelist, and he was T. T. Martin also. He was one of the officers, maybe a vice-president, I'm not certain, of the G M and O Railroad, and is retired now. He is doing lay preaching. I knew T. T. when I was in Mobile, but he was a member of the First Baptist Church, so it was more or less a casual acquaintance. But I do know him to be a very strong man, a deeply spiritual man, a Christian man of the very highest character.

T: I'll move on to Arizona, and some of these people you may know, or know specific things about. If you don't know too much about them, let's just move on to the next person. C. V. Rock?

H: Yes. C. Vaughn Rock. We used to kid him about "Upon this rock I will build my church." His father was the founder of the First Southern Baptist Church in Phoenix. When he retired or died, I don't know which, Vaughn succeeded him. It seems to me he has just recently retired or is about to. I worked with Vaughn. He was on the Executive Committee for three years, or part of three years, when I first went on, and then he went off. But Vaughn has been a very strong man for Arizona work. They've got a good strong work there now, but twenty-five years ago it was not so strong. He is in a very real sense a "rock" in Arizona in our Baptist work. I did not serve on any committees with him on the Executive Committee, so I don't know anything of his work there except just generally.

T: R. H. Spark? D. C. Martin? Ed J. Packwood?

H: No. No. Yes, Ed Packwood is from Arizona. I used to kid him and call him, "Brother Packrat." He was one of the strong laymen in the Arizona Baptist Convention, and I think added a great strength to it. He later became a member of their state convention staff. He was on the Finance Committee and was a very valuable member. He never had too much to say, but when he spoke, he said something.

T: These others would have come after you, but let me mention them. Morris Wall? Henry Wooten?

H: I know Henry Wooten, but I've never worked with him.

T: In Arkansas we talked briefly about E. L. Compere, T. K. Rucker?

H: Well, I know Rucker, but I don't know too much to say about him other than just that I remember him.

T: He didn't have any particular place in the Baptist life that you remember?

H: Not as I recall, no.

T: Reuben L. South?

H: I just knew him, that's about all.

T: J. Heflin?

H: No.

T: Dale Cowling?

H: Well, Dale is at Second Baptist, Little Rock. I've known Dale for a long time. He's a good strong man. Of course, he came on the Executive Committee after I left it, so I did not work with him, but I know him to be a very strong, valuable man.

T: Let me ask about one other and you may have mentioned him already--he just recently completed his service--Carlton Harris from Arkansas?

H: No.

T: From California, Sam Hodges, did you know him?

H: No.

T: Paul Meigs?

H: Meigs? Yes. Paul is an Alabamian from Howard College, now Samford University. I knew him in college and in the seminary. He went to California and then later went to Florida, where he is now secretary of evangelism. I've been on a number of his programs through the years. Paul, I believe, is either retired or about to retire. Paul's a good man, nothing that stands out as I recall, I just remember that he's a good solid man.

T: Okay. Charles McClain?

H: I know him, but I don't know anything particular to say about him.

T: David Page?

H: No.

T: In the District of Columbia, this man would be slightly before your time on the Committee, George B. Frazier.

H: I know George Frazier. He's a lawyer. He was on the Executive Committee, as I remember, when I first went on. I didn't get to know him too closely, because I was a fledgling and he was one of the old veterans. But I do remember him as a very valuable layman on the Executive Committee.

T: Edward H. Pruden?

H: Yes. Pruden was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Washington, D. C., retired now, living down in South Carolina.

T: I think it's Florida, it may not be.

H: Well, I was thinking he was a lecturing professor or something at Furman, Wake Forest, or somewhere down there.

T: It might be you're right.

H: Anyway, Ed's church was dually aligned with the American and Southern Conventions, but he was active in both. Ed was a little ahead of my time in seminary, so I didn't know him there, and there's nothing particularly outstanding that I recall about him. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance when I first went on that, and I worked with him there some. But I remember him as a very genteel, cultured man, a man a little more liberal in certain views, I don't mean theologically but in social views I guess you'd call them, than a lot of us at that time. And yet he was just a little bit ahead of his time.

T: What were you thinking of primarily?

H: I'm thinking of race, for instance. I recall a funny story about him. Sometimes these stories are not always true, but if it wasn't it could have been. I believe I read this in one of the press releases. While he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Washington, President Truman was in the White House. One Sunday morning Ed was in his study, getting ready to go into the pulpit. One of the ushers came in and said, "Well, Pastor, President and Mrs. Truman and party just came in for worship services this morning." It was the first time they had ever been there. They didn't announce at the time they were coming. Ed sort of had some butterflies in his stomach, and all of a sudden he remembered his text for the morning. "Father, the hour has come, what shall I say?"

T: Did you know Alvin O. West?

H: Yes, I know Alvin. Now wait a minute. Where is he from?

T: District of Columbia, you are not thinking of Allen West?

H: Yes, Allen is the one I know. I just know Alvin and that's all.

T: Okay. Fred B. Rhodes?

H: Fred is a lawyer from Washington, at least he's from up there. I was never on a committee with him, but I do recall him as a very valuable man. He was a very brilliant lawyer.

T: We'll take several people from Florida. You've let me mention a few who were before your time that you may have known. C. H. Bolton?

H: Yes, I knew C. H. Bolton. We never worked together on committees or anything, but I knew him. He was a very capable man with a wonderful sense of humor. After he retired he spent many years supplying pastorates, interim and otherwise, and I believe died recently.

T: Homer G. Lindsey?

H: Oh yes, Homer, Sr., I've known Homer from way back. He is a Southwestern graduate and I'm from Southern. So we met after seminary days, but we've always been good friends. His wife is the sister of M. F. Ewton, who was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma, for a long time. I've always felt like Homer was a good friend of mine. We've never been "old buddy-buddy pals," so to speak, but we've been good friends.

T: He was on the Executive Committee when you were on?

H: Yes. He was on it when I went on, and a very valuable man. Also, he was active in other phases of Southern Baptist life. He has retired; his son is the pastor who succeeded him as pastor of the church. And he's out-papaing papa in the growth of the church. Yet his mother and daddy are just as happy as can be, naturally, that their son is succeeding so gloriously. I was with Homer, Sr., down in Florida last December. I was in Orlando in an associational Bible conference. On Monday night of the time we were there he spoke at an associational stewardship banquet that met prior to the Monday evening session of the Bible conference. So we got to see him and have some fellowship with him there.

T: Walter B. Feagins?

H: I don't recall him.

T: M. H. Mabry?

H: No.

T: John H. Haldeman?

H: John Haldeman, yes. He was pastor of the Allapatta Baptist Church, Miami, Florida, and was a member of the Finance Committee. Later he became chairman of the

Executive Committee; in fact, he was chairman of the Executive Committee part of the time that I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. John is a very capable person, quiet-like, with sort of a wry sense of humor, and a great pastor--he had a tremendous church. I held a revival meeting for him in the spring of 1955, which was one of the greatest experiences I ever had. We started off on a Monday night with just the usual meeting-type thing. I think we had twenty-eight additions up until Sunday morning. And at the Sunday School hour the thing broke loose. We had over a hundred people saved, and then during the rest of the day a number came for one purpose or another. The total for the week of the meeting was 158 additions. John is out of the active ministry now, he probably is preaching, but he had gotten involved in some business deals down there. I think one of his deacons was developing motels, and John invested in that. He's getting along all right. Incidentally, he was a very close friend of Carroll Chadwick that I mentioned earlier. They performed one another's wedding ceremonies. John finally gave up his pastorate, and had organized a life insurance company. As I understand it, he is the president of it, and still living in Miami. I haven't had any contact with him for several years, because about the only time preachers ever see one another outside of their local bailiwick is at the Southern Baptist Convention, and he hasn't attended.

T: L. K. Edwards?

H: I didn't know Edwards, not enough to say anything about him.

T: James L. Pleitz?

H: Jim Pleitz is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pensacola. He is an Arkansasan, a Razorback football fan, and golfer. I don't know how old Jim is, I guess he's in his early forties. I first came to know him when I held a revival meeting for him at the Oak Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Angel Martini and his wife were members of that church--they were then. Not long after that, Jim went to Pensacola. Of course, no one knew too much about him outside of Arkansas until he went to Pensacola. But he has been chairman of the Executive Committee, and is now chairman of the Radio and Television Commission. I think he is one of the finest, most promising men of the generation just below mine that I know. I think he would--well, he has every quality for being president of the Southern Baptist Convention if he were elected. As you can tell, I'm high on Jim Pleitz.

T: Cecil B. Carroll, do you know him?

H: Cecil Carroll was a senator, a state senator down in Florida. I don't know too much about him except for a few speeches he made at the Executive Committee. He could get real excited, had a good mind. But I didn't work with him on any committees, so I don't know too much about him.

T: E. C. McDaniel?

H: No.

T: Georgia: Mrs. Frank S. Burney?

H: No.

T: She'd be before your time. Frank A. Hooper, Jr.?

H: Oh yes! Frank Hooper was a federal judge in Atlanta. At one time he was chairman of the Executive Committee. I think he was on the Finance Committee with me, very wise, astute and capable, as you would imagine, being a federal judge. Unlike some men in that type position who would have every excuse in the world not to be too active, Frank Hooper was always very active in Executive Committee work, in Southern Baptist work as a whole. He just seemed somehow to be able to fit this into his busy schedule. He has a son, by the way, who is a missionary in Israel, and I don't know of any finer Christian layman.

T: He worked on the Finance Committee with you?

H: Yes.

T: J. C. Wilkinson?

H: J. C. Wilkinson. I knew him, he was an older man than I.

T: All right. A. Barnum Hawks?

H: Yes, I knew Barnum Hawks. We were in the seminary together, though he was a year or two ahead of me. A good solid man; nothing outstanding that I would point out, he was just a good solid man.

T: All right. John A. Jones? He was also from Georgia. Do you remember him?

H: I remember him, I can visualize him, but I don't recall anything particular about him.

T: A. Judson Burrell?

H: Yes. He had a brother, both of them are preachers there in Georgia. Judson used to be associate pastor of the Southside Church in Birmingham where my mother was a member until her death. She used to tell me about how in her later years, when she had to be in bed a great deal with a bad heart, he'd come to see her. He was always telling me about her when he'd see me. We were in the seminary at the same time. We'd never been thrown together too much except on the Executive Committee, but we were good friends and still are. And he is a good sound man.

T: You mentioned his brother. James T. Burrell, was that his brother?

H: Yes. But I don't--he again was just a good solid man, but I didn't know too much about him.

T: James T. Wesberry?

H: Yes. Wesberry is pastor of the Morningside Baptist Church in Atlanta. A very good man, former president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, he was chairman of the State of Georgia Committee on Literature, trying to wipe out pornography and all that in Georgia. Jim is just a good, solid man. He's been nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention two or three times, but never elected, of course.

T: R. S. Bergen?

H: I don't know about him.

T: Howard P. Giddens?

H: I know him. We were at the seminary at the same time. I was ahead of him. I don't know anything particular about him other than that I just knew him.

T: R. J. Robinson?

H: Yes, he came on after I got off. He is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia, and recently received a medal as one of the all-time great Christian athletes. He was an All-American Basketball player at Baylor and on the American Olympic basketball team. R. J., I think, is one of our choice younger men; he has his earned doctorate from Southwestern Seminary. In January he was the visiting professor in homiletics at Southern Seminary. I did the same thing last July. He wrote me, and wanted to know what I did, and so on. Good man!

T: Now these men are all so much later on the Committee, but you might know them. Guy Rutland, III?

H: Oh yes, I knew Guy III, and Guy, Jr. They're from Decatur, Georgia, members of First Baptist. I knew Guy, Sr. He's dead now. They were contractors. Guy, Jr., is on the Board of Trustees at Golden Gate Seminary, at least he was. I think he just recently went off. I did not know Guy III as well as the others, but I'm sure he's a good, strong layman, or his granddaddy would come back from the grave and whip him.

T: J. Robert Smith?

H: No.

T: J. Thornton Williams?

H: I just know him. He's at First Baptist, LaGrange, Georgia. He's a former president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, but I never worked with him.

T: E. A. Wright?

H: No.

T: Now these men are from Indiana and they would be during your time, but some almost later. Walter R. Davis?

H: No.

T: Raymond Sanderson?

H: No.

T: From Illinois. W. K Sisk?

H: No.

T: I. E. Lee?

H: No.

T: Jack Devore?

H: I knew him, but that's about all.

T: All right. James M. Baldwin.

H: Baldwin, I know. He is one of the stronger men in the Illinois Convention. I don't know anything unusual that he did on the Executive Committee, but he was just a good, solid member.

T: W. J. Purdue?

H: I just knew him, that's about all.

T: He served only one year.

H: Charles R. Walker?

H: Yes, I know Walker. And again, he's a good, strong man from Illinois, and just a good, solid member of the Committee.

T: Everett Lenay?

H: No.

T: From Kansas. Rang W. Morgan?

H: Rang Morgan. I know him, but I can't put him into focus. I just knew him.

T: The others would be later, I'm sure. Forrest Siler?

H: I know Siler, the past president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and now president of the Board of Trustees of OBU. He's now at First Baptist Church, Lawton, Oklahoma.

T: Can you relate something about him besides his involvement with the Executive Committee? He was actually only on one year from Kansas.

H: Well, he's a native of Oklahoma, went up to Kansas, and then came back to Oklahoma. He is one of our stronger men, and as I said, he's been on the Board of Trustees at OBU for some time. He served on the committee with me and some others to nominate a president of the convention, and we, of course, elected Dr. William Tanner.

T: You mean president of OBU?

H: Yes. He is just made for the job. And, of course, Siler succeeded Tom Wildes after a long pastorate in Lawton, and has carried on without a hitch. They had a beautiful new auditorium, and everything they had in the way of new facilities burned down some months ago, just leaving, I think, the Activities Building. But they are building back and going right on. Forrest Siler is one of our stronger men in Oklahoma.

T: One other from Kansas. Kenneth B. Coombs?

H: I just knew him and that's all.

T: Kentucky. Some men from Kentucky--J. R. Jester?

H: I just knew Jester, that's about all.

T: George Ragland?

H: I knew him. Of course, he was before my day. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky. He was a very strong leader. He was a strong leader in the Women Keep Silent in Church Group. I remember years ago in 1938 when the Southern Baptist Convention met in Oklahoma City. The first time I was ever in Oklahoma City was when I came here for the Convention. The Pastors' Conference met in what later became known as the Mirror Room of the City Auditorium. They had, of course, different ones on the Pastors' Conference Program. Dr. Dodd presented Mrs. J. M. Dawson as the speaker. She got up and knocked a home run, so that I shall never forget how sorry I felt for Ellis Fuller, who followed her on the program. Of course, he was one of the "big cannons" of the day. He tried every way in the world to get cranked up and going. But, you know, you can only take a crowd to the peak so often, and she had done that. It wasn't Ellis Fuller's fault, but it was just the situation--the people had reached that emotional peak, dropped back, and weren't ready to go uphill again. But he worked at it. I mentioned that merely to show what a tremendous speech Mrs. Dawson made. But when she stood up and walked up to the podium--I never shall forget it, I was sitting in the back--George Ragland got up and started down the aisle followed by quite a delegation from Kentucky. They walked out. They wouldn't stay and listen to a woman speak. But he was a good, strong man on the Executive Committee. He was a contemporary of Louie Newton, John Buchanan, Frank Tripp, and men like that. I never attended the Executive Committees during that time, but I remember at the Southern Convention how they would get up and debate one another on issues. So they were sort of some of the big guns back then.

T: Did they debate Dr. Newton?

H: No, they debated among themselves.

T: H. V. Childs?

H: I know Childs. I don't remember where he was pastor, but it was in Eastern Kentucky. I never worked with him closely, and I couldn't pass any judgment on him. He was a good man, I remember that much about him.

T: Frank F. Norfleet?

H: Yes. Frank Norfleet is a very capable man, nothing outstanding that you could relate about him particularly, just a good, solid citizen.

T: Elwyn N. Wilkinson?

H: Elwyn Wilkinson, well, Frank Norfleet, too, we were all seminary students together. There's nothing that I would say that particularly pushed Wilkinson up above the crowd. You know it takes an incident, it doesn't mean a man doesn't have the capacity to do great things, he is just not there at the right spot, at the right time. So these men that I mentioned that way, I don't mean it disparagingly, I just mean they were just good, solid members. They wouldn't be on the Executive Committee if they weren't good men.

T: Phillip H. Wilson?

H: No.

T: R. Travis Otey?

H: I just knew him, that's all.

T: Okay. These men are much later. C. L. Smith?

H: No.

T: Ted Gilbert?

H: No.

T: These were all much later. From Louisiana, Guy Oaks?

H: Yes, I knew Guy Oaks. In fact, when I first went on the Executive Committee, he was on it and I worked with him. I had known him and worked with him on state committees in Louisiana. He was from Shreveport. I was in the First Baptist Church, Shreveport, in February of 1974, in a Bible conference. His wife came down and we were talking about Guy. He died not too long ago. But he was a lawyer and a very strong man, very capable. As I recall, he was on the Finance Committee, but he went off shortly after I went on it.

T: J. Norris Palmer?

H: Oh yes. Norris Palmer was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, for many years. He died a year or so ago. He was at one time chairman of the Executive Committee, I believe. He served on many important committees in the Executive Committee and in the Southern Baptist Convention. I can't remember now what it was, but he served on some very important committee not too long before he died. But he was one of the towers of strength in Louisiana, and was a great worker at the Southern Baptist level. He was president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention at one time, I know that.

T: R. Houston Smith?

H: Yes. R. Houston Smith was at First Baptist, Bossier City, Louisiana, and then came to First Baptist, Pineville, Louisiana. Now I think it was at Pineville, while there, that he was on the Executive Committee. He's retired now. Houston is a very good man, a strong man, just one of the good team men, I remember. However, Louisiana College is located at Pineville right near his church. On opening day at assembly every year they'd have the pastors in Alexandria and Pineville come over, speak to the students, and invite them to their churches. So they started off with Charlie Shirer, who was pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church, the farthest one away. He told the students all about what they had out at Calvary and invited them to visit. Then they presented me. I was at Emmanuel downtown, next farthest church away from the college. I did the same thing Shirer had done. Houston got up, and just said, "Why go farther and get less?" and sat down. Well, the crowd roared, of course. He got most of the students. We got some, but his church was the college church. They could walk to his church, and they had to have a way to get to ours. But Houston is a very good man.

T: Now J. D. Grey is a man that you would want to talk about at some considerable length, and we probably should isolate him separately from his real role in the Executive Committee.

H: You're right. I could make a box of tapes on J. D. Grey.

T: Why don't we go on through the list here and go back to Grey later?

H: All right. It suits me for us to do that, because I will probably repeat this when we talk about him. But just let me say at this point that if I had to name the three dearest friends that I have among preachers, J. D. would be one of them. And I suspect if I had to pick one, I'd pick J. D. Grey. That doesn't mean the others are not very close and dear friends, but there's just something special about J. D. I'll tell you about it later.

T: Okay. Claire C. Clark?

H: Yes. Another man from First Baptist, Shreveport, who was a lawyer, and I worked with him at the state level and the Southern Baptist level. I don't recall whether he was on the Finance Committee or not. I believe he was. But he also is dead now. He was a very strong man on the Committee, a layman, of course.

T: Mercer C. Irwin?

H: Mercer was down at Baton Rouge in one of the churches there. It's funny how you remember things. I remember Mercer by the fact that I was holding a revival meeting for him, and got up one morning, turned the radio on, and found out that it was D-Day in Europe. The church came together that morning and we had a prayer meeting about the situation. Mercer later went to become the secretary of mission work in the New Orleans area, and I guess he's still there. Just a good man.

T: G. O. McGuffee?

H: No.

T: Luther B. Hall?

H: Luther Hall I knew from Louisiana days. He was quite active in state work; he was president of the Convention at one time. His sister was in this class I taught at Louisiana College which I mentioned earlier. Luther was on the committee on "The Baptist Faith and Message," the revision of it. He was president of the Louisiana Convention at that time. He was the only man on the committee that didn't have a seminary degree. He would laugh and talk about the fact that he did not have a seminary degree. Yet, he made a very valuable contribution. Every now and then he'd come up with an insight that none of us had seen. So I have great respect for Luther Hall.

T: Ray P. Rust?

H: Ray was one of my "boys." He was in that class I taught at Louisiana College. He didn't get his name "Rust" for nothing; his hair is flaming red, what is left of it. He had a head full of it when I taught him. I didn't pull it out, either. But anyway, Ray is now . . .

T: Acting President of New Orleans Seminary.

H: Acting President of New Orleans Seminary. He was assistant to Grady Cothen, and is now Acting President. He has been very active in Louisiana Baptist work, I believe chairman of their Executive Committee at one time. I did not work with him on the Executive Committee, because, obviously, I was ahead of him from the very fact that I taught him in school.

T: Raymond T. Boswell?

H: I do not know him.

T: Okay. In Maryland, Francis A. Davis? That would be a man.

H: I just remember him, that's all.

T: Ralph T. Bayior?

H: No.

T: J. Winston Pierce?

H: Yes. J. Winston Pierce and I--he and his wife and my wife and I--were seminary mates together. Winston was from Maryland, and he went down to Raleigh, North Carolina, First Baptist Church. Then he went to Golden Gate Seminary where he was professor of preaching. He retired back in North Carolina, and is doing a good deal of writing. He's written a number of books published by Broadman. Winston is a good, strong man, a Southern Seminary graduate. I don't believe he got his academic doctorate; I could be wrong, but I don't think he did. But he is a very fine, very capable man.

T: F. Ralph Swanson?

H: He's a layman. I knew him mostly because his brother was a member of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and on the board of deacons. But that doesn't mean that he didn't stand tall in his own right. He was a big man, as I recall, a lawyer, and a very capable, dedicated man.

T: All right. From Michigan, perhaps just one, E. Clay Polk?

H: I didn't know him.

T: From Mississippi, Charles S. Henderson?

H: No.

T: Tell me something about Chester Quarles.

H: Well, Chester Quarles is one of those rare individuals. He grew up in Troy, Alabama, he was an orphan, born, I believe, with a lame arm and hand. And yet he never let it in any sense bother him. I first came to know Chester at Southern Seminary, he was just a little ahead of me, enough to where I missed him at Howard College. The first memory I have of Chester Quarles standing out from a group was--they were having an intramural softball game. Chester was out there pitching for one of the teams. And this lame arm, you know, just dangled. It was his right arm, but it didn't make any difference to Chester. He was zooming that ball over that plate just like Walter Johnson, or Vita Blue. When they'd knock one back to him, he knew what to do with it. Next, I remember seeing him on a basketball floor playing basketball on the seminary basketball team. He didn't let that be any handicap to him, and he just took life that way. He was pastor of a small church at Newton, Alabama, I believe, the first church out of the seminary. Then he went to First Baptist Church, Sylacauga, Alabama, and from there he went to be state Training Union Secretary for Alabama. From there he went to Nashville with the Sunday School Board, and was in charge of promoting associational Training Union. He had a wonderful sense of humor. We were always kidding one another. For instance, in San Antonio at the Southern Baptist Convention in 1942, he had gotten to be a southwide figure by being with the Sunday School Board. The rest of us were still down there in the pile, you know, just trying to get our heads up above the crowd. And old Ches, in a sense, had arrived. So I happened to be walking through the coffeeshop in the hotel there in San Antonio. He was sitting at a table eating with some people, and I happened to be standing there talking to him. One of

the missionaries home on furlough came by and saw and recognized Ches. He stopped and was visiting with him. Of course, we forget sometimes that the missionaries don't have the facilities to keep up with every little thing that goes on back at home like we do. And so when they had gotten through talking, this missionary said, "By the way, Ches, where are you now?" He told him where he was. When that fellow went on, I laughed and said, "Buddy, I guess he put you in your place. You thought you'd gotten to be a big shot, didn't you?" From then on, every time I'd see old Ches, I'd say, "Hey, by the way, Ches, where are you now?" I led a revival meeting for him when he was pastor at Leland, Mississippi. That's down in the rich Mississippi Delta country. I got off the train--it was during the war and you couldn't fly, of course, nothing flew in there anyway--but when I got off the train I had a suitcase in one hand and a Bible in the other. He said, "Where are your sermons?" And I held up my Bible. I said, "They're in here." As long as he lived, when he'd get me in a crowd, he'd tell about how I came in there and held a two-weeks' revival meeting for him and didn't have a single sermon outline, just my Bible. Well, of course, I always preach that way, at least since early in my ministry. So he said, "We'd get out, visit, and visit, and visit, and he'd go in and eat supper, lie down and rest for fifteen or twenty minutes, and be up and going on to preach like a house afire without a single note." Virginia and Chester were good friends of ours. From Leland he was elected to be the Executive Secretary of Mississippi, and we were thrown together many ways down there.

While he was Training Union secretary in Alabama, I recommended him to the Calvary Baptist Church in Birmingham, when I resigned to go to Montgomery. They had him up to preach and would have called him, but one woman raised a question about his arm. I said, "Well, he can do anything you can do." I don't know whether that got into the picture or not, but they called somebody else, called John Maguire. But anyway, Chester and Virginia were very good friends of mine and my wife; we were together on a trip to the Holy Land and the Baptist World Alliance. I couldn't begin to tell you all the times we were together, but I'll just say this. The last time Chester and I were together was at the Convention in Houston, the year W. A. Criswell was elected president. I was standing down on the floor of the hall. Well, I walked to the platform, and an usher came and stopped me and said, "W. A. Criswell and Billy Graham are sitting up there /and he pointed up/, and they want you to come up and sit with them." I said, "Well, you tell them I'll be up there in a minute, I've got to make a brief report here." When I got through with it I went up there. By that time Chester Quarles had come along. I sat down next to Criswell who was sitting next to Billy. Ches was sitting on the other side of me. So page boys and different people were coming up. They wanted to get Billy Graham's autograph and the new president's autograph. Well, there I was, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention--like Ed Solomon told Jim Storer when he was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he said, "Well, Jim, now you're the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. In two years you'll be a former president, and they ain't nothing no deader than a former president." Well, we former presidents call ourselves members of the "Who's Through" club. So Ches and I laughed about it. He and I were busy passing papers down for those fellows to autograph, but nobody ever asked us for ours. So we kept talking about how we wished we were famous so people would ask for our autographs. And we laughed and had a good time together. I left him. The next time I heard about Ches Quarles, he had died in Peru. But God never made a finer man than Ches Quarles.

T: Mississippi Baptists were somewhat divided, weren't they, after his death, when they were seeking the new Executive Secretary?

H: I think, in a way, yes. Of course, they had a rather critical situation there before he came into the position. I wasn't too close to it, but I'm sure there must have been, as there usually is, some maneuvering. Especially if you've got factions. Now in Oklahoma when Dr. Lackey retired recently, to my knowledge there was no problem whatever, just smooth as silk. So Joe Ingram, his associate, succeeded him. But I think that was the reason why they asked Doug Hudgins to leave the pastorate and take that position for the remainder of his active ministry. It was in order to get them through such a time. But that in no way reflects on Chester Quarles. It was just one of those things that happen when a vacuum occurs. You see various forces want to rush in to fill it.

T: I think you've mentioned him before, but the first Executive Secretary of the Historical Commission was Norman W. Cox, of Mississippi. You knew Dr. Cox?

H: Yes, I knew Dr. Cox. I first knew him when my wife and I were students at Howard College. He was pastor of First Baptist Church of Mobile, and had come there from First Baptist, Meridian, Mississippi. He came up to the college and spoke for a week. I had no particular contact with him from then on until he was elected secretary of the Historical Commission. I remember a sermon he preached one time on "How Our God Uses Little Things" to accomplish his purposes. Among other things, he described how God used a little snowflake to defeat Napoleon when he was trying to take Russia, not just one but billions of them. It was quite a beautiful thing he used to show how God can use his power, such as he can use little things to accomplish great purposes.

T: Was he a dynamic orator?

H: Not necessarily, he had a slight impediment of speech. It seemed to me he always had a little difficulty enunciating clearly. So I would not call him a great orator; he had a great imagination and used it effectively as a preacher.

T: Purser Hewitt?

H: Purser is a layman with the Jackson Clarion Ledger, a newspaper in Jackson, Mississippi. He writes a column, or did, I think he's retired now, but he wrote a column, I believe, called "Good Mawning." Purser was very capable, and a likeable, dedicated fellow, nothing outstanding to say except he was just a good, solid man.

T: Walter L. Moore?

H: Walter Moore? Are you still in Mississippi?

T: Mississippi, he was on the Executive Committee in 1958-59.

H: I don't believe I remember him. Oh, I do remember him. He was at First, Meridian, and later went to Vine Street, Macon, Georgia. A good man!

T: Owen Cooper, our current president?

H: Yes. Everybody knows Owen. I don't think there's a layman in the Southern Baptist Convention, outside of an official position like Porter Routh, who is as conversant with the life of Southern Baptists as Owen Cooper. I served with him on the Finance Committee and on various other committees. I've debated with him on issues. One time he and Carr Collins got the idea of proposing that the Home Mission Board should set up a lending agency to help churches in the pioneer areas. It called for the Home Mission Board to borrow $50,000,000. So they appointed a committee, made up of some from the Home Board and some from the Executive Committee, to meet in Atlanta to come up with some kind of recommendation. I was on the committee along with Owen Cooper and Carr Collins. We were from the Executive Committee. I don't recall who was from the Home Mission Board. We met and debated that issue all day. I was opposed to it, and they were for it. Finally I told them--they kept talking about how safe it was and how it would make money and all that--so finally I said, "Well, you two are businessmen. If it's such a safe and money-making thing, why don't you go into it yourselves and make some money out of it?" I don't know whether that had any effect or not, but the committee finally voted to recommend that it not be done. You'll come to Carr Collins down there later on, and I'll tell you a story about Carr in connection with that.

T: T. Cooper Walton?

H: No.

T: John G. McCall?

H: No, he came along after me.

T: All right. From Missouri, Walter Goodson?

H: No.

T: Adiel Moncrief?

H: I just knew him, but he came before my time.

T: O. R. Shields?

H: Shields, I knew him. I knew him in the seminary, just a good, solid man.

T: W. A. Buckner?

H: No.

T: Conrad R. Willard?

H: Conrad Willard is at Central Baptist Church in Miami, Florida, now. He was at Calvary in Kansas City. He was a strong man on the Executive Committee and also in our denomination as a whole.

T: He served just one year while in Missouri. Charles E. Currey?

H: I knew Currey. He is a judge; in fact, he filled the position that Harry Truman once occupied, the judgeship that he had in Kansas City area. When the Convention met in Kansas City in 1963, my last year as president, he came and told me that the following day was President Truman's birthday, and that some businessmen downtown were going to have a luncheon in his honor. Would it be all right if he brought him by and let me introduce him to the Convention? I said, "It'd be great for, after all, he's a Southern Baptist. We may not agree with everything he says and does, but he's still a Baptist." So he brought him by. I presented him to the Convention. I had told them ahead of time that we were going to do it, and I said that we want to sing Happy Birthday to him. So when I presented him we stood and we sang "Happy Birthday, Mr. President." He stood there and grinned from ear to ear. When we got through, I said, "Mr. President, do you have something you want to say to us?" He said, "Yes, I do." Well, I held my breath until he got through, I didn't know what he was going to say. But he made a very fine speech. The only thing he did he made a reference to a former speech of his. Prior to that time, you know, so many Democrats were deserting the party because of the then candidate John F. Kennedy being a Roman Catholic. Mr. Truman at that time made a speech in El Paso, and said, "If these Democrats didn't want to support the party ticket, let 'em go to hell." Later on, I happened to hear Lyndon Johnson speaking over T.V. in Fort Worth during the same campaign. Referring to those Democrats who couldn't support the party ticket, he said, "Now they don't have to support it, but I would suggest that they ought to take a trip. And if they want to do so, I will refer them to the Harry Truman Travel Bureau." That's the way he put it. Well, anyway, Mr. Truman just merely mentioned the fact, he didn't even use the word, but he mentioned the incident. I sat there holding my breath, I didn't know what he was going to say. It was a very fine speech, and I was happy to have had that contact with him. Now Currey, his daddy, by the way, is a real estate man and was one of the leading men in helping develop the campus for Midwestern Seminary.

T: James T. Shirley?

H: No.

T: Dr. Hobbs, we were talking about some of the different people on the Executive Committee. Let me ask just about three from Missouri who came somewhat later than you but you may have known them. G. Nelson Duke?

H: No.

T: W. Amos Esry?

H: No.

T: Norville G. Jones?

H: No.

T: From New Mexico, J. T. Barbee?

H: I just knew Brother Barbee, but that's about all.

T: He served earlier than your time.

H: Yes, I knew him in other relationships.

T: Can you relate anything in particular about him?

H: Nothing in particular, no.

T: Philip C. McGahey?

H: No.

T: L. M. Walker?

H: No.

T: J. Melvin Ray?

H: No. I remember the name, but I don't remember anything particular about him.

T: Okay. James F. Abernathy?

H: No.

T: Now some people from North Carolina, I'm sure you'll know some of them. Perry Crouch?

H: Yes, I knew Perry very well; I say knew, I know him. He served on the Executive Committee part of the time I was on; he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina, until he was elected executive secretary of North Carolina Baptists, the position he now holds. He was a very strong member of the committee, very forceful, and yet very kind and cooperative. He was chairman of the committee as I remember that brought in the Booz, Allen, and Hamilton report. That included the rotating system for members of the board that is now in effect, and that's the main thing that I recall about his contribution. But he was a strong member of the committee.

T: I think we probably should talk about this next man in relationship to one of the other presidents, but he was also later a president of the Convention, Casper C. Warren?

H: Well, Casper was just one of the finest men you'd ever know, very personable; he was a commoner, to pull out an old phrase, who could walk with kings and not lose the common touch, very dedicated. His pastorates were all characterized by strong mission outthrust, outreach. I guess Casper will be best known in Southern Baptist history as the man who challenged the Convention, while president, to launch out into the 30,000 Movement, and then was asked to give up his pastorate and to head that movement, which he did, and did very effectively. Casper, of course, was at First Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, at that time. Prior to that he was at Emmanuel Church at Little Rock, and prior to that a church in Kentucky. I came to know him while I was at Little Rock. He was in the party in which Mrs. Hobbs and I traveled in 1955 when we went to the Middle East, Europe, and the Baptist World Alliance in London. At that time he was president of the Convention. We came to

know him in a very personal way there, and have the fondest of memories of him and his wife, both of whom now are deceased.

T: Tell me something about that trip you had with him.

H: Well, it was a trip gotten up by Roland Leavell, Brownell 153 was the trip. We all remember it because we had our first meeting in New York before sailing on the Queen Mary (we went over on the Mary and back on Elizabeth). After we got to Europe we traveled by bus, train, and plane. But in our first meeting, trying to mold us into a unit, Roland gave us a little saying. "We're Brownell 153. Let Brownell worry, we're sans souci," without care. It started out to be a group of about thirty-two. In fact, it was said that there was going to be a group of us more or less contemporaries, seminary mates, as well as close friends. There were men like Doug Hudgins (when I use the name I'm talking about wife too). Doug Hudgins, Jim Middleton, J. D. Grey, and people like that. Ralph Grant was out at that time in Lubbock, Texas.

Dr. Leavell was such a popular tour leader that many wanted to join the tour. It wound up to be sixty-four people, just twice as many. Ralph Grant was his associate tour leader. Dr. Leavell was even then having trouble with his heart. The only way his doctor, Dr. Bethea of New Orleans, would let him go was that he go along too. He paid his own way. He carried along his old-fashioned pill bag that doctors used to carry around, put in it every kind of medicine he could imagine he might need, a lot of antibiotics. All of us carried a supply. He said he had a heavier practice on that tour than he had had in years. Well, after he ran out of medicine, he took an inventory of what the people in the tour had. When someone would go to him, he'd say, "Well, you need such and such, you go to see so and so and tell them that I said to give you X number of these tablets or capsules." During World War I, Dr. Leavell had an assignment in the army to conduct tours in Paris for the troops on leave from the front. He spoke French like a native, was an authority in all kinds of art including painting, sculpture, and the like; and, for that reason, so many people wanted to go with him. We had a wonderful time. People were brought in on the tour of whom we'd never heard, that is some of us. And frankly, at first, I had just a little resentment in my heart because we had agreed to go with the understanding that it was going to be a bunch of us who were more or less a congenial group to begin with. But before the tour was over some of the dearest friends I have today were people that I met on that tour. I'm thinking of a Mr. and Mrs. Redford in Chattanooga; she died a couple of years ago. I don't guess we had/have any closer friends among lay people than the W. A. Redfords. He owns a chain of variety stores in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and around. Anywhere I go to preach, if it's within reasonable distance, he always comes to hear me preach. Of interest is the fact that he was converted in the Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. In the summer of 1973 I supplied one Sunday there for Dr. Dehoney while I was teaching at Southern Seminary. A sister of mine and her husband who were in the same church with Redford, the First Baptist of Chattanooga, came up and spent the weekend. Redford had the biggest time you ever saw. I called him up into the pulpit (we were on television) and presented him to the people as one who had been converted in that church and was baptized by one of their pastors way back in their early days. He made a wonderful speech, and gave them a challenge to be faithful to the Lord. So there are many residual benefits out of that trip besides just the fact that we went. It was our first time to go to Europe and the Middle East. We carried our son, Jerry, who was sixteen at the time, and strangely, he still

remembers things that we've forgotten. Our nephew, Dr. Henry L. Lyon, III, who is now pastor of the First Baptist Church, Selma, Alabama, also was along. It was quite an experience. We've been back over there many times since, but never have we had the thrill that we had on that first trip.

T: Did you visit in the Middle East countries, as well as in Southern Europe?

H: Oh yes. We got off the boat at Cherbourg, France, and took a boat-train to Paris. From there, of course, we saw Paris and Versailles. We took a train to Lucerne, Switzerland; saw the Swiss Alps; went over to Zurich and saw our seminary at Ruschlikon. Then we took a train down into Italy to Milan and on down to Venice and Florence, and then took a bus from there to Rome. From there we flew to Egypt, and visited just around Cairo, the Pyramids and the like. Then we flew to Beirut, went to Baalbek, Damascus, over to Ajloun to visit our hospital, to Amman, and from there we went to the Dead Sea and up to Jerusalem. And then, of course, the usual things from there, including Samaria and Bethlehem. We went to Tel Aviv, Joppa, Haifa, Galilee, and so on. Then we took a plane over to Athens, saw Athens and Corinth, and then took a plane from there to London. After the Alliance meeting broke up, we went up into the Shakespeare country and up to Coventry and Edinburgh, and back to London. We then took a boat home from Southhampton to New York.

T: Do you remember what prompted Dr. Warren to conceive of the 30,000 Movement? What was the slogan? 30,000, '55?

H: As I recall, it was just the 30,000 Movement, but it wasn't in 1955 because that was when he first was elected president of the Convention. It was after 1957. He challenged us in 1957 to do this at the Convention in Louisville. And, as I said earlier, I think it was an outgrowth of his ministry in the local church. He had always had lots of missions, and God laid it on his heart to challenge Southern Baptists to go all out in establishing missions, new churches, and preaching points. Anywhere we established a preaching point or a Sunday School where we could teach the Bible, that was included as a unit in this goal. About that time our church entered into a nursing home ministry. As far as we could learn through the Sunday School Board Extension Department, it was the first time any church had ever done that. We got a man, Dr. J. W. Hodges, to come on our staff to head up that ministry. We wound up having, and still have, a ministry in about twenty-five nursing homes. Since then other churches have taken it up both in our city and elsewhere. We had/have lay people that go into these nursing homes. Those that are able to get together in their central assembly place would have a Sunday School lesson, they'd have songs and Scripture, prayer; then they'd visit bed patients. I asked Casper one day if that fitted the category. He said, "It certainly does." So we added about twenty-five in one shot.

T: Do you think it was a successful movement?

H: Yes, I think so. I don't recall now the exact statistics on it. But as I recall, we did reach the 30,000 or thereabouts. I've always said if you shoot at the moon and hit the top of a tree, you've done better than if you aim at the ground, because you'll hit the ground every time. So success is relative whether you reach 30,000 or 25,000, it's success. It's a little bit like the Jewish merchant. Somebody asked him how business was. He said, "Terrible! I lost $25,000 last year." They said, "Well business is

so good, I don't see how you did that." He said, "Well, the year before I cleared $100,000, last year I only cleared $75,000." But it was a success like the "Million More in '54."

T: This is what I was thinking of.

H: The Sunday School campaign--we didn't reach the million, but we had the largest increase in Sunday School enrollment that had ever been registered in the history of Christianity that year. It was along about that time that some secular magazine writer wrote an article on Southern Baptists, and called them the "miracle denomination."

T: In some circles they were criticized very strongly for our emphasis upon numbers and size and that our numbers are not true numbers, how do you respond to that sort of thing?

H: I think the statement that it is not a true figure is correct in that so many of our churches have so many nonresident members, members that they can't find. Right after I came to the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, I knew that they reported seven thousand members with an average of about fifteen hundred in Sunday School. I knew that either they didn't have that many members or else somebody hadn't been doing a very good job. The first thing I did after I got here was to ask one of the ladies in the office to count the membership cards involved, and it came up nine hundred short of seven thousand. So I suggested to the deacons that we revise our roll. There was some objection to it because some of the old-timers still had the "big churchitis" idea. At one time there was a race between the First Baptist Churches in Dallas, Oklahoma City, Lubbock, Houston, San Antonio, as to which was going to be the largest church. Some of that was still in some of our old-timers' thinking. At that time there wasn't too much difference in our reported membership than that, say, of First Baptist, Dallas. So when they objected to it I just dropped it, because I thought if we were going to have a fight there were more important things to fight over. But five years later I came back with it. By that time the people had confidence in my leadership. I told them, "There's not a businessman in this group who would expect a salesman to produce on the basis of a suggested list of customers, when he knew that nine hundred of them didn't exist and doubtless many others were dead or had moved off." So they voted to do it. One of the deacons thanked me. He said, "I'm so glad of that, because I'm tired of trying to explain to people on the street downtown about why we have a big membership and the Sunday School is no larger than it is." Well, we employed a lady and she worked a year and a half on it. I'll not go into detail as to the methods used, but we used every method you could think of to try to locate people.

T: What kind of things did you do to try and find them?

H: Well, first of all, she took the nonresident file and wrote letters to the last address we had on people. We got replies from many of them. She got the post office to help trace the rest of them. They found some of them. I don't think they do that service now, but back then you could pay, I think maybe it was ten cents for each name, and they would do it. I laughed and said, "If some of them committed a federal crime and the F.B.I. started looking for them starting from our church files they'd never locate them." We found people that had been members of several churches since they left here. One man and his wife that we had on our roll had been members of two or three

churches, and at the time we found them they were members of the First Baptist Church in Carlsbad, New Mexico. She was president of the Woman's Missionary Union, and he was teacher of a men's class. We found one that was a Catholic priest. I laughed and said, "Well, we didn't find any Jewish rabbis." But many, many of them were dead, had been dead for years. Then when we got down to that point, we published in our church paper the names of others that we couldn't locate. We took a portion each week for several weeks, asking the people if they knew the whereabouts of any of these or any possible clue to let us know. And we got a good deal of information that way. So when we finally got down to those, we wrote to these people and suggested that they join the church where they lived. When we finally got down to those who could not in any way be located, we put them in a dead file. We kept the names for the record's sake and for any future need. We also kept the nonresident file. But we divided our files into a local membership and, to all practical purposes, a nonresident membership. We reduced the overall membership from 7,000 to about 5,800. About 3,300 were residents, the others were nonresidents. We've tried to keep our roll pretty clean since that time, but even then it gets out of order.

I think churches in the West have larger nonresident memberships than churches east of the Mississippi because this is comparatively new country. In the early days, many people, like here in Oklahoma City, would move in one week, join the First Baptist Church on Sunday, then move on the next week, and would never notify the church that they had moved. They might join other churches, but back then, instead of having a paid staff with somebody in charge of keeping up with church records, it was done by volunteer help. They kept the records at home oftentimes. And they would fail to write for a letter. Or if they wrote, the clerk at another church would fail to send the letter and wouldn't follow through. It was just a thing that grew up over the years.

The nine hundred difference we found in this way. From the time the church was organized in 1889 they kept a ledger and they still do. They put in number one, Joe Doaks, number two, Tom Brown, and on down. Well, back in the early days they would just take the number--like if the church had four hundred members at the last associational letter time and now they had six hundred--they would just say that they had had two hundred to join during that year. They may have just said, "Well, we've got six hundred members now." They wouldn't figure on the ones that had died or moved away. Then if in the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 numbering in this ledger, this lady found, way down in there somewhere where a clerk in numbering had made an error of nine hundred between say one number and the next number--like 3,700, then the next one was 4,600 and then went on from there. It was not an intentional thing, just one of those human errors. I have an idea that if our churches over the country would do that same thing it would reduce our membership considerably, especially if we more or less quit counting nonresident members. But at the same time, I don't have any qualms of conscience about emphasizing numbers if they're honest numbers. Luke in the book of Acts, constantly referred to how many were added to the church--a great number of 3,000, 5,000, and a great number added to the faith, and so on. I don't think we should have numbers for numbers' sake, but if the church can win 100 in a year, it's a sin to win 99.

At the same time, I don't like some of the things that are going on in the present time--like certain evangelists, and it's creeping over into our churches--they'll have a revival and report they had 900 decisions. Actually it may be rededications or for

any number of things, and you may wind up with 100 that really made a profession of faith out of a big number like that. I don't think it's a good way to report. They ought to report that so many people were saved, so many people came by letter or otherwise, and then just say we had so many for rededication, and let it go at that. I have kidded so many of my brethren by saying that I preached a sermon on Sunday morning and we had sixteen hundred and something decisions. They ask, "You did?" And I say, "Yeh, the whole sixteen hundred of them sat and listened to me preach, and went home and decided not to do a cotton-picking thing about it." That's facetious, of course, but at the same time I think it can be a vicious thing if we let numbers be the ruling factor. However, I don't have any objection to numbers provided they're honestly achieved.

T: Did you meet much resistance from your church or from the people that you wrote to? You obviously tried to reclaim them or suggest to them they become a part of the church near where they live. What was the experience?

H: I don't recall any negative reaction to it. In fact, I think, to the contrary. People, some of them at least, expressed appreciation that the church still cared about them. There was no negative reaction that I recall on anybody's part.

T: Did you follow a regular practice of notifying a church nearby where a person lived that they had been a member of this church and then moved away?

H: Well, we did at that time. I'm ashamed to say that we didn't religiously follow up on it, though we did at times. Usually, if I knew a family that moved to a certain city, I would write them and suggest a church, and then would write the pastor and give him their address. But it was more or less of a personal thing on my part, not a church policy as such.

T: Do you see any kind of ministry in developing some kind of ministry among Southern Baptists in this area, of sharing our members or leading our members who move away? Many have in their covenant the statement that when we remove from this place, we will join a church of like faith and order.

H: Yes, I'm afraid there are a good many things in that covenant that we don't hold our people to, such as the use of alcoholic beverages. Of course, there was an effort made a few years ago through the Sunday School Board, I guess, to get churches to write to members living in other areas and try to get them to join churches there. I just happen to be honest and say that I question whether that will ever be done on a serious basis. After all, we're all human, and nobody is immune to the bug of "bigitis." I have just finished reading in the biography of W. A. Criswell, and frankly--though he and I have been very close friends since seminary days, I drove the getaway car at his wedding--I have never discussed it with him, but I wonder if in that membership they don't have a lot of deadwood. You look at a church membership and look at a Sunday School enrollment attendance and you wonder. But in this book, Criswell pointed out that every so often they would go through their rolls, and that they had at several times taken off as many as a thousand numbers when it was apparent that the people were nonexistent or they didn't know where they were. The book made the statement that if they had not done that, they would probably be reporting a membership of twenty-five thousand rather than eighteen thousand plus. I'm not sure if we'll ever really face up

to the thing. It's so easy to look the other way or to sweep something under the rug rather than to face up to it. But I'm quite certain that our membership Convention-wide is quite inflated. It may be true of other denominations; I have no way of judging that.

T: Did your church ever make a real effort to reclaim local people, resident members, who for one way or another apparently had become uninvolved?

H: Yes. Instead of having the old-style Extension Department, we took our resident members who were not enrolled in Sunday School, and when we graded Adults in 1954 we took those who by age would have belonged in a certain class and made up a roll of them, put them in a loose-leaf kind of a roll that we had. And on cards of a different color from the active members of the class, we listed the name and address of all the people on the church roll--resident members--who if they came to Sunday School would belong in that class. One called it the Extension roll. The idea was that the class was to visit these people at least once a quarter. They were to minister to them to call them, invite them to Sunday School, of course, and keep up with them--sickness and any other thing--and report it to the pastor. As a result of that we had some that we wondered if they shouldn't go back and start all over again with the Lord, confess their sins, and get saved, because of the way they would talk and treat these godly people who would go to visit them or who called them on the phone. But the result was that we were able to enlist many of these people in Sunday School. Prior to that time the church had visited these people just on Every-Member Canvass Day. In other words, the only interest we ever showed in them was when we wanted a pledge. This removed that stigma. We were seeking to reach them with a purely spiritual motive.

After some time class members would exchange names--one person would visit a person for say one quarter or six months, and then they would swap names so that they'd have a different person making the contact. On a few occasions, when they'd come back and report that somebody had bawled them out and slammed the door in their faces and ask me what to do, I'd say, "Leave them alone. I think we have Scripture for that. Instead of working with them get out and work with admittedly lost people that need the witness, and have never heard it." Jesus said that if they won't hear you, shake the dust off your feet and go on. So I didn't see that we should keep sending these people back to be insulted. This was not a widespread thing, but there was enough where it became a matter of concern. Since that time the church has changed to a different type of visitation. Right now, for instance, under Dr. Garrison's leadership the deacons have taken the responsibility of visiting every member of our church periodically. One of them told me the other day, "I've got your name. If I can ever find you at home long enough, I'm coming to see you." But if they're not active in the church program, then, of course, they talk to them in terms of our wishes and desires, their responsibility, and what they're missing by not being a part of it.

T: During your ministry, have you been in churches that have administered discipline, or have you been a pastor of churches that saw fit to do this, and if so, how did they do it?

H: The last time, in fact the only time in my ministry when we deliberately turned someone out of the church was in my college pastorate, the Berney Points Baptist Church in Birmingham. During the depression we had a man who had been a member of the Church of Christ who joined our church and was baptized. He came to me one day

and said, "Preacher, if you can't show me from the Bible or otherwise that baptism is not essential for salvation, I'm going back to the Church of Christ." Well, I could sit down with him now and spend several hours showing him. But back then I was just a college student. I didn't know A from Izzard about the Bible. What little I'd picked up was by main strength and awkwardness mostly. So I said, "Well, let's go in the church auditorium and see." We walked up to the pulpit to the Bible, and I opened it. I've never been a believer in this business of solving problems or getting the Lord's will by shutting your eyes and opening the Bible and looking down, and whatever verse your eyes fall on, that's the message for you. That's magic, not revelation or illumination. But in this particular instance, I had no idea where I was goin to turn. I was just a fledgling in the ministry. But I opened this pulpit Bible, and, lo and behold, when I looked down I was looking at the first chapter of First Corinthians and the verse where Paul said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, . . . and the household of Stephanas . . . for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." I read that to him and said, "Now Brother so and so, Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (I knew that much), and don't you think that if baptism had been necessary for salvation he would have done what was necessary for their salvation?" He said, "That satisfies me." Well, later on, I sort of wished that I had not found that verse. But, anyway, he became a problem in the church. For one thing he began to pass bad checks. He was in the real estate business, but like everything else, it was dead in those days. The man was desperate, trying to feed his family, and he'd write checks maybe hoping that he could cover them, but they would turn out bad. The only time that I ever did prepare a sermon for one person was for that man. I got up on a Sunday morning and preached a sermon against passing bad checks and being dishonest. I did everything but call his name. I have more sense than that now, I hope. But, anyway, the bad part was that back then if I got up a sermon for a given day, I had to use it because I didn't have anymore. I had not developed my understanding of the Scriptures and sermonizing to where I could just maybe pull a sermon out of the air on emergency. And so I had to use that sermon. The only problem was that while I was preaching the sermon he was in jail for passing bad checks, and he didn't hear a word of it.

Actually, that was not the thing that caused the church to discipline him. He taught a class of Intermediates, boys and girls. And our little old building wouldn't hold all the people. In the summertime, this class met under an oak tree out by the side of the church. He would have a class meeting in his home once a week for the kids. After they'd had their meeting, they'd rollback the rug, turn on the victrola, and have a dance. Some of the deacons talked to him, and I talked to him. I said, "Now if the kids want to dance and their parents don't object, while I may not agree with them, I wouldn't fight them on it. But the fact of the matter is, you are holding the dance in the name of the church, and the church doesn't approve of that. I want you to stop and the deacons want you to stop." Well, he wouldn't do it, he kept on doing it and in a sense defied the church leadership and authority of the church. So the deacons recommended on that basis that his name be erased from the church rolls. And it was. His family remained in the church. Jesus gives us a very clear procedure in handling such matters, and I thought we handled it that way. He said that if you have ought against a brother, go to him. Don't tell everybody else. Usually we tell everybody but the one we ought to talk to, and the more people that know about it the harder it is for one to knuckle under or come back and be reconciled. But Jesus said to tell him, and if he won't hear you, then take some others with you. And if he won't hear them, tell it to the church, and if he won't hear the church, then let him be as a

publican. I interpret that to mean that by his attitude he has demonstrated that he is not a Christian in the first place. Paul, in First Corinthians, fifth chapter, tells how to discipline a man. I'm just more or less quoting from memory, off the cuff, and loosely. But he said, "When ye are called together" (the passive form of the verb shows that somebody called a meeting, I assumed the moderator, as we would call him), and in the name of the Lord Jesus (which means under his authority to take this action.) So I take it that it means that a church should do this in an orderly fashion. We don't now discipline members very much, I remember when I was a kid in the little church where I was converted and baptized: the son of the chairman of the Board of Deacons, along with some other young people, went to a dance and the church found it out. We had church services only once a month, and on one month's church day they voted to turn him and the others out of the church. The next month they proposed to take them back because they had asked forgiveness. I'll have to admit that it was extreme; it wouldn't be done today, but it was the mores of that particular period. But I think if churches--it's sort of like everybody agrees the cat ought to have a bell on him, but who's going to put it on him--I think our churches would be stronger if there were a tighter discipline on the membership, its conduct, and its part in the activities of the church. Civic clubs, for instance, require a certain percentage of attendance or your name is taken off the rolls. For that reason, I know of men who will travel many miles to be present for a meeting, or they'll make it up at another club so that they can keep their percentage up. Churches have no attendance requirements. Again you come into a conflict there between authority and the freedom of conscience. But at the same time I think our churches are the losers because we have not maintained through the years as stringent a discipline program as I've described.

T: I appreciate your sharing this experience in First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. Let me go back to some of these names, some of these other people on the Executive Committee when you were there. Douglas M. Branch?

H: I knew Doug Branch. He was from North Carolina, and he also became the executive secretary of North Carolina Baptists prior to Perry Crouch. He was killed in an automobile accident. The irony of it was that he never drove without his seat belt fastened. But this particular day he got into his car and was just going to make a short hop somewhere; he didn't fasten it and had an accident and was killed. Doug was a very strong man and a very excellent member of the Executive Committee. I mentioned Perry Crouch just now as being chairman of that committee on reorganization of our Convention life. On second thought, when you mentioned Doug's name, I think he was the chairman of that committee.

T: Mrs. Gordon Maddry?

H: Yes, I knew, I know Mrs. Maddry. She is a lovely lady and was one of the most effective members of our Executive Committee.

T:

Why?

H: Well, for one thing, she added to the appearance of it. (Laugh.) But the other, she

had a very good mind and good judgment. She was not cowed by being the only woman other than the ex-officio president of the WMU Convention on it, and she spoke her piece. She served on a number of special committees that were charged with rather serious responsibilities, which showed the esteem with which she was held by the other members of the committee.

T: By the time she served on the committee--she began in 1954--by the time she served on the Executive Committee, I suppose those who are very strongly opposed to women being involved in Southern Baptist life were not on the committee.

H: Yes, they were not on it anymore. Dr. Ragland, as I mentioned earlier, would be one of those. I'm not sure whether he was still living then or not, but he was not on the committee.

T: Thomas P. Pruitt?

H: I remember him, not a whole lot about him except I remember he was very faithful and active and a good strong member of the committee.

T: Carl G. McCraw?

H: No.

T: W. D. Morris?

H: Yes. W. D. and I were in the seminary at the same time, along with his brother Frank, who was also a pastor. W. D. was a good man; he did not necessarily stick up like a mountain peak, but he was a good plateau-type man.

T: A. Leroy Parker?

H: No.

T: Ernest Anderson?

H: No.

T: Nane Starnes?

H: Nane Starnes was a very fine member. He was president of the North Carolina Convention at the time we had the committee studying the Baptist Faith and Message, and by virtue of that was on the committee. He was a very astute man, had a sharp mind, and he wasn't afraid to speak out though he did it in a good spirit. I came to have a great respect for and a fondness for Nane Starnes. I had never really known him until he was on this committee. He went on the Executive Committee after that, so that's where I first came to know him.

T: Claude S. Gatty?

H: I just knew him and that's about all.

T: R. S. Smith?

H: No.

T: E. W. Price, Jr.?

H: No. These men came after my time, evidently.

T: We were talking about some of the members of the committee and just one man from Ohio. Do you know C. Hodge Hockinsmith?

H: Yes, he was on the committee on the revision of the Baptist Faith and Message, and I came to know him there. He came on the Executive Committee after my time.

T: You mentioned a couple of these men earlier, but I'd like to have you amplify about them from Oklahoma. T. B. Lackey? He was Executive Secretary and you indicated some of the matters regarding his election. What kind of a man was he?

H: Well, Dr. Lackey was born and reared in Western Arkansas over around Mena, Arkansas. Any old-timers will remember the radio program "Lum and Abner." It was set in that area. Dr. Lackey came into Oklahoma. He used to conduct singing school over there in Arkansas, you know. They still kid him about it. He went to OBU, but did not go to the seminary. He was a district missionary and then he served as a missionary on the state convention staff. I don't know of all the churches where he was pastor, but I know he was pastor of Nogales Avenue Church in Tulsa at the time that Dr. Potter asked him to come and be his associate executive secretary. He then was elected executive secretary when Dr. Potter died. Dr. Lackey is a kind of a man who can walk with kings, yet he's a man of the people. He has a very good business head on him, he's a good preacher, and he's held some great revivals. I was his pastor from 1951 until I retired in 1973. Perhaps his strongest point is he is a promoter of the first rank. He knows how to get people to work together, to cooperate, and he has a vision of what needs to be done and how to get it done. In fact, among the executive secretaries of the various states, I've been told that they looked upon him pretty much as the leader in that particular area to come up with ideas and to help plan how to implement them. Under his leadership the work in Oklahoma went forward by leaps and bounds. Among many, many things I guess one of the greatest accomplishments during his time as executive secretary was the building of the Baptist Memorial Hospital, now known as the Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. I was chairman of the committee that recommended the site and also got the city to put on a campaign to help raise money to help toward building it. The Baptists put up the greater part of the money, but we did bring this city in to get civic interest as much as anything else. Lackey Manor, which is a home for the aged and also a convalescent area for the chronically ill, is named after Dr. Lackey. He is retired, but he's still working for the denomination on a part-time basis. He has an office out at the Baptist hospital. He's just one of the finest princes of God that you'll ever know.

T: You mentioned that in the early days or just prior to the election there was some

feeling that perhaps he ought not to be executive secretary. Was this alleviated rather quickly after he came in?

H: Oh yes! I think there were two things that were back of that. This is not to reflect unfavorably on anyone, but, you know, sometimes there arises a difference of opinion and outlook. There was a feeling among some of the younger pastors and some of the key churches that certain changes needed to be made in the administration of the work on a statewide basis. But you have to go back into the late twenties to get the roots of it. Frank Norris was riding high back then. Some of his strongest followers in Oklahoma were some of the pastors and even the editor of the Baptist state paper. They never did become a part of his movement, but they were of a like mind. So the state convention was just torn forty ways from Sunday. When Dr. Potter was asked to take the executive secretary position, he did it only on the basis that he would have certain authorities. At that time it was a wise move.

T: What kind of authority?

H: Oh, I don't know how to be too specific on that, except that he could just do certain things without asking the board or anybody else. A situation like that was calls for somebody that could say "Go and he goeth, come and he cometh." And so this had been maintained through the years. Now when I first came to Oklahoma, one of the men that wanted to see a change called me and asked to come over to Oklahoma City. He took me out to lunch, bought me a steak, and wanted me to join with them in getting Dr. Potter out of the office.

Now Dr. Potter was a great executive secretary. Let me put that in first of all. He was one of the best judges of men I ever saw, and that's why I was so willing to go along to help any way I could to get Dr. Lackey elected to succeed him, because I knew that Dr. Potter was a wise man. He had a philosophy--it was exalted and yet it was a little bit like J. B. Gambrell's philosophies. I'm going to give you an example. I don't mean it to be uncouth in any sense, but I think it gives you a picture of the man. One of the men who served on the state staff for many, many years until his retirement told me that when he came to work with Dr. Potter, Dr. Potter called him in and said, "Now I'm going to give you three pieces of advice. You're going to be away from home a great deal, and I'm going to give you these three pieces of advice. Number one, eat good food, your stomach can't stand slop, eat good food. Number two, stay in places where you'll have a comfortable bed, you've got to get your rest. Number 3, when calico starts looking like silk, go home." Now I think that gives you a picture of the man--wisdom, but very practical. Now it just happened that Dr. Potter was a member of the First Baptist Church. I was his pastor. But I told this man, "Well, I'm new in Oklahoma, and it's always been my policy when I go on a committee or if I go into a new church or into a new area, I sit and listen for about a year." It may be hard for some of my friends to believe that I can sit and listen that long, but I can and have. I sit and listen for about a year; I don't have much to say. I want to know where the ball is before I get up and speak it. It's better to have people think you're a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. So I said, "I don't know anything about this, and for that reason I'm not going to be a party to it. Now granting for the moment that you're right, that there are some authorities that Dr. Potter has that should be taken away from the executive secretary. At his age he has at most about five years before retirement." As it

happened he didn't live but about two years and died. But we had no idea that would happen then. But I said, "If there are changes that need to be made, that's the time to make them. Because some of you feel that some changes ought to be made, there are others just as strong in their feelings that things ought to stay like they are. And if you try to make changes even the changes and their need will not be the issue, it will be personal issue between you and Dr. Potter's supporters thinking you're trying to get him out. The time to make those changes is when you get a new executive secretary." And so when Dr. Lackey came in, there were certain changes made. Certain authorities were taken from the office of the executive secretary and placed in the Board of Directors as we call them here in Oklahoma.

T: What were some of these authorities?

H: Well, it's hard for me to pinpoint anything, but if something routine needed to be done, Dr. Potter didn't need to go ask the board, he went and did it. Of course, policy and finance were handled by the board. In a new program now, you'd have to go through channels and get approval in major items. Dr. Potter's authority being questioned didn't involve spending or abuse of money or anything like that. Dr. Lackey made an excellent executive secretary. I think another reason why some of these men objected to him was the fact that he was not a seminary trained man. This is not said by me except in love, because I love T. B. Lackey and his wife. They're just two of the most wonderful people you'll ever know. But with his Arkansas background and his education being limited to OBU--in fact he finished high school in a program that they had back then where you could go to OBU and finish high school, and then go on and get your college degree. But, for instance, Dr. Lackey had certain weaknesses in grammar. Well, John W. Raley said, "I'll help him in his grammar, and if need be, I'll help him in his speeches. I'll maybe correct his manuscripts for him if needed." There was not much of that, very little, in fact. I've heard commentators on television and radio make far greater grammatical errors than I ever heard T. B. Lackey make. But it was just a little old nit picking thing that they took hold of.

H: You know, when you're trying to get a certain thing done, you pick up anything that's handy to use. But he soon overcame what handicap that might have been, and there was never any crisis around Dr. Lackey in being elected or in getting started in the work. We have a wonderful fellowship in Oklahoma, and the brethren just went right on. When the decision was made, everybody accepted it. And Dr. Lackey began to show the sterling qualities that far outweighed any of his deficiencies, and we all have our deficiences. Why, those things were soon forgotten. I'll give you one example. At Enid, Oklahoma, a group of doctors owned the hospital. They wanted the Baptists to take it over and operate it. Dr. Lackey had led our convention to develop a hospital system.

T: There had been none before him?

H: Well, way back years before a Baptist doctor owned what is now the Mercy Hospital, which is now owned and operated by an order of Catholic nuns. This doctor wanted the Baptists to take over that hospital. They, I think, may have tried to do it, I don't know, but it was in the depression years and they didn't have the money, so they didn't do it. For a good many years there had been talk during Dr. Potter's administration about getting a hospital, but it was finally firmed up under Dr. Lackey's leadership. Now after this, or along with this, Dr. Lackey had led Oklahoma Baptists to develop a hospital system.

We owned a hospital in Muskogee and one in Mangum, but about that time many of the smaller cities, like Stillwater, for example, began to build hospitals. They were small but adequate for their local needs. By that time Oklahoma Baptists had established such a good record in operating hospitals that these communities would ask us to take over the hospital and operate it. Well, we had a little problem with the church and state issue, because many of these hospitals were built with local tax money or with grants from the federal government.

T: Under the Hill-Burton Act?

H: Yes. But we've worked it out, I think, satisfactorily. I think some people overdo the church and state issue. The state owes certain responsibilities to the church and the church to the state, I think. The basic thing is that neither shall control the other, but of course where tax money goes there's always the fear that the government will tell you how to use it.

T: This has not been a disturbing thing to you?

H: Well, I'm concerned that we maintain separation of church and state, but I'm not as--my razor is not quite as narrow edged as some. I think there's a grey line in there. It's not all white and all black, there's a grey line. We worked out, I think, to the most people's satisfaction, a program whereby we operated the hospital and they furnished the building. We made an inventory of facilities and agreed that, at least the agreement was, we could cancel the agreement at any time, or they could either if there was any problem of relationships. We would maintain the property and the equipment, and if we should withdraw from it we'd return the property and equipment to them in as good shape as we had received it.

Anyway, these doctors who owned this hospital at Enid asked if the Baptists would take it over. They didn't want to give it to us, it was a privately owned hospital. They had a closed staff, and they had $500,000 in the bank. They wanted to keep the $500,000 and maintain a closed staff. They also had some debts that they wanted the Baptists to assume, not a burdensome debt, but there was some doubt. Dr. Lackey and George Miller, a lawyer, a deacon in the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and the attorney for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, went up there. In the course of the transaction, Dr. Lackey adamantly refused to agree to continue a closed staff. He told them, "If we take over the hospital, we'll have an open staff. We'll assume that obligation against the hospital, but you'll have to give us the $500,000." They finally agreed to every bit of it. After they had agreed to it, one of these doctors came around to George Miller and said, "Where did you all find that mule trader? That man from Arkansas is the mule-tradingist man I ever saw." That's the kind of a man Bert Lackey is. He was anxious to get that hospital in one of our central cities in the North Central part of the state. But if you had watched him at work, you would have thought it didn't matter to him one bit whether we had that hospital or not. He was just a typical mule-trader from Arkansas, but he has used it for the glory of God.

T: You started to relate how he built up the hospital system, and you turned to Oklahoma City and the beginning of the hospital here.

H: He got the Board of Directors to bring the matter to the state convention meeting that particular year in the Capital Hill Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. We were in a building program here at our church. They usually meet here when they meet in Oklahoma City, but we were in a building program and the place was torn up, no parking, so we met over there. The convention voted to adopt the recommendation by the board of directors and appointed a committee of which I was to be chairman. On the committee were men like Senator Robert S. Kerr, R. A. Young, the founder and the head of the T. G. and Y. store chain, Judge Wallace, who was a federal judge, R. C. Howard, Jr., one of the prominent Baptists here in the city, and others. We had many meetings. In one we discussed the matter of the fact that when we started the hospital we were asking for problems, because hospitals do have problems. I remember Senator Kerr, Bob Kerr I'll call him, mentioned the fact that the patients complained so much about the meals in the hospital. Brice Twitty was on the committee, a layman from Tulsa, who was administrator of the Hillcrest Hospital there. I guess it is the largest one in Tulsa. He has died since then. Anyway, Brice responded immediately, "Now, Bob, when a person goes to the hospital, he goes there because he's sick. And when a man is sick his taste buds are out of order. The food wouldn't taste good at home." Well, anyway, do you want me to go into detail?

T: Please do.

H: All right. We got a firm out of Fort Worth to lead us in a fund raising campaign. The city agreed to put on a campaign. It was the first time that there'd ever been a city campaign in Oklahoma City for a hospital. They had put them on for everything else. But we couldn't get any outstanding businessman to head the campaign. We wanted a non-Baptist in order to give it a civic flavor. All of the top echelon of men were afraid of it, they didn't want to be identified with a failure. They thought it was going to fail. Anyhow, we had employed this firm in Fort Worth to come up here and give us professional help. Finally, I told the committee, "Brethren, we've decided to get these men in the top echelon but we can't get one. My suggestion is that we drop down into the second echelon and find a man that wants to get up on top, and get him to lead in the campaign." They said, "Preacher, that won't work." I said, "We've tried it every other way and that didn't work, and so I think we either are shut in to doing what I'm suggesting or just make it a Baptist campaign and let one of you men head it."

T: Were you the only preacher on the committee?

H: No, there was one other, and honestly at the moment I cannot recall who it was. But, anyway, they finally agreed to that, and we wound up getting W. P. "Bill" Atkisson. W. P. later, through the courts, had "Bill" officially made a part of his name. He was the developer of Midwest City, which is a city built around Tinker Field. He is quite a wealthy man now, a Methodist, and a good friend of many of us on the committee. So when the committee said, "Well, who would you suggest?" I said, "I suggest Bill Atkisson." We went to see him and he agreed to accept it. The fact of the matter was that Bill was planning to run for governor of Oklahoma. You see, leading a campaign for the Baptists--well there were more Baptists than anything else in Oklahoma--well, it didn't hurt him. I think Bill would have been elected governor of Oklahoma if he had not gotten a little uncertain on the liquor issue. Back then we had prohibition in Oklahoma, and his opponent was running on his major platform to have a referendum on repealing that. And so Bill at a strategic moment in the campaign made a sort of a flirtation

gesture toward the wet crowd. Well, when he did that, he thought he'd pick up some wet votes. But what happened was he lost many of the dry votes, because the dries, Baptist and otherwise, said, "No, we can't trust him." Well, actually, Bill is a very fine man, but some of us told him later, "Bill, you just got some poor political advice; you should have come to your friends instead of some of these others." The other man was elected and eventually prohibition was repealed. Well, anyway, Bill took this job and started off by pledging $25,000 himself. In the meantime, we had been trying to find a site. There were offers from all over the city, because people knew that wherever that hospital went there would be a jump in the value of real estate. We finally accepted a piece of property in what was known as the "shepherd tract." It was the only large open tract of land in the city limits that would be available and the owners, the Shepherd sisters--unmarried blessings--offered to give us ten acres of land. They're all dead now.

T: Were they Baptists?

H: No, Presbyterians. Later they gave a home for the aged to the First Presbyterian Church, built it right next to the church property. But anyway, they were some of the toughest people to deal with I ever saw. We sat up many a night until 2:30 in the morning with those sisters, talking and arguing out little fine points with their lawyer and our lawyer present. Finally, they agreed to give us ten acres.

T: What were the problems?

H: Oh, just little old things that they wanted to sew up. And we'd ask for certain things that they didn't want to grant. So finally, we reached a ground on which we accepted the ten acres. Our engineers went out and studied it, and came back and reported that we needed at least five more acres. That was just enough ground on which to put the building. And we had no parking lot area. So we went back to them and asked if they'd give us another five acres. They refused. "Well, will you sell us five acres?" They said, "No." They wouldn't sell or give us another grain of sand. They had gotten what they wanted. They had gotten the hospital located there. There was a tremendous tract of land there, and they knew that it was going to go sky-high in price. Well, when they would not give or sell us any more land, we just returned their gift. Later on, they built what is known as Shepherd's Mall out there, one of the biggest shopping centers in the city. But we brought in Frank Tripp, who was then administrator of Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, an adviser on hospitals, to get his advice. The city was trying to develop a medical center around the University Hospital, the Veteran's Hospital, and the University Oklahoma School of Medicine on Northeast 13th Street, and the Chamber of Commerce wanted us to locate this hospital in that area. So Frank said, "My advice is that you buy land and build it as a part of that Medical Center, or else go way out and buy a big tract of land where you can get land cheap." We had a real estate man quietly to get the prices on what the property in the Medical Center area would cost--just enough room for the building itself.

T: Downtown?

H: Well, it was semi-downtown, out on Northeast 13th Street, about twelve blocks from where we are right now at the church. So the price added up to about a million dollars. Just for land, and not an inch for parking. Well, we said, "That isn't any good." So

we went out on Northwest Highway and bought a tract of land out there. We got a Baptist real estate man in that area to put us together a tract of land. He and his wife owned some, and got other people that would go in. He and his wife, by the name of Smith, gave us some of their land and sold the rest of their land at a ridiculously low price. But, anyway, the whole package was sixty-two acres of land. We bought it for $260,000 and paid cash for it.

T: Had this money been raised by the convention for hospital work?

H: Yes. The convention had provided the money out on appropriation to get the land, I think. To show you what happened, within a year an acre of land back away from this Northwest Highway, which is one of the main traffic arteries, sold for $125,000 and another acre sold for $85,000. We got sixty-two acres for $260,000. You see that's what people knew; that's why they wanted the hospital located in their area. Incidentally, we got Bill Atkisson, who was the real estate man to head a committee to "bird-dog" or to search out the suggested site. When Mrs. Hobbs and I and our family first moved to Oklahoma City, one day late in the afternoon we took a drive out that Northwest Highway. Coming back, we stopped right at the top of a hill from which you can see the entire city. It's a beautiful view. We pulled off to the side of the road, sat there, and looked at it. I pointed over to a spot and said, "You know, some day I wouldn't mind having a home right there." Without knowing it, I pointed to the exact spot where that hospital stands today. It was the choice piece of land in this whole city as it turned out. But people said we were crazy when we announced where it was going to be.

T: This was in 1951?

H: No, it was about 1953, I would say. You know, details get away from you. And people said, "Why, you're crazy!" All the time, ever since the beginning of this city, all the hospitals have been in a cluster sort of downtown and close together. They said, "Why a hospital way out there, nobody's going to go out there! Doctors will not go out there to practice. You can't get nurses to go out there." Even many of the doctors were saying that. They were just in a stew about it. Well, of course, what happened was, we went ahead, and eventually the hospital was built. As it began to be built, other buildings began to be built around there. The Baptist Layman's Corporation, a group of laymen in our churches, all formed a corporation, borrowed the money, built a doctors' building, and operated it until they got it free of debt. Then they gave it to the Convention or to the hospital. Other medical buildings were built out there, clinics were built out there. But what the general public did not know, we had access to information which the Chamber of Commerce had--furnished by the utilities companies and on which they were predicting a population growth, and by which they were planning to lay their power lines, build sub-stations and the like. This information showed that from the time they turned that over to the convention, I mean to the Chamber of Commerce, that within twenty-five years from that time the center of the population of Oklahoma City would be at 50th and North May. At the time we made the study it was twenty years from that time. And this property that we bought, the southeast corner, touches within a block of the corner of 50th and North May. Even at the time that we built the hospital, it was the nearest one to 150,000 of the most affluent people in the city. We didn't have a lot of the medical programs we have now for the less affluent people. So we knew then that just from a purely financial standpoint, it was a wise move.

When I came to Oklahoma City, the northern and western boundaries of the city were at what we call Bell Isle Lake. There's a hydroelectric plant there. It's where this northwest highway comes into Classen Boulevard, which was and is one of the main traffic arteries running north and south. On the west side there's a creek that feeds into this lake. The northern and western boundaries of the city were there, except for Nichols Hills, up on the hill, a little cluster of homes where the wealthier people lived. We had a little country town called Putnam City out there, but that was it. Well, now, the city goes miles and miles and miles to the west and the north. And there is a concentration of businesses and office buildings forming right around 50th and North May. So our hospital is right in the heart of some of the greatest activities in the city. Well, since that time Mercy Hospital has voted to relocate, and is almost ready to open their hospital. They are almost parallel to us east and west, I judge, five miles north of our hospital. So we weren't wrong! It's funny that back then we were a bunch of fools; now everybody wants to get credit for having the idea for the site. We built the first unit of about 220 rooms, then later we added on to that. We put in facilities for labs, operating rooms, heating and cooling, and the like that will allow for expansion into a hospital for a 500-bed capacity. That has long since been passed. Now they're just about through with a deal that will give us close to 1,000 rooms in that hospital. The biggest trouble we have now is not getting patients and doctors to go out there, but keeping up with the demand for rooms.

T: You mentioned Senator Kerr in your discussion of this. Can you tell me something about Senator Kerr and your dealings with him? Did you know him well?

H: Oh yes. He was a member of our church, one of our deacons. He came from near Ada, Oklahoma, in the southeastern part of the state. He was born in Indian Territory, as they called it, before Oklahoma became a state. He was a lawyer who went into the oil business; he was later elected governor and then U. S. senator, and maintained that office until he died. I first met Senator Kerr at Muscogee, Oklahoma, when W. A. Criswell was pastor there. I held a revival meeting for Criswell. The American Baptists have a college there, Bacone College, for the Indians, and they were inaugurating a new president, a Dr. Riley. So W. A. and I went to the service for the inauguration. It happened that Bob Kerr was there to speak. As he was walking across an open piece of ground, toward the chapel building where the meeting was to be held, W. A. and I overtook him, and he introduced me to Bob then. I never knew that I'd be his pastor. He taught a class in Sunday School for many years, and while he was governor, no matter where he might be on Saturday, he'd always drive in or fly in to be here and teach his class on Sunday, a very loyal man. His father and mother were of pioneer stock, and he had those qualities that made the pioneers great. He was a very godly man; he was a tetotaler in Washington; he was known for drinking buttermilk, or something else, instead of alcohol. When he'd be running for reelection, he'd invite Mrs. Hobbs and me to come down to his election headquarters for an election party to watch the returns come in. So many places you'd go they were floating in alcohol. But Bob Kerr--they had plenty to eat and all that, but nothing to drink stronger than milk, soft drinks, or coffee. Even people that perhaps on their own did imbibe, did not do it there out of respect for Bob Kerr. Bob made lots of money in the Kerr-McGee Oil Company. He and Dean McGee were the ones who really got it into a big-time operation. By the time I came to be his pastor, he was in Washington, and Dean McGee practically ran the company while Bob was looking after his job in Washington. He'd come home on the weekends, but most of the time he was speaking somewhere out over the state. He was in great demand as

a pulpit supply among our Baptist churches, and rarely ever got to attend our own worship services. He might come and even teach that class, and then have to rush somewhere to speak. Or he would come and sit in the back of the auditorium, and just as soon as I'd finish my sermon I'd see him slip out the door. He was heading for the airport to go back to Washington.

Bob had a home here and an apartment in Washington. His home here was about two or three blocks from where I lived at the time. Quite often on Friday night he'd call me--he'd fly in, his wife stayed in Washington, but he'd fly home on weekends--he'd call me quite often on Friday night about 9:30 or 10 o'clock and ask me if I had anything to do at breakfasttime. If not, would I come around and eat breakfast with him? So I'd go and eat breakfast with him--just Bob and the Negro man that cooked for him and looked after him at the house. And we'd eat breakfast, but always he would want to talk to me. Sometimes a matter would be coming up in Congress or was up in Congress, and he wanted to know what the thinking of the preachers in Oklahoma was about it--if I knew anything about it. He wanted to know what I thought about it. He wanted my counsel on even things that didn't pertain just to Oklahoma but to the nation as a whole. We developed a very close friendship and rapport. He and Andrew Potter were great friends. He always said, "Andrew Potter was the greatest man I ever knew except my own daddy." His political philosophy was built around the phrase, "Land, wood, and water." He wrote a book under that title. I have a copy he gave me. He said that for the pioneers, his daddy told him, there were three things essential to life in the pioneer country--land, wood, and water. The land made your crops, the wood built and warmed your house, and furnished the fire to cook your meals. And you had to have water for your crops, your cattle, and yourself. Those were the absolute essentials, you couldn't live without them.

He conceived the idea of getting a channel in the Arkansas River that would lead down to the Mississippi, so that they could bring in barges up through New Orleans and the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers to a port near Tulsa. People used to laugh at him, but before he died he saw that almost to completion. They built a series of dams in that part of the state to provide fine lakes for water supply, fishing, and recreation. He brought President Kennedy here to cut the ribbon for the dedication at one of those dams. Bob had built a mansion of a home over in eastern Oklahoma, and had one of the finest herds of black Angus cattle in the country. President Kennedy spent the night in their home.

Well, anyway, Bob didn't live to see the completion of that idea. But today, barges bring freight right up the Mississippi and up the Arkansas River to the port of Catoosa right near Tulsa. And eventually they probably will bring them nearer to Oklahoma City. So he had a vision, and it became a reality. That's the kind of a man he was. Kerr-McGee Oil Company pioneered the off-shore drilling idea.

Bob eventually became the president of the Baptist General Convention. He was also vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention at one time, nominated by Andrew Potter, and elected in Oklahoma City. He helped preside in San Francisco. I was chairman of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, and I was building a program around certain ideas. We were in the Korean War, and I wanted, for instance, a program to speak to the world situation--a theologian, Duke McCall, spoke to the world situation,

a political leader spoke to it. I called Bob Kerr who was on the floor of the Senate, and they got him off the floor. They told him his pastor was calling him. So he came to the phone. I said, "Bob, I want you to go out to San Francisco on this date and speak," and I told him about it. I said, "Now I don't have any budget, you'll have to pay your own way." He said, "Well, that wouldn't be any problem. A request from Andrew Potter or my pastor is a command performance. I'll be there." And he was there. Later, he took the Potters and Hobbs and some others over to Trader Vicks for an unforgettable evening of a meal.

You know, he was known as the sorghum toting senator. When he first went to Washington--it became known in an interview--he let it be known that he liked sorghum molasses. A woman in New York lived in a tenement house up about four or five floors. She wrote him and said she sure would like to have some sorghum molasses; she hadn't had any since she was a girl down in the South. The next time Bob went to New York, he carried a gallon bucket full of sorghum molasses, and walked up those flights of stairs to this tenement house, knocked on the door, and this woman came to the door. He identified himself, and gave her that gallon of sorghum molasses. So that story got out on him that he was the sorghum-toting senator. The first Sunday we were at this church, his class had a breakfast. My wife and I and our son, Jerry, who was then ten years old, went to breakfast. My son sat next to Bob, and Bob showed him how to mix sorghum molasses with butter. It was a work of art.

Well, he was just that kind of a guy. Someone asked me shortly before his death, "Who do you think is the strongest man in Washington?" I said, "I think the two strongest men in Washington are President Kennedy and Senator Bob Kerr. And I think that if you had to pick the strongest man in Washington, it would be Bob Kerr. Because the only time he ever crossed swords with President Kennedy was over a bill on Medicare. He was opposed to it, and he won." Now later on, after his death and Kennedy's death, Lyndon Johnson got Medicare adopted. Lyndon and Bob were very close friends, they sometimes didn't agree on political matters, but they were very, very close friends. I came to know President Johnson before he was president through Bob Kerr.

While I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention , my wife and I were going on a mission trip to Latin America and Africa. I asked Bob one day, "Bob, I'm going on this trip. When I get out of this country I won't be a person anymore, I'll be the elected head of nearly twelve million citizens of the United States. Especially in Latin America the term "president" is a political title. I'll be speaking on subjects where I could put my foot in a bear trap, either in an address or in a press conference, on some delicate, political matter that is not public knowledge. Do you think it would be of any help if I came to Washington and let some person in the State Department brief me on some matters that are not public knowledge but that I ought to know?" He said, "I'll open any door in Washington you want to enter, would you like to see the President?" I said, "Well, when you can see the man, why fool around with the boys." Well, he set it up, and we went to see the President. I spent forty-five minutes with him and then he sent me over to the State Department.

T: Just you and the President and the senator?

H: Yes. I figured on fifteen minutes, and we had forty-five, and I broke it up. I felt we were infringing on the President. But when we went outside there was no one else

waiting to see him. I assumed he sort of cleared his calendar, I don't know. But anyway, it was a delightful visit. Bob started off by saying, "Mr. President, my pastor didn't support you in the election." I thought, some way to start off a friendly conversation. But President Kennedy laughed and said, "Well, I understand, and it's perfectly all right, and I can understand why." I said, "Well, Mr. President, it wasn't a personal matter because I did not know you personally. I'd seen you on two different occasions, but I'd never met you. But Southern Baptists took the position they did generally because of a position they felt that history entitled them to hold." He said, "I understand, and I think you're right." That opened up a discussion of the matter of church and state. I thanked him for his stand on that issue. He'd been opposed by some of his own church on the separation of church and state.

T: Do you think he believed this sincerely from your conversation?

H: I think he did. I came to have a great admiration for him, and had he run for office again, I would have voted for him. I told him so that day. When we got back to Bob's office, his secretary said, "How did it go?" He said, "Well, all right, but the biggest story of the day the press will never know about." He said, "The president of the Southern Baptist Convention told a Catholic President he was going to vote for him the next time." But I did and I meant it. Strangely, when we had a Catholic President in the White House we could rest easy on the matter of church and state. Whether there were political angles involved is another matter, but the fact of the matter is, we didn't have to worry about that. When we get non-Catholics in there, they scare us to death on the matter of an ambassador to the Vatican or using tax money for public schools. President Kennedy told me, "As far as I'm concerned the Constitution is quite clear on the use of tax money for public schools."

T: Parochial schools?

H: Parochial schools. He said, "To me there's no room for argument, it clearly forbids it." And he said on the idea of appointing an ambassador to the Vatican, "I wonder why Harry Truman, a Baptist, wanted to do it." Now they're both dead. I wouldn't quote the President if he were still living, but he said, "I don't know why old Harry wanted to do that, it was the biggest fool idea I ever heard of." Bob Kerr said, "Mr. President, Harry didn't always speak for us Baptists." We laughed, but it was a delightful visit. He made me feel perfectly at home. He showed me all about how his famous rocking chair worked. When we got ready to leave, I asked, "Mr. President, may we have a word of prayer?" I debated about whether to do it, but years ago when I visited the mayor of Montgomery about a matter, I asked if I could pray with him, and I did. He was one of the old-line political boss politicians and had been mayor for twenty-five years. But when I got through, tears ran down his cheeks. That night was Wednesday night, and one of my deacons told me at prayer meeting that he was by to see him right after that and he told him about my coming, and what I did. He said, "You know, I've been in this office for twenty-five years, I've had thousands of people come through here and ask me for everything under the sun, but he's the first one to ever ask to have a word of prayer with me." I vowed then that I would never go into an office of a public official from the highest in the land down to the dogcatcher on the block without asking if I could have prayer with them. As a result I've prayed with people--heads of state, high officials in government--all over this world. I debated about that in the President's office. "Here's the President of the United States. Now who am I to suggest

that I have prayer with him?" But I thought if there's any man under the sun that needs praying for, he does. He may have to make a decision before sundown that will affect the future of the human race. So I asked him, and he said, "I would appreciate it." I stood between him and Bob Kerr with my arm around each of their waists and led in prayer. The President's father was seriously ill then. I prayed for the President and his family, for his responsibilities, his health and wisdom, and for his father and mother. When I finished, he looked across to Bob Kerr and said, "You know, that's the first time anybody's ever done that." I thought of the people who had been in his office, preachers, some of the outstanding preachers of America and the world, and yet they had not had prayer with him. I have an idea it was because of the same hesitancy that I had. And I, perhaps, would not have had prayer with him except that I had formed that policy years and years before, and I've always been glad that I did.

I mentioned these off-shore drilling rigs. Bob went to help dedicate one in the Gulf of Mexico. He came back through here. His family was a long-lived family, his father and mother both. His father was ninety some-odd at death, his mother was almost ninety when she died. Bob was in his sixties, he never thought of dying that young. He went down to this dedication and came back through here for a meeting of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma, of which he at that time was president. We made a picture of the entire group that day. None of us thought too much about his appearance at the time. But a few days later he went back to Washington , and we heard he'd had a heart attack. Then we got out that picture--and since then we've talked about it--he was as white as a sheet. He'd never had any history of heart trouble. I still think that what brought that on him was related to that dedication. He said, "I climbed all over that rig, it was seventeen stories high, and I climbed from the bottom to the top." I think it was just too much strain on his heart.

Well, he was getting better. My wife and I were in Florida. I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the time. We went down there for some speaking engagements and went to the Orange Bowl game, Oklahoma versus Alabama. People asked me for whom I was going to root. I said, "Oklahoma! Oklahoma, though I'm a native of Alabama." Alabama beat Oklahoma that day. That was Joe Namath's last game in college before going to pro ball. Well, anyway, right in the middle of that game we learned of Bob's death. My wife and I were scheduled to visit with President and Mrs. Kennedy on Thursday after this Tuesday. They were at Palm Beach for the holidays, and we were scheduled to visit with them. He was across the stadium with his party watching the game.

T: You're talking about President Kennedy?

H: Yes. Bill Hinson, at First Church, Fort Lauderdale, set up our trip down there. He wanted me to come down and speak on his first Sunday going to this new church, First Church at Fort Lauderdale. He set up the Orange Bowl tickets and reserved seats for the Orange parade, and so on. Also, he had arranged for us to be the guests of the Yankee Clipper Hotel in Fort Lauderdale for three or four days. He wanted to take us deep sea fishing. When I got there I found that he had set up for me to preach for him on Sunday morning and for Jess Moody at West Palm Beach that night. Then on Monday to speak at a luncheon for Mack Douglas, at Pompano Beach. Then we got on a yacht and went down the canal to Miami Beach. We stayed on the yacht, tied up at the Fountainebleu Hotel. After the game we were supposed to go back up the canal to Fort Lauderdale.

The people who owned the boat were going to put on a big feed for a big bunch of us. But right in the middle of that game Jess Moody had his radio tuned in to the Sugar Bowl. He turned to me and said, "Is Bob Kerr a member of your church?" I said, "He's one of my deacons." He said, "Well, he just died." I said, "Ah, you're kidding." He said, "No." I took the radio and listened. Sure enough, that was true. Just about that time they said that President Kennedy had announced that he was going to the funeral on Friday. So I said, "You'll have to cancel that visit with the President and Mrs. Kennedy. I've got to go home." So Bill Hinson--I've always said that if I ever went into full-time evangelism, I wanted him to be my promotion agent because he could sell ice cream cones at the North Pole. I didn't see how we could even get on a plane going out of there the next day, because of all that exodus back to Oklahoma. But he got us two seats on an Eastern Airline flight the next morning. He also got us a room, a nice, lovely room, at the Carillon Hotel in Miami Beach, as guests of the management, meals and everything. We got into Oklahoma City thirty minutes before the Kerr Family arrived by plane from Washington. So instead of visiting the President and his wife in Palm Beach on Thursday, he was here for the funeral Friday.

T: Was the funeral here in this church?

H: This church. It was an atrocious day, cold and raining. The President came. They asked us to set up a private room for him, where he could have privacy for what time he was in the building before going into the auditorium for the funeral. The greats of the nation were here. I have a picture made from the top floor of the Baptist Building across the street from the church looking north on Robinson. Limousines were four or five across, curb to curb, and for two blocks, bringing the great men of the government, the Congress, and the governors of states, the President, the Vice-President, and on and on and on. Entrance to the auditorium was by ticket only, and they were issued by Kerr-McGee Oil Company. I remember some of our members got a little hot under the collar. They said, "I've been coming to the church all these years, and I've known Bob as far back as I can remember, and I can't get into my own church for his funeral." Well, it was out of our hands, you know. Certain ones, my wife, for instance, were given a ticket. People stood in the rain to see the President come and go. The Kerr-McGee Company wired our entire building with microphones and speakers so the people could sit in various parts of the building and hear; but, instead, they preferred to stand out in the rain to see the President.

Well, anyway, we set up this little room. He was only there for about five minutes. They had a hot line to Washington, which he didn't use. But I was in that room for five minutes with President Kennedy, Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson, and Governor and Mrs. John Connolly. I was in the presence of history and didn't know it. Think what happened to those people the following November after this January.

After the funeral the President would have been justified in every sense had he gotten in his car, gone to the airport, and taken off to go back to sunny Florida. But he got his limousine in the funeral procession and went to Rose Hill Cemetery, where Bob's body was put in a mortuary until they could build a permanent burial place down at Ada. He came in and sat across from the family in the mortuary chapel. Chaplain Harris of the Senate and John Raley assisted me. But after we'd finished, I led the way and we went down to shake hands with the family. President Kennedy followed and shook hands with them. By that time we were standing at the door. He came by and shook hands

with John Raley and Chaplain Harris. Then he turned to me and talked to me. He thanked me for the eulogy. He was kind enough to say that so many of them are over-done, but that one was just right. If I had said, "You know, Mr. President, I was in your office one time," that would be normal, wouldn't it? But he looked at me like a little boy, and said, "You know, you visited me in my office one time." One of the high points in my life, and yet he took that attitude that he had to remind me of it. But he had that ability to make you feel perfectly at ease in his presence. I said, "Yes, Mr. President, and I enjoyed it very much." He said, "Well, you must come again." I said, "I will, thank you." And he turned and ran out in the rain, got in his limousine and drove off. Later, the television showed his plane taking off at Tinker Field. Before the wheels were barely off the ground , the top of the plane was in the fog, the ceiling was that low. He went the extra mile to be nice and loyal to a friend. He and Bob were good friends.

That was the last time I ever saw him. I was sitting at home in my study working on a "Baptist Hour" sermon when they announced that he had been shot, and shortly thereafter died. While the whole nation felt the loss, I had just a little bit of personal sense of loss there, because he was the first President that I felt like I was related to more or less in a personal way, rather than just as a citizen and a head of state. Later on, I had some of the same relationship with Lyndon Johnson, not as much, but some with President Nixon. I think President Kennedy was a good President, and had he been given the opportunity to live out, to serve out his time, he would have made a great President. I never cared too much for his daddy. I had nothing against him, except I felt like some of his business practices back there years before were not the best. I understand that his fortune was made out of importing Scotch whiskey. I never somehow could get it in my heart to trust Bobby. I met him one time at the airport. One of our members, Andrew Potter's son, was U. S. District Attorney. Bobby came down here to visit while he was Attorney General. I happened to land on a plane and Bobby was waiting to take off, and I met him there at the airport. I just chatted with him for a moment. But I just couldn't let myself go with him. And Ted, well, I just better not say anymore. You know, Joseph Kennedy had strength. He used it sometimes ruthlessly, but he was a strong man. Rose Kennedy was a strong person, but she had a sweet spirit. I think that John F. Kennedy inherited those qualities, and they were combined in him. Bobby had one and Ted the other, but John F. had both--that is the way I would rate the men. I didn't mean to get into all of that except it sort of tied in with my experiences with Bob Kerr.

T: One other thing you might relate on Senator Kerr, really two things. One, he apparently did not leave a will, and a very large portion that might have gone to Baptist causes did not do so. Do you know any of the story relating to why he didn't have a will?

H: I'm glad you brought that up because I had it in mind to talk about it, and it slipped as I got off on this other. The fact of the matter is that the report went out that he did not leave a will. You know, you can get a bad story out, but you can't kill it. Later, they found a will of his in another bank vault, or box. However, it was a will made in the mid-thirties, and did not represent in any sense his ability to give nor his interests at the time of his death. Because of that, it cost the family considerable money. They had to sell off a lot of properties in order to pay the inheritance tax. Some people thought it was funny that he'd be head of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma and yet didn't have a will. Dr. Augie Henry, the Executive Secretary, ding-donged after him all the time about making a will. But, you know, so many big businessmen are so busy making money

they don't have time to figure out what to do with it. He was in the process of making a will at the time he died. He had no idea he was going to die anytime soon. And it isn't like it would be for me to go in and say, "I leave my two pairs of socks and that dirty shirt to my wife." It's a major operation for a man in his position, of his wealth, to make a will. And so they were in the process, his lawyers were, of preparing his will. I learned through Ollie Edmonds of Stetson University, who got it from one of the lawyers who was working with Bob--he was one of Bob's Washington attorneys from Florida--and this attorney told Ollie Edmonds that Bob had already told him to put a million dollars in his will for Oklahoma Baptist University. He had a goal to give O.B.U a $2,000,000 endowment. He gave the major portion of the money to build a girls' dormitory as a memorial to his mother. He gave a cottage at Baptist Children's Home as a memorial to his daddy. He had given O.B.U. $1,000,000 of endowment, and he wanted to make it two. So, he had told them to put a million dollars in his will for O.B.U., but he died before the will was completed and signed. Therefore, O.B.U. didn't get it, but it was in his heart to do it, nevertheless. It's just one of those things where a man keeps thinking that he is going to live forever, and he didn't. But he did have a will, though it was not the will he would have made if he had been able to finish the one he was working on.

T: Senator Kerr was also one who was remembered for his very strong stance on the oil depletion allowance. Do you remember in some of those conversations you had on Saturday mornings with him some of the things you talked about? Did you ever talk about that?

H: No, he never talked about that with me. Some other oil men in our church talked to me about it, and were unhappy with it. But Bob never talked about that with me. For instance, he was this kind of a man. He would not involve his pastor in any of his political affairs. He just said, "Now, Preacher, you stay out of it." I went to him one time when we were building a new building which included a gymnasium.

T: Here at First Church?

H: Yes. And I said, "Bob, you've given $50,000 already toward this new building, and I want you to give another fifty. That's the cost of that gymnasium. And I want us to name it after you. I know your interest in kids." He said, "Preacher, I'll give you another $50,000. I'll give it to you right now. But if you'll just be patient and wait, and let me give it as I can, year after year, I'll give you a whole lot more than $50,000." Well, I was willing to do that. But he said, "I won't let you put my name on it for there are some people up there in that church that wouldn't want my name on it because I'm a controversial figure. You know that and I know it." I guess I was sort of throwing out a little bait. At that time he was running for reelection. They had a real hot fight going on between him and former Governor Turner. It was a close race. I said, "You know, it wouldn't do any harm if next Sunday I could announce to the people at the church that you had done this, and by just happenstance, it would go out over a 50,000 watt radio station that covers the state of Oklahoma." He said, "Preacher, if I did it, I wouldn't let you announce it, not now." He said, "If you'll look at my record, I never make any large gifts to anything for eighteen months prior to my coming up for a vote on election. I don't want people to say I'm using my money to buy votes. If you got up and announced that, they'd beat you and me both to death with it. I won't let you announce it, but if you want it now, I'll give it to you; if you want to wait, I'll give you more than

that." I said, "Bob, I'll wait." He would not let his pastor get involved in those things.

When we were going through the throes of grading adults, this class that he had taught for years was a couple's class, and they were opposed to being graded by sex and all. Some of them contacted him. He was no longer the teacher of the class, but he called me from one of the anterooms from the Senate floor in Washington. He said, "Preacher, I hear that you are going to tear up my old class." I said, "Well, Bob, I don't know whether you'd call it tear up or not, but we are trying to grade our adults. It's being done all over the Southern Baptist Convention. The feeling is that by having more and smaller classes we can reach more people. If you had one method of drilling for oil, and somebody came along and showed you a method by which you thought you could double your oil production, wouldn't you try it?" He said, "Well, I guess so, but I think this may be a different thing." I said, "Well, I don't know, it seems to me like it's applicable. I don't know for sure it's going to double our Sunday School, or even add to it at all, but at least some churches have experienced that, and we are trying to give it a try." He said, "Well, Preacher, I just wanted to get the straight of it from you." But he added, "You know, my old daddy"--and that's the way he always referred to him-- he said, "My old daddy used to tell me, 'Bob, if you're going to be there to help them do it, then you can tell them how you think it ought to be done, but if you're not going to be there to help them do it, don't try to tell them how to do it.' You know, I'm gone so much now that I wouldn't be able to help you do it, so I'm not going to try to tell you how to do it." We then had a nice visit by phone, and he hung up. He was strong in his convictions, but fair, and I think one of the greatest men I ever knew, a deeply consecrated Christian.

His Bible--he had an old Bible on his desk--it showed the use of the years. His secretary told me that quite often she would walk in his office unannounced, and he'd be sitting there alone reading this Bible. Because of his position men and women, but especially men, in various areas of life would come to him with their troubles. It might be that they needed some financial help, and usually they would get it. But oftentimes, it was some other kind of help, spiritual help. She said that one day a man came to see him and he told her, "Now I don't want to be disturbed, except that I've got a call that you put in for me. It's very important. If that call comes back, I want that. But, otherwise, I don't want to be disturbed." When the call came through, instead of ringing his phone she just opened the door to his office to tell him that that call was on the line. Bob had the slide thing on the desk. He had that pulled out, had his open Bible on it, and the man was sitting there in front of him. He had some kind of a problem, personal problem. She said that Bob didn't stop to look up at her. He read to this man, "A thousand shall fall at thy right hand," and that no harm could come nigh unto him. He read it and said, "Do you believe it?" The man said, "Yes." But he said, "But do you believe it?" He said, "Yes." But he said, "Do you believe it?" He said, "Yes." "Then go practice it," he said. Then he looked up, and she told him about the phone call.

Bob was a man of a deep religious faith. He wrote a poem called "A Prayer for My Pastor." I have a copy of it hanging in my study, have had for years. As I said earlier, he and later President Lyndon Johnson were very close friends. Lyndon and Lady Bird, he was then Vice-President, came to Bob's funeral. In my funeral message I referred to and quoted that prayer. After the service was over and I led the casket out to the hearse in front, I then started down the sidewalk alongside the church to get my hat and

coat. As I came back out, the Johnson limousine was just behind the President's limousine. Lyndon Johnson rolled the window down and called me over to the car. I went over; he and Lady Bird both were in tears because they were very close to Bob. He thanked me for what I said, and then said, "That poem, I've got to have a copy of that poem, can you get me a copy?" And I said, "I'm certain I can, Mr. Vice-President, I'll get it and send it to you." And I did. I got it from Bob's secretary. She had previously been Andrew Potter's secretary, but when he died Bob got her to come work for him. I think she was one of the most ideal secretaries that I ever saw anywhere, and still is for that matter. Well, anyhow, I called her and told her. She found me a copy, and I sent it to then Vice-President Johnson, and got a nice letter back from him. So all of these things just add up to the fact that Bob Kerr was really a great man.

T: What kind of things did you talk about in your Saturday morning meetings when you met?

H: Oh, it varied depending on the situation. As I indicated earlier, he quite often would ask, "Do you know what the pastors in Oklahoma, the Baptist pastors, what they think about this matter?"

T: Can you think of some specific issues of the time that he asked you about?

H: Yes. One particular thing I remember. Some of the pastors had been pretty rough on him. I think it was at the Oklahoma County Baptist Pastors' Conference. I was not present, but they had voted a resolution censuring him because he was working so closely with President Truman.

T: On any particular issue?

H: Oh, nothing particular. But, you see, President Truman was trying to get an ambassador to the Vatican, and the Baptists were strongly opposed to that. So any cooperation with President Truman they didn't like. So they passed this resolution censuring Bob. He asked me about it. I said, "Well, Bob, I wasn't there. I don't know why except that I didn't know it was coming up. I wouldn't pay any attention to it, because some of these fellows are always doing something like that." He said, "It's a funny thing, I've always tried to be a good Baptist and do what I could for the denomination, doing the Lord's work, and it sort of gets close to me when I do something with which the preachers do not agree." That led to a discussion. He said, "You know, I'm in a particular position, any man in this position is. For instance, in this case people sent me to Washington to do a job. Now they're criticizing me for working, or cooperating, with the President and his programs. They sent me to Washington to do a job. The only way I can do that job is to get along with the Administration. If I don't do the job they sent me up there to do, they won't send me back. Yet, if I work with the Administration, the only way I can get the job done, then they criticize me for that." We got to talking about Truman's efforts to appoint an ambassador to the Vatican, and Bob said, "Well, of course, you know I'm opposed to that, and a lot in Congress and the Senate are opposed to it. We're going to try to kill it in committee." He said there are two ways to kill somebody. One is with a rapier, the other is with a meat axe. Now," he said, "they're both effective, but it's a much cleaner job to do it with a rapier. So we're going to try to kill it with a rapier in committee. But, of course, if we don't succeed, then we'll get out our meat axe and fight it on the floor of the Senate. If we can kill it in committee, I think we can do that.

But if it ever comes to an open vote on the floor of the Senate I don't think we can defeat it, because there are many senators that will vote against the President's proposal in committee, but they will not vote against it on the floor of the Senate, lest they suffer the wrath of the Catholic vote back home." That's a sample of what we talked about. At times there'd be--I don't recall any specifics--but there'd be things that they would be weighing and decisions he had to make as a senator, how he was going to vote on an issue or something, and he would ask my counsel on it, particularly if it was in the field of religion, morals, or ethics.

T: Did you ever talk with him much about his stand on Medicare, his position about it?

H: No, I never did. I had an idea if Bob lived on, he probably would have come around to the Medicare program. But his philosophy was--I think I can maybe state it in this incident. One day a group of us were together in connection with this committee on building the hospital. It was before Bob came in the room. We were talking about the fact that the state owned a piece of property at Helena, Oklahoma, where they had a correction school for girls. But they had so few there, they were going to close it down and move it somewhere else. The property was up for sale for a very small sum, and the approach had been made for the Baptists of Oklahoma to buy it and establish a home for the elderly. About that time Bob walked in. Somebody asked him what he thought about it. He said, "I'll give you plenty of money for a program for kids, but I won't give you a dime for a program for old folks. They've had their lives, the future is in the lives of these kids." He was not a man to be cruel toward elderly people or anything like that, but his philosophy was that the future was in the kids, not in the old folks. But I have an idea if he had lived up to that time he would have been in favor of Medicare.

T: Were there times when he got embroiled in real controversy and questionable activities that you can relay in having conversed with him as a pastor on some of these tense matters?

H: Well now, what do you mean "questionable"?

T: Well, I meant controversial, that's a better word than questionable, controversial.

H: Well, of course, any man in public life, especially in politics, is going to be involved in controversy. He had gone beyond the state level when I came to know him other than in just that passing acquaintance in Muskogee. I do know that he was constantly being involved in debate on the floor of the Senate. Bob was a master at repartee, and in debate he pulled out all the stops, took the gloves off, and went at it barefisted. It wasn't long after he went to Washington that the other members of the Senate feared his repartee, his comebacks. It got to where nobody particularly wanted to lock horns with him in debate. I think that is how he came to be such a powerful man in the Senate. His colleagues saw that here's a man with a good mind; he's got the ability to use humor, sarcasm, whatever, as a weapon. At the same time he's a man who knows what he's talking about, he does his homework. It was quite well known that the men in the Senate didn't want to lock horns with him.

T: Did he ever talk to you about considering running for the presidency?

H: Oh, just in a broad sort of way. Of course, he did, you know, at one time declare

himself as seeking the nomination. I remember seeing on television out of Chicago a picture of his headquarters up there. It was a little log cabin. He was born in a log cabin. Now a lot of fellows wished they had been for political purposes, but Bob was born in a log cabin down in Southeast Oklahoma. But we never discussed it very much. Now, I'll say this, the historians may record, and I have read in some accounts to the effect that Sam Rayburn was the man who put Lyndon Johnson in the White House by a circuitous route, but nevertheless put him in the White House. I prefer to believe Bob Kerr who told me the story with his own mouth. In Chicago he sought the nomination and didn't get it. The next time was in Los Angeles, where Kennedy was nominated; Lyndon Johnson was also out for the nomination for President. And it was a rather close nip and tuck thing. But Kennedy had such a well-oiled organization that he came out the winner. Some wanted Lyndon Johnson to run as Vice-President. I think Kennedy himself wanted him. He felt that he would help to offset that Catholic problem, and he was a strong man, well known in the South and Southwest. But you know that when you seek the top spot, it's a little bit tough to have to knuckle under and take the second spot. Lyndon just wanted no part in it. Bob Kerr told me, "I talked him into accepting the Vice-Presidency." Now the historical record may show that Sam Rayburn did this. Bob Kerr told me that he did it. And I prefer to believe Bob rather than some report that got circulated around, when I know the close relationship between the two men. And as a result of that, of course, he wound up as President.

T: How did Senator Kerr relate his Christian experience and Christian belief with some of his very strong conservatism? Did he ever talk with you on that?

H: No. Bob was a rather strange mixture along that line. He was a conservative in his own business, and yet he was rather liberal in government business--deficit spending, things of that kind. Now he didn't operate his business that way. But because of that, I think, for instance, Mr. E. K. Gaylord--the owner and publisher of the Daily Oklahoman and Oklahoma City Times--Mr. Gaylord and Bob Kerr were very close friends personally, but politically they were on opposite sides. It always amused me when Mr. Gaylord would come out on something when Bob was running for office. Or if he did something in Washington with which Gaylord didn't agree, he'd come out with a blistering editorial on the front page. And yet they might eat lunch together that day. Personally, they were good friends, politically they were not.

Bob and I were walking across the street one day going to a meeting of this committee on this hospital. We got halfway across the street, and I looked up and saw that we were crossing on a green light. I mean we had a red light in our face. I said, "You know, we're crossing the street here on this green light. This is a pretty come-off when the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City and the United States senator from Oklahoma jaywalk on a red light." He said, "Preacher, if I had stopped for every red light that's been thrown in my face, I'd still be ploughing a mule down in Southeast Oklahoma." I don't know that I see any particular conflict between his conservatism as a person and his religious belief, because he was a conservative in his religious belief. He was a liberal, so-called, only in his political philosophy, but in his private business and in other things, he was a conservative, and that includes his faith.

T: Are there other things that you'd like to share about Senator Kerr that you can recollect on?

H: Oh, I don't know. I could talk for a long time about the Senator. I remember one day

his sister's husband died, and I had the funeral. Bob's mother, who was a widow, lived with this daughter whose husband had just died. And, of course, Bob was at the funeral, one of the pallbearers, in fact. After the service was over at the grave, he and I were talking. I said, "Bob, how is your mother?" She wasn't at the service. He said, "Oh, she's all right, preacher. She doesn't really know what's happened. You know it happened right there in the home, but she doesn't really know what's happened. But, you know, that's a decision you have to make. You either have to give them up early or watch them gradually fade away." I've often thought of that. My own mother died of a heart attack when she was seventy. I thought it was pretty rough to lose her that quickly. But my wife's mother lived to be eighty-three, and the last three or four years of her life I could see where death could be a blessing because she suffered so much pain. It was in the neck and the face, a nerve situation, which doctors said is the most excruciating pain a human being can suffer, and there wasn't a thing to be done about it except clip the nerve and leave one side of her face paralyzed. She wouldn't have that. So I know that when she died I missed her and felt sorry for my wife and the family, but I was glad for her because I can hear her now. She'd go to her room at night and we'd hear her in the room in the dark talking. She was hard of hearing, and she'd talk louder than she knew. We thought maybe she was calling us, so we'd go up to the door and listen. She'd be lying there in the bed in the dark just saying, "Lord, why don't you take me on home?" So Bob said, "You either have to give them up early or watch them just gradually fade away."

T: Did the Senator's wife and family attend your church?

H: No. His wife was a Christian Scientist, a very devout one. One son was a Christian Scientist, the other children married either Methodists or Presbyterians and went with them. So Bob was the only member of the family who was a member of a Baptist church.

T: Dr. Hobbs, I wonder if you'd say some more about Andrew Potter as well. We're talking about Oklahomians, and people who have been involved with the Executive Committee and related to it. Can you indicate something about Andrew Potter? You came to the state much after the controversy. Did he ever share with you as a member, as his pastor, about the controversy and the issues as he saw them and how Oklahoma Baptists were so to speak healed back together?

H: No, we never discussed it at all. I came here in May of 1949, he died in July of 1951, so we were together about a little over two years. We were good friends, but we didn't spend a great deal of time just talking. I do know this, that this controversy, while it was in the past by some more than, well I'd say a decade and a half, at least, no, two decades when I came to Oklahoma--centered in a division over the Frank Norris movement and his opposition to Southern Baptists. Some strong men in our state were found on both sides of the issue. Some felt that Frank was right and others didn't. And while these men never became a part of the Frank Norris movement, the Fundamentalist fellowship as they called it, still back in those days there was trouble going on all over the nation, not only among Baptists but other groups, about modernism, as they called it then. The American Baptist Convention as it is now called--it was National or NorthernBaptist Convention--divided. A strong conservative convention came out of that era including such giants as J. C. Massee and W. B. Riley. I'm thinking now about the Northern

Baptists including other strong men like Fosdick and some others. So it was not just an isolated thing. Frank Norris' movement, of course, originally started as a falling out between him and some of the other Texas Baptists. It centered somewhat in the 75,000,000 Campaign as a root, as I recall. But in Oklahoma it was simply a matter of some who felt that Norris was right and others who did not. For instance, the editor of the state Baptist paper, Dr. Stealey, who was the father of Dr. Syd Stealey, later the professor of church history at Southern Baptist Seminary and the first president of Southeastern Seminary, was on the Frank Norris side, at least with respect to his philosophy and theological position. Clyde Morris, First Baptist Church, Ada, was of that same strain. Now none of them pulled out of the Southern Baptist Convention or even the Oklahoma Baptist Convention. But it was just an era of controversy, and many denominations were either divided or swept from their historic theological moorings during that period of time. I think, eventually, we'll discuss the "Baptist Faith and Message." It was born out of that era at the southwide level. I think it did more than any other one thing to hold Southern Baptists on an even keel during this storm.

Well, one of the classics in my memory was when Syd Stealey came out here on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Baptist Message. He was the invited speaker, and was asked to speak on his father as he remembered him. It was a classic. As he gave his strong points, his weak points, he kept you laughing and crying almost at the same time. Syd with a true historian's instinct didn't rob history to protect his dad or to protect those who opposed his dad. He told about how when he went to the seminary--of all things, he went to Southern Baptist Seminary, that den of iniquity to his dad--and of all people he became the fellow to Dr. E. Y. Mullins, who had carried on a long debate in Memphis with the elder Stealey over the wording of the section on "Man" in the "Baptist Faith and Message." And to think that his son would become fellow to Dr. Mullins!! And really, he never got over it. But, of course, Syd himself was a loyal Southern Baptist. His dad was a loyal Southern Baptist, but he was of a different strain and happened to be on the other side.

Now back at that time there was every possibility in the world that the Oklahoma Baptist Convention could have been split wide open. It was a time when the Convention owed debts up above its ears. The 75,000,000 Campaign promised so much. Then came the depression of the twenties. Pledges that were made in good faith were not paid. We got in more money than we'd ever gotten in a comparable period before, but the optimism of the time led the agencies and boards to launch out and build new buildings and campuses and enlarge mission programs, and then when suddenly the money was cut off and they didn't get the anticipated funds, they were in big trouble, as the fellow says in the television commercial. So Oklahoma Baptists were in big trouble financially. The brethren turned to Dr. Andrew Potter, who was by no means a compromise man between the two groups. He had his own position. He was pastor of the First Baptist Church at Enid, Oklahoma ; he had come out here from Tennessee. He was a great fox hunter. He was asked to take the executive secretaryship, and, as I said earlier, he took it only on condition that he be given certain strong powers. Because you had to have some pretty strong powers to deal with situations at that time. He told me one day that the first day that he was in office, he got a phone call from one of the officers in the First National Bank, asking him to come around that he wanted to see him. So he went around there, and the man showed him notes that the bank held on the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma that were far past due. And he said, "I just want to know what you're going to do about it." Dr. Potter said, "Well, now, if you press for payment right now, there isn't a thing

in the world I can do about it. But if you will give me time we'll pay every dime of it with interest." The man looked at him in a minute and said, "You know, I believe you will, and so you take the time." He went to the next meeting of the Convention and called on them to raise the big sum of--I don't know, it was just a matter of a few thousand dollars, but it would be pittance now, but then it was big money. The Baptists raised it and paid off that debt. He told this story at a meeting of the state board of directors of the convention. I had just come here and was not on the board, but he invited me to attend the meeting. They met downtown, the offices were downtown then. The convention still owns the property down there, but rents it out. Under his leadership they built the present Baptist Building across the street here. He read to us a letter from the banker.

He had the money in cash to pay for this building when it was built. He had been with the convention's knowledge putting aside some money every year for several years until he had enough money in the bank to pay the contractor cash the day he got it finished. But Oklahoma Baptist University got into some financial problems. They were building a home for the president. It was to be a home as well as a place of entertainment and other things that go along with the president's position at a university. So the price ran away with them, and what they had thought would cost about $60,000 was going to run over $100,000. So Dr. Potter came to the Board and told them about it. O. B. U. had asked for authority from the board of directors to borrow, I guess, $100,000, some figure like that. Dr. Potter said, "Now my recommendation is that we do not grant them the authority to borrow this money. Instead, that we lend them this money out of the fund, the money we have in the bank to pay for our building when we finish it. And then if we have to borrow some money to finish paying for the building, let the convention borrow it. If we let the Oklahoma Baptist University borrow money, then what's to prevent the Baptist Children's Home from coming along and wanting authority to borrow some money. And then another one and another one, and the first thing you know, we've struggled so hard to get out of debt now, we'll find ourselves back in debt again beyond our ability to pay." So they voted to do that. And he said, "Now if you wonder if we can borrow the money from the bank, I am anticipating that you might ask that question. I have in my hand a letter that I want to read to you." It was from this very same banker who had called him in to find out what he was going to do about those notes. The banker had written to the board of directors a letter in which he said, "Our bank is ready to lend you any amount of money that you may want to borrow within reason. We want no mortgage, the only security that we want is the name of Andrew Potter signed on a note, because we know him to be a man of integrity and we'll not have any worries as long as Mr. /whatever his father's name was/ Potter's son's name is on that note." So that's the Andrew Potter that I knew. His wife is still a member of this church and one of the sweetest souls you'll ever know. Bill, the son, was U. S. District Attorney under appointment from John F. Kennedy. But, of course, it's a political plum, and when the Republicans came to power, they put a Republican in. Bill and his wife and their children are members here. His wife is a very lovely person.

T: Now tell me something about C. C. Morris. Did you know him?

H: I knew C. C. Morris, but not too intimately. I'd known him by reputation from afar before coming to Oklahoma, but he resigned, or retired, from the active pastorate not too long after I came. Though he lived for some years, I never had opportunity to work with him enough to know a whole lot about him. I know he was a very capable

man and a very powerful man as far as influence was concerned in Oklahoma Baptist work.

T: He was not a native Oklahoman?

H: No. I'm not sure whether he was from Mississippi or not. But I know his nephew Paul Stephens, who succeeded him as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Ada, was from Mississippi.

T: Now is that Paul Stephens of the Radio and Television Commission?

H: That's right. Clyde Morris, of course, owned his own radio station, and it was reported he was not exactly standing in the bread line. He'd gotten in on the golden era of radio, before television, and I guess made a pretty good sum of money. I understand that there was some problem, and it wasn't on Paul's side. The thing of it is, I think his uncle even was happy that the church called Paul. He didn't pick him to succeed him, but he was happy when they called him, because he was his nephew. But Clyde Morris belonged to that breed of men that pioneered this country out here, and pioneers are made of tough stuff or they wouldn't be pioneers. I think he had some trouble turning loose of the ark of the covenant. When Paul got on the scene, and it suddenly dawned on Clyde Morris that this nephew of his had been called as pastor and was going to be the pastor, it created some problems. It was a very sad experience for Paul, and I imagine it was for Clyde Morris. But that's about the extent of my knowledge of Clyde Morris.

T: This is an aside, but what's your advice to the retiree? or prospective retiree?

H: My advice to him is to thank the Lord for the privilege of having been at a given place, and when he retires from it, retire from it. I worked and gave to the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City just about everything I had for twenty-four years, lacking three months. But when I retired, I retired. Now we live in Oklahoma City, have bought us a home here. People in Oklahoma City and Alabama were surprised when we didn't move back to Alabama, and we were asked, "Why?" We've lived in Oklahoma twenty-four years. This is home, and, of course, we've been away a good deal since Dr. Garrison came as pastor the first of March, 1973. We're in and out--not here on Sunday a great deal, but we're in and out. I knew Dr. Garrison before he was called as pastor here. He'd been pastor of the First Church at Hobart, Oklahoma, and First Church, Altus, Oklahoma. He had worked with me on a committee dealing with some problems at O.B.U., and I knew him for a good man. While I had nothing whatever to do with him being called, I was glad when he was called because we were friends. We've never had a problem and never will have. I refuse to enter into trying to tell him or the church how to do their business. He made a change--actually, it was one that had been anticipated before I gave up the pastorate, but when it actually was made it was during his time, I was at that time teaching at Golden Gate Seminary. A man who had noticed in the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger that this change was being made in the program asked me what I thought about it. I said, "Well, it doesn't matter what I think about it. To begin with, it just happens that it was something that was anticipated when we prepared the budget in August before he came in March, and it is just being implemented now. But let me tell you this, that if he recommends and they agree to have dances in the gymnasium on Wednesday night after Prayer Meeting, I'm not going to say one word. I won't go to the dance, but I'm not going to say a thing. I had my day there, and now it's his day. It's his program. It's a new ball game, and I'm just going to sit up in

the stands, and be one of the great crowd of witnesses that looks down upon the arena." He invites me to preach. In fact, he wants me to preach a whole lot more than I am able to because of my own schedule, but, at the same time, we have the very finest of relations; and that is true of him and his wife and me and my wife. We are friends. He's the first pastor I have had in forty-five years, and I am thankful to the Lord that I've got a good one, and I am going to be good to him.

T: Is it hard to give up?

H: Nope. I think it depends upon the person. I have known some where it was hard for them to give up. One woman--I'll not call her name because she is a very prominent person still living--but one woman told another preacher's wife who indicated something about her husband thinking about retiring, "Well, tell him, don't. It's the biggest mistake we ever made in our lives." But I think it depends entirely on the person. I am really relieved. I am doing what I like to do. Not that I didn't enjoy the pastorate. I always did. But, you know, it gets to a time when your spirit is willing and the flesh is weak. Your get-up-and-go has got-up-and-went, as somebody said. A lot of the things that naturally are part of being a pastor are things that are more or less tedious and time consuming. There are pressure situations, and while you live with them and get so accustomed to them that you are not particularly aware of them, when you get them off your shoulders you suddenly feel a great release. Now my doctor told me that I was in good health, but he said, "I want you to retire while you can enjoy retirement and do some things you want to do. If you don't want to do anything, don't do it. If you want to spread your ministry and share whatever you have with other churches and pastors through Bible conferences, seminary teaching, revivals, or whatever, do it. But get out from under the pressure that you are under in the pastorate."

Well, as I said, I never had been aware of the pressure, but as I think back I can remember that there was never a night that I didn't close my garage door wondering if I would have to open it before daylight next morning. My blood pressure has always been good--one hundred and twenty over eighty, which is perfect. But I announced on a Sunday, Mother's Day of 1972, that I was going to retire at the end of that year, which was almost eight months away. On the following Tuesday, I went to the doctor for my monthly check-up on my blood pressure and other things. My blood pressure had dropped from one hundred and twenty over eighty to one hundred and ten over seventy. It had dropped ten points after I had psychologically rolled the burden off on somebody else. I still was the pastor and still had responsibility, but there was that psychological shifting. I knew that I was now ready to shift the burden of responsibility over to the staff, getting ready for my retirement. Billy Graham had been concerned about my health since I had had a slight heart attack about three years ago now--in 1971--and I wrote him a note. I said, "Dear Billy, I have just come from my doctor and my blood pressure is one hundred ten over seventy." Immediately I got a letter back. He said, "Dear Herschel, I'll give you a thousand dollars for your blood pressure--Billy."

So that's why I say it wasn't hard for me to give up the pastorate. For one thing, I have been too busy to think about it. If I had given it up with nothing to do, I imagine I would have been bored to death. My doctor said that people who have been active all their lives and suddenly quit with nothing to do don't live long. That's a medical fact. But I have been so busy, I have had only about eight Sundays, I guess, that I have not been somewhere preaching since the first of January, 1973; and I am dated now through 1974 and halfway through 1975, and I have a number of dates in 1976 already, (now into 1977).

So I'm busy. And I'm writing. I'm constantly writing. The only pressure situation I find in retirement is writing deadlines.

T: Some other Oklahomans that were on the Executive Committee--and you may want to talk at some length on some of these people--H. G. Bennett?

H: Well, H. G. Bennett was the man I referred to earlier. He was a wonderful layman from Arkansas who came out here, and was the president of Oklahoma A & M College as it was known then. Now it is Oklahoma State University. He was the one who devised the "Point Four Program" of our government to help other governments, other lands, in improving agriculture conditions, and so on.

T: Right. I had forgotten about that.

H: I have already talked about him. It just happened that I was the last commencement speaker he ever chose for Oklahoma State University though he was the president there for many, many, many years. But he always traveled by airplane. The University had a plane, and if he wanted to come to Oklahoma City, sixty-five miles away, he'd fly down here. When he was finally killed--he and his wife were killed in a plane crash in Iran--they said that they found an open Bible on the seat between them. They had had their Bible open, reading it, when they were killed. I went by to see the sons. They were all gathered at one brother's house, and I went by to see them. They said, "Well, you know, we told Dad that some day he was going to get killed in a plane crash, that the law of averages was going to catch up with him." And he said, "Well, now, just remember, if that happens don't feel bad about it. Just remember that riding in airplanes will have added about fifteen years to my life. Because with all the traveling I have had to do, if I had had to go by car I would have been dead ten years before I am killed by a plane crash."

T: R. Lofton Hudson?

H: Lofton, I believe, was originally from Tennessee. We were in the seminary together. I know he was pastor in Tennessee and came from there to First Baptist, Shawnee; then from there to Warnall Road in Kansas City. He now has his own counseling service. Lofton is a very capable man, is highly educated, and I guess, in his own field of psychology, he would be recognized pretty much as an authority. But he got into that so early that his contribution in the church channel was just normal. He was on the SBC Executive Committee before I went on it, so I never had any experience of working with him on the Executive Committee.

T: Did you work with him at all when he was pastor at Shawnee?

H: No, he left the state very shortly after I came. He went to Warnall Road in Kansas City.

T: Haskell McClain?

H: Haskell McClain is a layman. He is now retired. He was the vice-president of the First National Bank in Oklahoma City. He is a member of Trinity Baptist Church. I always told him that was the only bad judgment he ever showed--joined the wrong church. He was a very good man, a very capable man, and he was on the Finance Committee and made a very fine contribution.

T: Do you remember anything specific that you can illustrate in terms of his attitude in reference to the Finance Committee?

H: Nothing more than he just brought his knowledge of banking and finances to bear in entering into discussions and wrestling with problems.

T: Hugh R. Bumpas?

H: Hugh Bumpas is a native Texan, a Baylor University and a Southwestern Seminary alumnus. He was pastor of the Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for many, many years. In fact, he was there a couple of years longer than I was at First Baptist here, and he retired about six or eight months after I retired. Hugh is a good man. He was, as I have used the phrase a number of times, not necessarily a mountain peak in any sense, but a good plateau man.

T: Joe Coleman?

H: Joe is an architect, a layman, and member of First Baptist Church in Tulsa. He is a very active layman in Oklahoma Baptist life, and I think a very dedicated and capable man.

T: Here are a couple of others who would be much after your time on the Executive Committee, but you probably have known them. Richard M. Peterson?

H: I have known Richard for a long time. In fact, if you remember yesterday at the cafeteria, I introduced you to two men. Warren Terry was one, and the other was Richard Peterson. He was pastor here in Oklahoma City when I came to Oklahoma. Then he went to First Baptist, Stillwater. He is now out of the ministry. He had an unhappy experience in his family life. It was no fault of his. So, he is out of the pastorate; does supply work. In fact, he told me yesterday that he had been doing interim supply somewhere. He is in, I believe, the bond selling business--some financial deal like that.

T: Bruce G. Carter?

H: Bruce Carter is a layman. He was president of Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College up at Miami, Oklahoma. He retired and came to Oklahoma City and joined the First Baptist Church. He was on our active Board of Deacons and taught a Sunday School class. He was elected president of Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha. It was in quite a problem situation, and they brought him down there to help work that out. He is still there, and belongs to the First Baptist Church, Chickasha. Bruce is a very strong and unusually talented and dedicated layman, and has long been recognized as one of the outstanding laymen in Oklahoma.

T: Warren C. Hultgren?

H: Well, Warren is, I believe, originally from Minnesota. He is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, was pastor of the Downtown Baptist Church in Corpus Christi. He was Howard Butts' pastor at one time, he was pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles,

Louisiana, and came to the First Baptist Church, Tulsa, to succeed Dr. Storer. He has been there now fifteen years or something like that. He is one of the most outstanding, up-and-coming, younger generation preachers--the generation just under mine. He is sound in his faith, tremendous in his ability, he has one of the greatest senses of humor I ever saw--I have always told him when he laughs he opens his mouth, and you could count the warts on his tonsils while he laughs. I have always told him that if I were ever going on the stage as a comedian, I wanted to hire him to sit on the front row and laugh at my old jokes. I don't care how old and stale one is, he always laughs. Well, he is just a choice, cream-of-the-crop kind of a man. He is now coming into the leadership of our denomination, and I say in the next twenty years or more he is going to be one of the top leaders among Southern Baptists. I wouldn't be at all surprised to see him as president of the Southern Baptist Convention one day. He is of that caliber.

T: J. W. Bell?

H: No.

T: Just one other Oklahoman, Dr. Hobbs, that I will ask you about who was on the Executive Committee--J. Douglas Green.

H: I don't know him.

T: From Oregon-Washington, Northwest Convention, did you know either J. Kerry Moore or his father, J. C. Moore?

H: No.

T: Cecil Sims?

H: No.

T: From South Carolina, Dr. R. C. Campbell?

H: I knew Dr. Campbell. He was a generation just ahead of me. I remember he was at one time pastor of the First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas. He was Executive Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. When I knew him he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Columbia, South Carolina. He was one of the great giants of his generation--a great preacher and wrote a great many books, mostly sermonic literature. He was just a general, all-round, strong leader of his generation.

T: Leon M. Lattimer, also from South Carolina.

H: He would come in about that same generation. I have known Dr. Lattimer for many years. When I was a young preacher just starting out he was always gracious to me when he would see me at a Convention or something. So often, you know, a man has sort of got it made and has other things on his mind. He may be hurrying to get somewhere, or he may see an old buddy across the lobby he wants to speak to, and he doesn't give much time to the young fellows; but Leon Lattimer always did, and for that very reason, I guess as much as anything, I have always tried to do the same thing.

T: Paul Wheeler?

H: I just knew Paul, not a whole lot about him. I just knew him.

T: Horace G. Adams?

H: No.

T: R. Archie Ellis?

H: Archie Ellis was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina. He followed Dr. Campbell there, I think. I first came to know Archie close up in that "Brownell 153 Tour" in 1955. He was a very good man, active, strong in the leadership of the Executive Committee. He has since given up the pastorate and is now--I don't know his exact title--State Secretary of Social Services and Ministries for the state of South Carolina.

T: Lester L. Bates?

H: No.

T: Enoch C. Brown?

H: I've known Enoch Brown for a long time. I can't think just where I did first know him. I guess it was in the seminary. But Enoch is just a good, solid plateau man.

T: Jesse M. Hill?

H: No.

T: Mark T. Sims?

H: No.

T: Mrs. Russell C. Ashmore?

H: No.

T: Stewart B. Sims?

H: No.

T: Preston Callison?

H: No.

T: Okay, let's move to Tennessee, then. R. Paul Caudill, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Memphis.

H: I've known Paul Caudill since seminary days. He was a Fellow in senior Greek, New Testament. I was Fellow in Homiletics. He was one year ahead of me in school, but

I think I got my doctorate ahead of him. But he, as I remember, finished his work and left and later wrote his thesis. Anyway, I did finish a little ahead of him. He was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia, and came from there to Memphis many years ago. The interesting thing is, they tried to get him to take that church when Dr. Bateman retired, I guess he died, and he turned them down. Duke McCall's father was chairman of the committee. They phoned me, and I kept putting off going up to visit them. Finally they sent a committee down. I was at Alexandria , Louisiana, and they said, "We're not going to let you alone until you come up and look us over and pray about it. If you do that and turn us down, then we'll not bother you any more." That was on a Sunday. I said, "All right, I'll be up there Tuesday morning." I went up there on Tuesday morning and stayed on through and conducted Prayer Meeting Wednesday night and went on home. It was a good church, and while it was located in an area that was not very desirable they were planning to move out into what is now that beautiful Parkway location there in Memphis. What bothered me about that situation was that here was the committee of five talking to me, and yet they had an overall committee of thirty some odd. I said, "Now if I give you fellows the green light and you go talk to them they may say no. What assurance do I have?" They said, "Well, don't worry about that. We'll handle that." So I said, "Well, I tell you what, I'm going on home and let's pray about it. If anything significant develops on either side, we'll let the other know." So I went on home. Jim Sapp was the educational director there then. I went on back to Alexandria on Thursday. My wife's mother lived with us. She was always a great one for prayer, and didn't dilly-dally around about it--she would just get right down to business. So when we returned from church on Sunday morning, she said, "Well, children, we've got to decide something. If it's all right with you all, I have said to the Lord, 'If you want him to go to Memphis you'll give us an evidence of it by midnight tonight.'" My wife and I said, "That's good enough for us." We went on to church that night, came home, went to bed, and went to sleep. I woke up, turned on the light, and it was twelve-thirty-five. I hadn't heard anything, so I went on to sleep with peace of mind. I said, "Well, that settles it. We're not going to Memphis."

The next morning I sent Judge McCall a telegram telling him that I didn't feel led to come. The next day I got a letter from him expressing his regret that I had sent that telegram. He said, "When I got it I was in the process of writing you a letter to tell you that the entire committee met yesterday afternoon and voted unanimously to recommend you to the church." Well, I just wrote him and thanked him. I didn't tell him this, but I told my wife and her mother that was the thing that settled the question. It seems to me the normal thing would have been for him to say, "Well, that's settled now. That was the thing that was bothering him, so I'm going to call him and tell him." If he had called me on Sunday afternoon instead of waiting until Monday to write me a letter, he would have had a pastor that Monday morning. As it was, I didn't go, and they went back to Caudill. I can tell all of that about myself, because, you see, they tried to get Paul first. They went back to Paul, and he came and took the church.

Paul is a very deeply consecrated man, a man of great ability. You know, preachers hear other preachers preach very little. I've never heard him preach to my knowledge, but I am sure he is a good preacher. He couldn't have stayed in Memphis, First Baptist Church, all these years otherwise. I held a revival meeting for him one time and I found the people there dearly loved him. Some of our former members here are members there, and they tell me that that is still the case. He later became involved in the Baptist

World Alliance Relief Program; he headed it for a number of years. He was a good man.

T: Merrill D. Moore?

H: Anybody who knows anything about Southern Baptist life the last quarter of a century would know Merrill Moore. He later became the first secretary of the Stewardship Commission. Prior to that he was in charge of promoting stewardship for the Executive Committee. But even before that he was on the Executive Committee.

Now the first time I ever met Merrill, my wife and I were students at Howard College, and he had just finished the seminary. Of course, the seminary has its commencement early in May and colleges go on through May. So we were in Bible class one day and the professor introduced Merrill Moore to the class. He said, "This young man has been called and is going to be pastor of the First Baptist Church in Selma, Alabama." That's where my nephew, Henry L. Lyon, III, is pastor now. That was my first acquaintance with Merrill Moore. Later, I had the privilege of being the pastor of his son and wife while his son was here taking his med work, and he is now a medical missionary. Merrill is a very good man, a strong man, and deeply devoted to the Lord in this work; he is a hard worker.

T: G. Allen West?

H: Well, I've known Allen since seminary days. We've been very close friends. I was, I think, a year ahead of him in school, but we were there at the same time. He has his earned doctorate from Southern Seminary, New Testament interpretation; it is the same as my degree. He was pastor there in Nashville--the Woodmont Baptist Church. That is where I held a revival meeting for him. He is now the Executive Secretary of the Associational Mission Program for the Long Run Baptist Association in Louisville. Again, a very good, strong man.

T: Another man that is in with presidents that we will need to talk about further is Ramsey Pollard. Perhaps we should hold that for a little while.

H: Well, Ramsey, of course, is tops in my book, and I'll say that in another way later on.

T: Homer H. Waldrop?

H: I knew Waldrop, but I did not know him too intimately, and I don't remember too much about his work.

T: James M. Windham?

H: Jim Windham. We were in the seminary together. He is pastor up in Maryland now--just across the river from Washington. Jim was a good man, to use the phrase, a good plateau man.

T: We'll talk about this man again, as well. Wayne Dehoney?

H: Wayne is a good friend of mine. I have known him really since he was pastor at Central Park Church in Birmingham. I held a revival meeting there for him. Wayne is a great

promoter; he has big ideas and he sees them through. He did a great job in Central Park. You go down there and see that beautiful auditorium. They built it while he was there. He has done a great job at Walnut Street. I supplied for him there last summer, and I was back speaking to a Deacon's Retreat in the fall. I will be back with him in a Bible Study in a couple of years. He's just a top man in anything he does.

T: Claude R. Garrison?

H: No.

T: Charles A. Trentham?

H: When I first knew Charles Trentham, he was professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary. He went from there to First Church, Knoxville, Tennessee, and recently has gone to First Church, Washington, D. C. He is a very scholarly man and a very cultured man. Anything I would say about Charles would be good. He is one of our stronger, better men.

T: Mrs. Raymond T. Davis?

H: No.

T: And again a man we'll talk in terms of a presidency, H. Franklin Paschall.

H: Well, Franklin, again, is one of our top men. Even though he has already been president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I rate him as in the generation just under mine. He, to me, is one of the great so-called stackpoles, I think, for the next twenty to twenty-five years.

T: Fred D. Wright?

H: No.

T: I'm getting out of your generation again--Tom B. Madden?

H: No.

T: There are several from Texas that perhaps you would like to mention: J. M. Dawson, who served on the Executive Committee in 1946.

H: That was before my time. Of course, I knew Dr. Dawson from other relationships. He was head of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs for a number of years. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas, long before that. He wrote a number of books on Baptists and their stand for religious freedom.

T: Would you say he was the type of man who matured after he retired?

H: I suspect he did. Some of his greatest work was done after he retired. You know that is often true of men. Alexander Maclaren was one. Everybody knows Maclaren for having written an exposition of the Bible. He wrote his first exposition when he was

about forty-five. He wrote most of it after he retired. Yet, so many people think when one retires he is just sitting around waiting for a shovel to pat him in the face. A man can do his greatest work after he retires; honestly, I feel my richest years are ahead of me. As I study Ephesians, I see there the cream of Paul's entire theological thought. I think it's possible if a man has tried to stay up with things and stay alive intellectually and otherwise, and his interests have grown, why shouldn't sixty-five, say, to eighty, be the cream? They call us "elder statesmen," and people snicker sometimes, but that is a legitimate term. After all, I think one of the weak points in our Southern Baptist life right now is the way that the Convention structure ties off a former president the minute he hands over the gavel. It's nobody's fault. As we say among ourselves, he is a member of the "Who's Through Club," when he is just ready, it seems to me, to give some of the richest years of his service. Well, I'm going on and serve. I don't want to get up and pop my jaws every time anything comes up at the Convention, but if I have something to say, I'll say it. I'm going on and stay busy.

T: H. L. Fickett?

H: I knew Dr. Fickett, Harold Fickett, Sr. His son is pastor out in California at a big "independent" church. I didn't know Dr. Fickett too well. I just knew him. He was a good, strong man, but I didn't know him personally.

T: J. A. Ellis?

H: No. I just knew him, that was all.

T: W. Boyd Hunt?

H: Boyd Hunt is professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary. He was on the Executive Committee during the time he was pastor of the First Church, Houston. He left the seminary and went down there, and then went back to the seminary. Boyd is a very wonderful person. He has a good, strong mind, or he wouldn't be teaching in the seminary. He made a good pastor. He is a good preacher. I have had him supply for me often. His greatest contribution has not been on the Executive Committee, but in the seminary classroom.

T: Another man we'll talk about in relationship to presidents of the Convention is Carl Bates. He served from Texas during the early 1950's. Do you remember him on the Executive Committee at that time?

H: No. When was he on the Executive Committee?

T: From 1950 to 1955, from Texas.

H: Well, I remember him being there. I don't remember too much about what he did at that time. Carl and I have been friends for many years. His service as president of the Convention overshadows and blocks out too much of the details of what he did in the Executive Committee; and yet, anybody that knows Carl Bates knows that if he is serving anywhere he is an asset and makes a contribution. I'll have more to say about him when we come to it.

T: All right. Sterling L. Price?

H: Sterling was pastor of the University Baptist Church in Abilene at the time he was on the Executive Committee. He later went to Third Baptist, St. Louis, and resigned there. The last report I had on him, he was associated with the Baptist hospital there in Missouri, in the field of development--fund raising. Sterling is a good man. He, unfortunately, had some family problems. In fact, his home broke up, and that is how he came to be out of the active pastorate. He has a great sense of humor and a good mind.

T: J. Carroll Chadwick?

H: I was talking about Carroll yesterday over in East Texas, and I think I've said enough about him. I could repeat it, but I think I've already said it.

T: You are right. I'm sorry. I had a note there that we had talked about him. Carr T. Collins?

H: Carr Collins is a strong layman. He was a member of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, and later became a member of the Park Cities Church there. He was one of Dr. Truett's great admirers and standbys, and I think perhaps he had difficulty making adjustments to a new pastor and a new program and eventually wound up at Park Cities, which is another great church in Dallas. He is the president of the Fidelity Union Life Insurance Company in Dallas and served on the Finance Committee. He and I used to lock horns quite often, but we were the best of friends.

T: What did you argue about?

H: Oh, just different things about different opinions about whether this agency ought to have this much or that much. I think one of the biggest arguments he and I ever had was over this idea of his and Owen Cooper's of setting up, or the Home Mission Board setting up, that big loan outfit, borrowing fifty million dollars. I opposed them, and the committee voted the way I wanted them to vote. Whether I had anything to do with it or not is another matter. We had met at the Home Mission Board in Atlanta. Carr asked me--we had fought like two old strange tomcats all day over that--"When are you going back home?" I said, "I am leaving at X time." I said, "I am flying from here to Fort Worth, and I will catch a plane from there to Oklahoma City." He said, "Well, I'm on a flight to Fort Worth that doesn't get me home until midnight. I believe I'm going to try to get on that flight you are on." Well, I didn't say anything, but my thought was, "Well, I'm sort of sorry you are going to do it." I didn't want to have to sit on that plane with him for three or four hours and rehash and argue again--we'd been arguing all day. Later, and I suspect hopefully that he would say no, I asked him if he got on it. He said, "Yes, I sure did." So we went on out in time to catch the plane and got on there; it landed in Birmingham and then went nonstop to Fort Worth. When we got to Birmingham, he said, "I'm going to get off. I'll be back in a minute." He came back and the plane took off, and he said, "Well, while we were there in Birmingham I called my office in Dallas and told them to

have a car over at Fort Worth to meet us, and we'll take you over to Love Field." I was going to have to ride a limousine from Fort Worth over to Love. So we rode all of that distance and talked about everything under the sun except what we had been arguing about all day. We never mentioned it. That's Carr. He fights to the last blow for what he thinks is right. But when it's over he's still just a good friend.

You know there for a long time it was a little difficult, a little slow in coming, to get laymen on the Executive Committee. Some argued that they didn't know what the denomination program was all about and they wouldn't take the time. Well, sir, one day the Finance Committee had a meeting, and the secretary of the Annuity Board and their financial advisors came in requesting one-half million dollars in additional funds to fund the old annuity contracts that were made with the preachers who were then old. They said they didn't have enough money on hand to honor them. We didn't know much about running annuity boards back in those early days. So the appeal was that we've got our name, our honor, and our integrity at stake, and we must take care of these old preachers. Of course, you know, a bunch of preachers would vote to give the moon away on an appeal like that. Carr sat there and listened to it, and when they got through, he said, "Brethren, you know who I am." Of course, they were all from Dallas. He said, "If I weren't a Baptist and would be subject to criticism for making money out of the Baptists, I could take every one of those contracts, and I could service them. I could honor every one of them, that is, take the money that you've got that was given on those contracts, too. I could take all of that. I could service them; I could honor them and make money without an additional dime being added to it." One of them said, "Well, why don't you do it?" He said, "I wouldn't do it because I'm a Baptist. I wouldn't want anyone to think I was doing business and making money off the Baptists." But he said, "I'm just telling you that you don't need the half million dollars because I could take that same amount of money you've got on hand and the obligations, invest that money, and service all of the contracts, and I wouldn't need another dime." And, you know, I never saw a bunch of actuaries that were so anxious to get out of a room in my life as those guys were. I told Carr after that, "Carr, if you never do another thing you have earned your right to be on this Finance Committee, because you just saved Southern Baptists one-half million dollars with that one little speech there." I was ready, and all the rest of them were, to vote one-half million dollars. We didn't know anything about the details.

T: It wasn't needed?

H: It wasn't needed. Alton Reed, who was the secretary of the Annuity Board then, was perfectly honest. He was just taking the advice of the actuaries, you see. But when those actuaries saw that here's a man who knows what he is talking about, they were in a hurry to get out of there.

T: B. J. Martin?

H: Martin. I knew him. He was from Houston, I believe. A good plateau man.

T: J. Ralph Grant?

H: Ralph Grant was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Lubbock, for twenty odd years. I first came to know him close up--I knew him just generally--but close up on that famous "Brownell 153" tour in 1955. It was right funny. Dr. Leavell made him his assistant director. Well, it didn't work out for two reasons. Number one, the people signed up to go with Roland Leavell. They wanted to hear his lectures on art, etcetera, and some of the crowd had to get in the bus with Grant. There was nothing wrong with Ralph Grant, except that he had only made one trip over there, and about all he could do was to point over there and say, "There it is," whereas Roland Leavell could talk half an hour about it. My wife and I were unhappy because we were one of the first ones to sign up with Roland Leavell, and here we found ourselves on the bus with Ralph Grant as the director. We knew that Ralph didn't know much more about it than we did. And so, that didn't work out. Besides, Roland was just the kind of man that could not delegate responsibility. That was true even at New Orleans Seminary. He was one of the great princes of God among Southern Baptists; but again, the only two perfect men I know are you and me, and I'm not so sure about you sometimes--you know that idea. But Roland was in the habit of just doing things himself. So it turned out that about all Ralph did was look after the luggage. So we got to kidding him about being the baggage boy. And to this day if you want to see Ralph Grant's face turn red you get him around a bunch of fellows and say, "All right, Ralph, get the baggage out." His face will turn red. But he is a grand guy. He is retired, and spent a year as interim pastor of one of our English-speaking churches, I believe, in Hong Kong.

T: Perry S. Webb, Sr.?

H: Yes. Perry Webb, Sr., was the pastor of the First Church, San Antonio. The first time I ever knew him, really for him to stand out to me, was when he preached the annual Convention sermon in 1938, when the Convention met here in Oklahoma City. He is from Arkansas, and one of the great preachers of his generation. Still is a great preacher; not an orator, not too large of stature, but I had him in a revival meeting here in Oklahoma City a number of years ago and he did a tremendous job. He is retired, living in San Antonio, he and his wife--she is one of the sweetest things you ever saw. They have a son, Perry, Jr., who is pastor of the First Baptist Church at Albany, Georgia. I did not serve on the Executive Committee with Perry, but he would be a tower of strength anywhere.

T: W. Edwin Crawford?

H: I don't know him.

T: W. B. Henderson?

H: No.

T: Maple L. Avery?

H: No.

T: James H. Landes?

H: James Landes, Jimmy as I know him, first came to my attention as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas. He went from there to First Church, Birmingham, then from there back to First Church, Richardson, Texas, and has now taken over as Executive Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He would be a strong man anywhere you put him. A great team man.

T: We'll be talking about this man again, K. Owen White. He served on the Executive Committee in 1962.

H: I was at the seminary at the time he was there. He was a little ahead of me. In fact, he was a Fellow in Junior Hebrew when I took Hebrew.

T: All right. We'll be talking more about him, certainly. Charles C. Bowles?

H: We talked about Charlie Bowles on another occasion.

T: Okay. N. B. Carroll?

H: N. B. Carroll; I knew Carroll more or less. Not too close up. A good man.

T: Jaroy Weber?

H: Jaroy Weber--he was one of my "boys" that I taught in Louisiana College. He was pastor at Orange, Texas. After he finished college he went to First Church, West Monroe. He was Secretary of Evangelism for the Louisiana Baptist Convention; went to First Church, Beaumont, and from there to Dauphin Way, Mobile, which was my former pastorate. He is now at First Baptist, Lubbock. Roy is a strong man, evangelistic in his approach. Well, as I said earlier, I am proud of my "boys." In 1974 he was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

T: Woodson Armes?

H: I just knew Woodson. I never worked with him close up. He was not on the Executive Committee when I was, but I know him to be a good, strong man.

T: Leonard A. Hartley?

H: No.

T: Noble Hurley?

H: No.

T: Okay. I guess we're getting out of your generation.

H: That, or they're laymen. Some of them are laymen, you see.

T: All right. From Virginia, Mrs. George R. Martin?

H: I knew Mrs. Martin, not too intimately. She was president of the Southwide Woman's Missionary Union for many years. She was a very strong, determined-type person. She knew what she wanted, and she went after it in the work of the WMU. There are some people that I know that have had some run-ins with her. If they didn't agree with her, she didn't just back off in the corner and squeak like a little mouse. She came out roaring, fighting for what she believed. I never had any problem with her, and I worked with her a great deal. It was when I was on the Foreign Mission Board that I worked with her mostly. She was a very wonderful, capable woman, and one who made a contribution to the Southwide WMU that will last until the Lord comes.

T: H. W. Tiffany?

H: I just knew him--not too much. He was an older man than I. I knew him, but that's about all. Good man.

T: John W. Wood?

H: John Wood was pastor in Annapolis, Maryland. He would get up and tell the pastors to go home and if they had any boys coming to Annapolis to be sure to let them know about his church. I've known John somewhere else, but I don't remember just where. He was just a good plateau man.

T: W. Curtis English?

H: English, I know, but not too much about him.

T: Clyde Hickerson?

H: The same thing there. Of course, I have known Clyde Hickerson longer than I have English, but I never worked closely with him. He is just a little bit ahead of me.

T: Robert Silk, Jr.?

H: No.

T: Charles H. Riland?

H: No.

T: Albert E. Simms?

H: No.

T: Howard W. Lee?

H: No.

T: Richard L. T. Beal?

H: No.

T: I guess we are getting out of your age group. I appreciate the time on these names.

H: I'm only too glad to do it.

T: There are a couple of other things that I think would be helpful to talk about. You certainly were here in Oklahoma and were actively involved with Oklahoma Baptist University at different times. You were, I am sure, acquainted with Dr. Raley, the president of Oklahoma Baptist University. Could you relate your relationships with OBU and Dr. Raley? When did you first meet him and what were your first contacts with OBU?

H: Well, I knew Dr. Raley more or less from a distance long before I came to Oklahoma, but shortly after coming to Oklahoma, I came to be well acquainted with him, and from then on we worked very closely together. I was on his Board of Trustees a couple of times and was chairman one time during his presidency. John Raley lived, ate, and breathed Oklahoma Baptist University. When he went there he was the youngest university president in America. He came up here from Texas and was pastor, I believe, at Bartlesville, and went from there to OBU. He and Helen, his wife, had two children, a daughter and a son, John, Jr., who is a lawyer. Both of them just lived OBU. The symbol of Oklahoma Baptist University was a buffalo, a bison. When John went there they had a few buildings but they were in disrepair. There were no paved sidewalks or streets around the University, no landscaping to speak of, and it was a dreary looking place. It was in the depression years when money was scarce as hen's teeth. But John went in there, and one of the first things he did was tell them, "I want you to draw me another picture of this Bison." He said the one they had looked like an old flea-bitten buffalo that was about ready to lie down and die. He said, "I want one standing on his feet with his head down like he is snorting and ready to charge." And if you see the picture of the Bison, that's what it is today. John made it that way, and I think that pretty well would express John Raley's personality.

John was a brilliant man. His addresses on Christian education at the annual state convention were classics. I used to tell him, "You ought to have them published in a book." You turn John Raley loose in a room with fifteen men, and if one of them was a millionaire he'd find him. He just had an instinct for finding people and getting them to give money. That's how he was able to build OBU from almost nothing into one of the top Baptist colleges of America. John was just so much of OBU and OBU was so much of him, I don't know whether he could turn loose altogether or not, and there was a problem that arose about it. The trustees set up an arrangement for John and Helen--really for John, because later, as I came to discover, as chairman of a committee to work out a problem that arose, I found that the arrangement that was made cared for John and Helen as long as John lived, but the minute John quit breathing Helen was on her own. I am happy to

say that in the work we did that was changed where she's protected too, because John is dead.

T: Was this a case of a man unwilling to give up in retirement?

H: Not altogether. Number one, Bob Kerr and Raley were close friends. And Bob said, "I want to build a house for John and Helen to live in as long as they live."

T: Was Senator Kerr on the Board of Trustees?

H: No, but he was a benefactor of the school. I wasn't on the Board of Trustees at the time. In fact, I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention at this particular time, and I knew more about what was going on in Virginia, Florida, or Tennessee than I did Oklahoma because I was gone all the time. I learned in Nashville that the trustees had voted certain provisions for John and Helen.

T: These were provisions for the retirement?

H: For retirement. I learned later that Bob Kerr didn't want to build that home in Shawnee. He wanted to build it in Oklahoma City or any other place of their choosing, because he was fearful, I guess, that there would be a possibility of some trouble. But some of the other leadership in Oklahoma City said, "We don't want to build it in Oklahoma City." John was such a dynamic figure. They feared, I think wrongly, but they feared that John would have to have something to do. He'd be like a worm in hot ashes, and since he was no longer connected with OBU and no longer over there in Shawnee, he'd be down at the Baptist Building trying to tell them how to run their jobs or something. It was entirely, I think, a mistaken attitude, but nevertheless that was a part of it. So they said, "Well, don't put him in Oklahoma City." So they wound up building the home in Shawnee on property that was owned by the Faculty Building Association, property which has now been turned over to the university.

T: Now was this the point where you were invited to be chairman of this committee?

H: No. At the time that arrangement was made I was not even on the Board of Trustees. Dr. Raley had almost handpicked James Ralph Scales as his vice-president, and I am sure, though he had never told me, he had in mind, "Here's a man I would like to see succeed me." And he would make an excellent one as is evidenced by his work at Wake Forest now. But some said, "I don't know and I don't want to be unfair to anybody," that perhaps John thought, "Well, now with James Ralph as president, he's my boy, and we'll work together." But he found out later that Ralph wanted to be president in fact, as any man would if he were elected to the job. That may have been some of the problem.

But I honestly have to say that I think it was a problem that centered more on the distaff side of things. It is awfully hard for a woman to live and dream and plan a home like that lovely president's home, and then live in a little bungalow at the foot of the hill, and look up and see another woman living in that house. And I am being sympathetic. I don't mean to be unkind or critical. As I was involved

in trying to work out a settlement later, because I was back on the Board of Trustees when the problem really erupted and got so bad, I felt that the seed of the trouble really was there. It was a case where people needed to be pitied more then censured, because we are all human beings. The Lord knows our frame, that we are dust, even though we may not know it sometime. I know, for instance, our committee got John and James Ralph together across the street here in the Baptist Building one afternoon, and it wasn't fifteen minutes until we had them loving one another and almost weeping on one another's shoulder. And we thought, "Well, thank the Lord, that's solved." The next morning we were right back where we started.

T: That Dr. Raley would pull back and not try to run things?

H: Well, I don't think Dr. Raley ever tried to run things. Now there were some things I think he may have resented in the changes that James Ralph made, but any new man is going to make changes. He's not a "me too" man; he's got his own ideas and there will be changes. There have been changes in the program of this church. Why, I couldn't care less. After all, I made some changes when I came here, and the man who follows Gene Garrison will make some changes. If he doesn't have any ideas of his own, he ought not to be pastor of this church.

T: Was the problem here that Dr. Raley was not willing to go along with the changes?

H: There are some things that he objected to--I don't know, it's hard to know how to express it--at least he didn't agree with them. They were a little more liberal in the program than he had been accustomed to. But the only way I can interpret it--for instance, this afternoon everything is lovey-dovey and in the morning, it's everything else but. The only way I can interpret that was, well, the two men got together and buried the hatchet and loved one another, but they had to go home. See what I mean? And after all a man is married to his wife, and so this committee was appointed by the trustees. I was made chairman. Gene Garrison was on it. Warren Hultgren was chairman of the Trustees at the time and was an ex officio member. We worked for a long, long time on that problem. In fact, some of the members of the committee got so mad they wanted to just go over there and just tell John and Helen to get going. I held their feet to the fire. The trustees at the time of Dr. Raley's retirement made him Chancellor. And one university needs a Chancellor like I need another leg. Baylor tried it, and it didn't work. "Chancellor" is where you have a chain of schools, you know, each with a president and here's one man that's over the whole thing. But I was asked to be chairman; Warren Hultgren was on there.

T: Who appointed the committee?

H: Warren Hultgren.

T: As chairman of the Trustees--so it was not directed to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma?

H: No, no. Of course it never got out that way. It was handled by the trustees as it should have been. And so we met, and I held the committee's feet to the fire.

Any member of the committee will tell you that. I said, "No, Brethren, I don't agree with some of the commitments that were made to John and Helen, but the fact of the matter is the trustees made them, and as far as I'm concerned we are going to live up to them." Somebody said that legally we could do so and so. I said, "I don't care what the law says. Moral law says we made the commitments, and that means we are going to live up to them. I'll never agree for us not to do that." And the fact of the matter was that when they got through Helen had a better deal than when we started. John came to my study one day and sat down and cried like a baby. He had this bad heart. That's why the doctor made him give up the university. He didn't want to see his work torn up that he had spent his life on. He didn't want to be at odds with the man who had been his good friend, and yet, I think he was just caught up in a thing he couldn't get out of. The tragedy is that a man who had worked so hard to build a great university and to build himself into it was caught in a situation where subsequent events tainted his name in relation to the school. People, being what they are, won't remember all those tremendous accomplishments, they'll remember that problem.

T: What do you see the problem really centering around? What do you think the problem really was?

H: I think the problem all in all was the inability of the old to give way to the new. But I think it was centered in the distaff side. Any problem between John and James Ralph I think we could have handled. But bless their hearts, we can't live without the women, and sometimes we can't live with them. You know that old saying. But it seemed that we'd get everything all right, and then all of a sudden it was all wrong again. The irony of the thing is that John, Jr., and his family were members of our church, and they moved to another church in the city because they thought I wasn't treating their daddy and mother right. Things weren't what they wanted. I got some legal counsel on it, and I told the committee that even legally, "We can't put them out of that house even if we wanted to. That house was built for them to live in."

T: The trustees wanted to put them out?

H: No, it was not the trustees, but just some members of this committee. That idea never was brought before the trustees. Oh, no. The wives just somehow or another didn't seem to be able to make the adjustment. I suspect, and I don't want to be unkind to anybody, and I might have been the same way; Helen, bless her heart, was so involved in that house and in the school. She's a Texan and her heart was on Bison Hill, and not particularly anywhere else, I think, in Oklahoma. Certain ingredients by themselves are harmless, but you put them all together and they make gunpowder. But even with the careful planning to provide for John--for instance, they could live in that house as long as John lived--but according to the legal document, the minute John died you could tell Helen to move on.

T: Was this just an error on the part of the trustees or part of the plan?

H: I think John had a part in drawing up the plan. I have no proof of that, but I just know how John worked. He probably got some of his trustees there in Shawnee,

and they worked out this and brought it to the trustees. He was to be Chancellor and was to receive certain benefits. Well, as long as he worked for the University they would furnish him a car, but when he had a heart attack he couldn't work any more to any great extent. There was no provision for yard care, utilities, upkeep, and things like that. I held the committee's feet to the fire, but I don't want any credit. I'm just trying to put it down for the record. Any member of the committee will verify this. I said, "We're going to honor everything that the trustees pledged to do." And I said, "Furthermore, I think we ought to correct some things that they overlooked." Of course, John was still living at the time, and I said, "I think we ought to recommend that we give him that Oldsmobile that he is driving which is almost a new car. I think we ought to make this to apply that Helen has the use of that house as long as she lives, should she outlive John. We ought to provide for yard care, utilities, and some other items that we mentioned, and a sum of money--I think half of what we are giving to John to give to her if she survives him." All that was voted. But we did vote to change the title from Chancellor to President Emeritus. It was, I thought, a very good deal, but that title seemed to mean more to Helen than the other. Because when we took that title away it hurt her deeply. It was one of the sources of the problem. We were trying to set it up so that there would be no semblance of the former president having any authority relative to the University. I was the one who made the motion that the parlor in the chapel building be named after Helen, and Helen wanted more or less to be the one to say who could use it and who couldn't. Well, that was never intended.

Helen had John's papers in the garage after his death, and she wanted to give them to the University, but do it with the proviso that there would be a room in the chapel building set up for it, and she would be the curator for it. We said, "No." Now this came after this other, but we just said, "No." We agreed to set aside a room in the library with the library staff to look after the papers just like anybody else. Because if Helen had done that she would have needed an office, a secretary, and a lot of other things we didn't think were necessary. Well, she said Baylor University wanted the papers, and I think at one time they did. But when they found out the situation, the president of Baylor told the librarian to write that they would not be interested. To make a long story short, there was some give and take. We do have a room in the chapel building set up and whether the papers have been put in there or not I don't know, because I went off the trustees a year ago. Anyway, the idea was to put them in there. Let the library staff process them. The room would be open at times when people wanted to see them, and when there was a need for people to use them.

Helen, I am sure, was hurt at me as she was with other members of the committee. She wrote a book about John, and she never mentioned my name, never mentioned T. V. Lackey's name, never mentioned Warren Hultgren's name. She did make a few remarks that were aimed at this committee without naming it. But some that were on her side and John's side, she praised them to the skies when they were a part of the problem really, not of the solution. Anyway, we were friends all the time when we'd be around together. There was no unkindness there. At first I said, "Well, unless somebody else tells her, I am never going to tell her how I fought for them. But one day I thought this had gone on long enough. We

happened to be together at luncheon at a trustee's meeting. I met her out in the hall, and said, "Helen, I want to talk to you a minute. I know how you feel and I don't blame you. Certainly, I don't blame you for your feelings with the information you have. But I want you to know, and you can ask any other member of that committee and I think they'll tell you, that I was the best friend you and John ever had." And I told her what I had insisted that the committee do. Well, she thanked me, and, you know, ever since then she has been as sweet as pie. You know people get problems and the communication breaks down, and oftentimes the things they hear are changed, not intentionally, but from one person to another things just get changed. So, I just talked to her as an old friend as we have always been, and I let her see some things that she did not understand. I think that is all behind us. Dr. Scales was elected to the presidency at Wake Forest. Their committee came out and spent two hours and a half talking to me one afternoon, and I told them the whole story. I thought to myself, "Well, they'll know it anyhow." So I just pulled my gloves off and told them the whole story. I said, "Don't take my word for it, go to Tulsa now and talk to Warren Hultgren and get his side of the story. They did, and later told me that he told the same story. They elected James Ralph, and the chairman of that committee wrote me. He told me that they, of course, had recommended that the trustees elect Dr. Scales as their president. He thanked me for the frank way in which I discussed the situation with them and said, "If you had tried to sugarcoat that or gloss over any part of it, we probably would have gotten suspicious and turned away from him to someone else. But because of your candidness in discussing it, we were satisfied that what you told us was the truth." It was just a matter of people having their human failures, that was all in the world it was, and sometimes they get out of hand. But Dr. Cothen came in and did a great job for a short time, but I think maybe that was needed. Then, Dr. Tanner came and he is just fitting like a hand in a glove--he and his wife both. All these problems have been resolved. They are behind us, and I think they'll stay there. Everybody, to my knowledge, is happy, and the university is going right on.

T: Were you a part of the committee that brought Dr. Cothen?

H: I was a member of the committee that brought him, and Tanner. Yes.

T: Perhaps, Dr. Hobbs, you can tell me something about the invitation to Dr. Cothen and some of the people that were considered to assume responsibility of leadership for Oklahoma Baptist University in the late 1960's.

H: Well, of course, there were a number of men who were considered, and finally there were three or four that were invited out here for interviews. Frankly, some of their names escape me at the moment. One, at the time, was vice-president of Peabody, and later went to be president of a school somewhere. Another was one of the vice-presidents of Baylor in charge of public relations or something like that. All of them made a favorable impression. Albert McClellan was considered at that time, but frankly, the committee felt that Albert was doing such a good job where he was that it would be almost criminal to move him.

Dr. Cothen was at the time Executive Secretary of the California Baptist Convention. He is, of course, a native of Mississippi. I told him when he was elected president of the Sunday School Board that I was going to protest--that it seemed that Mississippi had a monopoly on that job. Dr. Holcomb and Dr. Sullivan were Mississippians, though they were in other states when they were elected. Dr. Holcomb was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and Dr. Sullivan, of course, was pastor of the First Baptist, Abilene, Texas. But anyway, Dr. Cothen was pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church here in Oklahoma City for a number of years, went from here to First Baptist, Birmingham, and from there to California.

While all the men that we interviewed were good men, the committee felt that here was a man who knew Oklahoma Baptists, and with the situation that we had at the time at Oklahoma Baptist University had qualities and an understanding that would be most valuable in that particular time. I remember when he came for an interview with us, the chairman of the committee, whose name escapes me at the moment--he has long since left Oklahoma--was a former roommate in college of one of the men who was being considered, and he was very much in favor of him. But when the committee interviewed Dr. Cothen and he left, this man expressed objection to him on this basis. He said that his answers to the questions asked him were too pat, implying that he was trying to say what he thought we wanted to hear so he could get the job. Well, of course, anybody who knows Grady Cothen knows that isn't true. In reply to this rather feeble objection, Dr. Lackey said, "But he's our kind of folks. He thinks as we do and his whole outlook on life is ours. He has been one of us." Well, anyway, the committee voted to recommend him to the trustees with one abstaining or negative vote, and that was, of all things, the chairman of the committee. When it was presented to the trustees he got up and stated that he voted against it. He refused to make it unanimous. Well, of course, that didn't help him any with either the committee or the trustees, because it was quite obvious, opposing a man of Dr. Cothen's caliber and ability for that situation, that his objections were not really valid. I say this because I have not called his name. In fact, if you asked me right now, I couldn't call it to save my life. He soon left Oklahoma and went somewhere else, which is all right. Dr. Cothen came, and it was like they had been away on a trip and had come home to Oklahoma. In fact, his wife expressed the feeling that Oklahoma was really, in their hearts, home. They thought, and we thought, that he had come for another long tenure like Dr. Raley. But we never know, as G. Campbell Organ translates "The wind blows where it listeth"--he translates it, "The spirit works as he wills." And that is a good translation.

Dr. Cothen was eventually called to be president of New Orleans Seminary. It was his Alma Mater, and he was the first graduate of that school ever to be president of New Orleans Seminary. He made a good president, and I understand that the committee that nominated him for president of the Sunday School Board wrestled with the problem of moving him so quickly. But, again, I think that Dr. Cothen, in both situations, at OBU and New Orleans, served a very definite purpose with a short tenure. Short, comparatively speaking. He was at OBU about five years. He went into a situation where there were some problems and ironed them out. The Lord was preparing him, we know now, for what I think is the most vital position in the life of Southern Baptists--as the president

of the Sunday School Board. He will make a good one. I wrote him when he was elected and told him that. He was one of about four men in the final consideration, any one of which would have made a good man. But knowing him as I did, I was praying that he would be the man. I was sure that all Southern Baptists who knew him, along with me, would rejoice. I think all Southern Baptists will come to do that, because he is a man of great integrity and ability, very friendly and approachable. Yet, he can be firm when the occasion calls for it. His theology is without question. He is right down the middle of the road where Southern Baptists for the most part are. I predict for him a great ministry as the president of the Sunday School Board.

T: Did you know him when he was here in Oklahoma before?

H: Yes. He came to Olivet Church about a year, or maybe a little less than a year, before I came to the First Baptist Church. We worked together here in this association for around twelve or fourteen years. I came to know him very well.

T: You mentioned that there were others considered for his job at the Sunday School Board. Do you know who these were?

H: No. It's only hearsay. I just know what I heard from others--you take a big list of names and sift them down and, gradually, one way or another eliminate some. Some eliminate themselves; others are eliminated for good reason, and you finally come down to three or four people. Then you zero in on those men and decide which of them to recommend. To use a good "theological" term, it is sometimes a flip of a coin, that sort of thing, that determines it. I had no access to the committee and, of course, wanted none, but just from general skuttlebutt that goes around, I was of the impression that he was one of about four finalists that were considered.

T: Do you know the others?

H: The ones that were named to me I did know, and I don't suppose there is anything wrong with calling their names--Landrum Leavell, Franklin Paschall, and I believe Jaroy Weber may have been the other one that was considered.

T: You said you also were on the committee that brought Dr. Tanner. Were you ever considered as a possible president for OBU when you were here?

H: No. To my knowledge I wasn't. I was asked by Dr. Raley to come and head the Department of Religion at one time, but I did not feel that was my calling. I served on the Board of Trustees of OBU, I guess about twenty years altogether, and was the chairman of the trustees for three terms, but I was never considered for that position. I'll say this. When the situation was in such condition that it was thought they needed a strong hand, there were some individuals that mentioned it to me. That was all there was, and I just laughed it off and turned it aside.

T: This would be in the late 1950's or early 1960's?

H: That's right.

T: You were on the trustees when Dr. Tanner was invited to become the president?

H: Yes. I was on the committee that invited him. And I think Dr. Tanner is the Lord's man for a long presidency. Dr. Tanner has his earned doctor's degrees in both theology and education. I just don't know of a man anywhere better qualified than he is for his position. If there is an unhappy person in the state of Oklahoma about him, I do not know who that person is.

T: Were there also a number considered to succeed Dr. Cothen?

H: Well, yes. Any time, you know, there is a vacancy people recommend others, and you get quite a list. You just have to go through and thin it out. Actually, the committee talked with Dr. McClellan about the possibility of his coming. There was no discrimination against Dr. Tanner in it, but, there again, here was a man who was an Oklahoma product, and it was felt that he had a lot to give. He was intrigued by it, and even agreed that his name might be presented. But in less than an hour he called and said, "I just can't do it," and actually wept over the phone about it. But he felt he had a mandate from God to stay where he is, and I hope he stays there until he retires. At that time it was a matter between him and Dr. Tanner. I would say that each has qualities of his own. Perhaps the fact that caused us to call Dr. McClellan first and talk to him was his Oklahoma connections, but it is no reflection whatever against Dr. Tanner. I think the Lord's will was done. I think it worked out in a wonderful way.

T: Is Dr. McClellan a graduate of OBU?

H: Yes. He is a native Oklahoman, a graduate of OBU and Southwestern Seminary. He was pastor in the state, and then editor of our state paper before going to Nashville.

T: Then he apparently didn't consider it very long?

H: No. I think the call to come back home was an emotional pull, but in his heart and his mental judgment he, I am sure, felt that he should stay where he is. No pressure was brought to bear on him in Nashville to stay, although, I understand, he talked to Porter Routh about it when he knew that his name was being seriously considered. Porter said, "Well, of course, I wouldn't in any sense stand in the way, but I would certainly hate to lose you." I think Southern Baptists would have been the loser, although he would have been a good man at OBU. But he is in his place, and we have got a man at OBU that couldn't be better qualified. I think that while it wasn't intended that way it turned out to be beneficial, because there were people in Oklahoma who felt that Albert should be asked to take it. The fact that he was asked and did not take it became known, and it satisfied those who might have been unhappy otherwise. I have never liked the translation of Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good"--that is fatalism. The way it seems reasonable to me, and I was happy to find there is some strong manuscript evidence for it, the proper translation is, "God works

in all things for good." I think he did in that.

T: Dr. McClellan was the most seriously considered then, prior to the call to Dr. Tanner.

H: Yes. To the point that we called and talked to him about it.

T: Did he come out and visit with you?

H: Yes. When we got down to the nitty-gritty, the men who were seriously considered were asked to come for an interview, and he came at our invitation. He was not seeking the position. No man I know of who was really considered sought the position. My feelings have always been that if a man is seeking the job he is not the man. When I get to heaven I will have lots of sins on my record. But one of them will not be that I ever asked anybody to appoint me on a committee, to recommend me to a church or to any other job. I have always felt that the Lord knows where I am, and if he wants to use me he will.

T: Really, then, you are saying that just Dr. McClellan and Dr. Tanner were the two most seriously considered?

H: Yes. That's right.

T: How did you become aware of Dr. Tanner?

H: Oh, I don't know. Someone, I forget who it was now, wrote and recommended him. As I recall, he had been on the campus at OBU a year or so before that for a series of messages, and he impressed the people very much--those who heard him. I have no way of remembering who it was who recommended him, but he was recommended in due process by somebody. At that time he was president of Mary-Hardin Baylor College at Belton, Texas.

T: Are there other matters relating to your years on the Board of Trustees at Oklahoma Baptist University that would be worthwhile for us to record? things that I don't know about that I should ask you questions about if I knew?

H: I don't know of anything of any great significance, other than what I have related about the problem that we had between Dr. Raley and his family and Dr. Scales and his family. That is the only really major problem that we had. Other things were more or less routine.

T: You promised a couple of days ago, and we haven't gotten around to it, to indicate your philosophy of the pastorate and your development and change in the area of race.

H: Well, I have often said the only thing that George W. Truett and I had in common was that we both felt that we could render our greatest service for the kingdom of God and denomination from the pastorate rather than from some denominational office. I think that has proved to be true in my case, and I am sure it was

in his. I have always had the feeling that I belonged in the pastorate. I never agreed with some of the faculty members at Southern Seminary, those who would say to the student, "Now if you're going to teach, get a doctor's degree, if not, you just get your master's in theology /which was the standard degree back then/, and go on out and start preaching." I never agreed with them, and I don't to this day. I think that the pastorate deserves the best academic training a man can give it. I am not saying that to disparage a man that has less than an earned or an academic doctor's degree. I am simply saying that I don't see any conflict between a man having that degree and being a pastor. Even people in my church through the years have come up to me and said, "You ought to be teaching in a seminary." I would always thank them but say, "Don't you think that people in churches need teaching also?" I have had opportunities to go into other phases of the work, and I am putting this in not in any sense to boast, though I am grateful, but to show that my conviction is born not of necessity, but of a choice that is very strong in my own heart. For instance, I was asked on one occasion to go to Southwestern Seminary when Dr. Jeff Ray retired. Dr. Head called me and asked me if I would come out there and, as he said, build the Department of Homiletics. He said, "We have had some classes in preaching, but we have never really had a Department of Homiletics." I thanked him but declined for the same reason. I was asked to become editor of one of our Baptist state papers--in fact, the Alabama Baptist, when Dr. Leon Macon died. Dr. Baggett is a wonderful editor, and he is the man for it. I'm not. I couldn't see myself, with the experience I had had more or less spread all over the nation and the world, in an office editing a paper, as important as that job is.

T: This was after you had been president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

H: Yes. It was just not for me. Oley Kidd, who was the Executive Secretary of the Birmingham Baptist Association, called me one day after different ones had talked to me about considering that, and I would say "no." He called me and said, "Herschel, this is Oley." We were in college together. I said, "Oley, what do you want?" He said, "Don't you think it's about time you came on back home?" I said, "Oley, I have been in Oklahoma City for seventeen years /that was true at that time/ and I lived in Birmingham twelve. Where is home?" He said, "I get the message," and hung up. That's the last I heard of it. I was asked--well, the committee officially didn't do it but you know how they will do, they sort of unofficially feel you out--to consider coming back to Alabama and being the Executive Secretary. But, again, I couldn't see myself in that position. The man who was the man for it is the man who is in the job right now, George Bagley. George was assistant to Dr. Reid. Again, I had just come out of the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and I think that perhaps may have had some influence on it. I was asked to consider presidency of one of our seminaries; actually, I was invited by the committee to come talk with them relative to being recommended, and I refused even to go talk to them, because I didn't feel that was my work.

T: This was Southern Seminary?

H: No. New Orleans Seminary. Dr. Eddleman knows this, so it is not telling

anything unkind. He and I have talked about it a lot since. The fact of the matter is that we had reached the point in our ministry here where my wife and I had a feeling that the Lord might be going to move us. We had accomplished certain things, like building a building. We had gotten the debt paid down to $300,000, which was sort of a figure that all of us had set, that if we could get it down to that we could live with it, depression or no depression. And we had reached that place. You know how you get feelings. Maybe this is the time the Lord is going to move us. And this matter came up. We went to the Houston Convention with our minds made up that if they offered it to us while we were down there, that would be to us the Lord's will. We went down there. Students came up, some of the faculty members also, and said, "We hear you are coming to New Orleans. We sure are glad." Pastors who were my friends said the same thing. I said, "Well, you know something I don't know." I was in the lobby of the hotel. I was around the chairman of the committee and members of the committee, and Grady Cothen, by the way, pastor of Olivet here, was on the committee; but everybody talked to me about it, it seems, except the committee. So finally when I walked through the lobby on my way to the room to pack and start home, I went upstairs and I told my wife, "Well, we've got our answer." She said, "What?" I said, "We'll stay in Oklahoma City!" So we packed up and came on home. This was in June.

The next month--the church on a Wednesday night had voted a five-year program that we had laid out, and also they had voted to buy a new home for the pastor and his wife, not just the idea of buying but voted to buy a particular house--the next day I got this call. Well, I told the chairman, "I don't feel that I should leave the pastorate. I think this is my place of service. Besides, we just voted to adopt this program and the church has bought this new home. I think it would be an affront to the church for me now to turn around and say, 'I am going to leave.'" So I said, "Who else do you have on your list? Who's your next man?" He said, "Leo Eddleman." I said, "Well, he's the man. He has an earned doctorate from Southern Seminary, has been a missionary, a pastor, a professor in a seminary, and now is president of Georgetown College--I don't know how you would find a man better qualified by experience and training." And so, of course, they went on and got him. Leo knows all of this, so I am not telling anything out of school. I am merely mentioning it to show that my conviction is not sour grapes. I mentioned earlier the Louisville Southern Seminary matter, and I hope it isn't egotism, but with the caliber of people that were wanting "to go to bat" for me, if I had given them the green light, I just feel that would have made the difference. But I did not then feel that was my "cup of tea" so to speak. But without any human being interfering, if it had come to me at that particular time, I would have felt it a draft from the denomination. But it did not turn that way, and I am thankful that it didn't. I had some approaches by individuals, some close to the center of things, about possibly coming to be president of then Howard, now Samford University, before Leslie Wright was elected. That is no reflection on Leslie because it never got to the point of being serious. I was approached unofficially about considering being Executive Secretary of the Home Mission Board one time, and I had several other teaching opportunities. I just brushed them aside because I had the conviction that my place was in the pastorate.

I think that subsequent events proved it to be right. For instance, when you accept

a paid position with the denomination, you accept certain limitations. As a pastor I was free. I was free to speak my piece on issues at the Southern Baptist Convention or any other way. Besides, I have been, through the grace of God and the brethren, given certain avenues of expression where I could let my views, whether right or wrong, weak or strong, be known--such as writing. While I never have used "The Baptist Hour" as a personal pulpit to get off my own ideas--in fact, we deliberately stay away from denominational matters because it's a public program carried on, for the majority of cases, sustained time--we try to stay away from Southern Baptist affairs. Seldom do we even mention Southern Baptists on the program. We just try to stick with preaching the gospel. Anyway, had I been in one of these denominational positions, it's a thousand to one I would never have been elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, which meant that I would not have been chairman of the Committee on Baptist Faith and Message, which would have meant that I, with duties of the kind that would be involved in an administrative office, would not have had the time for writing that I have had. My church has been wonderful to me to give me time to do all the denominational work that I wanted to do and could do, and to write and to do the things that really I feel is a ministry that God has opened up for me. I didn't ask for it; it is just one of those things. Had I, for instance, been a seminary president when that doctrinal crisis came in 1961 to 1963, I would have been, right or wrong, considered a part of the problem, not a means of helping solve the problem. I don't mean our seminary presidents were themselves parts of the problem, but being presidents of seminaries on which certain doubts have been cast by certain groups--I mean the seminaries--that meant that they were a part of the problem to that extent. So I think that all in all the Lord has vindicated the conviction that I have had that my position is in the pastorate. As I have told young preachers at Golden Gate and Southern Seminary, in Bible conferences and Pastors' Conferences all across this nation, knowing what I know now, if I had a thousand lives to live for the Lord, I would want to live every one of them as a pastor of a local Baptist church.

T: What was your pattern of activity as pastor of this church? Did you delegate authority? Did you run things in your own hands? What were your pastoral methods, so to speak?

H: I delegated authority. When I first came here I hadn't been here too long until I brought Stanton Nash from Mobile. I had known Stanton and his wife, Joy, for years. I had been her pastor for a long time. I married them, and when he went overseas during World War II, he put his membership in our church. When he came back they went to Southwestern Seminary. I visited Joy in the hospital the day every one of their children were born except one. The exception was when the second daughter, Stanna, was born. They lived at Fort Worth at the time. I have always felt that they were sort of family to Mrs. Hobbs and me. Joy's mother was Marie Balyest. Her husband died, and she later married a Mr. Weir up in Kansas, and he has died since. Anyway, we have always felt like we were family--more than just friends. So, I had brought Stanton to Mobile from the Seminary when he finished there. He had only been there about a year when I came to Oklahoma City. While Stanton never said a word to me about it, I had reason to believe that he and Joy were just dying to come out here with me.

But I didn't say one word to them about it. I wanted to get out here--I knew there were some problems in the church--and be sure that he would be the man. After being here about four months, I was convinced that he was the man, so I brought him out here and made him "Assistant to the Pastor," a title which covered a multitude of duties. He was over everything in the church program except the minister of music, the pastor, and my secretary. He was responsible to me; but everybody else, with the exception of those I mentioned, were responsible to him. It made administrative matters easier for me. I think it was the most prosperous period in the church while I was pastor, in growth and all. Even after he left to go as executive secretary of the Hawaiian Baptist Convention, I reorganized the staff with three department heads--the minister of education, minister of music, and business administrator. Later, we added the minister of activities to that. Those people were responsible to me, and my secretary was responsible to me and that was all. In all the years that I was in the pastorate, I never so much as bawled out a janitor about doing sloppy work, if he did. I didn't even go to the building engineer. I would go to the business administrator. He and I might go 'round and 'round, but I never corrected anybody that worked under him. Because I feel that a man can only work for one person. So I have always delegated responsibility.

Apparently some men can't, and I think they do it to their own hurt. I know of some cases where men have broken in health because they were trying to do everything themselves, even though they had a staff. They worked themselves to death, the staff was unhappy, and it didn't do the work any good. When I have asked someone to come and work on our staff, like in an educational capacity, I always told them, "We are not just buying so many pounds of your flesh and so many units of energy and so many hours of time, we are buying your brain and your spirit, to put it in a crass way." It was my way of saying to them, "We want you to feel free to contribute on the basis of your ability, not just stand around and wait for orders." In other words, if I have got to plan the educational program, I don't need an educational director. I would always tell a staff member, "You work out your plans and then bring them to me, and let's go over them." Most of the time I would say, "Okay." I might want to change something. I might see a red flag that needed to be thrown up at a spot where I knew there was a potential problem. If I had to do all the planning, then I didn't need these people. I would get up and front for them, and really promote and all of that, but the detail work I left to them.

I don't like detail work. My wife does all of our bookkeeping. In most cases when a man dies his wife doesn't know A to izzard about his business affairs. It might be the other way around if my wife died suddenly. Oh, I know what we've got, and I know what bills we owe, but she's the bookkeeper. She likes to do that. She was trained for that, and so she does that work. I just don't like detail work. So I have always relied on other people, delegating responsibility. And if you delegate responsibility, you have to give commensurate authority for and to carry out that responsibility. Stanton Nash and I have often laughed about it. He and I would get in my office sometimes and just go 'round and 'round like two strange roosters in the same backyard; but when we walked out that door, we stood together. We never let anybody see a difference in

public. And that has always been true with other workers. I know when we were trying to--and did--grade the Adults here, there was one group that strongly resisted it. I guess they didn't want to take on the pastor, so they took on Stanton Nash. Maybe they identified the movement more with him than with me, I don't know.

T: Whose idea was it?

H: Well, his and mine together. Anyway, a friend of mine, a friend of Stanton's also, came to me and said, "This group has a petition asking the church to fire Stanton Nash. They asked me to sign it, and I wouldn't do it, but I thought you ought to know about it." I said, "Well, you go and tell whoever has that petition that I know about it, and that I request that they put my name right above Stanton Nash's. The church gave me the authority to employ and dismiss. I didn't ask for it, but they gave it to me. Until they vote to take it away from me, I am going to exercise it. In the first place the church won't do what they are asking; but in the second place, if the church did, it would be voting on my resignation in the same vote. So just tell them, if they will, to put my name right above his." That's the last we ever heard of that petition.

I hold men and women responsible. If their work isn't growing, I call them in. I want to know why. I don't call in the Director of Youth Work, I call in the Minister of Education. In other words, I was friendly with these people, but I did not try to exercise authority over them. I dealt only with the man for whom they worked because they had to work for him, not for me. I would let the man in a given department do the "bird-dogging" in looking for workers. When he found a person, I always liked to meet him/her. If I thought he was making a mistake, I would tell him so; but I don't recall any instance that I have had to do that. But I always told these department heads this: "Now if you have an idea for a new type program, and you come to me and we go over it and agree on it, and you start putting it on and get into hot water, I'll be in hot water with you, right up to my ears. I'll stand with you. But if you go out on some fool program without my knowledge, and get yourself all messed up and in trouble, you are just out there by yourself. Because I am not going to jeopardize my position of leadership as the pastor by trying to bail you out when you got in without my knowledge or approval." It all sums up that I have always followed the path of delegating authority. It gave me more time for pastoral ministry, for counseling, for study, for writing, and the things I needed to do. The pastor can't divorce himself from administration. But he can, basically, enhance his usefulness by delegating administrative duties and authority, not only to members of the staff but by using the lay people in the church. Our lay people are a gold mine that many churches have never tapped. We had committees--the church still does--covering just about every phase in the life of our church. If a matter came up that was related to, say, the Falls Creek-Glorieta Committee, I didn't spend a lot of time with that. I would say, "Go talk to the chairman of that committee." Then, if necessary, he would have a meeting of the committee, and I would meet with them unless I was previously engaged. But I let them do the real nitty-gritty work.

T: I know you had a very large church particularly in Oklahoma City. Did you have any systematic plan that you followed for pastoral visitation?

H: Well, of course, I did in a way, for instance, hospital visiting. I visited people when they went to the hospital, with maybe a few exceptions that I would overlook or didn't know about. When a baby was born, I tried to be, as nearly as possible, the first person to visit the mother. When someone died, the same thing. It's in those two times that you get closer to people than any other. Their hearts are tender, either with joy or sorrow, and if you are standing by, they'll never forget it. If you don't stand by, they never forget that either. I might say, talking about babies, I have always followed the pattern of writing a letter. Not to the parents, but to the baby. And I try to write it quickly, hoping it will be the first mail the baby will ever receive. In it I welcome him or her into the world, and talk about how some people call it a pretty rough old world, but I find it the best world I have ever known. I congratulate them on the choice of their parents, grandparents, etc., and pledge my prayers that they are going to grow up to be strong Christian men or women whose lives will bless the world. Things of that sort. And I mail it to them. You can't begin to express the appreciation the parents have for that. They put it in the baby book, and say, "Now when he/she gets old enough to read, it will be there for him/her to read." I have done that for missionaries on the mission field. I would read where they had a newborn baby, and I would write them a letter.

I have always used a dictaphone. People have always said I was very prompt in answering letters. The reason is that unless it called for some research of some kind, as I would read letters I would just reach over and get my mouthpiece on the dictaphone and dictate a reply. One thing I always looked for in the Baptist state papers, and I usually got most of them, was a notice that a preacher, his wife, or a member of their family had died, or some other church person. Maybe there would be a notice that a young man who had been ordained to the ministry, or one had been called--maybe an older man--to a church or elected to a denominational job, whatever. I would just pick up the mouthpiece and say, "Dear brother so-and-so, I just read where you have been ordained to the ministry, and I just want you to know that I am praying that God will richly use you in your ministry through the years." Just a personal word, and then I would sign off. It paid such tremendous dividends in good will. I didn't do it with any idea of trying to court favor or get elected to a job, because I did it right on through after I had been president of the Southern Baptist Convention. J. D. Grey once said, "I am not running for a thing, you know." Well, I never ran for an office anyway, but at the same time, I did it because I wanted to. People would say, "I don't see how in the world you have time to write so many letters." Well, it took a matter of seconds to do that, and yet, I don't compare myself with Dr. Truett or Dr. Dodd, men like that, but if I had received a letter from Dr. Truett like that when I was ordained to the ministry, it would have been one of the treasures of my life. While I don't compare in any sense with him to that young preacher, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, and the former president of the Southern Baptist Convention thinks enough about me that he has taken time to write me a letter. So it is one of the greatest of ministries. One of the greatest ministries Dr. Truett had, they tell me, was a writing ministry. Maybe

that sort of inspired me to do that, I don't know.

But getting back to visitation. The usual hospitalization lasts five to seven days, unless it is an extended illness. I always visited every member of our church who went to the hospital. If I had sent every member of the staff to visit them, including the janitor, and I had not gone, they would have felt neglected. I visited them at least one time. If I happened to go back to the same hospital to see someone else, I would go by and just spend a moment with them and have a word of prayer. I didn't make a second visit to see that person unless they were there for an extended period. We had it set up to where the department heads would take a day--there were four of them and I made five--we would take a day apiece, Monday through Friday. Like, the Minister of Education would go on Monday; well, I'd be going on Monday, too. I went every day if we had new people in the hospital, but he'd go on Monday, another on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and then I would take, say, Friday. So the people got a visit every day, but not every day from me unless I just happened to be in that hospital every day seeing other people. I always lined my visits up, like you've got a ten-story building; I would ride the elevator to the top and walk down and visit as I came down. I visited people in nursing homes not as often, but I tried to visit them on occasion.

I visited newcomers, but I always let somebody else do the culling. I would take those people that seemed most likely to be good prospects, especially those that it was felt that a visit from the pastor himself would be effective, and maybe necessary, to reach that person. Here's a man who's head of a business. He is used to dealing with the heads of other businesses, not the subordinates. If all the subordinates go to see him, but the pastor doesn't whom he regards as the head man, even though he isn't, it doesn't affect him too much. Maybe the pastor of some smaller church could go to see him and get him. So I tried to be selective in my visiting, for after all you've just got so much time. I never had any problem arise out of not visiting people. In fact, my churches have always commented that I did so much more visiting than other pastors they had had. But I enjoy it. That's that pastoral heart, I guess, the thing that has held me to the pastorate. I have always felt this way: you can preach <u>at</u> people on Sunday without visiting them during the week, but you can't preach <u>to</u> them. You've got to have a rapport--more than just that you are the pastor--and they'll remember it. You have got to go when they need you. You have got to be with them in their joys and in their sorrows. You have got to let them know that you care. I found out something else. A church can call you and on X date you become the <u>preacher</u>, but you don't become the <u>pastor</u>. Now you may in name, but in fact, no. You've got to stay there and let the people come to know you and to know that you love them, that you can be trusted to keep their counsel when they want to talk to you. It takes time to build that up. I was <u>preacher</u> for many churches and thought I was the <u>pastor</u>. But you know something? The only church of which I was ever really the pastor in the deepest sense of that word was the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City. It wasn't the church's fault nor mine, in a sense, but I just didn't stay other places long enough. The longest I ever stayed anywhere before I came here was five years. When we went to Mobile we thought we had found our place from then on, but the Lord had other plans. When we came here we stayed twenty-four years,

lacking three months. My ambition was to make it at least twenty-five years, maybe thirty, but when I had that heart attack in 1971, it seemed wise--though in time I got over the heart attack--for me to take retirement at a little over sixty-five, and I did. But I had to live here with these people before they would really let me be their pastor in the deepest sense of that term. It got to where they would come and tell me things they wouldn't tell a lawyer, doctor, or any other human being. While we have laws that protect the lawyer or doctor in courts--he can refuse to testify about a client or things going on between them--most states don't have such laws to protect preachers. But I have always said I would go to jail before I would reveal a confidence. I never had to make the choice, but I have always said in my own mind I would do it before I would reveal a confidence, because once you break that confidence then you are through as a pastor.

T: Did you try to visit your total congregation over a period of time?

H: No, I didn't. It's an impossibility. My first full-time pastorate was the Berney Points Church. I told earlier about the experience there. I was pastor of the Vinesville Baptist Church in Birmingham for six months, but it was just a part-time thing. Neither my wife nor I had been to college or seminary, and we didn't know anything about how to go about being a pastor of a church, but we wanted to visit and felt we should but we didn't know how. So the first Sunday afternoon that I was pastor there I preached that morning, we went home and ate lunch, then we went out, picked a block--it was springtime in Birmingham, nice and warm. We started visiting from one house to the next--people that belonged to other churches, other denominations, and some no churches. We soon found out that was not the way to get the job done. You would have to live to be a hundred years old to get around. So, in the course of time, I learned that you have to confine your visiting to a definite purpose. You've got to have a reason for going there--not just ringing doorbells and wearing out shoe leather. Now it wasn't a lack of wanting to do that, it was just a lack of time. But I tried to visit with a purpose. In the course of time you will get around to most of your people, either at church in some special way or in a family situation, a sorrow or a joy, a birth or a wedding, or you will be with them at a class social or something. That is one of the prices that the pastor and people pay for being in a large church. You don't have as much of that intimacy as you do in a smaller church. At the Berney Points Church, though I didn't even have an automobile, I visited every family in the church once a month, but we only had about twenty families at that time. Now they have a great church. But you have to organize your work to cover the needs, rather than just idly going around making calls. Now I think the Sunday School classes, other organizations, the deacons--they can get around and make these visits to the people on a general basis. But it is impossible for the pastor to do that if it's a large church.

T: You spoke as well on the role of the pastor and the emphases that you try to make. What was really the biggest achievement you had at First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City? What was the high point of your ministry?

H: Well, that would be hard to say. I would have to mention several things that stand out, and I start with what I think is the least important. When I came here the

church, like all churches, had been through the depression period of the 1930's, and they had had many short pastorates. A man didn't stay there long enough to get his teeth into a real program. Now the men that were here--I'll just start with Mordecai Ham and make this clear: Mordecai Ham was an evangelist. He held a revival in this church one time. Later, when they became without a pastor, many people wanted him to be their pastor. He came through here one time and his car broke down. Some of the men went down and bought him a brand new car and sent him on his way. So later they asked him to come as pastor, and he did and stayed one year. He is quoted as having said, "There were just two mistakes made. One was when they called me; the other was when I accepted, because my ministry is that of an evangelist." So he just faced the fact and went back into evangelism.

They called T. L. Holcomb. He told me that his family still thought of Oklahoma City as the nearest thing to heaven on earth to them. After he had been here five years--he could have stayed here until he retired--they elected him to the position as head of the Sunday School Board. Then W. R. White came. He could have stayed here longer had he wanted to, but they elected him president of Hardin-Simmons University. J. Howard Williams could have stayed here forever, but he was elected executive-secretary of Texas Baptists. Willis Howard came and stayed two and one-half years, and for health reasons he gave up the church. I told Willis, "Willis, some people might say that your ministry here was a failure, but don't ever believe it. It was a success. You accomplished certain things in that church that needed to be accomplished to make the way for a long pastorate. Some men can go in and do a job real quick; others have to stay there a long time. You're the kind of a guy that would fight a buzz saw holding a wildcat under each arm." He cleared up some situations here that made it possible for me to have a long, happy, and fruitful ministry here.

T: What really would be one of the highlights of your ministry? You said you had three that you could think of.

H: Well, I may have said three. I don't know that I would want to limit it to that in discussing it. I said that I would start with the least important from material aspects. I think we got the church on a sound fiscal basis through developing a budget program. They went on the unified budget when J. Howard Williams was here. But they did not have the type program for subscribing the budget that they used after I came here. The year that I came here the budget was $190,000. At times our budget, when we were paying debts, reached as high as $700,000 or $800,000 a year. But after we got our debts paid off it leveled off at around $560,000 to $570,000 or $580,000 a year, although usually the church took in between $600,000 to $700,000 because of a lot of designations that were made by people. As I said, we had been through the depression, and with the short pastorates, they had never really gotten into a great program. Dr. Williams, I think more than anybody else, developed the Sunday School program here. In fact, I have had people say that Dr. Holcomb really brought the First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, into the Southern Baptist Convention or into the mainstream of the Convention. It started out, by the way, with a loan from the American Baptist Convention, and that loan was paid, I believe, either just before or right after I came here. They paid back a loan. Of course, they had gone into the Southern Baptist Convention. If they

had stayed in that convention I guess it would have paid it. But they felt like after so many years that they should, and they did. They had pastors who were great preachers. But they were not what we would call denominational men. Dr. Holcomb was really the first strong denominational man, and I think that is a good appraisal of him. Dr. White was a great preacher, known for twenty-minute sermons. He can pack more into a twenty-minute sermon than any I have ever heard--still does. When I had my heart attack the church got him to be interim supply for five months, except for a few Sundays he already had committed. His knees, like a lot of us, show the age and the passing of time, but not his voice, his brain, his heart, or his spirit. As I indicated, the great contribution Dr. Williams made, I think, was to develop the Sunday School and put in the unified budget system. Dr. Howard cleared up a situation that in a sense, I think, had resulted in these other men leaving instead of staying. There was a situation involving certain people that needed to be cleared up, and they got a chance to go on to a challenging situation, so they left rather than to tackle it. But Willis Howard was of the nature and temperament that he would wade into it, and did. It needed to be done as subsequent years proved. I doubt if I would have been here twenty-four years if he had not done what he did. Now, during these twenty-four years, for one thing, we built two new buildings to provide for facilities that a downtown church needs, such as a recreation gymnasium, a large dining room, a chapel, and a parlor second to none in the city, where the richest people could have weddings and receptions with pride, and the poorest could afford one with dignity. In other words, the front of the chapel is so beautiful, the glass and all, that I have seen some beautiful weddings with nothing but a couple of small baskets of flowers separated enough to make an altar. We bought land and developed parking space for as many cars as I think this church will ever need. Any church has to have parking space, but it is especially true of an inner-city or downtown church. Without parking, you are dead. We provided, I think, all the parking space this church will ever need, and most of it is developed, paved, and ready for use. We have got one strip that we don't use. They use it for certain recreational activities, and until we do need it we'll leave it unpaved. I imagine the church will leave it that way.

One of my desires before retiring was to renovate the older parts of the building. Now we were doing a lot of that all along, such as air-conditioning areas that were not air-conditioned; but I wanted to leave the church with a fully renovated building, paid for, so that the new pastor could come into a wonderful situation and not have to be wrestling with financial problems, but could put on a more spiritual program. Well, we achieved that. I think we lacked $40,000 or $45,000 having it all paid for when I retired. If I had so desired I could have named a Sunday and we could have taken up a big offering and gotten enough money to pay it. But it was so small an amount that I just didn't bother with it.

Getting into what we could call spiritual aspects--anything connected with the Lord's work as a spiritual dimension--but into the more spiritual things, I think one thing. With a long pastorate, and I am quoting what other people said to me, I was able to solidify the church and its fellowship. When I came here, friends of mine said they wouldn't touch it with a forty-foot pole. Nobody particularly wanted the church. When I left here any man could be happy to be called as pastor of this church. Dr.

Garrison and his wife have often talked about what a wonderful fellowship they inherited. Well, I told them, "That's all right. But you have been here a year now, and you've still got it. So you don't have to give us all the credit. You have preserved and improved what we left." I am an expository preacher, and I think it's the greatest kind of preaching. To have people say to me, "I've learned more Bible during your ministry here than in all the rest of my life put together," I think is an evidence of some solid accomplishments. One man has taught an Adult class here for years. He didn't tell me this; he told someone else and they told me. He said, "I never really knew how to teach a Sunday School class until he came here and I began to learn the Bible." I preached through the Bible, and it gave the people a continuity that they said they had never had.

T: Through the Bible? You mean you could predicate that on the next Sunday you'd be on chapter so and so?

H: In a way. I started with Genesis 1:1 and went through the last chapter of Revelations over a period of twelve years. I had the freedom to drop out of it any time, like getting ready for a revival or every-member canvass, things like that; but then I'd go right back to it Sunday morning and Sunday night. So I think that certainly could be put in a high bracket in my ministry here. But I rather think if I had to put any one thing above all others, it would be the fact that I stayed here long enough to see the people grow and develop. I visited mothers when babies were born. Then I won to Christ or had a part in winning to Christ those babies when they got old enough. I baptized them, I married them, I visited their babies when they were born, and I got to see a generation develop. I got to see in that same time the development of the people in the church.

A man, for instance, was secretary of the company of which he was a part--made a very nominal salary--and in the church was secretary of the Sunday School. He couldn't pray one word in public. If you would ask him to stand up and say "hello," he would faint. It was through the Training Union more than anything else--we got him in the Training Union with a clear understanding that we wouldn't ask him to do anything, just come--that we helped him most. After a while they asked him if he would read a verse of Scripture or read something out of the quarterly. To make a long story short, he got to where he could get up and speak with the best of them, pray in public as fine as anybody I ever saw; he became a departmental superintendent, later a deacon. And in his company he went from secretary to vice-president, president, and chairman of the board. He attributed every bit of it to the ministry of our church. The last year before he retired--and even when he retired on a handsome salary--I never made it a policy to go in the business office and look at the pledge cards or a person's giving record--I knew what some people were giving, you just know, especially those people that give a lot of money. But I purposely did not go in and snoop into those records, for the simple reason that when I got up in the pulpit to preach, I didn't want to have in the back of my mind, Now there's Mr. So and So. He gives $10,000 a year to the church, I mustn't say anything to ruffle his feathers. But there's a poor old boy over there, and I know he hasn't given a dime the last twelve months. So I can really take it out on him. I wanted to be free to preach to everybody alike, to minister to

them alike. So I never kept up with those things. I knew we had somebody who did. But this man's pledge made the last year before retirement was such an unusual pledge that the business administrator called it to my attention. The next time I saw the man, I told him, "I don't make it a practice of checking on pledges. But Mr. Dunbar told me what your pledge is for next year, and I just had to thank you." Tears came to his eyes, and he said, "You don't have to thank me, Pastor, I owe every bit of it to the church and to the Lord. I think you'll be interested to know you got me started tithing years ago, and my tithe this year is more than my total salary was at the time you got me started tithing."

Now I use that as one example. I could just sit here and talk by the hour about people like that. But to feel that I had planted my life in the lives of so many other people; and then, young people, to see them go out and take their places in the world. I am thinking of one now that is a professor at the University of Oklahoma, of one that is a mechanical engineer with a big outfit in Wichita, my own son a chemical engineer with Dupont, and others who are preachers, scientists, educators, in government service, and on and on. I just learned the other day from a couple that their son and his family are in Amman, Jordan, connected with our diplomatic service there. It makes you feel like that you can see some of the harvest of seed that you planted. And I think if I had to put any one thing above everything else, that would be it.

T: You lived through the trauma of the 1950's and 1960's, Brown versus the Wichita Board of Education decision in 1954 and movement toward civil rights. You were born in the deep South. Did you have a change of heart, change of feeling, on the race issue and black and white relations?

H: Well, of course, I came out of an era where the separation of races was more or less taken for granted. Particularly in the deep South, everyone knew his "place" and, right or wrong, I am not defending it, I am merely stating it, everybody, at least outwardly, seemed to be in harmony with it. For instance, the white people thought it an obligation to look after the Negro. If one was hungry they saw that he was fed, and so on. But from the time I was a child I always like to play with Negro children. I remember we would go blackberry picking. I guess it was selfishness on my part, but instead of picking blackberries, I would eat them. One of these little Negro children would fill his bucket, and then I would let him pick my bucket full for me. But I enjoyed playing with Negroes.

I never had the deep-seeded prejudice against the black people that some people have. You know, the interesting thing is in the North of our country they love the Negro as a race, but not as a person. In the South they love him as a person, not as a race, if you can comprehend that difference. So many Negroes went North thinking, We're going into Negro heaven up there in Detroit and around. They got up there, and a lot of them said, "They treat you up there the same way they treat everybody else." Well, the white people up there treat one another pretty rough. They don't have the warmth of relationships that they have in the South. So these Negroes go up there, and they find out the white people don't care anything about them. They don't care anything about their white neighbors for the most part. It is dog-eat-dog. I hope I am not being unfair to the

people in that part of the country, but that is the impression I get when I go up there. There are exceptions, of course; but as a whole there is not the homogeneity in the North that there is in the South. But I never had any deep-seeded prejudice against the Negro.

Now when the Supreme Court decision was handed down and we really began to move into trying to solve the problem, by that time I was in Oklahoma City. The best way I know to put it is to say that when I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, after a press conference the New York Times carried a story on me in which they said that I was a "gradualist" in racial integration. I told my wife, "Well, I never thought of that, but I like that term." That's what I am. I believe in it. I think it would have been better to have done it on a gradual basis more than to try to force it too soon. The South has lost much of the warmth between the races. The white people don't feel the responsibility for the Negroes' welfare that they once felt. I sense that when I go back down there.

A white lady here in the city called me one day. She was very active in the NAACP chapter, and was really deriding me and the churches because we were not in the forefront of the social movement to integrate. She said that medical science has made so much progress, but the churches haven't. I said, "Well, you know, Mrs. So and So, with all of the progress medical science has made it still takes nine months for a baby to be born. If you try to force it any sooner you've got an abortion. I want the same thing you want, but it is a matter of difference as to how to get it done. I think if you will give us twenty-five years, we'll solve the problem without a lot of heartache and trauma in our society." But they didn't. I think the integration movements have, through law and other ways, gained for Negroes some things that they didn't have and might not have gotten so soon. But I also think that they paid a great price for it in personal relationships. When I say they, I am talking about both sides of the question.

In the fall after I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, a Negro tried to join our church. The leader of the youth movement of the NAACP led a group of high school young people. They announced in the paper that starting the first Sunday in September they were going to have picket lines at certain churches, and they named them. They picked out the leading church in a number of denominations. We had never had a policy against Negroes being in our church. Negroes had worshiped with us all the time. Many times I would call on a Negro pastor, if I would see one and recognize him, to lead in prayer.

T: This was in your church?

H: In this church. But these young people showed up on Sunday morning at the Sunday School hour carrying signs like, "Welcome Negro Haters." A lot of people, of course, resented it very deeply. Having read this in the paper, I had told the superintendents in the departments where they would belong in Sunday School, "Now if they come we are going to try to bring them in Sunday School. If they bring them in your department, put them in the class where they belong by age, just like you would any other young person. Don't put them in a room by themselves. Just treat them like anybody else." I told the head usher, "If they don't

come to Sunday School, bring them in the auditorium and seat them, not on the back row or off to themselves, seat them down among the people just like you would anybody else." And so they came. I stayed away from it. Some of my deacons said, "Pastor, you just don't get out there and get involved." So the news media were there--reporters, television cameras. The young Negroes wouldn't come into Sunday School. But the head usher stood there with the front door of the church auditorium open, standing there with a big smile on his face, making gestures for them to come on in, but they didn't come. They didn't want to come in there. But that television cameraman, boy, he just took up a lot of film on that. That night his station ran the story and showed the film. Well, that thing backfired on this Negro woman and these young people. The press, the radio, and television just chewed them out, not because they had tried to come into the Baptist church or any other church, but because they obviously did not want to come in. They wanted to make a scene. So on the following Saturday a panel of Negro pastors on the church page, a half page, condemned that sort of thing. They said it was hurting them. We had good relations here in Oklahoma City between our races. Well, on the first Sunday in the next month they showed up again, but about half as many as in October. On the first Sunday in November it was a cold rainy Sunday, and there were about half a dozen who came to picket. The week before the first Sunday in December they ran an article in the paper, and said, "On Sunday we are going to have one of our people try to join each of these churches. We are going to force the issue." They admitted in the story, "We have got to do something drastic to keep our movement alive." So the following Sunday that happened in several of the churches.

In our own church this Negro woman brought a high school boy, a fine looking young man. When the invitation was given the people around her said she literally shoved him out in the aisle. He didn't want to come. She shoved him out in the aisle and started him down toward the front. Well, he came on down. In the meantime, I had told the deacons--this was even before they announced they were going to start picketing--"Eventually a Negro is going to try to join our church, and I think we ought to understand what we are going to do." They kicked the thing around, and finally said, "Oh well, the pastor will know what to do, just let him do it." I said, "Yeah, good old preacher!" I said, "If you leave it up to me, I'll tell you what I am going to do. I am going to follow the bylaws of the church, one of which says that any time a person is presented for membership if there is one negative vote it is automatically referred to the deacons for study and recommendation. That is what I'm going to do." And somebody said, "Suppose there is no negative vote?" I said, "Then you will have a Negro member is all I can say." Everybody laughed.

Well, that bylaw was not put in to keep Negroes out of the church, but to keep these people that were asked to leave the church under Dr. Howard's ministry from coming back. Several of the deacons banded together that they would always see that at least one of them was at every service, so that there would be one "no" vote. They weren't trying to keep the people out. But they wanted to set it up to where they would have to appear before a committee of the Board of Deacons and make certain they were coming back with the right spirit, if they came. So it wasn't aimed at race at all. But I said, "I am going to follow

it." And I did. There were four "no" votes, and everybody else voted strongly to receive the young man. I explained to him what that meant. Then I had him stand in line. The people came by and shook hands with him, as they did with new members. A committee was set up, and they agreed among themselves that though he came under adverse circumstances, from now on it was up to the church. "What are we going to do?" So they said, "We don't see that we have any basis on which to do other than to recommend he be received." They set up a meeting with him. I had to be in Nashville that day and night, and the committee said, "Well, we don't want you here anyway. If he is received, you have got to be his pastor. And if there should be any unpleasantness in this meeting, we don't want you to be involved in it in any way." So, in Nashville, Porter Routh asked me about it. I told him they were going to meet that night with this young man. And he said, "What do you think they'll do?" I said, "I think they are going to recommend to receive him." When I got back home the next day, I called the chairman of this committee, and to my surprise he said, "We're going to recommend he not be received." I said, "Why?" He told me, "The boy came in and instead of talking to them, he got up and walked the floor and gave them a tongue-lashing on the race issue, and told them that he didn't come for fellowship in this church, he came to break a social and racial barrier." Well, the committee then unanimously agreed that even if a white man had come with that spirit and had said, "I came for an ulterior reason rather than the proper one," that they would recommend that he not be received. So they recommended the boy not be received. Again, it was not race. Now the fact that he was a black boy probably caused four people to vote against him, but the committee didn't; it was not race, it was attitude. If a white person had come with that same attitude, they would have made the same recommendation.

Well, the committee voted to bring their report to the deacons. When it was brought to the deacons and they voted to receive it and pass it on to the church, I said, "Now, brethren, I've got to administer whatever is voted by the church, and I want to understand myself and be sure the church understands what we are voting. I take it that this merely means that the boy will not be accepted as a member of the fellowship, but that he will have access to the Sunday School, Training Union, recreation, worship services, anything in our church program, short of membership in the fellowship. Is that right?" And they said, "That is right." I explained that to the church before they voted on the motion. I told the young man, "You are a victim of circumstances. But if you will come on and prove yourself worthy, the church will accept you within six months, and I will recommend it." I said, "Furthermore, if you will come on, I will see to it that this church, or the people in it--one way or the other--will put you through college and prepare you for whatever calling in life you may feel you have." Well, he came for about two weeks and then dropped out. He was a member of a Negro Baptist church here in the city, by the way; and he went back to that church. I told the deacons, "Now I can be pastor of a Negro just as well as I can a white person." I said, "It may sound funny coming from an old Alabama boy, but I just don't have any prejudice toward them in my heart, and I am telling you that so you will not wonder what the preacher will do if we accept a Negro. Would he want to go back down to Alabama or go somewhere else?" I said, "No, it won't make a bit of difference to me."

Finally, when I went as president of the Southern Baptist Convention as a fraternal messenger to the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., in Kansas City, they were having quite a fight. It was between a group led by Martin Luther King who were trying to get another man than Joe Jackson elected president, in fact, the head of their Sunday School Board, similar to Dr. Sullivan.

T: D. C. Washington?

H: Yes. That's the man. I went as fraternal messenger from our Convention, and was there the day after that man was shoved off the platform in a shoving contest, fractured his skull, and died that night in a hospital. When I got off the plane the next morning, Ross Edwards met me and greeted me with that news--that he was dead. Well, I got over there, and they had gone into court. The judge had said they couldn't elect a president until every delegate--and that's what they call them--was certified. He had appointed a president pro tem, an eighty-some-odd year-old pastor there in the city. I sat on the platform most of the day listening to them sing. I thought I had heard Negroes sing, but I hadn't until that day. When I did get up to speak--it was about ten minutes--I just gave them a little evangelistic note and sat down. But when I was presented--they rally around their State Standards in their convention like in political conventions--way in the back was the Oklahoma Convention crowd. When I was presented one of the pastors by the name of West stood up and got to a mike, and asked to say a word. He spoke of how deeply the Negro pastors appreciated me in Oklahoma and of what I had done with and for them to help them and to work with them and all. I am mentioning all this--it answers your questions.

Then, when I was nominated for president of the Baptist World Alliance--eventually Dr. Tolbert of Liberia was elected--I knew that Southern Baptists had gone there expecting a Southern Baptist to be elected. There were even some that wanted to nominate me from the floor, and I wouldn't let them do it. But I felt that there might be a lot of unhappiness among Southern Baptists back home, not understanding what had happened in Miami Beach, especially since they elected a Negro. But, regardless, I told no one except my wife what I was going to do. I didn't do it for show; I did it out of my heart. I felt led of the Lord to do it. I asked Dr. John Soren, who was presiding, that when he presented Dr. Tolbert that morning for a brief statement to the Congress, that he give me a point of personal privilege that would last about two minutes. So when Dr. Tolbert finished speaking, Dr. Soren recognized me. I asked Dr. Tolbert to come and stand by me. I didn't mention anything about my having been nominated in the committee--I figured that it was pretty well known that I had been--I simply said, "Yesterday we elected a president for the Baptist World Alliance and he stands by my side. I want you to know that he is my president, and I am going to support him in every way I can. I shake hands with many people, but I embrace only those I love; and I want the privilege of embracing Dr. Tolbert at this time." And he and I embraced one another. My wife later said it looked like two Kruschevs up there trying to embrace one another, because we were both rather portly at the time.

But the funny thing was that the press missed what most people said was the greatest story at the Baptist World Congress in Miami Beach. They were all back in the

pressroom drinking coffee and writing stories. There was some man sitting there--just a messenger--who said he made a picture. Well, I knew I had seen a flash out of the corner of my eye, but I didn't know who it was. But no press person was there to get a picture of what turned out, many people said, to be the greatest story to come out of that Congress. But the people stood and cheered. Later, someone told me that Mrs. J. T. Ayorinde of Nigeria--her husband is Executive-Secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention--stood and wept, and said to some white lady standing by her, "I never thought I'd live to see this." A banker in Miami Beach sent a note up to me that I have kept through the years, talking about how that was the highest moment in that whole Congress. Cornell Goerner, secretary of our mission work in Africa, came to me--of course, he was just on cloud nine. He and I have been friends since seminary days--and he said, "Herschel, it couldn't have been more perfect." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He said, "Well, in Africa that's the way men greet one another if they love one another. I said, "I didn't know that. I just knew that I wanted to embrace Dr. Tolbert, and I did." Bill--he's the only head of state--he's president of Liberia now--in the world that I can call by his first name and he calls me by my first name. Bill and Victoria Tolbert and Herschel and Frances Hobbs are bosom friends, and I use the word "bosom" in its deepest sense. When I embrace Bill Tolbert I don't think of a white man embracing a black man. I think of two Christian brothers embracing one another. If there is one bit of racial prejudice in my heart, the Lord has certainly covered it up with love. But I think that in my own experience I have come to realize what Paul was talking about when he said in the second chapter of Ephesians that Christ has come for to make of two one new man, so making peace; and in a little book of mine that has just come out on New Men in Christ--it is on Ephesians--I say that that verse gives us the equation of life. One Jew, plus one Gentile, plus Christ equals two Christian brothers. You substitute any combination of races and colors, or social, economic, or national positions, and the answer comes out the same. I think that is true with Bill and Victoria Tolbert and Herschel and Frances Hobbs.

Shortly after that Congress, a retired schoolteacher, a Negro woman, wrote me a letter and said she would like to join our church, and gave her reasons. They were legitimate reasons. I told the deacons about it, and we agreed I should go see her. I went to see her and was satisfied that she was coming with the right spirit. Her husband was a deacon in one of the Negro churches. Her reason for wanting to come was, she said, "They are always in a fuss and a fight, and I want to worship God in peace. Somebody might ask me why I don't join some other Negro church. But they are all the same, and I want to join some church where I can worship God in peace. I have heard you on the radio. I would like to be a member of your church. If you all do not receive me, I will understand, and I will try to join some other white church." I told her she would be welcome, but I added, "Why doesn't your husband come with you?" I wasn't trying to proselyte, but I thought when she came, if he was with her, until the people sort of got used to her being here, that she would have somebody with whom to be a companion. She said, "No, he wants to stay where he is." She had a daughter who had a master's degree in sociology and a son-in-law who had his Ph.D. degree in some field, education I think; both of them are in the Oklahoma City school

system in administrative capacities. I said, "Well, why don't they come?" "No, my daughter said, 'I want to stay with Papa.'" So she came alone, and the church received her. There was some opposition, but the first Sunday she was here as a member she went in the department where she belonged, and asked in what class she belonged. "Well," she said, "I want to go to a certain class." She had found out that was the one she belonged in by age. It happened that the superintendent of that department and his wife, who was his associate, both voted against receiving this woman. But when she came in that morning, this lady took her to the class. A woman came out and asked her, "Why did you put her in our class?" She said, "Well, in the first place, she belongs in there by age; in the second place, she asked to be brought in there; and in the third place, as you know, my husband and I voted not to receive her. But the church voted to receive her. And as far as I'm concerned she's entitled to every right and privilege of any other member of this church." She has made a wonderful member. I wish some of the rest of our members would do like she does. She is a faithful tither. When she is going to be out of town she drops me a note or calls me, or did when I was her pastor, and tells me. The other day I met her in the hall. I hadn't seen her in several months. I had been away. And we just hugged one another like son and mother. I think that Southern Baptists have made tremendous strides in solving this problem, but it will still take some time. After all, in the deep, deep South some people that grew up under another system have difficulty changing, and they are just as good Christians as anybody else but the mores of their era change slowly. In other words, the twenty-five years that I mentioned to that woman--about twenty of them--have passed. I think in a few more years we will look back and say, "Why did we ever have a problem about that?"

T: This attempt of this young boy to join the church. Was that the test after you became president of the Southern Baptist Convention?

H: Yes. I think my being president may have had something to do with it, but not altogether, because they chose other leading churches like St. Luke's Methodist, First Christian, and one or two others. That may have had a little something to do with it, but it wasn't the major thing.

T: How did you become preacher on "The Baptist Hour"?

H: Well, I remember the first voice ever heard on "The Baptist Hour." I was in the bathroom shaving on a Sunday morning, had the radio turned on, and I heard M. E. Dodd's voice. I was asked in the summer of 1946 by Dr. Sam Lowe to come to Atlanta and preach on "The Baptist Hour" one Sunday, and I did. It was broadcast live over--oh, I don't know--not very many stations. I had never in my fondest dreams thought of being the preacher on "The Baptist Hour." Up until that time the longest any man had been on was three and one-half years, and that was Roy McClain--that was being on and off, taking the times he was on and adding them together made three and one-half years. I got a telegram one day from Paul Stevens, who, of course, is the now-called president of the Radio and Television Commission. The telegram simply asked me to record my sermon on Sunday morning and mail it to him at the Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, and have it there by Tuesday morning. He didn't say why he wanted it, and I had no idea.

By being in Louisville I figured he might be conducting a class at the seminary on how to use the radio in preaching the gospel. I told Stanton Nash, "I guess he wants mine to show how it ought not to be done."

T: You were broadcasting over the radio at that time?

H: Oh yes. I had broadcast over the radio for many years in churches where I had been, just from the pulpit. Every Sunday for over thirty-five years our church has been on a 50,000 watt station here in Oklahoma City. But when this telegram came in, I showed it to Stanton Nash. We were in some kind of a campaign, and I was busy doing some promoting work. I was preaching through the Bible and had come to a place in Isaiah that I was going to use; but for whatever reason he wanted it, I didn't feel like it was what I would want to be used as a sample of my preaching. Frankly, I just wasn't as well prepared as I usually try to be. I told Stanton, "Well, we just won't do it." Saturday afternoon he called me and said, "Pastor, I've been thinking about that recording. Why don't I set up the recording machine in the morning and tape it, and then you listen to it. If you don't like it, we can throw it away. If you do, I'll mail it." So, I told him to go ahead. I listened to it and it sounded better that I thought it would, so I said, "Go ahead and mail it." Wednesday afternoon he was in my study for something.

T: Now this was Stanton Nash?

H: Yes. I got a phone call from Ed Arendall, who is now pastor of the Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham--he was then for that matter. He was chairman of "The Baptist Hour" committee. He said, "My committee and I, and Dr. Stevens have been here at the Brown Hotel in Louisville since yesterday morning listening to recordings of sermons that were sent to us in response to a telegram like the one you got. They have asked me to call you to see if you would accept a three months assignment as preacher of 'The Baptist Hour.'" Well, I told him, "Yes." Later, I saw him in Miami at the Southern Baptist Convention, Miami Beach, and he asked me what I thought about it. I said, "Well, fine Ed, except for one thing. I think you ought to put a man on for six months because it takes him three months to build his audience, the kind of people that would listen to him, and by that time he's off. You, at least, should give him three months to preach to the crowd that would want to listen to him." He said, "Well, you're probably right." So it turned out that before I ever started they asked me to take it for six months, which I did. I took it for three six months' periods. Then they asked me if I would take it on a "permanent" basis, which I did in 1959. Funny, somebody said, "What does permanent mean?" I said, "I'm as permanent on 'The Baptist Hour' as I am at the First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. I may be on for years; I may be off next week. But, it's an indefinite period." As it turned out it has been sixteen years now, and will go on indefinitely.

The thing I think is most interesting is the fact that when they got these tapes, they did not put the preacher's name on his tape. They just numbered them. I was under the impression for a long time that they had forty-five or forty-eight tapes, but someone told me the other day that Paul told him that they had a hundred tapes. They would start listening to one, and if for some reason, like the voice

was not a good radio voice, or there was other reason to feel that that would not be the one, they just wouldn't listen to all of it--they'd take him off. But they kept on listening, eliminating, and listening, and eliminating, until they finally got down to tape number so and so. They said, "This is the one." And then they checked to see whose tape it was, and it was mine. I had been Ed's daddy's successor at Mobile; had been his mother's and brother's pastor. In fact, when Ed was considering going to Dawson Memorial he was at First Church, Atmore, Alabama. He came and talked to me. His father died in the meantime, and I was the nearest thing to a pastor he had. Since I was from Birmingham, he thought I could counsel him. I said, "Ed, there isn't anything up there now but a little old fieldstone building out in the woods. But Birmingham is moving that way." Nobody then dreamed that Samford University would be right nearby. But I said, "If you go up there you won't have anything but the opportunity, which is what your Dad said he found when he came to Mobile. But I predicate if you go up there that you will do the same thing there that your Dad did in Mobile." Well, he went. And so for many years on his anniversary I have sent him a letter reminding him that he made a liar out of me. I said he would do the same as his daddy did in Mobile, and now I say he did better. Well, Ed had no idea--there was a personal relationship between us--when he voted along with the others on this tape number so and so that he was voting for my tape. That's the way I was selected. And I have often thought--and my heart skips a beat almost--Suppose that Stanton Nash hadn't insisted that I make that tape and send it up there. I would have missed the greatest opportunity of preaching the gospel to the world of any pastor in the history of Southern Baptists. Now Billy Graham is another matter, but he's not a pastor. So there again, I think that my decision to remain in the pastorate figured in this, because later, when I was asked to consider going to one of the seminaries as a teacher, I talked to Paul. I said, "Paul, if I took this position as a professor /and they were going to start me off as a full professor in theology/ would that make any difference in our relationship on 'the Baptist Hour'?" He said, "Well, I'll just say this. It wouldn't since you are already on and established. But if we started out afresh to look for a preacher for 'The Baptist Hour,' we wouldn't look to a seminary faculty to get one," which I think supports what I said that my decision that my base of operation was the pastorate. It figured in my being chosen for "The Baptist Hour" and eventually being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, not only because they would elect a pastor rather than a denominational employee. But I think my being on "The Baptist Hour," in addition to preaching at conventions and evangelistic conferences, and writing books and the like, gave me an exposure that I don't suppose any other man had ever had when he was nominated for that office. I was elected the first time I was nominated. That's happened two or three times since then. But, to my knowledge, it had never happened before that time.

T: Do you prepare a sermon each week, or do you do a series and have them recorded all one after another?

H: Well, I usually have followed the pattern of a theme--sometimes it may be for a month, it may be two months, it may be for a quarter, never over a quarter. Then I'll build my sermon topic, scripture, and all around that theme. Like now, in March, 1974, I am preaching a series on "Problems, Problems, Problems." You

can tell by the mail when you touch a tender spot, and we know by the mail that one of the greatest responses comes when you preach sermons dealing with people's problems--like doubt and anxiety, which I preached on last Sunday--and next Sunday, the problem of unanswered prayer. Of course, I take the position that all real prayers are answered. "No" is an answer. God says, "Yes, no, or wait." And more often "wait" than "yes" or "no." But anyway, that is the pattern. Then I go down to Fort Worth once a month and record the sermons for a month--it may be four, it may be five. They offered to build me a studio here in Oklahoma City, but I chose to go down there for two reasons: Number one, when I go down there I get away from things up here. I'm thinking that I need to go to the hospital, or I need to do this, that, and the other. I concentrate on the job at hand. You think about preaching to a potential audience of--well, the Lord only knows. In the United States alone they figure a minimum of twenty-two plus million. And when you get outside of the United States it ranges anywhere from fifty, one estimate one time, to eighty million people. We are on this Voice of the Orient station beamed to India now, the second most populous nation in the world, where television is not strong like it is in this country. They depend more on radios, and English is almost a universal language. The people listen to BBC and The Voice of the Orient along with their local stations. There isn't any way in the world to know how many people hear "The Baptist Hour" in India. We know they hear it because we get mail from there. We get mail from Russia. But the opportunity to preach the gospel to that many people is a tremendous privilege, and I guess an even greater responsibility.

So I go down to Fort Worth to get away from everything but that. The other reason is, I wanted to be a part of the team, not a box of tape mailed down there once a month. In the old building when I would walk in the front door, by the time I got to the studio where I recorded I had spoken to everybody on the staff. Of course, in this new building and enlarged program that they have, why, I go down there and record, and unless I happen to be there at the prayer time, which I try to be, they don't even know I'm there. Because I go in a back door and down in a studio two floors under the ground--a soundproof studio. If someone had told my father, who died in 1910 and never heard of radio, on the day I was born in 1907, "Some day, Elbert Hobbs, your son, Herschel, will go down in a room two floors under the ground into a soundproof room and talk into a little piece of metal, just a little above a whisper, and be heard all over the world," he would have said, "You are as crazy as a Betsy-bug." And yet, that is what happens.

I try to use a variety of sermons. I try to cover various needs. I don't use the same sermons on "The Baptist Hour," for instance, that I use here. Ed Arendall told me, "Now you can use the same sermons you use in your church on "The Baptist Hour." I said, "No, Ed, I can't, because sermons I preach here are for the needs of our church. The sermons on "The Baptist Hour" would be for an entirely different need." So every sermon I prepare specifically for that program. I write them out. My pattern of preaching has never been to write out my sermons, but I do write out "The Baptist Hour" sermons for two or three reasons. One is time. Another is exactness of what I want to say without any "uhs" or "awhs" in it. Another is that the only point of contact you have with your listeners

is the ear. If you are slow in delivery or hesitant, you will lose them; if not their ear, you'll lose their attention. And so, every sermon is prepared for "The Baptist Hour"--nothing else. They are, of course, printed, and people can subscribe for them, and they are mailed out once a quarter. They used to be printed in the Beam when they published it. They stopped putting the sermons in there and got a wave of mail protesting, mostly from pastors. Then they started scattering them throughout the Beam, and they got another wave of protest. They said, "Put them all together. We take them out and put them in loose-leaf notebooks, and put them in our commentary files." I do expository preaching altogether on "The Baptist Hour." I think that one reason why I have been on so long is because of the expository preaching. So, I could not estimate the value or even the accomplishment of it. They say for every letter you get a thousand people who wanted to write and didn't. If that's any criterion, then there are thousands of people who would have committed suicide and didn't because they heard a sermon on "The Baptist Hour" that happened to meet their need. There are multiplied thousands who have been saved, and so on and so on. I shall always be grateful for that privilege.

T: You indicated earlier that you attended the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., in Kansas City shortly after they had their rather serious argument. Have you ever attended other National Baptist Conventions? Do you remember any specific things about that convention?

H: That was the only one I ever attended. Well, I remember sitting on the platform with Dr. Montgomery, who was head of their Sunday School Publishing House. He was backing Dr. Jackson for reelection. Among other things he said, "You know we don't have the strong leadership that you people have, and when we get a good strong leader we have to hold on to him."

T: Was this D. C. Washington or Montgomery?

H: Washington. Did I say Montgomery? In passing, I'll say that I think Joe Jackson is to my mind the greatest leader among the Negro people in America today. I have said that many times. Harry Truman, out for one of his morning walks in New York a number of years ago, was asked a question about the race movement. He said, "It will never succeed; they don't have any leaders." I wrote him a letter and told him, "I am sure you know this man but perhaps have overlooked him--in Chicago at the Olivet Baptist Church is Dr. Joseph H. Jackson." I went on and talked about him. Well, anyway, Dr. Washington said that Martin Luther King and his group wanted to turn their convention into a social and civic rights movement. And he said, "We are not going to let them, because our convention exists for a different purpose than that."

After I had made my little speech that afternoon, I left and spent the night there and went home the next morning. I got up the next morning at seven o'clock and turned the radio on in my hotel room. The news reporter was saying that at last that morning at four o'clock the National Baptist Convention meeting in Kansas City reelected Dr. Joseph H. Jackson as its president. He told how nearly all night they had been having ballot after ballot. It was a very crucial thing, and,

of course, this other group pulled out and organized the Progressive Baptist Convention. But that is the only meeting of that or any other Negro convention I ever attended. I was supposed to go to the National Baptist Convention of America, I believe they call it. Something came up so that I couldn't make it, and they had to ask someone else to go in my place.

T: Do you know Gardner Taylor from New York?

H: Oh, yes. I've known Gardner Taylor since he and I were pastors in Louisiana. I was at Alexandria, and he was at Baton Rouge. I have worked with him on the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee. I think Gardner Taylor is one of the greatest preachers in America. I heard him preach on the same program--the first time I ever heard him with R. G. Lee. M. E. Dodd had a Bible conference every year in his church at Shreveport, and he invited people from that part of the country. I went. On this particular night--the first time I ever knew it to be done--he had an integrated service. It happened that the whites sat in one place and the Negroes another, but they were in the same auditorium. They did that I guess by choice; they were not required to sit that way. Anyway, Dr. Taylor got up to preach, I shall never forget it. He preached on, "Our Father which art in heaven." He played on the word "Our" Father, meaning the Father of the whites and the blacks. He said that before we can locate God we have to say "our Father." That Negro congregation would talk back, and would say, "Our Father." Before we can say, "Hallowed be thy name," we must say, "Our Father"; and they'd answer back, "Our Father." He knew howto preach to Negro people, and they got a rhythm going between him and the people. It excited everybody and just picked you up. I didn't enter in by replying, "Our Father"--I believe that, but I just didn't get into that--but I just felt like if he goes on much longer, I will.

Well, anyway, after that, Dr. Lee got up to speak, and these Negroes began to "Amen" him and talk back to him like they did to Gardner Taylor. And Dr. Lee, like any white preacher not knowing how to preach to Negroes, when they began to "Amen" him, instead of him picking up and getting a rhythm going like Taylor did, why he just preached faster. It was just like a sewing machine running itself to death. So it has always been an amusing memory of mine as to the contrast between these two great preachers. But Gardner Taylor is one of the great preachers of America.

T: I'd like for us to turn to some of the Southern Baptist Convention years. I am sure there are other things that should be asked of you, but let's pick up--we talked about your events in Oklahoma and your pastorate here--with the Conventions in the 1950's. You attended most of them and were on the Executive Committee when various issues were raised. One of the key areas was certainly the expansion of the seminaries. Can you share any of the experiences in relationship to the establishing of Golden Gate Seminary as a Southern Baptist seminary, and then the story of Southeastern and Midwestern that were developed in that period. Do you know anything about Golden Gate's background?

H: Well, I know that it was started as an independent Baptist seminary. It wasn't any offshoot of anything, or it was not an antitype of seminary. It just started out there in Berkeley in a church building, and it was not related to any convention. Now in Berkeley there was the American Baptist Convention's seminary, but there was no seminary that taught along the lines that traditionally Southern Baptists have done. So this seminary was started. I am not sure whether Dr. Herring was the first president or not.

T: Second, I think.

H: Second. But when I first became familiar with the seminary he was the president, and remained so until after it was brought into the Southern Baptist Convention. When the Baptists of California requested to be taken into the Southern Baptist Convention fellowship--this came to a vote in San Antonio in 1942--there was opposition to it by a strong segment of people, mostly east of the Mississippi River. M. E. Dodd was the one who was so strongly in favor of receiving them. He had lived out there at one time, and had spent a good deal of time out there, and knew the people. Men east of the river, strong, conscientious men, opposed the idea. They thought that we should remain in our old traditional Southern Baptist territory. But these Baptists had gone out there from the South, mostly, during World War II or during the depression years when so many migrated to California. They didn't find any kinship with the established Baptist work out there, which was largely American or Conservative Baptists. They began organizing their little churches, and the first thing you know they had associations, then a convention, and then they wanted to be a part of the Southern Baptist Convention. Eventually, it was voted to receive them at the San Antonio Convention. Well, of course, Golden Gate was involved in that, and after Dr. Herring's resignation, Harold Graves, who was then pastor of the First Baptist Church, Hartlesville, Oklahoma--he's a native of Illinois, but he had come down here as pastor--was elected president.

I never shall forget the first time I visited the seminary. It was in 1951 when the Convention met out there. We drove out, my wife and I, and visited the seminary, saw Harold and visited with him. I actually felt sorry for Harold, being out there so far away from what to me was home base, and apparently with so little with which to work. But, in the course of time, the Convention authorized the moving of the school to a campus of its own. I was on the Executive Committee by this time and had nothing whatever to do with selecting the site or anything else, but there isn't a more ideal spot in that whole Bay area than Strawberry Point for the seminary. I remember how shocked the Finance Committee of the Executive Committee was when Harold Graves came in with the request for money for building that campus. We were accustomed to so many dollars per square yard, and it was two to three times as high out there. An architect explained to us, "The reason is that it costs more to build in California than it does over here. The terrain, for one thing, is all hilly, and there's so much rock and stuff you have to dig out and blast out." So we finally recommended that the money be appropriated, and the work started. They, of course, built what to me is the most picturesque seminary campus that we have. Now all of our seminaries have a beauty of their own, like the Smokies and the Rockies.

I spent two and one-half months in the spring of 1973 at Golden Gate teaching, and my wife and I lived in an apartment on campus. So we got to see it for two and one-half months, and it is, I think, the most beautiful. It has the most gorgeous view of downtown San Francisco to be had. In fact, the most wonderful view of San Francisco, I think, to be had from anywhere is from Harold Graves's living room, looking through that big picture glass window. The only thing that Golden Gate Seminary needs, or the only problem they have, will be solved with more students and more money. We envisioned a lot of students going out there from this part of the country. I'd have no objection to it. But the purpose in putting that seminary out there was not to draw people from Alabama and Oklahoma, but to develop a ministerial leadership on the West Coast. They are doing that. I have been out there periodically since 1950, on various missions, preaching at conventions and evangelistic conferences and the like, and over a period of twenty-five years I have noticed the development and change that has come in California. They have grown from a rather loosely knitted and somewhat wild type of Baptist into solid citizens, so to speak. I think Golden Gate Seminary has been one of the leading factors in that. I have made the prediction--some people think I'm crazy when I say it, and time alone will tell who's right--but I have predicted that the day will come when we'll have stronger Southern Baptist work in California than we have in Texas, the reason being that people are there and Southern Baptists are there. We've got little churches scattered all over California. They almost don't consider a church an orthodox Baptist church that doesn't have from one to three missions of its own. Most of the churches out there we would call missions back here, but they've got their own missions. One of these days these little churches are going to spring into full growth, and that's why I say that I think the future of our work in California is very bright, perhaps brighter than any other one state right now.

Now as for Southeastern Seminary, of course, we were crowded out in our seminaries with students. New Orleans had been expanded from a Bible Institute into a seminary. Incidentally, talking about the effect that seminaries have on an area, Dr. John H. Hurt, Sr., once told me a story. He was on the Board of Trustees of New Orleans Seminary at the time I was. He told me that he was on the committee that went into a bank and tried to borrow $35,000 to buy the old Sophia-Newcombe College property to be used as a campus for a school to train Baptist preachers. The banker said, "We don't mind letting you have the money, the property is worth far more than that. But what I can't understand is why you Southern Baptists want to establish a school to train Negro preachers." That's the way he put it. In other words, down in South Louisiana and New Orleans and around, most of the people, the only Baptists he knew, were Negroes. Well, now, when you go to New Orleans--and even when I was on the Board of Trustees I'd get in a taxi at the St. Charles Hotel, and I'd just say, "I want to go to Baptist Bible Institute." That's all it took. He knew where it was. I think that the seminary, the hospital, J. D. Grey, and I'm not sure which order I would put them in, have made Baptists what they are in New Orleans.

We needed to let the pressure off the three seminaries we had. We needed more seminaries. Wake Forest moved to a new campus and that opened up that property,

and they offered to sell it. Southern Baptists bought it and started Southeastern Seminary. Of course, the student body there is good and strong. Midwestern? It was thought that the seminary needed to be established somewhere between Louisville--well, there's Louisville, Southwestern, and Golden Gate--you could make a triangle out of those. Somewhere between Louisville and Southwestern area and Golden Gate, we needed another seminary.

Gaines S. Dobbins, when he was acting president of Southern Seminary, went to an A.A.T.S. (American Association of Theological Schools) meeting. They were all moaning and groaning about the fact that they didn't have any students to speak of. So they asked Dr. Dobbins about it, and he said, "Well, our problem is finding seminaries in which to accommodate the students for the ministry. We have had to open two new seminaries." They were astounded. One of them said, "Well, how do you explain that?" Dr. Dobbins said, "Well, of course I'm sure we all agree that preachers are called by the Lord, and I guess we'll just have to say the Lord would rather call Southern Baptists than anybody else."

Well, anyway, we needed that seminary. I happened to be on the committee to suggest a site. Louie Newton was chairman, Doug Hudgins was Vice-Chairman, I believe. I don't recall who else was on the committee, but I remember those. We were offered sites in different places. Tulsa offered us a piece of land. We would have offered one in Oklahoma City, but Tulsa expressed their plan before we did anything, so we didn't want to muddy the water. We were offered a site in Memphis. We were offered a site in Denver, one in Colorado Springs, Kansas City, and maybe some other places. Well, Dr. Newton asked Doug Hudgins and me to go and meet with the Denver committee and look over what they had to offer. We agreed that we would invite James B. Leavell, who was then pastor at San Angelo, Texas. He is now professor at Houston Baptist College. Though he wasn't on the committee he was in this area. They had a luncheon, and the governor of the state was there to speak on behalf of Denver.

After we'd planned to go out there we got an offer from Colorado Springs. Doug Hudgins called me and said, "Since you are nearer to Denver than I am, would you mind dropping off at Colorado Springs, go a day earlier and see what they have and then meet us in Denver." So I did. They offered us a piece of land, eighty acres in a rectangular shape, with a nice little lake right in the middle of it. At the background of it was the entrance to the Garden of the Gods, and in the background of all of that was Pikes Peak. Up in that cool country I could envision a seminary there that could operate twelve months out of the year. Doug and I talked about it. We envisioned special summer courses where a pastor could bring his family from all over the country on a vacation trip. We could bring in some international lecturer, some great theologian, preacher, or teacher, and let him lecture at night. They could attend conferences in the morning, and be free in the afternoon to go sightseeing. The one problem we had there was that they didn't have enough industry or other things to offer students employment. There weren't enough churches out there for them to need the students as pastors. That same problem, the latter one, would be true in Denver.

T: That's Colorado Springs, you're speaking of where you envisioned this?

H: That's right. In the meantime, just about that time a crisis hit us in the Kansas City area. Up until that time, Central Baptist Seminary, which was an American Baptist seminary, had been open to Southern Baptist students. Some of the faculty were Southern Baptists. About half of the churches in Missouri had as pastors students from that seminary, all Southern Baptists. It was a bolt out of the blue. And why? I don't know to this day. But the Board of Trustees of this school voted to go all together for American Baptists. Southern Baptist faculty members either had to join American Baptist churches or resign, any Southern Baptist who was on the Board of Trustees had to get off, and no Southern Baptist ministerial students could attend. That in spite of the fact that through the years many American Baptist men had been trained at Southern Seminary, maybe at some of the others, but I happened to know about Southern. That threw them into a crisis.

T: Who precipitated this?

H: I don't know, I have no idea. I just know that it happened.

T: Was this after your committee had begun to meet?

H: Well, yes. How long it had been brewing, I don't know. It erupted right at the time when we were searching for a site for a seminary.

T: Wasn't W. W. Adams on the faculty at that time?

H: I think he had gone (he was formerly the president of it) to Louisville by that time. He was not out there to my knowledge. Walter Binns was president of William Jewell College there at Liberty, Missouri, near Kansas City. He and Louie Newton were longtime close buddies. Walter went to Louie, and he just laid the thing on Louie's heart that if the Southern Baptist pastors in Missouri had to go to Southern or Southwestern, it would wreck the Southern Baptist work in Missouri. These churches that had been depending on that seminary for pastors would suddenly find themselves either without a pastor or they'd have to go to school so far away they couldn't commute very well. So even though I still had a dream--and it's still a dream, it will never be a reality--of that seminary up there in that beautiful setting, I voted as did Doug and the committee to recommend that we locate the seminary in Kansas City. It met a need there, and possibly, as you think about that stretch of country across the nation, maybe it's as good as we can do. But it still leaves a big gap between Kansas City and San Francisco. I still think that if we had located it somewhere in the Denver area that it would have been more equitably located, but what's done is done.

T: Would some of the problem at Central Baptist, which is in Kansas City, Kansas, be tied in with the decision of the Missouri Baptist Convention to refuse to seat dually aligned churches?

H: It could be, I mean, there's a possibility that that's the case, could be just striking back at them, but I'm not in position to say for certain.

T: How did you get the particular site in Kansas City?

H: Well, Mr. Curry--you remember we mentioned him in connection with his son who was on the Executive Committee--was head of a big real estate company there in Kansas City, and he was made chairman of a committee to find and recommend a site. And he worked. I don't know the details because I was not involved in that particular part of it, but I do know that there was a family that owned a big tract of land. It was out in the country in a sense then, and this family that owned this tract of land sold the property at a very reasonable price. It was the wish of the people that they retain a small area for their homesite, but it was in their will that upon their death this would go to the seminary. I think it has gone to the seminary since then. That's how it came to be located on that particular spot.

T: William Jewell was also a dually aligned school or a school that was supported by both Southern and American Baptists, did this decision have any effect on that school?

H: Not that I know of, it still is dually aligned. When Guy Moore was inaugurated as president, I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. They had me and the man who was president of the American Convention there for the occasion. I spoke at a luncheon and I don't recall what he did. But anyway they conferred honorary doctorates on both of us in recognition of their appreciation to each of the conventions for what they had done and were doing for the school.

T: What could have been done at Midwestern to avoid the kinds of problems and finances that they had begun to have? Is there anything in the earliest days you remember that could have been done differently?

H: Oh, I don't know, I haven't given that any thought. I've been pretty much out of touch with things at Midwestern since I got out as president of the Southern Convention. I don't know how they got into the financial trouble that they're in, and I don't know how it could have been avoided without knowing something about it. It may be that they overbuilt or built more elaborately than they should, because that is a very elaborate type of school, the architecture and all. I would think it's not the cheapest in the world. I don't mean that critically, I'm just expressing an opinion. I don't know enough about the situation to make an intelligent comment about it.

T: Were there other events that occurred in the 1950's among Southern Baptist life with which you were acquainted that should be mentioned?

H: Well, of course, there was the historic action of the Convention, I believe it was in St. Louis, where we passed the resolution urging our people to cooperate with the Supreme Court ruling on the integration of our school system. It took a long time for a lot of Southern Baptists to get around to implementing what was voted at the Convention. Of course, we all know that what the Convention votes isn't binding on even one local church. I think perhaps that would mark the beginning of the Southern Baptist move toward implementing in the lives of the local churches the thing that was becoming a wave of the latter 1950's and through the 1960's,

that is, this correction of a social system that should never have been. "A Million More in 1954" that we mentioned earlier was in that period. And while we didn't reach our goal, it set an all-time record. I think that would have to be included.

T: Coming into the 1960's, sometimes called the Turbulent 60's, and during the first two years of that decade, Ramsey Pollard was president of the Convention and you were elected president of the Convention in 1961 when it met in St. Louis. I wonder if you could tell me something about how you came to be elected president of the Convention and various developments that occurred at that meeting.

H: Well, as you know, it has been the pattern for quite a long while to elect a new man every two years. We elect a man for one year, and it's customary, if he will allow it, for him to be elected for a second term. So every two years for six years I had a group, or some groups, wanting to nominate me for president of the Convention. Each time I had refused. If there ever was a time for me to be elected, I didn't feel that was it. I didn't know that there would ever be a time, but I knew that was not the time. For instance, one time I hadn't been here at this church too long. We were in the middle of a building program. It was in Houston and some of them wanted to nominate me there. I wouldn't permit it because I had all the commitments I could have at home. Besides, I thought there were other men who were older and more experienced and more deserving, and even if I ever were elected, my time ought to come later on. Let those men have their time.

Ramsey Pollard and I have been very close friends, Ramsey and Della, my wife and I, have been. Ramsey had been nominated a couple of times and was not elected. In Louisville, everybody thought it was Ramsey's year, so to speak. But as often happens, the Convention decided it was time to elect a layman, and they elected Brooks Hays. Well, two years later, I had some people who wanted to nominate me then, and I wouldn't let them.

T: That was the year when Ramsey Pollard was elected then? Brooks Hays was 1958, I believe.

H: Yes. In 1959. You're right, it was in Louisville that Ramsey was elected. And as I mentioned earlier in our interview, when I was up in Louisville people said, "I hear you're going to be elected president of the Convention." I told them, "No, I'm going to nominate somebody." It might sound funny that I nominated a man who was a good friend of mine when another good friend was going to be nominated. Without calling names, it was not Doug Hudgins, but a friend of Doug's and mine who asked me if I would nominate Doug. I said that it would not be an act of friendship to refuse, and I could do it with all good conscience. Except it bothered me that I was nominating one good friend against another good friend. I explained that to Ramsey, and, of course, Ramsey was a big enough man so that he understood. Ramsey was elected that year. He came to me later to my surprise and thanked me for not letting my name be put into nomination. I said, "Why?" He said, "Because you would have been elected." I said, "Oh, no!" He said, "Yes, you would. I've been up twice and haven't been elected, and if I had not made it

this time, that would have been the end." I said, "Well, you're a very gracious man, but if I had been nominated you would still have been elected." In Miami Beach he was elected for his second term. He was sitting on the platform, and I went over and said, "Ramsey, who's going to nominate you?" He said, "Nobody, I don't know." I said, "You mean you haven't seen to it that somebody's going to nominate you?" He said, "No." I said, "You know, somebody might get up and nominate somebody else." So I said, "I'll just nominate you," which I did. It was a foregone conclusion, but I put his name up and he was reelected.

On the way back to the hotel that day I told my wife, "You know, Hon, I've refused for six years now, every two years, to let my name be put in nomination. My good friend Ramsey will be through at the end of this year, and I somehow have a feeling that it might be the time for me to let my name be put up. So, while I wouldn't turn my little finger to get nominated, if somebody wants to nominate me a year from now, I'm going to let them do it." I never said anything to anybody else about it. I guess it was in January following that time that I got a phone call one day from Wayne Dehoney. He was at Jackson, Tennessee, then. He said, "Some of us feel that you should be the next president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and I'm calling to ask if you will give your permission for your name to be placed in nomination." I said, "Well, Wayne, I told Frances a year ago that I would not try to get anybody to nominate me, but if anybody wanted to I would permit it because I have the feeling this time that I ought to let my name go up, whether I'm elected or not. So I will agree to my name being put up. But I tell you now, I won't do one thing to get elected." He said, "Well, you don't have to, you just leave it to your friends." He said, "Who would you like to have nominate you?" I said, "Well, I can think of a lot of people, but I might just as well be practical." And I said, "Carl Bates is from Mississippi, he has been pastor in Florida and Texas, and now he is in North Carolina. He has contact with all parts of the Convention, he has been all over the Convention speaking, he's known by the people, and a good friend of mind. I think Carl would be the man I'd choose." He said, "Well, that's all I want to know." In a few days I got a letter from Carl. I'm sure Wayne called him. He was asking if he might have the privilege of nominating me. I wrote him back and granted it.

It just happened that when we got to St. Louis he was elected president of the Pastors' Conference. He didn't know if it was the proper thing for a man who had just been elected president of the Pastors' Conference to nominate somebody for president of the Convention. He came and talked to me about it. I said, "Well, Carl, do what you think you must do and what's right, but I don't see the impropriety in your nominating me if you feel that you'd still like to do it. That's your problem." He said, "Well, that is my problem." And I said, "Well, I don't think there'd be any reason for you not doing it, if that's the only thing." So he went ahead and nominated me.

Word gets around through the Baptist papers as to who is likely to be nominated a given year. So word had gotten around that I was probably going to be nominated. Usually when you elect a new president you'll have ten or twelve people nominated,

but that year there was only three nominated: Roy McClain, W. O. Vaught, and myself. It isn't a good idea, but they did it nevertheless. When each man was nominated, their supporters would clap. They've since asked them not to do that. Anyway, that year they did. Well, Roy McClain got a very light hand. W. O. Vaught got a medium sort of hand. I got a heavy hand. So they had the ballots and they were marked. Usually you vote in the morning and in the afternoon they'll announce who was elected, and if there is to be a runoff. As soon as Roy McClain saw the situation he withdrew his name before the ballot, because it was evident he was not going to get it on the basis of that support he received. So they took the vote, they just had two men to vote on. Incidentally, Vaught and I are good friends; we were classmates in the seminary. Usually, as I said, it would be in the afternoon before they'd give the results. But within ten minutes, they came back and announced that I had been elected. Later on there was some question raised--one of the editors wrote an editorial about it. The chairman of the Talley Committee told me that what happened was that they got into a room, and first thing they did was to separate the ballots in the Hobbs pile and in the Vaught pile. When they got through, the Hobbs pile was way up high and the Vaught pile was very small. So they said, "Well, there's no need of waiting to announce the results, but we can count the ballots for record later." That's why in ten minutes they came back and announced I was elected.

Russell Dunbar, who's been bringing us this coffeepot down here, was at the Convention. My secretary wanted to go, Lucy Gibson. I wouldn't let her, and afterwards she wept about it. She said, "You're going to be elected and I want to be there and see it." I said, "Lucy, if you don't want me elected, a good way to keep me from being elected is for you to go. I know how these things work. Somebody would get the word going around, and it will sweep the lobbies of the hotels like wildfire that Hobbs is so sure of it he even brought his secretary along ready to go to work. I said, "Now if I'm elected you can go the next year, but you can't go to this one." One of my deacons came around and said, "I'm going to get a busload of deacons, I hear you're going to be nominated. We're going to take them up there and work the lobbies." I said, "Well, Deacon, if you don't want me elected, that's the best way I know of for you to keep me from being elected. If you want me elected, you fellows stay at home."

So I kept my word to Wayne. I don't know anything else anybody did, but I didn't do one thing. I've already indicated that I think one reason why I was elected--by apparently a very sizeable majority and on the first ballot--the first time I had ever been nominated, was because of my exposure to the Convention. I was "The Baptist Hour" preacher; I had written a good many books, and had spoken just about all over the Convention, in state conventions and evangelistic conferences. So I was known to the rank and file of the people who were there and eligible to cast ballots. There were several of our members there--usually several go every year--and that particular morning they said, "Let's all sit together." So we were sitting together, and as soon as the ballots were taken up, one of the ladies said, "I left my car at a meter where you have to put a dime in every two hours. I've got a dime in the meter." So Mr. Dunbar said, "I'll go with you." When they came back, they said, "Where are Dr. and Mrs. Hobbs?" And the others said,

"Oh, you missed everything. They've already announced that he was elected, and they've already presented them to the Convention and he's back in a press conference."

Well, it's a rather hair-raising experience--that press conference. John Hurt of the Baptist Standard has asked all the former presidents to write a 350-word article for him. He's going to start running them the first of April leading up to the Convention in Dallas. It was to be on "I Remember." Some of the things that you most remember about the Convention when you were president. Well, the first thing I'm going to mention is that I remember the terrifying experience of sitting out there with twelve or fifteen thousand Baptists, just Mr. Anonymous. All of a sudden, you are Mr. Baptist, Mr. Southern Baptist. Now you know that you're not, and all the Baptists know you're not, but to the press of the nation, you are Mr. Southern Baptist. You can't even comb your hair without it being an official act of the Southern Baptist Convention. That's the attitude that the press takes. They don't understand us Baptists. And so it was quite a terrifying experience. To make matters worse, the famous trip by bus through Alabama was going on.

T: You mean the "Freedom Ride?"

H: Yes. They turned the bus over one time, and I don't know what all. But, anyway, these reporters knew I was from Alabama, and they asked me about that. Well, I didn't want to say anything that would hurt and offend my friends in Alabama. After all, I love my native state as anybody else does his. Yet I had to be open and frank and express my own opinion. I simply told them this. I said, "I think that we are never going to solve the race problem from federal government action or on a national basis. We've got to have certain laws, I know, but ultimately it's going to have to be on a face-to-face basis. Each community has its own peculiar problems, and each one is going to have to work out its own problems. I don't think there is any solution just broadside for the whole nation. The problems in Birmingham are quite different from those in Detroit or New York City." That's when the New York Times came out and described me as a "gradualist." I clearly let it be known that I was for the Supreme Court ruling and for integration. But I felt that it should be done on a more gradual basis lest we do more harm than good in the long run. One religious writer for the Courier Journal in Louisville came out with a story in which he said that I was a fence straddler. I've learned since then that he writes every article about religion with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. I wouldn't have known about it except that Chauncey Daley of the Western Recorder wrote an editorial, a real sharp editorial, refuting what he had said. He said that I was not a fence straddler, that I was a middle-of-the-road conservative, that I answered every question clearly, didn't try to evade or avoid any issue; but that it just happened that I was stating my position, and he knew me well enough to know that was my position and not just being a fence straddler. So that's how I came to be elected president.

T: Some have indicated that W. O. Vaught ran several times and made a real effort to try to be elected. Do you know anything about that?

H: All I know is hearsay. The hearsay that I have would indicate that, though I don't know it to be a fact. I was told that one man made the statement that he

was asked to go to St. Louis ahead of time and do some work locally. Though he didn't want to do it, he did it out of friendship. I was told also that Dr. Vaught stayed on that night and had the Prayer of Dedication for foreign missionaries. He was one of our vice-presidents of the Convention at the time. Then I never saw him anymore. He left. I learned later that he went home. I guess he led in this prayer on Tuesday night and Wednesday morning he went home and was there for prayer meeting Wednesday night. Whether he made some statements or not, it was reported he made some statements not in the best of taste. Of course, he and I are still friends. It doesn't make any difference to me. He was disappointed, I am sure of that, as any man would be. But I'm this way. I don't seek anything like that, but then when I do, like, for instance, if I did let my name go up, then I want to win. I'm just that much of a fighter, although I abhor any politics or any promoting of oneself or even a group promoting somebody other than maybe letting it be known that he is available, and I'm going to vote for him if he's nominated or something like that. But campaign, letter-writing, and things like that? Oh no. I abhor that.

T: He tried again in 1963 to be elected.

H: I'd forgotten that, but I guess it's true. I was chairman of the Program Committee of the Executive Committee prior to my election. And since that is about the hardest working committee connected with the Executive Committee, I felt that I should let Porter Routh know that I had agreed to let my name be placed in nomination. I talked with him and told him that. I said, "Now, of course, that doesn't mean I'm going to be elected, but I did want you to know it." He said, "Well, I think you will be elected. From my position I have observed that there are some men always running and never elected. But there's a man going on about his business, just doing the job that he's asked to do by Southern Baptists, asking no favors, just doing his job. Then all of a sudden things begin to fall into place and that's his year. I see that for you." Well, as it turned out he was right. But it does illustrate the principle that for a man to be known to be running for the job, it's fatal, it's almost like the kiss of death. If the messengers find that out, then he just as well not be nominated.

T: There were a couple of other things that happened at that Convention in 1961 in St. Louis when you were elected. One was Olan M. Kennedy, at that time in Texas. He made an amendment to the constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention to delete the word in the purpose that it would be for Baptists in the United States and its territories. Did you know anything about the background in that resolution and that amendment to the constitution?

H: Now that has to do with places where we could carry on Baptist work?

T: Right. The constitution reads in Article II that the purpose of the Convention is to provide a general organization for Baptists in the United States and its territories for the promotion of Christian missions, and so on, and so on.

H: Well, of course, knowing Kennedy--originally when I first came to know him he was pastor of the Powderly Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He followed

a brother-in-law of mine, Henry L. Lyon, Jr. We've been talking about Henry L. Lyon, III, now I'm talking about his daddy. Kennedy at that time, as I recall, was pastor out in the Washington-Oregon area, am I right?

T: I think he was in Amarillo. He did go later out to Oregon-Washington.

H: Well, maybe so, but anyway it was related to the effort on the part of some to get Southern Baptists to move into Canada. We had some Southern Baptist churches up there, I mean that had the same faith and all we had. They preferred to be a part of the Southern Baptist Convention rather than the Canadian group, and they wanted to be a part of the Washington-Oregon Convention. The question was, Did our constitution allow us to accept churches into any one of our Southern Baptist state conventions that were not in the Continental United States or some of its territory? And that was an effort to remove that barrier so that these Canadian churches could become a part of the Southern Baptist Convention. Southern Baptist leadership, generally, I think, was opposed to it because they did not want to do anything that would harm the relationship between Southern Baptists and Canadian Baptists.

T: Do you remember any of the background? It came up the next year in 1962 and was referred to the Executive Committee by a very narrow vote and subsequently never approved. Do you know any of the background at all on how this was achieved and the basis of the opposition?

H: No, I don't. I was so involved by that time in other matters that things like that were not very important to me, at least they didn't seem to be. I had nothing to do with that; I knew nothing about what was being done. They brought that to the Convention, it was referred to the Executive Committee, and then it pretty well died at that point.

T: I suppose that the thing that your days as president are best remembered for were a controversy that erupted in 1961 and came to the fore in 1962 relating to professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Seminary, Dr. Ralph Elliott. Can you relate how that issue first came to your attention? What was the Elliott Controversy?

H: Well, the truth of the matter is, I knew Ralph Elliott or I knew about him. I had never met him personally. When I was elected president of the Convention, I did not know that he had written a book called The Message of Genesis, I had not heard of it. It was not really until in the fall of 1961 that that really began to be an issue. I guess it took that time for the book to get out and be read and the brethren to begin their efforts to refute it.

Before we get into that I'd like to mention another matter that came up chronologically in my presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention. This had to do with a controversy centering around Dale Moody, Professor of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville. Immediately after being elected to the presidency of the Convention, Mrs. Hobbs and I went with a party that had already been set up on a trip to Europe and the Holy Land. It had been built around T. B. Lackey and me, he as Executive Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of

Oklahoma and I as the one who would be the teacher of Bible on the trip. So I debated about whether I should go after being elected to the position, but decided that I should. After all, the tour was built largely around my teaching the Bible to the people, plus the fact that I decided I could make it a duty or a service of the newly elected president by making it a point of visiting the missionaries in the areas where we would be going. Most of the places where we were going did have missionaries. So we went.

It was in London on our way back that Dr. Lackey came to me with the copy of a Baptist Press release which had been sent to him by Albert McClellan, telling about the fact that Dale Moody had stirred up a hornet's nest among some of the Oklahoma Baptist pastors while at Oklahoma Baptist University for a summer school term for preachers. One day after lunch, I learned later, he and some of the preachers got out under an oak tree and were having a session. Dale had his Greek New Testament in his hand. I don't know who these preachers were, but I assume that most of them were certainly not affluent in Greek, and many of them perhaps wouldn't know a Greek word from a hole in the ground. Anyway, in that enthusiastic way that is so characteristic of Dale Moody, it got into a discussion, almost an argument with these preachers. Dale is a kind of fellow that comes out of his corner with both fists up, he comes out fighting. I say that in love, because I have a lot of admiration and love for Dale. But at the same time, I was told that he would shake that dog-eared Greek New Testament of his in some of their faces, and say, "You don't know the Greek. The Greek says so and so." I don't know exactly what all the controversy was about, I mean what their discussion was about. But I do know that Dale has some views that most Southern Baptist preachers would not hold to. One is with relation to the security of the believer; he does not believe in the security of the believer. At least he did not at that time; I don't know what he believes now.

Anyway, this article told about how a group of Oklahoma Baptist pastors were all stirred up, including Sam Scantlan, who was on the state staff. Sam was one of those former oil field hands who was converted late in life, went to OBU, and was on the state staff as one of our state mission workers. Sam was pretty well wrought up about it. Dr. Lackey and I were laughing about what was going on back at home. I got back home on Saturday night. Then I preached on Sunday, and on Monday morning I came into my study. You can imagine the mail piled on my desk. I had left shortly after being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Such a person's mail normally runs high, but at that time here were letters of congratulation and everything you could think of. So I was sitting there just trying to find my desk on Monday morning under all that pile of mail, when the phone rang and one of the pastors told me, "There's been a controversy going on centered around Dale Moody and some things that happened at the OBU summer school for preachers. They're bringing up a resolution at the Pastors' Conference this morning for action, and I thought it's possible you may have to face this problem in the Southern Baptist Convention somewhere, and that you might want to be there to hear what goes on." So I went. Otherwise I wouldn't have even been there. They had discussed and agreed on charges to bring against Dale the week before when I was in England. A committee had been appointed and it had put in writing the charges that had already been agreed upon. It wasn't a matter of voting to

adopt the report of the committee. They had merely put in writing what the group had already voted on the week before. But they read their report, and the question was over what to do with it. One group of hotheads wanted to release it to the press. There's always that element, you know. They want to get it out in the public press. Another element, and it proved to be the stronger element, wanted to give it to Dr. Duke McCall, president of the seminary, and let him handle it any way he saw fit, either personally or through his trustees, which is the proper way to handle such matters. McCall was coming down the next week to preach at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly. It was even discussed that we did not want to present this to him until after he got through with his week of preaching, because "he's to be here on a spiritual, Christian mission, and we don't want to disturb him." That was agreed on. One of the what I would call the so-called fire-eaters was the fellow that brought that up. He pointed out that the resolution should not be presented to him--this was after it was voted--until after he had finished his work. Anyway, the thing we were voting on was not whether to approve the charges, but what to do with the documents containing the charges that had been made: whether to release it to the public press or to give it to the president of the Seminary. When they called for a vote, the motion was to give it to McCall. "All in favor of the motion, lift your right hand." Well, I was sitting there with my hand on the back of the empty seat next to me, and I just raised it, didn't even take my elbow off the seat. I would vote that way every hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days in a year. Any matter like that should be turned over to the head of the institution and handled through regular channels, rather than to be released first of all to the public press, not even to the Baptist Press, but to the public press. It was clearly understood that this was to be kept quiet until after McCall had finished his week, that everybody knew that it was not to be released in the form of a story.

Wednesday morning I got a phone call from Erwin McDonald, who was the editor of the Arkansas Baptist Magazine, saying he had received this story from the Baptist Press and wanted to know about it. I hit the ceiling. Not only because the story had been released, but in the story it said that the vote was on whether or not to approve the charges made against Dale Moody. That wasn't the issue at all. The issue was what to do with the charges that had already been agreed upon the week before and put into written form. And it said that, after saying the vote was on approving the charges against Dr. Moody, "Dr. Herschel Hobbs, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was present and voted for the resolution." Well, I didn't vote for the resolution at all. I voted for what to do with the resolution. I'm not blaming anybody, it was just one of those things. It got garbled some way. Well, anyway, I said, "Erwin, I hope you won't run it." He said, "Well, all the other editors have it, and they'll run it, and I've got to run it." I said, "Well, I'm going to write an article and send it out explaining what happened." Even so, it was a week between the time they read that story and the time they read my article.

I called W. C. Fields--I taught W. C. in Louisiana College, and I've always felt like he was one of my boys--I said, "W. C., you've released this story that came out of Oklahoma City." Now W. C. didn't write it, but he got the story and released it. I said, "You've released this story out of Oklahoma City, and without

checking the facts. It is entirely untrue, it doesn't present the picture as it is." I said, "You've called me long distance about things that were of such little importance. They could have been answered by mule mail. But here's an item that could split the Southern Baptist Convention, and you don't even have the courtesy to call me and ask me, 'Is this true?'" I said, "Even the secular AP-UPI people would do that, they would release both sides of the story in the same story and let people judge for themselves. As it is the best I can do, it will be a week after this is published before my story gets out, and you know what will break loose in between." He apologized all over the place, and I said, "Well, now, let me tell you something. I appreciate that, but that doesn't solve this problem. From now on, don't you ever release a story about me while I'm president of the Southern Baptist Convention that involves any kind of controversial possibility without first checking with me." He said that he wouldn't, and of course, he didn't. I mean he followed that.

Well, anyway, E. S. James got his copy down at the Baptist Standard in Dallas, and he got out a tracer to find Dale Moody, and located him at Glorieta Assembly. Dale was out there speaking. He didn't have his files there, he didn't know what was going on. As he told me later, he said, "I remembered you and I spent two hours and a half in your hotel in St. Louis one day arguing over the security of the believer." I'd written a little Studies in Hebrews book which was the Bible Study Week book back in 1954 or 1955, I forget which. It was very strongly against the idea of a person being saved and lost again. So he and I had quite an argument. He said, "I remembered that, and I just thought that maybe you'd held that against me all these years; and now when you got into position to do something about it, you let me have it." I said, "Well, Dale, I'm sorry you don't have any better opinion about me than to think that I would do such a thing." But anyway, out there in Glorieta, not knowing anything about what had happened, he had just surmised the worst, you know. And you know Dale. He struck back. I don't remember what he said now, but it was something cutting about me. Anyway, he went on home to Louisville. When I got this call from McDonald, I immediately called Duke McCall and explained to him. He hadn't heard about it. I explained to him what had happened, I said, "Duke, I'm calling to apologize to you, to the seminary, to the trustees, and to Dale Moody." But I said, "This is not a true story. I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do about it except to call and apologize." He said, "Well, you don't have to apologize to us. I've had enough experience with the press to know that you can't believe verbatim everything they say." I said, "I know, but the people who read it will."

Anyway, when Dale got home, he and Duke McCall were together, and evidently talking about this. McCall said, "Well, now, don't pick a fight with the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, because you can't win against that office."

Well, of course, my article went out and explained the thing. In the meantime, I had gotten letters that would blister the paint off a barn door from a few people. When my explanation went out, I got some thanking me. In Memphis, in September of that year, they had the first Southwide Men's Convention. Dale and I were both on the program. I wrote ahead and told him, "Dale, I think you and I need to get together and talk." He came to my room one night at 9 o'clock and stayed

until 2:30 the next morning. Most of the time we were just having a ball, laughing and talking, and visiting, and arguing over theology as we often do. But once he knew the situation, it was a laughing matter. But it was a pretty tragic thing at the moment.

The funny thing is that almost two years later, after I finished my second year as president, the editor of the Illinois Baptist, L. H. Moore, again a good friend of mine, wrote an editorial complimenting me on my handling of the Convention in Kansas City, and how fair I was in San Francisco and at Kansas City. He ended the editorial by saying that it was quite a different Herschel Hobbs from the one who signed the resolution charging Dale Moody with certain things two years ago. You see, by that time, I had signed the resolution. I didn't just vote for it, I had signed it. Yet, people wonder when we talk about how the original text of the Scriptures got corrupted by copists! I wrote Moore, "You know, the first duty of an editor who writes an editorial should be to do his homework. You haven't done yours. If you had gone back and checked your own paper you would have noted that I wrote an article in which I explained what happened. The worst that was ever said about it was that I voted for it--something I did not do. But here you come out and say that I signed it." I have seen Moore, we have talked and laughed about different things, but I have never received one scratch of a pen or a pencil in reply to my letter. One of the weaknesses for the "fourth estate" is that they'll make blunders and put them on the front page or editorial page, but if they ever put in a correction it's back where nobody will ever find it; oftentimes, as in this case, they ignore it altogether. A hundred years from now people will read that issue of that paper, and they will say, "That guy Hobbs must have been a first-class nut." I want this in this oral history because it was a misunderstanding all the way around. It made me look like a fool, because it looked like I voted to approve the charges when I was in Europe and never heard one word that was said. I may not have much sense, but I've got more sense than to do that. But I know that Southern Baptists are God's people, because they can do so many fool things, and still somehow land on their feet and keep going.

T: What happened in this Moody controversy? How was it finally cleared up?

H: It was nothing. It was like so many things. It was like an Indian who was asked to describe a sermon he heard a white man preach. He said, "Heap big wind, much lightning, loud thunder, no rain." There was a lot of noise made, but that was the end of it. In fact, let me say this. The man who wrote the story was asked why he even included my name in it at all as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He said, "Without that, I had no story. It would have just been a bunch of Oklahoma City preachers fighting among themselves." But that made his story. I have often said that if there is any way of calling institutions under judgment at the judgment bar of God, the press media is going to have to stand judgment for a lot of things it has done. I was chairman of the Committee on Baptist State Papers for several years. I asked to be released only a year or so ago. But I think that one of the problems of our state papers is that the standard of journalism that they follow is patterned after the world and not after the kingdom of God and Christian ethics.

T: Was that Theo Sommerkamp who wrote that article?

H: No. Actually it was Bob Matthews who is with The Baptist Messenger. The editor told him to write it, and I don't think he was at the meeting. That is how the thing got twisted. It wasn't any intentional thing. It was just one of those things. But it was a good thing the editor, who is a good friend of mine, was at Falls Creek when that broke, or I might have been put in jail for assault and battery. I was so wrought up at the time, because it was a very serious matter. As it turned out it was all right. But at that time you just couldn't predict what could happen. Now we were talking earlier about the Elliott matter, but I wanted to get this other on record.

T: Would the Elliott controversy, in part, have saved Moody, so to speak, the fact that this came up and attracted attention, pushing Moody's experience in the background?

H: I rather suspect that to be true. It's like in Denver when some of the brethren came out there with blood in their eye for Foy Valentine and the Christian Life Commission over that famous seminar they had in Atlanta, where they had the editor of Playboy Magazine there to debate with some of our most capable men in the fields of ethics. I personally thought it was a good thing to show that magazine and its editor up as the phonies they are. But there was an element that was wrought up about it, and they were out for blood when they got to Denver. But by that time the Broadman Commentary, Volume I had taken the headlines. I was told that Foy Valentine walked up to Jim Sullivan in the hotel lobby, shook hands with him, and said, "The Lord provided a sacrifice." Sullivan and the Sunday School Board were on the altar instead of Valentine and the Christian Life Commission.

T: I wanted to ask you about that event and the involvement of the four presidents in this resolution, but let's go back to the Elliott controversy. This controversy broke with Dr. Moody in the early summer. When did you become aware of the Elliott problem?

H: In September, as I recall. As I said, by that time, the book had been published, was out, people had read it, and opinions were crystallizing, and the ultraconservatives were beginning to make their voices heard. I have said many times that the book by Ralph Elliott, The Message of Genesis, was the occasion but not the cause of that turbulent period. It was something like a thunderhead that had been building up for a long time. There had been the idea that Southern Baptists were growing more liberal. So this merely furnished an occasion for the lid to blow off. It caused great concern. For instance, when the Executive Committee met in Nashville, I guess it was in September, the pot was beginning to boil. I asked the seminary presidents to be my guests at breakfast one morning.

T: This was after K. Owen White's article, "Death in the Pot"?

H: I think it was--yes. Didn't his article come out in August or early September?

At this breakfast we talked about this situation and how the faculties were being involved. I said, "Brethren, I've got more to do than I can do, and I am not asking for another job; but if you think it will help the situation, I will, upon your invitation and no other way, come to your campus at a set time and meet with you and your faculty, and we will just talk about our problems in theological education and doctrinal matters." The presidents, to a man, jumped at it like a hungry dog after a piece of bread.

So, subsequently, I went and visited every one of the six seminaries. I spent anywhere from two and one-half to four and one-half hours, depending on the size of the faculty and where I figured maybe some of the problems might lie. I would spend the first hour and one-half just talking to them about Southern Baptists, about the problem, and about the causes of it as I understood it. For one thing, I said, "You men think you are in touch with the people but you are not." Without exception, they took exception to that statement. They said, "We are out preaching all the time." I said, "Yes, you fly into the city. Somebody meets you at the airport, or you may get a limousine into the hotel. Sunday morning you go over to the church about 10:30, go back to the hotel, eat lunch, and take a nap. Then you get up and go over and preach that night, and go back to the hotel. The next morning you get on a plane and fly home, and you say you have been with the people." I said, "You haven't touched the hem of the garment. You have no more idea what the people are thinking than the man in the moon."

I said, "Another thing that I think is the problem is the terminology you use, for instance," I said, "the word 'myth.'" I didn't elaborate. I knew they knew what I was talking about. I just went on. Well, I would talk for an hour and a half, and then throw the meeting open for discussion--questions, answers, rebuttal--and we would just have a good time together. Everywhere I went these men would have somebody get up and say to me how much they appreciated my coming and spending that time. "We never thought we would see the day when the president of the Southern Baptist Convention would spend this much time to come and show interest in our work and our problems." I found that the seminary professors were arguing among themselves a whole lot more than the brethren out in the Convention were arguing about what the seminary professors were saying and doing.

I wanted to be able when we went to San Francisco to say, Not "I think," but "I know from experience, because I have spent this time with these men and women. I have talked with them." I wanted to be able to say what I expected to be true. And I found out it was true, that about three to five percent of our professors were the ones that were getting a little off base in some of the things they said and did, and keeping us all in a stew and a stir. But that ninety-five percent or more were back in their classrooms teaching exactly what Southern Baptists would like to have taught. They were doing their job, but they were not heard from. They were not getting any publicity. For instance, in one seminary, I knew that when I threw it open for discussion exactly who would be the first person to speak, and I knew what he would talk about.

T: Is this Southern Seminary?

H: Yes. So when I got through and I threw it open for discussion this man said, "Now you mentioned the word 'myth.'" He said, "Now the Greek word mythos means . . ." I said, "I know what the word mythos means. I also know what the word 'myth' means to European theologians. I know what it means to British theologians. I know what it means even to American theologians. But I also know what it means to the average Southern Baptist--it means 'fairy tale.' And no matter what it means to you, when you say it you are saying what it means to the people who hear you say it. When you speak of the 'myth of creation' or the 'myth of the flood or the myth of the virgin birth,' you are saying to them the fairy tale of it. Something that isn't true." I said, "Now you can go on using that word if you want to." I said, "Of all people, you ought to know that a word in this country may mean one thing and in another country may mean something else." I said, "That word 'myth' is a dirty word in the theological vocabulary of Southern Baptists. You can go on using it if you want to, but you can prepare to be in hot water up to your ears among Southern Baptists as long as you do." So this man replied, "I have a book with the publisher now that has the word all the way through it. What other word would I use?" I said, "What's wrong with the word the 'epic' of creation?" "Oh, but," he said, "'Epic' means . . ." I said, "I know what 'epic' means, but it's better than 'myth.'" "But," I said, "What's wrong with the good old cornbread and buttermilk statement, 'the Genesis account of creation'?" He said, "Well, I've got a book with a publisher now that has this word all the way through it. What am I going to do?" I said, "I don't know, but you might call the publisher and tell him to 'hold the presses,' and let you take that word out." When the book finally came out I perhaps wouldn't have bought it otherwise, but I bought it and read it, and the word "myth" wasn't in it.

After the meeting was over I was swamped by professors thanking me for what I had done. They said, "We have argued with that man until we are blue in the face, but it is just one colleague arguing with another. For the first time, we have seen him set back on his heels. When the president of the Southern Baptist Convention looked him in the eye and said what you said to him tonight, it is the first time that we have seen him set back on his heels." So that is why I say that the professors argue among themselves. The strange thing is, this man in some quarters has the reputation of being somewhat liberal in his views. He uses a terminology that is strange sounding to some ears, but those who know him well say that he is almost a Schofield Bible man in his fasic faith. So that was one way that I tried as president to come at this problem--to interpret Southern Baptist thinking to the Seminary faculty, and then later to interpret the faculties' thinking to the Convention.

T: Have you heard the story that Dr. Elliott's book The Message of Genesis was a book requested by some of the seminary professors for use as a textbook?

H: No, but I'm not surprised.

T: I'm asking is that true?

H: I do not know that that is true. But if it were, I wouldn't be surprised, because Ralph Elliott was sort of a cat's paw in a way, and I will explain that a little later on. Another thing that we sought to do: Porter Routh and Albert McClellan came to Oklahoma City one day and spent the whole afternoon with me in my study. We were talking and praying about what approach we could make in San Francisco to prevent an explosion and what some were predicting might well be the split of the Southern Baptist Convention.

T: Now, chronologically, about when would this have been when they came out? In the spring of 1963?

H: No. It was in the spring of 1962. My wife and I had been to Latin America and Europe in February or March, so it was in April when they came out. Finally, Porter Routh said, "Well, they are saying that Southern Baptists are becoming more liberal in theology, and the best way to find out, it seems to me, is to have a committee to study the 1925 Statement of Baptist Faith and Message, and find out if they are. Are we too far to the left, or are they too far to the right, or what?" So we discussed that idea and came up with the procedure to recommend to the Executive Committee that they recommend to the Convention a committee to be appointed to make a study of the 1925 Statement of Baptist Faith and Message, and to report to the 1963 Convention, and that the committee be composed of the presidents of the state conventions, which qualified under the bylaws to be represented--you have to have a certain number of members in your convention to be qualified. The idea of using the presidents was to get as close to the grass roots as we could. We figured that the man who enjoyed enough confidence of the people in his state to be elected their president the previous fall would be the best way to get at that grass-roots thinking. So then it was decided to recommend that the president of the Convention be the chairman. We felt that the theological education family should be represented, so we were going to recommend that the presidents of the six seminaries be on the committee. Well, we went to San Francisco. Word by that time had gotten around that we were going to make such a recommendation. The night before the Executive Committee was to meet. The next morning, in fact, E. S. James, C. R. Daley, Joe Odle of the Mississippi Baptist Record, and several others, came to me in the lobby of the hotel, and said, "We've supported you and we want to keep on doing it. But if you come into the Convention with a recommendation that this committee be set up to include the presidents of the seminaries, we are going to have to oppose it." James put it this way, "If the Baptist Standard were being investigated, I should not be on the investigating committee. Whether right or wrong, this problem swirls around the seminaries--at least, one seminary--and that makes them all suspect in a way to so many people. The presidents of the seminaries are involved, and in a sense they are a part of the problem that we are trying to solve." Well, that made sense to me. So I went to the committee that we had set up, an ad hoc committee. We were having breakfast the next morning before going to the Executive Committee, to be sure we had everything the way we wanted it. I walked in there, and after we got through eating I got and spoke to the group a little bit. I told them about this experience and that I agreed with the editors, and I thought we ought to drop the seminary presidents' names. And almost to the man, as if one person, they gave a sign of relief. They said, "We've been feeling that way, but we just did not feel that we should be the ones to suggest

it." So unanimously we agreed not to include their names. It went to the Executive Committee that way and from there to the Convention. When it was presented to the Convention by the Executive Committee, J. T. Ford, who was then pastor in Atlanta, Georgia, got up and made a motion that the six seminary presidents be included--moved to amend and somebody seconded it. When they voted the amendment lost almost one hundred percent--not quite. That showed the wisdom of not having their names on there. The Convention did not want those men--good as they are--on this committee. Well, the committee was set up. In the meantime, Dr. K. Owen White made his motion that the Convention go on record as reaffirming its faith in the Bible and instructing the agencies--I don't recall the wording--to operate in keeping with the accepted Baptist beliefs. Do you have it there?

T: Yes. He moved that the messengers to the Convention by standing vote reaffirm their faith in the entire Bible as the authoritative, authentic, and infallible Word of God; that we express our abiding and unchanging objection to the dissimilation of theological views in any of our seminaries which would undermine such faith in the historical accuracy and doctrinal integrity of the Bible; and that we kindly, but firmly, instruct the trustees and administrative offices of our institutions and other agencies to take such steps as shall be necessary to remedy at once those situations where such views now threaten our historic position. That is on page 65 of the 1962 Annual.

H: All right. I knew the substance but not all that detail. But the point is the first boo-boo I made as president of the Convention in presiding. Anybody that thinks he won't make one just better get up there and try it. It's like sitting at home watching one of these quiz shows on television, you think you know all the answers. But you get up there on the show, and you won't know some of them. When he made that motion there was a second, and I called for discussion and then a vote, and it was passed. A dear lady, I don't recall her name, but she was then the state president of the Woman's Missionary Union of Georgia, stood up and raised a point of order. Later, she told me that was the first time she had ever spoken out in the Southern Baptist Convention and that she was scared to death. She said, "Mr. President, do not the bylaws say that an item that is not on the adopted agenda must be submitted to the Committee on Order of Business, and they set a time for a hearing and announce it in advance?" I said, "Dear Lady, you are right. The Chair is in error, and I declare the action null and void." A no came from all over the house. But I said, "Now brethren, the Chair made an error, and I am admitting that I made it. If you want to vote to adopt this at a future time when the committee brings it back, you can still vote to adopt it. I am not undoing a thing you have done. I am merely saying we must do it according to the bylaws." So the committee then set a time to hear it--the next morning.

T: What you've just related does not appear in the Annual.

H: No. Nobody could ever get the history of the Southern Baptist Convention by reading the minutes of the Convention. That is why what you are doing is so valuable. They put down in one sentence what might have involved an hour of discussion and

debate, and maybe it is like open heart surgery on our denomination. We are right at where one was in process right there.

Anyway, that night I slept very little. That motion called for a reaffirmation of our faith in the Bible and so forth; and on the other hand, it called for instructing agencies--something that the Southern Baptist Convention is very reluctant to do. It isn't altogether true, but it almost has not instructed its agencies. It requests most of the time. Very seldom has it instructed. I could just see the Southern Baptist Convention the next day voting no to a motion that included a statement of reaffirmation of our faith in the Scriptures, and so on. And I could see headlines across the nation, "Baptists Vote Not to Approve or Reaffirm Their Faith in the Bible," and what would be happening in every Baptist home in America. Yet, I didn't know how to keep Southern Baptists from doing what they didn't want to do. So after an almost sleepless night, the next morning I was shaving, and it came to me like turning on a light inside my head. I know God put it there. I didn't have enough sense to think of it. It suddenly dawned on me that it was two motions. One was a motion to reaffirm; the other a motion to instruct. I came running out of the bathroom and told my wife, "Hon, God has given the answer." And I told her what it was. She said, "I think you're right." I went on out to the Convention hall. I wanted to talk to K. O. White. We had been friends through the years since Seminary days. I wanted to talk to K. O. about it and tell him what I was going to do; and I did. He said, "That's all right." So when the time came to hear that again, I got up and said, "The Chair is ruling that this is two motions." And I explained it. So we took a vote after discussion of the thing: number one, they voted to reaffirm the Scriptures, number two, they did not vote to instruct.

T: They changed the wording. The wording that the annual says, that we courteously request the trustees of our institutions to take such steps that shall be necessary to remedy at once those situations where such views now threaten . . . .

H: Now, that's it. They took the word "instruct" out.

T: This is on page 68 of the 1962 Annual.

H: I don't recall the detail on that, but I have an idea that my pointing out that was a motion to instruct may have put it in somebody's mind to get it removed. The day before, Dr. James had come to the Executive Committee. He said, "Brethren, I have read the president's address, and I notice it's on the agenda right after the miscellaneous business. I think if you will put that address before miscellaneous business it will maybe head off a lot of fireworks."

T: Who suggested this to you?

H: E. S. James suggested it to the Executive Committee. So they voted to request that the change be made. Therefore, I delivered my address before the first miscellaneous business session. I tried to go into this thing to bring elements of higher and historical criticism down to where people who had not been versed in that sort of thing could understand. Because that was being one of the centers

of attack on this whole movement. I tried to show that the Bible had benefited more than suffered from this type of study. So I don't know whether it tempered the tone of the thing or not; but we had very little problem. I think the proposal about this committee let the pressure off tremendously. It gave us a year to make a study. I shall always be grateful, and one has to be honest with himself and put aside what little false modesty he might have--I have never been accused of being overly loaded with it--but I tell people I have a semon on humility and how I obtained it. My text is Paul's words in Romans 12: "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think." It has five points: (1) I am humble; (2) I am getting humbler all the time; (3) I am proud of my humility; (4) I deserve a lot of credit for my humility, because I have so much of which to be proud; (5) even when I'm bragging I am humble, because I am a whole lot better than I say I am. I have never gotten up enough courage to preach that sermon, but I might as well leave it for posterity. Somebody might some day preach it.

In both cases--in San Francisco and Kansas City--I requested from the committee an hour for the president's address. Up to that time the president's address had been more of a formality and a little bit of an afterthought--sort of a State of the Union message, taking twenty to thirty minutes. Well, I asked for an hour. I wrote out both addresses, something I don't ordinarily do, and I told the Convention that I was doing it. I said, "Those who know me know I do not ordinarily do this, but I am doing it for three reasons: (1) before I speak I want to know what I am going to say; (2) while I am speaking I want to know what I am saying; (3) after I get through I want to be able to show what I said. Besides, I feel that I am going to be dealing with the very heart of our denomination, and I want to speak exactly. I can say much more in the time allotted by reading it than I can by doing it more or less extemporaneously." So for one hour, in each case, I read my address. In both cases, theConvention stood and gave me a standing ovation. In both cases, it was voted that these addresses be printed as a part of the Annual for that year.

I don't know if that had ever been done, and I am not sure that it has been done since. It was not so much the excellence of what I said, but I think the brethren recognized that here was an honest effort not to plow under something or to sweep it under the rug, but to come to grips with it. They responded to it because Southern Baptists love one another. We have our differences like a family does, but, you know, we get together and have a fight at the Convention, then we always sing, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," and go home friends. The world can't understand us. Anyway, we left that Convention with this committee. Now, immediately, the question was raised about having a committee like this to study our Statement of Faith.

T: Let me ask this about the Convention in 1962. Did you talk extensively with K. Owen White prior to the Convention?

H: No.

T: Did you know he was going to bring this resolution or did you just assume somebody would?

H: I assumed somebody would. I didn't know who was going to bring it. Nobody told me.

T: Were you ever invited to the meetings of the small group that proposed it?

H: No. I never was.

T: Did you know anybody who was invited?

H: No, no one who was, shall I say, officially connected with the Convention. I do know this. At the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference the day before the matter was to be brought up, two men got up. They just couldn't let it alone. It has always been a policy of the Pastors' Conference not to mess with matters that are coming up at the Convention. A man who was not a Southern Baptist was there as a guest to deliver some messages on the Holy Spirit.

T: That was Sidlow Baxter?

H: Yes. The man who arranged his invitation was C. Z. Holland of Arkansas. He was on the committee, by the way, to make the study. He was president of the Arkansas Convention at the time. And if you ever start out early some morning to shoot all the fools that day, don't shoot C. Z. Holland until late in the afternoon. Anyway, C. Z. came to me--we had been in the seminary at the same time, he was a year ahead of me--and he said, "I told Baxter, 'Now you are a guest and you stay out of our affairs. Southern Baptists will tend to their own affairs. Don't you mention that.'"

T: He's a Scottish pastor, is he? Or is he independent?

H: I think he's Scottish. At that time he was pastor of a church. I understand he's given it up not too long in the past now. But anyway, C. Z. said, "You stay out of this." Well, you know, an old firehorse smells the smoke, and he can't keep from running. I don't say this condemning the man, I say it, I think, with understanding because I know how it feels; there is no pain like the pain of undelivered speech. But he got off on that the afternoon before the Convention was to open that night, and the next morning this was to be brought up. Well, the brethren just said, "Amen, amen." Boy! They just took it up. "That's what we want to hear." I wasn't there. I had spoken to the pastors' conference. You know at the Convention the president is like a three-ring circus. I ran in and spoke and left immediately. I'd go to another meeting. So I was told later about Baxter and what he did. And then, bless his dear heart, Dr. R. G. Lee was to bring the closing address. Another firehorse smelled the smoke, and psychologically he just couldn't resist it, I guess. I saw him in Oklahoma City in 1949 hand over the gavel to a vice-president to plead with the Convention not to pass a motion to adopt the report of the T. C. Gardner Committee, which dealt with Baptists and what constituted a legitimate Southern Baptist, and the ordinances and all, which would most certainly have at least driven a wedge in Southern Baptist fellowship. I know Dr. Lee agreed with everything that Gardner had in his report.

T: Now that's not E. P. Alldredge you are thinking about?

H: No. I mean T. C. Gardner, who was then state Sunday School secretary for Texas, and his sister was Lee's educational director. So Dr. Lee, believing everything that was in that report about baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all, saw that it was a possibly divisive issue, and he surrendered the gavel in order to make a plea to the Convention not to adopt the report. The Convention voted it down on the basis of Dr. Lee's plea. He was president then, you see; now, he was just another preacher, and boy, his blood got hot and he coulda't stay away from it. He got up and preached, and, of course, you know how Dr. Lee can sway a crowd. I wasn't there now, I don't know--I'm just telling hearsay--but somebody who was there told me that some of those fellows were just absolutely down on the floor, beating on the floor, just like wild men. When I heard that it was just like sticking a knife in my gizzard. I thought, "Oh, my soul." I had heard Dr. Lee so often give an invitation. "Now brethren, if I were performing an open heart operation on your loved one, you wouldn't want somebody to bump my elbow. If you leave during this invitation, you are bumping my elbow, and I am dealing with a very delicate matter--the souls of men." Well, right at the time I was fixing to put the knife in, you see, well, he bumped my elbow. And I could see that Convention going forty ways from Sunday the next day. Actually, I just didn't have any hope that we would get through without a fight with blood up to our knees on the floor, and, sure enough, the split that some had been predicting--maybe it would come. But God works. He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. So through the workings of the Spirit of God and the plans that had been made, I think under his guidance, we came through the Convention in good style.

Now, the question was raised about the men who were on this committee. Were they capable of dealing with this very vital document? Shouldn't it have been done by technical theologians, teachers, and the like? That doesn't appear in the minutes now. That was just something that was spoken around. Maybe there was an editorial about it. Well, Dr. Jack Gritz of The Baptist Messenger asked his associate Bob Matthews to do some research, and then he wrote an article on the men on that committee, showing their theological training. To the surprise of a lot of people, there was a sizeable number of men on this committee with earned doctorates in the field of theology, Old and New Testament, and other things. Everybody except one man had a standard degree, Ph.D. or B.D. from one of our seminaries, and he even proved to give very valuable help in our study. When that article was published I think it helped to set at rest the fears or apprehension that were over the Convention about the qualifications of this committee to make a study of The Baptist Faith and Message. So the committee was called together for its first meeting in Nashville. We spent most of our time at that meeting discussing what the committee was to do, the authority we had, and what our instructions were from the Convention.

T: Would it be helpful here to have a list of the committee as they were appointed? Would there be some usefulness in your commenting on different of these people? You were chairman. The vice-chairman was Douglas Hudgins of Jackson, Mississippi--you have spoken of him several times. The secretary was Dick Hall, Jr., of Decatur, Georgia.

H: I earlier pointed out that Doug was Dr. Tribble's Fellow in Theology for a year, working on his graduate degree, but was called to the Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth and left the seminary. He did not finish his academic doctorate, but he was a man well-versed in that field. Dick Hall was at First Baptist Church in Decatur, Georgia, at the time and had his Ph.D. degree in New Testament Interpretation from Southern Seminary.

T: Howard M. Reeves of Mobile, Alabama?

H: He has a Ph.D. degree from Southern Seminary. I am not sure in what field, but he does have that degree.

T: We've talked of some of these men before, I know. Edward J. Packwood.

H: Packwood is a layman in Arizona, very wise and level-headed but not too much versed in theology. It is not his specialty, but he was a good member.

T: C. Z. Holland of Jonesboro, Arkansas?

H: Holland has his Th.M. from Southern Seminary, but don't let that fool you. He is a very studious man. You see him walk in and you think you are looking at Abraham Lincoln coming in the door, which shows you he will never win a beauty contest. But he's got brains inside that head. He still walks like he is walking across plowed ground--he is from Mississippi; he picks his feet up real high to keep the clods from hitting him, you know. But anyway, he was the pastor of First Baptist Church at Jonesboro, Arkansas. He is a constant reader and a student. He had been in Europe and had taken courses under some of the great teachers over there. Almost any subject we could bring up he could tell you, "Well now, in a certain book, so-and-so." He is a well-read man and a very valuable one on that committee.

T: W. B. Timberlake of Pomona, California?

H: Timberlake does not have an earned doctorate. He was a lawyer. He has a brother who is on the faculty at Oklahoma Baptist University in the Bible field. Dr. Timberlake went into the ministry after being a lawyer, and, like a lawyer, after everybody else was satisfied and ready to vote on something, he would want to split some hairs. You know that's the lawyer in a man. That's what we have lawyers for. At times we would wish that he would not say so much about something. We had worked until late at night on the ordinances and we came to the Lord's Supper, and I said, "Brethren, we are worn out physically and our minds are tired. Let's go to bed and tackle this when we are fresh in the morning." So we did. But during the night, Brother Hockensmith from Ohio wrote out a statement on communion, the Lord's Supper, which made it closed communion with two locks on the door. When he got through with it Timberlake said, "Brother Chairman, I'd like to say a word about that." I thought, "Well, here we go. He's going to side with him, and we'll be here all day on this." He said, "Now I like that statement, and it would suit California Baptists because that's what we believe and practice." But, he said, "We must remember that

we are not drawing up a Statement of Faith for California, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, or Virginia Baptists. We are drawing up one for Southern Baptists, and it will have to be broad enough that all Southern Baptists can live comfortably under it." I looked up to see if the Lord weren't coming through the ceiling. I knew the millennium had arrived. But I tell that to show you how considerate the members of the committee were of drawing up a statement that would be true to our beliefs, and yet would be of such nature that no man need compromise his conscience to live by it. If some of those who want to make a halter out of their statements had had the attitude that Timberlake had, who believe as strongly as they do about some things that they hold to; yet, he recognized the freedom of the competency of a soul in religion and respected it.

T: C. V. Coons from Washington, D. C.?

H: He was a layman and a good man, but not too conversant in the area we were working in.

T: Malcolm B. Knight of Jacksonville, Florida?

H: Pastor of Southside Baptist Church there. He has a Ph.D. in theology from Southern Seminary. He was a very good member of the committee.

T: Charles R. Walker from Marion, Illinois?

H: Walker had a standard seminary degree, and was a good member of the committee.

T: Walter R. Davis of Hammond, Indiana?

H: I don't remember too much about Brother Davis. You know, that's been thirteen years ago.

T: Did most of these men attend the meetings regularly?

H: Oh yes! But some of them were men I did not know particularly prior to that time.

T: Garth Pybas from Topeka, Kansas?

H: If Garth Pybas had a seminary degree I am not aware of it, but Garth had a clear mind and was very valuable to our committee in his insights.

T: V. C. Kruschwitz?

H: Verlin Kruschwitz at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, Severn's Valley Church, Th.D. degree from Southern Seminary, New Testament Interpretation. He was a very good strong man.

T: Luther B. Hall from Farmerville, Louisiana?

H: He was the only man on the committee that I know didn't have a seminary degree. He is a graduate of Louisiana College and a man that knows his Bible.

T: Was he a layman?

H: No. He is a pastor.

T: Did he feel he didn't have a seminary degree?

H: Well, he admitted it, but he sometimes would laugh and say, "Well, I don't have a seminary degree, you are talking above my head right now." But he did make a great contribution. I think one of the strengths of the committee was that it had men like that on there, because he looked at this thing from the standpoint of the man that never went to the seminary. I think that was one of the strengths of the committee itself to bring out a well-rounded statement.

T: Robert Woodward of Frederick, Maryland?

H: Woodward, I think, had his earned doctorate, and he was a very sharp man. I noticed he has recently gone to a church somewhere else. Some people think of men over in that part as being more liberal than the other parts, but he is open-minded. I think he is what I would like to be classified as a progressive conservative.

T: Paul Weber, Jr., from Springfield, Missouri?

H: He was a very good man and had his standard seminary degree. He was outspoken, but level-headed.

T: When you use the term outspoken, do you mean willing to challenge?

H: Yes, and willing to speak his own ideas, not just to sit there and listen. But he participated in the discussions. We went over that statement word-by-word, not line-by-line, and we worked for a whole year, you see. We would meet for days in a week from early morning until late at night, just taking off for meals. We studied that thing word-for-word; and where there was any question, we checked it with the Scriptures. I had my Greek New Testament there by my side all the time, and it got to be sort of a joke. They'd say, "All right, Hobbs, get out your Greek New Testament," and we'd examine this in the Greek New Testament to be sure that it was what we wanted to say.

T: R. A. Long of Roswell, New Mexico?

H: I don't recall too much about him. He was a standard seminary graduate.

T: Okay. You mentioned Nane Starnes from Asheville, North Carolina.

H: Yes. He had a standard seminary degree, Th.M. from Southern Seminary.

T: Did he pastor First Baptist Church over there?

H: No. I forget the name of it. It was not First Baptist, but a good strong church.

T: Then you mentioned previously C. H. Hockensmith from Columbus, Ohio.

H: Hockensmith was a younger man. He had a standard seminary degree, I think, from Southern Seminary.

T: He was very conservative, you implied here.

H: That's right.

T: Hugh R. Bumpas from Oklahoma City.

H: Hugh Bumpas was a standard Th.M. man from Southwestern Seminary. He just recently retired. He is a man of rich experience. He served on many of our boards and commissions and had a broad view of Southern Baptist Convention life, and I would say, if anything, he leaned a little bit to the right in conservatism but not too far that way. He's just a good, down-to-earth, center-of-the road man.

T: David G. Anderson from North Charleston, South Carolina. Do you remember him?

H: I remember him, but not too much about his contribution. I just remember him, that's all.

T: E. Warren Rust from Cleveland, Tennessee.

H: Rust was a standard degree man from the seminary. I mean by that either Th.M. or B.D. I think at his age it would be Th.M. He was a very capable man, a good thinker, and he entered into what we did with zest. Now these other men that I mentioned that I am not too certain about, they all entered in, because we just had a round-table discussion on everything.

T: You mentioned this man before, James H. Landes.

H: Landes has a Th.M. from Southwestern, but one of our stronger men theologically and doctrinally, and was a conservative man.

T: And finally, R. P. Downy from Salem, Virginia.

H: He has a Ph.D. degree in New Testament interpretation from Southern Seminary, a very strong man.

T: When you first came together and met, what did you decide to do? Did you have some ideas in your mind where the committee might be led to go?

H: Well, as we understood it, the Convention had given us a certain amount of instruction. We were to make a study of the Statement of Faith, The Baptist Faith and Message, 1925. We were to submit our report to the editors by a certain date so that it could be run in the papers, editorialized upon or discussed as they chose. We were to submit a copy to the secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention by a certain date to be included in the Book of Reports. They did not spell out our duties exactly, but we understood them to be that we had an option between three things: one, after a study to recommend that we reaffirm our belief in the 1925 Statement of Baptist Faith and Message; number two, to write a new statement altogether and present that; number three, to present a revised form of the 1925 Statement. After discussing the alternatives, we decided that the third was the proper one to follow, because the 1925 Statement was a very fine statement, but it did need some updating. It needed some change in emphases. The 1925 Statement was gotten up and brought out in the context of the fight over evolution. Ours was more on the nature of the Scriptures, so we felt that was what was needed, and that's the procedure we followed.

T: It has been suggested to me by a number of people that this was not a statement of belief so much as it was a political document, to use the term that has been suggested to me. How would you react to that?

H: Well, I don't know who said it and I don't want to know, but I don't personally agree that it is just a political document. We were caught up in a theological struggle which I think, rightly, was interpreted as a possibility of dividing our Convention. Now, we merely agreed, as I stated earlier, that the first thing to do was to find out, Have Southern Baptists divided, moved to the left, or are we still pretty much the same people we have always been? So we agreed that we needed to make a study of that statement. Are we still where we were in 1925, or are we more liberal, or are we more ultraconservative? As you know, by a study of the parallel columns of the two statements listed in the Book of Reports, there were no really drastic changes in the basic theological position of the train of statements. But we tried to update it, put the emphasis where it was needed, clarify certain areas, enlarge upon some, such as on the Trinity--God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the nature of salvation. We pretty well wrote that. We combined some things that were in the 1925 Statement that we thought belonged together. The only statement we added to the one on the Scriptures was that the criterion for interpreting the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, because at that time this Baptist Faith and Message thing--one of the things being heard was that Dr. Elliott in saying that Melchizedek was a priest of Baal was reflecting on the priesthood of Christ; and of course, as Elliott explained to me, he said, "That is a misunderstanding of what I tried to say." He said, "He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek; not like Melchizedek." And if you take it after the order of, then it does not identify him with a priest of Baal. But, the general public looked at it that way, and that is why we added that statement. That any interpretation, for instance, in the Old Testament, must coincide with the revelation of God as we have it in Jesus Christ. So instead of being a political document, I think it was an honest effort on the part of those who were responsible for giving leadership at that time to determine just where Southern Baptists are. In other words, if we are more liberal now than we were in 1925 we want to know it; and that was the way we decided was the best way to find out.

T: I think what was behind this suggestion--it's not mine, it was implied to me by some--was that it was a compromise statement. It attempted to say something to everybody. Is that true?

H: I don't think so. No more so than the 1925 Statement did. As I indicated, we added very little to most of the statement. For instance, on the church we added one sentence relative to the word church being used sometimes in the New Testament to refer to "all the redeemed of all the ages." That was the only item in the whole statement that brought a debate, and that wasn't much.

T: Did it bring a debate in the committee?

H: No. In the Convention. On the Convention floor, not in the committee.

T: The committee did not debate that at all?

H: No.

T: Even the man such as Hockensmith that you mentioned did not debate?

H: No. As I recall, we had no debate in the committee on it. We discussed it a lot, but there is a difference in debate as I see it. Discussion is where you are more or less sharing views to try to find the kernel of truth. Debate is where I take one side and you take the other, and we have a go at it. A church history professor in one of our seminaries told me after the adoption of that statement, talking about that one sentence, said, "That is the only new development in ecclesiology in the Southern Baptist Convention since 1845." But whoever made that statement apparently needs to do his own homework on Southern Baptists. They have always been a compromise, middle-of-the-road people, so to speak. The word "compromise" is not the proper word. We have never been extremists in anything. I have made the statement many times--I am not sure but that I made it in one of my president's addresses--that Southern Baptists are about five percent to the right and five percent to the left of center, and as Carl Bates said, "Not very far to the right or left"; but ninety percent of them are right down the middle of the road, where Southern Baptists have always been. Somebody challenged that statement and said, "Don't you think we have more liberals now?" I said, "Yes, we've got more conservatives, too; but we've got more Southern Baptists." I said, "I think percentage is still about the same." So it isn't a matter of trying to get something in a statement that everybody will accept, it was a matter of trying to state what we believe basically.

I don't know whether you ever fed hogs or not. But you go out with a basketful of shucked corn and call up the hogs. You throw it down right together and there is enough there for all the hogs to eat, and more. Invariably, one old hog, usually an old sow, will grab up an ear of corn and run way off down to the corner of the hog lot and eat it, as if every other hog was trying to get its ear of corn, when there is more corn up there than they can all eat. So you have people that will take a doctrine, one little facet, and run off with it and go to an extreme one way or the other. But the masses of Southern Baptists have always been a middle-of-the-road people.

T: Did you have an extensive debate on the Lord's Supper and baptism?

H: Not too much. As I mentioned about the Lord's Supper, that pretty well settled that. There was, in fact, no debate on it. We talked about how best to express this truth. But on baptism, no, I don't recall any particular debate. Now discussion, I point again, is a difference. We discussed every word in this 1925 Statement and every word that went into the 1963 Statement, but it wasn't necessarily debate.

T: In the baptism statement, the last statement relating to baptism, it says, "being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper." This is implying close communion and close membership. Is this specifically what the committee had in mind?

H: Well, if I am not mistaken, that is what I think they had in mind; that is in the 1925 Statement.

T: Much of it is, yes.

H: We just didn't change it. I think what the committee had in mind was that baptism, while not necessary to salvation, is necessary for membership in the fellowship. We felt that was true in the New Testament itself, and along with that the privileges that go along with the fellowship.

T: How would the member from North Carolina have reacted in this in a state where that was not always the prerequisite for either church membership or the Lord's Supper?

H: I don't recall that Nane Starnes had anything unusual to say about it. He may have discussed it, but I don't recall any objection that he took to it.

T: This is saying that baptism is essential for the Lord's Supper. Do Southern Baptist churches practice this?

H: I'd say most of them do, in principle. There was a time when Southern Baptists would--I remember when I was a youngster, when time came for the Lord's Supper, they would say, "We're going to have the Lord's Supper, and we invite all the like faith and order to remain and participate, all others to leave." All the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians would get up and walk out and vow never to come back again. The unsaved would get up and walk out, not knowing what it was all about. Then there are some Southern Baptists, and others too, who say that a person should only take the Lord's Supper in the church of which he is a member. That is based on the idea that the church should be in position to discipline the members. They get that out of Paul's discussion of it in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians; for that reason, if you are not a member of the church where you can be disciplined for any wrongdoing, you should not partake of the Supper. But I'd say that the vast majority of Southern Baptist churches say that a Baptist from anywhere can take of the Lord's Supper. And yet, I think that the average, well, it's hard

to say, average is a rather loose, broad term; but to my knowledge, let me say, the more general practice now is that we observe the Lord's Supper and say nothing about it.

T: Did you really write the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message in its outline form and share it with the committee?

H: Well, of course, we were revising a former statement--let's keep that in mind. I'm of the opinion, though I can't prove it, that Dr. Mullins wrote the 1925 Statement.

T: It has been suggested a number of times.

H: The committee was appointed in 1924 and adopted in 1925. It reads like Dr. Mullins; and, of course, he lifted out great portions of the New Hampshire Confession. So, again, it is just familiar to Baptist ears. The committee, as I remember these things, would hammer out what they agreed should be said. I would make very copious notes, and then would write out between sessions what I thought the committee intended to say. Then I would bring it back to read it, and the committee would approve it. Now you take that statement on salvation. I wrote that. I stated it to the committee, just orally, and they agreed on it; then, I wrote it out and brought it back to them, the threefold nature of salvation--regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

T: Opposed to a six-point years before.

H: Yes. Much of the statement on God the Son, which was almost a new section that we put in--the other statement had very little about the Son.

T: It had a very limited discussion of the Trinity as well?

H: Yes. I wrote most of that and particularly the part on God the Son and the mediator, Jesus Christ. That is one of the times when they said, "All right, Hobbs get out your Greek New Testament." We came to that idea of the mediator, and I cited the statement of Paul to Timothy, you know, "one God, one mediator"; and so I got my New Testament, and I said, "Let me read it to you exactly the way the New Testament reads, "For one God, and one mediator of God (the genitive case)." I said, "The way I interpret that is one God and one mediator partaking of the nature of both God and man." Then, I went on to say, "in whom God and man meet in reconciliation."

T: Now, that is in the section of salvation or on the section of God.

H: That's in the section on the Son.

T: The Son of God, point two, under main two--God.

H: Yes, let me see if I can't point it out to you. I would have said that it was at that point. Here it is. It's under God the Son, where it says "He ascended

into and is now exalted at the right hand of God where he is the one mediator partaking of the nature of God and of man and in whose person is effected the reconciliation between God and man, and he will return in great power and glory to judge the world and consummate His redemptive mission," and so on. The idea there being instead of God on one side and man on the other, and they're mad at one another, and Jesus in the middle trying to pull them together, the office of the mediator was this: Two parties came before the judge and had a difference. The mediator was appointed by the judge. He was supposed to represent both parties perfectly and do all necessary to bring them together in reconciliation. And so as God, Jesus Christ perfectly represents God. As the Son of man, he perfectly represents man. So he is, as Dr. Truett used to say, the God-man; and he would add, "Never did hyphen mean so much." So in Jesus Christ we have the one who partakes of the nature of God and the nature of man. Therefore, he perfectly represents both. It is not in him bringing God and man together, knocking heads to get them to agree. Of course, we know that God needs no reconciliation to man or else there would be no offer of redemption. But at the same time, the point is that it is in this combination of the Deity-Humanity in Jesus Christ that God and man meet in reconciliation. It is not a matter of three people, two mad at one another and one trying to get them together, but it is in the nature of Christ.

It is of interest, I think, to note this. One time several years before that, Dr. Frank Staggs was lecturing in his class in New Testament or Greek or something at New Orleans Seminary. He was trying to make the point that in reconciliation there are not really three people involved, but that God and man find reconciliation in the God-Man. I don't know how he stated it, I didn't hear him. A student recorded what he said, took exception to it and made quite a case out of it; Frank wound up in some hot water for a while. So I met him on the street the next day, I think it was, after this statement was adopted, and I said, "Frank, has it ever occurred to you that that for which you were in hot water at New Orleans Seminary a few years ago is now a part of the voted statement of the consensus of faith of Southern Baptists?" I told him what I had reference to, and he laughed and said, "I hadn't thought about it, but that's true, isn't it?" Our committee met at the Gulf Shores Encampment in Mississippi for a whole week. We met at the same time that the faculty at New Orleans Seminary came over for their pre-fall term retreat. So Frank and I were discussing that situation that he had and this particular thing; and I gave him what I understood to be my interpretation and understanding of what the Greek text said, and he agreed with me. And so it was out of that that the statement came as it did.

T: The section on last things, eschatology, is considerably shortened from the 1925 Statement. Did you talk extensively on that point?

H: Yes. We talked a good deal about it, and it was agreed that we did not need as long a statement. In fact, I think if you will analyze the overall statement, you will see that we have put in at other points some of the things that were in the section on eschatology in the 1925 Statement. We felt they belonged there better. Like, for instance, over there in the statement God the Son, /we added/ "He will return in power and glory, and so on. The idea was not to tone down the

doctrine /last things/; it was merely to try to state it more concisely. As I said earlier, some of the things that were in the 1925 Statement we combined in new statements and some of the things we put in /combined with other statements/ like "He will return in power and glory," from the 1925 Statement on the second coming. We put that in /the statement on God/ so as to complete the picture of God the Son.

T: The statement on Christ had some real parallels to the Apostles' Creed. Was that coincidental, or incidental, where it speaks of in here, "He was raised from the dead with the body glorious . . . . He ascended into heaven and is now exalted on the right hand," and then coming to the statement where you talked about the mediator. Is that just incidental?

H: Incidental. There was no definite effort on our part to do it.

T: This would be part of the interworking of your mind. You certainly are familiar with the Apostles' Creed.

H: Well, I was going to say, it was more that than any deliberate design to reproduce the Apostles' Creed.

T: When the statement came up for adoption by the Convention in Kansas City, before it came before the Convention, did you circulate this to leading Southern Baptists to react to before it came before the Convention?

H: Well, the first thing we did when we finished what we called our first draft was to send mimeographed copies to the head of the Sunday School Board and each of the seminaries, with a request that a copy be given to each professor and each person at the Sunday School Board that had anything to do with the writing or the handling of theological matters, and that they be asked individually to study it and to make any suggestions or criticisms they had to make. Then we requested that the agency head, whether it be the seminary president, Sunday School Board Executive Secretary, or so on, at that time to get his group together and make a composite study, and then to have a committee draw up recommendations to ask for any suggested changes. In other words, we involved the theological community in the report by asking them to criticize our work. But we made it clear to them that the committee was not obligated to abide by their suggestions if we did not agree with them. The result was that there were not very many things, it was mostly terminology. The only thing that I can recall of any radical nature that was suggested was in talking about God, the Son. We had said that He completely identified himself with man. Of course, we were thinking in terms with the fact that He was man at the same time He was God in the Flesh. Wayne Ward wrote me a letter and said, "Herschel, the way this reads you are falling into traps of some of the early Christians." He said, "If He is completely identified with man it makes him guilty of sin." He said, "I suggest that it should read "completely identified Himself with man, apart from sin." There was no question in my mind about that, so that was added. To my mind that was the only real change that was made in the original draft.

Then, after they brought their reports back to us, the committee had another meeting and went over them and finalized what we wanted to have as our report. I then proceeded to write the report, and the committee approved it. I checked the Scripture references that appear underneath each item in the 1925 Statement, and some of them didn't touch top, side, nor bottom of the subject to which they were supposed to apply. So, I just said, "Well, we are not going to trust these Scripture citations." I just set out to get Scripture citations to support each of these items. I was talking with Dick Hall about it, and Dick said, "Well, that is going to be an awful job. You let me help you." So, I asked him to take a certain area.

T: Do you remember which?

H: I don't remember which. But anyway, I did most of it; and even when he sent me his, I checked it. Dick and I have been bosom buddies since we studied together one summer in the seminary during graduate work. That was the most tedious job I ever had. I really nearly went stir crazy. I was nearly climbing the walls. You just set out sometime to look for Scripture to be sure it applies. It is just a nerve-wracking experience; but I wanted the Scripture to be accurate in its representation, so that is why I did that. Actually, after I had drawn up the report and put in these Scripture references, I had it mimeographed by my secretary and mailed a copy to each member of the committee, and asked him to give his approval or disapproval. No, now wait a minute--wait a minute. We met after it was drawn up and went over it, and voted to approve it. Then, it was after the Convention had voted to adopt the report that I took the original and sent it around on a round-robin basis. I signed it, and sent it to Doug Hudgins, and had a place there for everybody to sign, and asked each man to send it to the next man until it finally got back to me after the last man had signed it. We would have the signature of every member of the committee on that original document, and it was turned over to your Commission. That is when we circulated it. It was approved in committee. Then, in accordance with the instructions of the Convention, we submitted a copy to every editor, a copy of the final report.

T: Was it prepared to be included in the Book of Reports for 1963?

H: According to the instructions of the Convention, we sent the copy to Clifton Allen, Secretary of the Convention. In fact, we drew it up ourselves the way we wanted it in the Book of Reports in parallel columns, the 1963 Proposed Statement and the 1925 Statement, so that the messengers could readily compare, if they wanted to, the two statements. It was printed in the Book of Reports in that form. The editors were asked to print it in their papers and to editorialize on it--good, bad, or indifferent. In other words, we requested that everybody study it, read it and study it, before coming to the Convention. When we came to the Convention and the hour to present it, the house was packed--it was air-conditioned--and it would seat about 15,000 people. They were standing around the walls, sitting on everything they could find, because everybody knew that we had come to a very serious moment.

I stood up to read the report. As I have stated earlier in this series of interviews, I had a very serious virus. I went down to Judson College in Alabama and spoke on Thursday before we were to go to Kansas City on Saturday. I was to speak on Sunday at a couple of the churches. On the way back from Marion, Alabama, where Judson is located, to Birmingham, where I would catch a plane home, I began to get a sore throat. By the time I got to Birmingham, my throat was as raw as a piece of raw beef. I gargled and took aspirins, and went to work on it. By the time I got home it was down in my chest. I called my doctor on Sunday morning. I had worked on it on Saturday, but it didn't seem to do any good. So Sunday morning he said, "Well, under ordinary circumstances I would put you to bed and give you medicine. But I know you can't go to bed this week, so I am going to bring you the strongest antibiotic I have, and you take it. But have your secretary call to Kansas City and cancel these preaching engagements that you have. So I did. But we flew up there on Sunday afternoon, and I went to bed that night, still taking these strong antibiotics. On Monday I went to a session of the Executive Committee and from there they took me to the Baptist Hospital. They gave me a strong penicillin shot, and by Tuesday, when time came for me to deliver the president's address, I spoke for a solid hour without a bit of problem. I could just see myself coughing my head off, you see, but I didn't have a bit of trouble. But Wednesday morning I told Doug Hudgins, "Now Doug, if I get to coughing, you be there following me so you can step up and finish reading." The committee agreed that since I knew more about the statement than anybody else that if there was any debate, I should defend it. They thought this would be more effective than having every member jumping up saying something. Well, I stood up and read the report and got about halfway through it. Eventhough the house was air-conditioned, it was hot, and all of a sudden the congregation just began to weave back and forth like wind going across a wheat field. I knew if I didn't sit down, I was going to fall down. So I called Doug, and he finished reading it while I sat down. Then I defended it in the debate over that one sentence on the church. My wife came over to me and said, "You are going to the hotel right now, and we are going to call the doctor." She didn't know but that I'd had a heart attack. In fact, the afternoon Oklahoma City Times on the front page carried a story headline, "Hobbs Has Heart Attack." It happened that there was a medical missionary in the hall, and he came on the platform and felt my pulse. He said, "I think you're all right. You're just over-heated." But before he got up there my wife had told me that, and I said, "No, Hon, this is so important, it must be handled, and I am the only one that is prepared to do it. I am willing to die on this platform, if necessary, in order to get this statement adopted, because I feel that the life of Southern Baptists is at stake right now and could be very well determined in the next few minutes. And, if necessary, I am willing to die right here on this platform in order to get it done." Well, about that time this medical missionary came up and felt my pulse and said, "Well, you are just overheated." So I defended it in the debate--sitting down. I didn't dare stand up.

When they finally voted to adopt it, I had heard that there was a motion going to be brought at a miscellaneous business session that followed immediately that would try to reopen the Midwestern Seminary and Elliott matter. Matters which had been taken care of in San Francisco, about the Seminary; and Elliott was no longer even

with the Seminary. I told Dr. Cothen and Dr. James, who were the vice-presidents, "I'm going to preside at this miscellaneous business session, even though I am going to have to sit down to do it. I understand this motion is going to be brought, and I want to rule it out-of-order. I think it will be more effective for the president to rule it out-of-order than for anybody else." They agreed with me.

A man got up and made a motion--I don't recall the exact wording of it. He was a preacher, but I understood he was doing it at the request of some laymen that had had a caucus on it. So I ruled him out-of-order and gave five reasons why. I am not sure I could recall them all right at the moment, but one was that it had been handled at the Convention the year before and that Dr. Elliott was no longer with the Seminary. Another was that the Convention had never ordered an agency to do things, it always elected trustees and let them do it. There were five of them. I don't recall the man's name who made the motion.

T: Joe West, from Texas, made a motion concerning the Midwestern Seminary, according to the minutes.

H: Yes. He was from down in Houston somewhere. I ruled him out-of-order and gave my reasons. He kept trying to speak, and I ruled him out-of-order again. Well, naturally, my physical condition didn't add to my patience, I guess. I'd do it again if I had to, but I regretted that I had to do it. I rapped the gavel on the table and almost shouted, "You are out-of-order!" He appealed the ruling of the chair, and I put it to a vote of the Convention and they supported me almost one hundred percent, if not altogether. So he came over and said, "You were pretty rough on me." I said, "Well, friend, I am sorry, but you asked for it. You wouldn't take my ruling." So then I gave the gavel back to Dr. James, I guess it was.

T: The recorder suggests that it went to Dr. Cothen.

H: All right. Cothen. I went on to the hotel and the doctor came, the hotel physician. He checked my heart, and everything, and said, "You are okay." He said, "You have been on these strong antibiotics, you haven't been eating right, and you are dehydrated. I am going to send you up a big pitcher of orange juice and a bloody, rare steak, and I want you to eat every bit of it and stay in bed this afternoon." Well, that orange juice looked like it was a barrelful, but I drank every bit of it; and that steak, that old steer was still kicking and almost bawling, but I ate every bit of that. A dear friend of mind, Dr. Ramey, from up here at Edmond, called me in the afternoon, and he said, "Some of the brethren are awfully disturbed about this thing and about your ruling this morning, and wondered if you wouldn't change it." I said, "Doctor, I love you, and I don't want to lose your friendship, but I will not change that ruling because I am not going to open the gate and let that bunch get in there and get on to Midwestern Seminary again. They have had enough. Ralph Elliott is no longer there, and whatever they want done now was done a year ago by a vote of the Convention, and there is no need to open that matter up again. I will not change my ruling." Well, I understood later they had a pretty rough session that afternoon, but Grady Cothen handled it perfectly.

That night I was back presiding again after that orange juice and that bloody steak took effect. I was as good as new. We went on through the Convention. I feel that after that particular Convention with the Statement of Faith adopted, and almost unanimously, that Southern Baptists sat back and said, "Well, we are satisfied." Now, of course, you know as long as Southern Baptists have freedom in their thinking, they are going to have problems. In my address in San Francisco, I said that our doctrine is like a muscle. If a muscle loses its tension, it loses its usefulness; and if our doctrines lose their tension, they lose their usefulness. If we don't have a strong enough belief in something to contend for it, then we don't have much faith and much belief. So, this theological tension is good for us, and I think these rights and lefts are good for us. They keep us on our toes.

A newspaper reporter from the Oklahoma City Times, trying to report the Kansas City Convention so his readers could understand it, said it about as good as I ever heard. "It is a struggle between liberals and conservatives, but, of course, a liberal Southern Baptist is a conservative Protestant." I thought that pretty well stated it. We've had other problems since then, the Broadman Commentary problem, and I have a very painful remembrance of an experience in that, but that was under another president.

I surrendered the gavel with a great deal of satisfaction and delight. I wouldn't take a million dollars for having been president of the Convention. I wouldn't give you a dime to be president again. I think every man that has ever been president feels the same way. It is a privilege unspeakable; yet, it is a responsibility that once you have been through it is rather frightening. You wouldn't want to take it up and go through it again.

T: There were a couple of matters of debate in that meeting that you just described. C. Earl Cooper of Florida moved to amend the report by striking all of the report except the Scripture references. Did you expect any of these kinds of challenges?

H: No. That came as a complete surprise, and I think the Convention treated it the way it should have been. They pretty well got rid of it.

T: There was a second statement by a man from North Carolina, Julius H. Corpening. He wanted to substitute for the motion that the Convention receive the statement for information and commend it to the churches for guidance, and they express gratitude to the committee. This was ruled out-of-order by the Chair. Do you remember that?

H: Yes. That was an effort, of course, from those who object to any semblance of a creed. But I ruled it out-of-order because I didn't think it was in keeping with nature with the preamble to the Statement. At the same time the Convention had previously in 1925 adopted such a statement, and that was, I thought, the intent of the Convention in appointing this committee. The presiding officer has the responsibility of protecting the rights of the body, and that is why I ruled it out-of-order.

T: Then after this came the amendment, which failed, proposed by Wendell Rone to strike the last section on the church?

T: You mentioned the supporting evidence you had received from Albert McClellan before you went to the platform that day.

H: Yes, and I don't think it is necessary to repeat that, but I might just say for the record that this group was a rather small group, and it centered not in any one place. Rone is from eastern Kentucky. There were some from Arkansas, one or two, I know, from Texas, and one from Florida, as I remember it. But there are those who see that the word "church" always refers to the local church, which we commonly call "Landmarkism." But I don't think there was ever any serious danger to that statement in the report from the Convention as a whole. For instance, I raised the question, and I did it not to be sarcastic, but in debate--you know, sometimes when tensions build a good laugh will help the situation--so they were insisting that every use of the word "church" in the New Testament that referred to the church was used referring to the local church. I said, "Well, if that be true, then to which church did Jesus refer when He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church?" An old boy in the back of the hall hollered out, "The First Baptist Church of Jerusalem." He didn't even need a microphone, he had leather lungs. I said, "Well, brother, if that be true, then he was at least seventy-five miles from where he built that church when he said it." The crowd just roared. That's really what I wanted to happen. I wanted them to laugh and sort of let the tension off, and then we could go on.

As it happened, there was not very much discussion after that, and the people began to call for the question. They had heard enough. They had made up their minds. This group, I think, pretty soon saw they were fighting a losing cause, and they didn't press it very much. So the report was finally adopted, as I later said to somebody, without changing even a punctuation mark. And I think that was due to the fact that the committee had done a thorough job in its study, its homework. The people had had opportunity to read it in the Baptist papers, they had the opportunity to compare the two statements; they saw that we were not trying to hide anything or put over a fast one.

I have found that Southern Baptists will follow and trust you if you do not give the impression that you are trying to pull something over on them. Now, you don't want to surprise Southern Baptists. The Sunday School Board found that out to their sorrow when they surprised Southern Baptists by proposing that the Training Union be changed to Quest. Actually, that was a good idea. But the average Southern Baptist didn't know that that was the "in" terminology right then in education. If they had put that out six weeks before the Convention, explained what "Quest" meant and what they had in mind, I don't think Southern Baptists would have thought the second time about it. But they sprang it on them, and as one editor said, "It was the best kept secret of the year." When they sprang it on them, you know what happened. They just threw it back in their faces. I have always said this, even in local meetings like deacons' meetings, if a committee gets all of its ducks lined up in a row before it brings them in to a report to the deacons, they'll approve the report without scarcely examining it. But if one duck has its tail out of line, somebody is going to hit it with a board. I think that the Convention saw that our committee had its ducks in a row, and that there was no effort to cover up anything. For that reason they were ready to vote and to support it.

Dr. Ashcraft, at Midwestern Seminary, incidentally, wrote me sometime ago and asked where he might find the files on this committee because, he said, "I have a feeling that this statement is going to take on even greater importance as the years come and go, and there should be written out somewhere a record of the proceedings of the committee in drawing up and proposing this statement." I wrote back and told him that I had done so in a brief fashion--not as extensive as we have here this afternoon--in the first chapter of the book that the Sunday School Board asked me to write on The Baptist Faith and Message. He said, "Well, that satisfies it. I just thought that ought to be on record somewhere."

T: The papers relating to this committee are on file in the Archives of the Convention which is held by the Historical Commission.

H: Yes. I told him that.

T: One other fact that I think you might make clear on this matter is that when the motion to extend the time finally passed after two previous amendments failed, you were granted the opportunity as the Convention minutes report, "to allow a statement by President Hobbs and then vote on the report of the committee. . . . By common consent, the Convention understood that the introductory material is a part of the committee's report and will be so included in the vote on adoption." (1963 SBC Annual, p. 63.) Do you want to react to that event?

H: I wanted it clearly understood that the Convention, in adopting the report, was adopting the preamble. The preamble was in the original 1925 Statement, and we included it--I think maybe with a little change. I am not too certain about that, but virtually the same. If you take out the preamble then the rest of that statement becomes a creed--the very thing Southern Baptists don't want. I simply wanted it clearly understood before the Convention voted that the preamble protects the conscience of the individual and guarantees the competency of his soul before God or in religion. I wanted it clearly understood that that was the sense of the committee and of the preamble and of the Convention at the time it voted.

I think time has proved that to be a needed action, because some have wanted to interpret various parts of it apart from the preamble, for instance, the so-called Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship, which, incidentally, has no more right to that name than a hog has to a sidesaddle. A few years ago the "liberal" crowd had an organization called the "E. Y. Mullins Fellowship." They had no right to E. Y. Mullins' name. He didn't grant them the right to use it, and I have an idea if he had known it he would have said, "No." At the same time this other group comes along, this so-called ultraconservative group, and they, out of a clear blue sky without asking anybody, take the name which definitely belongs to Southern Baptists--to all Southern Baptists. It adopted the statement that has that as its title. And yet, they come along and take it as if they are the Baptist Faith and Fellowship and the rest of us are not for it. They have no right to that name. Of course, we don't have a patent on it, and it wouldn't stand up in court, but morally they have no right to that name.

Frankly, I don't think they are going to bring up anything at the Dallas Convention this year, but if they do, the first thing I want to do is to raise the moral and

ethical question of their name. I think it will do more at least to "turn on a little light" than any other thing I can think of.

Now even some of what I call our stronger leaders have made statements that would ignore the competency of the soul in religion. The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship has chosen just certain items in the statement and said, "This is what we are going to stand on." Well, then, they have kicked not only the preamble but most of the rest of the statement out the window as unimportant. It is either the whole statement or it is none of it. It is still not a creed. It is just an effort for us to state what is generally believed by Southern Baptists. And yet, no one Southern Baptist is required to sign it. Our seminaries, many of them that did not already have an abstract of principles, have adopted this 1963 Statement as what you would call an abstract of principles; the Sunday School Board has; many state conventions have; and many associations and local churches have. Yet, each one has done it voluntarily. Nobody has asked them to do it. That's purely Baptistic, but the minute the Southern Baptist Convention says, "You've got to do this," then we violate the preamble.

T: Is the preamble printed each time?

H: Yes. It's in the little booklet printed by the Sunday School Board.

T: And you see that this is very much an integral part as you did when you spoke at the Convention in Philadelphia?

H: Yes. You take that out and you've got a creed, and we don't want a creed. You know, generalizations are never too accurate or fair, yet, I think it might be well to make a statement right here. Someone asked me about recent years and the amount of disturbance and debate we have had in the Southern Baptist Convention over theological matters, wanting to know why. They wanted to know if we were getting more liberal. I said, "No, I think Southern Baptists are about where they have always been theologically. There are more of us and so there are more in each category, but still the percentage is about the same." And they said, "Well, why all this fighting, feuding, and fussing? We didn't use to do it. Well, we were fighting, feuding, and fussing over something else, but not over theology." I said, "Well, there may be other factors involved, but I have an idea that one of the strong factors is this: When Frank Norris was living and his movement was going strong there was a certain type of theological position that more or less gravitated to him. There were churches that followed the fundamentalist view. They fought Southern Baptists through Frank Norris from the outside. Now, Frank Norris is dead these many years. His movement has fallen apart. There are independent churches here and there, but there is nothing like he had, and these men have nowhere to go. They are wanting to be a part of some Baptist body. They are in our Convention, pastoring churches, and they are good men. I don't mean to say anything unkind about them. There were many good men involved in the Norris fundamentalist movement, and some who were cantankerous who only wanted to make trouble. But there were many good men in there. The result is that these men, well now, they are still fighting for the same thing, but they are fighting from the inside instead of the outside. That, I think, is why we have

had so much of this at our Convention, especially in recent years. These men are messengers to the Convention and can get up and speak their piece, whereas Frank Norris would have a tent down the street a block away and would hold forth down there. Nobody but the newspapers and those who wanted to see the show knew what was going on down there. That may not be a fair appraisal, but it is the way I have tried to analyze and the way I see it.

T: We have talked about the Convention where The Baptist Faith and Message was adopted. Perhaps it would be useful to go back and pick up some of the story on what really precipitated that Baptist Faith and Message--what properly is known as the Elliott Controversy of the early 1960's. It began over the book published by Broadman Press, The Message of Genesis. Can you assess further how it began as you understand it, and what happened between Elliott, the trustees, and the publishers?

H: Well, of course, as I stated earlier the book, The Message of Genesis, and Dr. Elliott were the occasion and not the cause for this uprising or this controversy in a sense. It had been building up under the surface for a number of years. There was a feeling on the part of many that Southern Baptists were drifting toward a more liberal theological position. I don't think that they were more liberal, but there were certain changes. After all, our faith is a living faith; it isn't static and it isn't set down in a creed. Changing times often call for changing approaches to truth. Discoveries in the various fields such as archeology, manuscript study, science and the like cause us to take a new look at certain things and try to come up with a better understanding of truth. But, nevertheless, there were those who interpreted much of this as a drift toward liberalism. Especially were they concerned about the seminaries, because it is there that our pastoral leadership, and for a great part our denominational leadership, is trained. Knowing the experience of some other denominations where the seminaries went "liberal"--I never did like labels, but we are stuck with them--and then subsequently the men that were trained there went out to be pastors of churches, writers of their literature, and so on, the drift in that direction gradually trickled down to the churches themselves, so that some of the denominations had gone pretty far afield from their more or less traditional position. Conscientious men were/are concerned that that not happen in our Southern Baptist Convention.

Well, anyway, the matter came to the surface in connection with Elliott's book on Genesis. He followed the documentary hypothesis pretty much, the Graf-Wellhausen approach, which is known as the documentary hypothesis. I don't know of any reputable Old Testament scholar today who follows that hypothesis as it was originally taught. Certain basic factors in it have been followed and still are. The more we learn, for instance, about the five books of Moses or about the times in which they were set, the more evident it becomes that they belong in the period where tradition has placed them rather than in the late times, say the eighth century, B. C., and later, that the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis placed them. Anyway, the language of the book was disturbing to some and especially to those who were not too versed in the documentary hypothesis; but at the same time disturbing to some, for instance, K. Owen White, who has his Ph.D. degree in the Hebrew Old Testament from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. White wrote the famous article "There is

Death in the Pot" and also made the motion at the San Francisco Convention which opened this thing up in a way.

Now those who do not know K. Owen White might think that he is some kind of ogre, but I have known him since I entered the seminary in 1932. The first time I ever saw him he came and spoke to the Dodeka Club that I mentioned at an earlier time. I never shall forget that he spoke on Isaiah 40, where the Lord says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem." That is the way the King James Version reads. White pointed out that the Hebrew reads, "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem." That thrilled me then and I have used that many, many times through the years since then. White is a conscientious scholar and a capable one. He has a Canadian background. He is perhaps not ultraconservative, but he is very decidedly conservative in his theology and isn't afraid to express his opinions. And yet, he is one of the sweetest men in his spirit you'll ever know.

Anyway, following the Convention in San Francisco, when this thing had been brought out in the light, the president of Midwestern Seminary, Millard Berquist, and the chairman of the trustees, Malcolm Knight, invited Porter Routh and me to come to Kansas City and talk with them to Ralph Elliott. So we met in the Mulhback Hotel for about eight hours in the hotel room. I was asked to do the talking for the group, and most of this time was spent in asking Elliott about what he believed on certain subjects. For instance, I asked him what he believed about Creation. He believes in the Creation as a work of God. I asked him what he believed about man, and while these are my recollections of his replies, I think they are accurate. He said (I am quoting him from memory, but I am giving the substance of his replies), "I believe that God made mankind (and if you read the King James Version, the word 'Adam' doesn't appear until you get way over into the closing part of the second chapter; and yet, the word 'Adam,' that's just a Hebrew word brought over into English, appears a number of times before that, translated 'man,' and it means 'mankind'). He said, "I believe that God created mankind, and then selected one man and one woman, Adam and Eve, and through them traced the fall of man and God's redemptive purpose in the light of it." I asked him, for instance, what he believed about the flood, and he gave me an answer--I don't recall exactly what it was, but it was perfectly all right. He did indicate that the Bible record doesn't call for a flood over the entire earth. The purpose of it was to destroy mankind as it was at that time with the exception of Noah and his family; and according to the Bible itself, the human race was still confined to the Mesopotamian Valley at that time. Even though one might insist on a worldwide flood, I think it has been shown, especially in recent years, that such was entirely possible and probable from archeological evidence. For instance, they have found mammoth animals in arctic zones that are frozen, and in their stomachs they found undigested tropical forage. The inference is that there was some terrific climactic change that happened so quickly that these animals, where we now associate their kind with warmer climates, were suddenly frozen. That is just one example. There are many. But anyway, I talked with him about one of the big problems that the brethren had and that was his treatment of Melchizedek. He pointed out to me that in Hebrews, as well as in the Psalms where Melchizedek is mentioned--well, in Hebrews it speaks of Jesus Christ as being a priest after

the order of Melchizedek. He said in his book that Melchizedek probably was a priest of Baal, and those opposed to him interpreted that to mean that Jesus was like that. Well, he said, "The point is that Jesus was of the order of Melchizedek" as over against the order of Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. It doesn't mean that he was like him in kind, even if you accept the fact that he set forth about Melchizedek being a priest of Baal. I don't accept it, and I don't think Southern Baptists as a group do; but even if for the sake of argument you accept it, it still would not mean that Jesus was a priest after a pagan order. The point was that Melchizedek's priesthood came with no background. There is no record of its beginning or its end, and the point was that the priesthood of Jesus is an eternal priesthood. Anyway, he explained it that way. The brethren who were present said that I gave Elliott the equivalent of a Ph.D. oral exam in Biblical Theology. Whether that it is true or not, I don't know, but I am merely quoting them.

Finally, when we got through with all of this, I said, "Dr. Elliott, you are not a heretic, you are a poor writer." His face turned red, and I might say he was very humble through it all--just as humble as a little dog--and he said, "I would rather you call me a heretic." I said, "I can't. I've got to tell the truth. I am certain that you believe what you have told me you believe, because you are a man of honor and honesty, but you would never get that from reading your book. That's why I say you are not a heretic but a poor writer." I went on to say that I am not any great shakes as a writer, but I said, "I think I could take your book, delete words, phrases, and paragraphs here and there--not over six or eight typewritten pages of deletions--and take the remaining material and write a book on Genesis that Southern Baptists would accept." Elliott was very popular and in great demand as an interim pastor and for revivals. Students there at Midwestern Seminary said he could preach up a storm in a revival, preach like an old brush arbor preacher. I have an idea that perhaps he had one eye on his colleagues in the field of scholarship, and was writing for them, maybe, instead of for Southern Baptists. Now the idea that you mentioned that some had said his book was being written as a textbook, I know nothing about that. It may or may not have been. And the fact that some said, you know, that others--other seminary men in other seminaries--teach the same thing. Well, I am not in a position to say they do or do not. But I do know that one was quoted by another to me--and I have in mind Clyde Francisco. A person said they were talking with him and raised the question about Melchizedek and Baal, and Francisco said that it was generally agreed among the scholars that the most up-to-date information left open the serious question that the worship of Baal had penetrated that far south into Palestine by the time of Abraham. Francisco has written the revised form of the material on Genesis for the Broadman Commentary, and anyone who wants to can check on what he says there. Frankly, I have not checked it, although I have the volume.

After we had gone through that we began to try to work out some kind of solution or compromise with Elliott on future actions. One had to do with the matter that the Convention had voted to request the Sunday School Board not to continue publishing the book. That meant, of course, that Elliott had the right to receive back the manuscript or the book and the copyright. It was reported that another publisher

was ready and anxious to publish it in a paperback form. So we were trying to work out some way to ease the situation.

T: Did the Convention specifically ask that the book not be published, or was that simply a decision of the Sunday School Board and Broadman Press? Wasn't that motion defeated?

H: I believe you are right. It was made, but was defeated with the idea that the Convention had left the Sunday School Board in the hands of the members of that Board to operate. And later, they decided to do this.

T: Was the attempt made to defeat it with the understanding they would not republish it? Do you know?

H: That detail escapes me at the moment, but I think it was an unspoken understanding. There was the idea the Convention would not do this, but leave it up to the Sunday School Board to act. But the Sunday School Board knew how the Convention felt, and later they said they would not continue to publish it. Every time we made a proposal to Elliott, he would say, "Well, I'll need an hour to think it over." We would then disperse and he would leave the room. We would go down and get a cup of coffee or sit around and talk; and he'd come back later. While it appeared that he might be amenable to our suggestions, he would come back and say, "No."

T: Can you give some specific times this happened and on what issues?

H: Well, I don't recall all those details after all these years, but I think one of them had to do with the matter of his agreeing not to give this to another publisher immediately. We had the blaze put out, but there still were smoldering embers. It would be like throwing gasoline on them to just turn right around and have it published elsewhere. He was still on the faculty at Midwestern Seminary, and it would be somewhat interpreted by his opponents that it was a defiance of the will of the people as expressed in their discussions at the Convention. Other details I don't recall. The point I am making is this. Those of us who were there with him got the impression that there were some other people in that hotel he had to confer with before he could make a decision. Now I can't prove that--couldn't in a thousand years.

T: You don't know who they were?

H: No. But we assumed they were other professors from Midwestern Seminary. I don't know. We also got the impression that Elliott was out on a limb and would have liked to have crawled back to the tree. Now he might deny this, but I am just giving you our impression. But that there were some people who wouldn't let him get back on the tree. They were on the tree, safe and sound, but they had him out there on that limb and wouldn't let him come back to the tree. They were going to make a test case out of it, and it appeared that they wanted to make a martyr out of him for the sake of their cause. Now, again, I am merely surmising. I have no proof that that is the case. Yet, over and over again he

needed an hour to go somewhere. Now I figure that he either went to another place in the hotel or else he got on the telephone. We didn't ask him what he was doing. We drew our own conclusions.

That meeting adjourned without any progress made beyond ascertaining what Elliott believed on certain things. Later, I was in Nashville and was eating dinner in the Hermitage Hotel. I was alone. K. O. White came in, walked over, and spoke to me. I said, "Are you alone?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Sit down and eat, and let's visit." So he did. I took that as an opportunity to tell him about this meeting. In each case, without exception, when I gave him Elliott's answer to me on questions that I asked about the book of Genesis, White's reply was, "You can't hang a man on that, can you?" You see, if Elliott had written that book in the way that he talked to me, there would never have been any controversy over the book, in my judgment. Because here was a man (White) who is a scholar, strongly conservative, but a scholar. He wasn't a fool. He wasn't a so-called red-neck who never saw the inside of a seminary. He had the best training that Southern Seminary could give--a Ph.D. degree in Hebrew Old Testament, no less. Furthermore, he was a Teaching Fellow while he was doing his doctoral work. At least part of the time he taught me in my class in Junior Hebrew. I am stressing that to point out that White is a man of reputable scholarship and not to be taken lightly. When I told him what Elliott had said to me about his own beliefs, his expressions led me to think that White would never have become a party to attacking his book on the floor of the Convention had it reflected those beliefs. Because he is, in the true Southern Baptist spirit, one who gives men the right to differ.

But we differ within the framework of our faith in the Scriptures. As I pointed out in my president's address in San Francisco, the difference between a creed and our position is the difference between the ways you let a cow graze. One way is to snub her to a post, and as she grazes around the post the rope gets shorter and shorter, until she finally gets her head right up against the post and can't get away and can't graze either. That's a creedal faith. A living faith is where you build a fence around a pasture and turn the cow loose in there and say, "Now eat anywhere in the pasture, but don't get outside the fence." I said, "The fence in this case is the Scriptures. We believe a person is free to read and interpret the Scriptures as he feels led of the Holy Spirit, but it must be within the framework of the entire Bible, not just a verse or an event in isolation." That is why we put in the Baptist Statement of Faith and Message that one line about the Scriptures--the only thing we added to it--that the criterion for interpreting the Scriptures is Jesus Christ. I guess one thing we had in mind was Melchizedek. You have to interpret Jesus Christ not in the terms of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek in terms of Jesus Christ.

Later, the trustees of Midwestern Seminary had a meeting, and they asked me to come. I told them, Well, I have no vote." Of course, I was ex officio member of every board in the Convention, but still, I said, "I'll come and sit and listen, but I don't anticipate having anything to say." At the close of their meeting, they asked for whatever remarks I had to make. They were rather general. But I sat in the meeting.

In the meantime, I talked with Dr. Berquist. He and I were classmates in the seminary. In fact, I don't know whether they have it now, but back then they had what would be comparable to valedictorian and salutatorian at commencement. They didn't call us that, but I assume that since I was the first one to speak that I would have been called the valedictorian. He was the second one to speak and would be the salutatorian. Of course, it may have been the other way around, but I just assumed that--Millard might have assumed the other way. Anyway, he and I have had a running joke ever since. I spoke on "The Gospel and the Modern Mind." He says there was neither gospel nor mind in my speech. He spoke on "The Christian and World Peace," and I kidded him. I said, "That was 1935, and we haven't had any peace since." But anyway, I talked with Millard about this situation. He had the idea that he had to protect his faculty, and I think that is a legitimate position up to a point. But I kept trying to get Millard to see the fact that he was elected by the trustees, who were elected by the Convention, and that his first responsibility was to the trustees and through them to the Convention. I asked him one day, "Millard, when are you going to start being the president of Midwestern Seminary and not just the protector of your faculty?"

T: When you used this term that urged him to be the president rather than defending the faculty, some have suggested that he changed his position from what it originally was and sacrificed Elliott. Do you react to that?

H: Well, I can explain why he changed his position, and he did not--and I want to say NOT--sacrifice Ralph Elliott. I think Millard deserves that to be in the record. Elliott had asked to make a statement to the trustees.

T: In this meeting you attended?

H: Yes. I kept telling Ralph, "Now Ralph, we are trying to build a bridge." Now wait a minute, let me back up. That came later. He had expressed to Berquist his desire to make a statement to the trustees. I think that Berquist may have suggested it would be well if he did, and he finally said he would like to. The trustees met that morning and after the opening devotion and all, a motion was made. I don't recall the wording of the motion, but anyway it opened up this matter--in fact, that was what the trustees were called together for. They took up a few minor items later, but they were called for that purpose. From that time until late in the afternoon they discussed this matter pro and con. Finally, the time came when they were ready to hear Elliott's statement. We had asked him to make some kind of conciliatory statement that would give us a basis on which to work in trying to solve the problem without anybody being hurt seriously. We felt that we had to represent the Convention and its feelings, and at the same time, we wanted to help Elliott. I still say, and I can't prove it, I think that just as there was a group of men who more or less banded together at Southern Seminary to defy the administration and as a result were dismissed--some of these men went to Midwestern Seminary, and I think that same spirit was in this--that we are going to make a test case out of this for academic freedom and so on. But we told Elliott that we hoped he would make a conciliatory statement that would give us a basis on which to work. When he came in, he read his statement. It was a challenge to the trustees, not to say that he regretted that

a book of his has caused all this disturbance. There was not a word of regret over what had resulted from it--not the slightest note of that. It was a defiance of the trustees and the administration. While I don't recall all that was in it, I do remember that at the close the note was in words similar to this: "You can fire me if you want to, but you can't defeat this cause," or something to that effect. With that, he closed his manuscript, put it in his pocket, and walked out.

Well, I believe at that point a committee was appointed to meet with Elliott. Now understand, I am drawing this from memory that's twelve years old, and there may be some fuzzy places in it that would not check right out with the minutes of that meeting. But, as I recall, I do know that a committee was to be set up, appointed, and whether they voted to do it before Elliott's statement or after, I don't recall. But I do know that as soon as he had finished and left the room, the meeting adjourned for approximately thirty minutes.

T: Now this was held at Midwestern?

H: It was in a downtown hotel. The committee that had been appointed got together for a few minutes. I was not on the committee, of course, since I was only an ex officio member of the trustees and did not want to participate in the debate. Then we reassembled and, as I recall, we soon dismissed for lunch with the understanding that the committee would get with Elliott and try to work out some equitable solution; and then, the trustees would reassemble at a given time.

So they met, and the committee asked me to meet with them. We met with Elliott. In the meantime, some of the strongest conservatives on that Board of Trustees--Jimmy Morgan of Fort Worth was one. Jimmy is a wonderful guy, has a wonderful, sweet spirit and all, yet he is a strong, not ultra, but a strong conservative. There were some others; I don't recall who they were, but Jimmy was one. They had agreed in that morning meeting before Elliott spoke that in order to solve the problem they would concede certain things. I don't remember what they were, but it was a conciliatory approach.

So I apprised Elliott of that in this meeting that afternoon, and said to him, "Now, Ralph, we are trying to build a bridge over this chasm that has developed between you and the brethren over the Convention who are opposing your book. But a bridge has to rest on both sides of the chasm. Now some men who strongly disagree with you have given us a certain amount of conciliatory material (at the time I mentioned what it was, I don't know exactly now), and we've got a buttress to rest on that side. Now we need the same kind of spirit from you so that we can have a base on your side of the chasm, and from those two sides build a bridge." It was then that we asked him if he would agree not to republish this book for two years in order to give this thing time to work itself out. He refused, steadfastly.

But I was about to miss the most important thing I wanted to say. When we adjourned for that recess after Elliott had made his statement, Millard Berquist almost ran across the room to me. His face was red, he was trembling, he had done everything a man could do to try to save Elliott and to protect him. He had taken criticism

meant for Elliott. There was even talk in some quarters, "Well, we ought to get rid of him--get us another president." But he came over to me and he said, "Herschel, there wasn't a single note of conciliation in that statement, and I am ready to do whatever is necessary to solve this problem." I said, "Praise the Lord! We are now on the way to the solution." At that moment I think Millard became the president in this controversy, rather than the protector of a faculty member. He had done everything that he could do as the president to protect Elliott and to try, from his position, to get him to give here and there to help solve the problem. But Elliott had repeatedly refused. By request of the president of the seminary and, as I recall, mine, he had come to the trustees to make a statement. We had hoped it would be conciliatory, and instead, it was everything but. In fact, as we said in discussing it later, "He dared the trustees to dismiss him." When he saw that Elliott was hopeless--it looked like he had determined he was going to be a martyr--Berquist came to me and said, "I am ready to do whatever is necessary to solve this problem." He did not throw Elliott to the wolves. It is just like God letting somebody go to hell. After he has done everything he can to keep a fellow from going to hell, and the fellow refuses all of God's offers of grace and mercy, then there is nothing else to do. So Berquist came to the place where he said, "Well, if Elliott will not be saved, then I have got to think of the seminary." And it was at that point that he began to think of the welfare of the seminary, rather than this man who seemed determined to try to make a martyr out of himself, maybe hoping that it would set the fires going and would strengthen the cause.

But even that afternoon as we met with him and talked with him and pled with him, as I have told you about this bridge business, he steadfastly refused to do anything about it. So we reassembled, and it was agreed that the committee would meet again with Dr. Elliott. They asked me if I wanted to make a statement. I made a rather general statement. I said, "Brethren, it looks to me like we are in a situation comparable to this: A man has two children, and he has only one dime, and yet both of them want a dime to buy candy. Now he can give a dime to one child and make that one completely happy, and give nothing to the other child and make that one completely unhappy. Or, he can give each one of them a nickel. Neither will be completely happy and yet, they will both not be completely unhappy. I think you have reached that point--that you are going to have to give a nickel to each side rather than to say a dime over here and nothing over here." It was still with the hope that something could be worked out to save Elliott, because he is a good man. He is a brilliant man and has a wonderful heart. But I think he was caught in a situation where he was almost helpless to do what he himself, maybe, would like to have done. Some criticized "Red Top" Owen, you know, because at the last minute when the thirteen were dismissed, he changed his position; he saw that it was wrong, he changed it, and is still there doing a great job at Southern Seminary. I think Elliott, maybe, would like to have done the same thing; but I am as convinced as anything that there was a force--whoever comprised it I don't know--where he was not free to act as a person. He was somewhat representative of a group and an attitude. So I went on home. They had another meeting with Elliott, and he still had the same attitude, and ultimately, of course, he resigned. The trustees didn't dismiss him; he resigned.

T: Did they force him to resign?

H: No. They did not force him to resign. He resigned on his own. I think he saw that it was an impossible standoff. The trustees had given up to the point where they couldn't give any more and maintain their integrity and that of the denomination. And he was not willing to give any more, so he resigned.

While some might say it is nit-picking, I want it on the record. The pressure that was placed on him to try to get him to change was not based on doctrine, or heresy, or a charge of heresy. It was defiance of the administration and the trustees. When a faculty member defies the president who employed him and the trustees who operate the institution, then what are you going to do? Any businessman who had an employee that took that position would fire him on the spot. But the trustees were still patient and understanding, and hoping they could work the thing out. Finally, Elliott saw it was hopeless; and he either had to give or resign, and he chose to resign. But he was not fired. He was not pressured out. The only pressure put on him was to try to get him to help work out a conciliatory position where we could solve the problem and keep the family happy and together, and he was not willing to do that.

T: I have heard it suggested by some involved in that issue that there was an agreement that if Elliott was sacrificed and there was bloodshed, the conservatives would pull their fight off the seminary. Have you heard that?

H: If there was anything like that, I never heard one whisper of it. And I think I was in a position to have known it, if it were true. By invitation of the president and chairman of the trustees, I was right in the middle of it. I would not impose myself in it, arbitrarily, as the president of the Convention, because that would be in a sense the Convention interfering with the internal affairs of an institution. But I was asked to do it. I did nothing that they didn't ask me to do, but I tried to do the best I could when they did. There was absolutely nothing like that. When people get mad they sometimes make irresponsible statements that maybe they wish they hadn't made as soon as they make them. And that is a totally irresponsible statement. If anybody insists that it is a true statement, then I'd have to go even stronger and say that it is an out-and-out false statement.

T: There are some other matters we need to discuss about the Elliott controversy. We have talked about, but there probably are some other behind-the-scenes events that occurred with relationship to the Elliott controversy. Some of the professors at Midwestern had been among those removed from Southern Seminary in 1958. Would you react first to how the seminary professors that were fired got to Midwestern and what your suspicions are with their involvement with this Elliott controversy?

H: Well, of course, the situation at Southern and the dismissal of the thirteen professors is well-known history. Again, as I have said on other occasions, while there were doctrinal matters involved, the problem was basically one of who is going to have authority to run the seminary--the trustees and president, or the faculty. It grew out of the old system of the president being within the family--the chairman of the

faculty--rather than president with authority. We have discussed that in other parts of our discussions. When these men were dismissed, some of them went here, there, and yonder. One went to Furman, I recall. Another went to a pastorate in Georgia, Estill Jones. I believe Smith went to Furman. Turlington went to a pastorate in North Carolina. Incidentally, he wrote the Mark section of the Broadman Commentary. I was asked to review Volume 8 of which it is a part. I read every word in Volume 8; and except for a few little minor references to Mark using sources and all--of course, I recognize sources; the use of sources I think sometimes is overdone and we don't give the Holy Spirit as much credit as He might deserve--I found nothing in Dr. Turlington's treatment of Mark that I would turn over in bed for to differ with him.

Some of these men were invited to the faculty of Midwestern Seminary. It happened that this seminary was just coming into being at that time. What I am about to say is, I want it understood that I cannot document what I am about to say. But it is my own judgment in regard to this situation, and I was, I think, in position to observe some things. Dr. H. I. Hester is a wonderful Christian gentleman and a scholar. He was for many years on the faculty at William Jewell. He was on the Trustee Board of Southern Seminary at the time these men were dismissed. It is my understanding--and anyone checking it can check the trustee records and perhaps verify it or not--that Hester supported the thirteen men. Now, after they were dismissed and the Southern Baptist Convention elected trustees for the new seminary at Kansas City, Hester was one of those trustees. He lived in Missouri, and it was perfectly logical. Later, the trustees elected him as chairman of their board, and he, I am sure, played quite a part in the molding of the beginnings of that seminary. Berquist was coming right out of a pastorate. I know if I had been in his place, I would have felt a certain inadequacy starting into an entirely new field from the pastorate to the educational side. And if I had been in his position, I would have leaned heavily on the counsel of the chairman of my trustees. I always did in churches with respect to the chairman of the deacons. And understanding that Dr. Hester supported these professors in the trustees of Southern Seminary, I think he, meaning well--now, you know, you can do things at the moment that seem wise and yet, later on, you look back and you say, "Well, if I had known how it was going to turn out, I would have done otherwise." But after all you can't Monday morning quarterback the game. You've got to live with it. I think that Hester perhaps played a major role in bringing some of these men who had been dismissed at Southern to Midwestern. And these are good men. I wouldn't agree with them on everything I say and preach or write, but that is the genius of our Baptist faith.

But the issue at Southern--again, I want to say as I said earlier--was not primarily theological or doctrinal, though those factors entered into it. But the ultimate issue that led to their dismissal was a struggle as to who was going to run the seminary--the trustees and president or the faculty. And if the trustees, for instance, had decided the faculty should, rather than the president, well, Duke McCall might have been out. He probably would have resigned had they taken that move. The trustees elect a man as president and authorize him to do certain things. And unless there is a very great moral or ethical issue involved, I think they should support him. Just as deacons should support the pastor. But they, of course, did, I think, the wise thing in keeping the authority for running the school in the hands of the trustees and

through them the administration, as Southern Baptists intend that it should be. That is why they elect trustees. The Southern Baptist Convention doesn't elect the faculty. The trustees do that, and the Convention would release all control over a seminary if it agreed to turn the running of it over to the faculty. Now, there should be a voice from the faculty in decisions made, but that is an internal thing within the administrative policies of the school. The Convention doesn't spell out how that shall be done, but the ones in authority must be answerable to the Convention.

The Southern Baptist Convention cannot fire a professor. It can't fire a janitor in one of its institutions. I had that checked out by a lawyer in Missouri when there was an outcry that we ought to fire the faculty at Midwestern and we ought to fire the president at Midwestern. That was before the Kansas City Convention. He gave me a legal opinion. He replied that on the basis of the constitution and bylaws of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Charter of the Seminary in the state of Missouri, the Southern Baptist Convention could not fire any employee. It could not fire a trustee. The Convention can replace the trustees through their own prescribed channels. The Convention itself said, "We will elect trustees and replace them when the time comes, either at the end of their term or otherwise, with a certain method." The lawyer said that the Convention by its own bylaws has to follow that. And so I went to Kansas City with the assurance that if I had to use it--I didn't have to--I had legal opinions from a lawyer in the state of Missouri on that. I think that Hester, meaning well--and I know him and his wife; they are wonderful people, and he would not deliberately contrive to do something wrong because he has too much ethics and religion for that--strongly influenced the president and the trustees in bringing these men over there. The result was--not intended to be--that it merely moved the problem from Louisville to Kansas City. And that problem was not who wrote the book of Genesis or who was Melchizedek. That problem was, who is going to run the institution. And I think that if we dug down far enough underneath all of this Elliott controversy, we would find that if we could psychoanalyze everybody that was involved, that was the underlying thing there. It was not so much this book. If we give in here, where are we going to stop giving in? That was the thing, you see. And so while I do not censure Hester, I do think that entered into creating a situation in which this problem arose at Midwestern Seminary.

T: Do you think Hester was the man to whom Elliott was referring in making his decisions?

H: You mean about how he'd have to have an hour?

T: Yes.

H: No. I don't think so. I think if there was anybody--and this is only an impression which I got and the other men there got--it was certain members of the faculty, and I would assume some of these men that went out there from Southern Seminary.

T: In part is the reason you met at a hotel because you didn't want to meet at Midwestern or was it simply convenience?

H: We did not want to meet at the seminary, largely because we just didn't want to create a stir out at the seminary with the students and have them say, "Well, the big shots are here, they are giving Elliott a going over." So we just met downtown. The trustees did the same thing. Now whether the trustees normally meet downtown, I don't know, but they did on that occasion, I think for the same reason.

T: Dr. Hobbs, one other thing on the Elliott controversy. There has been some suggestion made that there was an arrangement regarding your successor as president. That there was an understanding that if Dr. K. Owen White, who had brought the motion in San Francisco, was elected president, he would agree to serve only one year and this would satisfy the conservative forces. Do you know anything about that kind of suggestion?

H: I just know that the devil is alive and well on planet Earth. That could be nothing but the whisperings of the devil into somebody's ear or heart. There isn't one particle of truth to that idea. Now, I, of course, am not omnipresent nor omniscient, I humbly admit. But I think if a thing like that were going on, the president would know about it.

I am going to refute that idea, not on the basis of I think, or I hope, or I guess, but I am going to refute it on the basis of actual events that were done out in the open where I guess fifteen thousand or more Southern Baptists observed. Carl Bates was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference when I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He nominated me when I was elected president. In my own heart, I never maneuvered to get it done, because as I said earlier, I deplore that sort of thing. I have never yet, God being my witness, asked to be appointed on a committee. In anything--local church, association, state, Southwide, worldwide--I have never asked to be appointed on a committee. I have never asked anybody to nominate me for anything. I have never asked anybody to recommend me to a church.

The nearest thing I ever did to that was when I was ready to start my graduate work at Southern Seminary and I had two good churches out in Indiana. My wife had a bad streptococcus infection, and back then it was just you against the germ. We had none of the drugs we have today. She stayed in the hospital for nearly a month there in the Baptist Hospital in Louisville. The doctors later told me that for two weeks they didn't know whether she was going to live or die. They knew that infection was going to move. It would either go up or down. If it went up, it would hit the brain--no hope; if it went down, it would settle in her pleura and there would be hope. It went down. She has had trouble with pleurisy ever since. It is not serious, but every now and then she gets a little pain. It is dry pleurisy. The doctor told me I had to leave the seminary or I had to--well, no, I am running ahead of myself. I got my stories mixed up. When I was planning on starting my doctor's work, I was asked by Dr. W. O. Carver to be his Fellow. Cornell Goerner was his Fellow, and he was graduating, and he and Ruth had been appointed as missionaries to Rumania. He was to teach in the seminary. The seminary trustees decided they needed to put somebody in to work with Carver, looking toward the time when he would be retiring. They asked Cornell; and then they asked the Foreign Mission Board to release him from his appointment. Just

prior to commencement a group of us had gotten together and given Cornell and Ruth a going-away party and gift. They were embarrassed to tears because they knew all the time they weren't going, but they couldn't tell us. They were sworn to secrecy. Dr. Sampey announced at commencement when he conferred the Ph.D. on Cornell that he was going to stay on and teach. And since money was so scarce, in order to give him a living wage, he had agreed to continue doing the work of a Fellow in that Department of Missions and Philosophy for one year, so they could add that to his salary. Well, I was sitting out there, and even though I was sitting down I had the rug jerked out from under me, because I was counting on that Fellowship, which paid the handsome sum of $35.00 per month, to enable me to stay on and do my doctor's work. We moved out on the field in Indiana, and I wrote Dr. Davis, Hersey Davis, and told him what had developed. I said, "Dr., I am planning to major with you and I am not asking you to do anything except, do you know of any church or any situation in that area where I might be called, so that I would not have to use up so much of the income traveling to and from the church." Of course, he wrote later and said he didn't; and yet, in the same mail I got another letter from him saying, "I just talked to Dr. Weatherspoon, who just returned from a trip to the Orient with Dr. Truett and Dr. Rushbrooke. He said he was away at graduation time and didn't have a Fellow /Howard Colson had been his Fellow/ and asked if he knew somebody he could get." Dr. Davis recommended me. I didn't ask him to recommend me to it, but my letter led to that. I got these letters from the post office at the same time. The one said, "I don't know of anything"; the second said, "I just talked to Dr. Weatherspoon and recommended you, but don't say anything unless he does"; the third letter was from Dr. Weatherspoon, asking me to be his Fellow. I had already accepted an invitation to preach a trial sermon at First Baptist Church at Boaz, Alabama, up on Sand Mountain in north Alabama, leaving the next morning to go down to preach. When I got these letters I accepted the Fellowship and wrote the church and told them what had happened. I said, "It wouldn't be fair to you for me to come down and preach and muddy the waters." So I didn't go. But that is as near as I ever came to asking anybody to do anything for me. I just would not be a party to any kind of back-room, smoke-filled-room politics, denomination or otherwise.

Now, in spite of all of that, in my own mind I had thought, "Well, now, having come through this controversy and apparently the stampede is over, and we have got the cattle /and I use that word in a good sense/ rounded up, now we need somebody to come in as president who could keep them calm and maybe heal wounds that had been made." I thought of Carl Bates. He was known and loved by Southern Baptists and was the kind of man that, it seemed to me, would just fit like a "hand in a glove" into that situation for the next two years. I didn't talk to him about it. When time came for nominations, as I remember there were about twelve people nominated; among them were Carl Bates and K. O. White. On the first ballot Carl Bates lacked 335 votes out of a field of twelve--he lacked 335 votes getting a majority over the other eleven. When he didn't get it--I think in his own mind he had said, "If I am elected on the first ballot, I will accept it; otherwise, I won't stay in the voting."

T: Have you heard that he was, in part, called by his board of deacons and told not to accept the presidency because of their building campaign?

H: I have heard that story, but I have also heard, on the other side, from a man who was in that church and whose word I have no reason to doubt, that the deacons had already made plans that they were going to be at the airport to welcome their pastor and wife home as the new president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And I believe that story; not the other one. They were planning on moving their church and building a new building, but I just don't buy that story. I know it was circulated, and it made Carl look like a weak-kneed something. But it isn't fair to him nor to the deacons of the First Baptist Church in Charlotte. Carl announced that he would not stay in.

T: Did he not request his name to be withdrawn, and you ruled that it could not be withdrawn?

H: He did. First of all, he came and talked to me, and he made no mention whatever of any situation in his church. I think as close as Carl and I were, and still are, if that had been such he would have confided in me. Had he told me that that was the situation, I would have said, "Well, Carl, I am sorry, but I don't blame you." And that would have ended it. But here is what Carl Bates told me. He said, "Herschel, you have a Ph.D. degree from Southern Seminary. I have a Th.B. degree," which was not even the standard degree when he went to the seminary. This is not revealing any secret, his contemporaries know about it. It can be checked in the records at Southern Seminary. A Th.D., Bachelor of Theology, did not require senior Hebrew and Greek. It did require junior Greek and Hebrew. He said, "You are a theologian."

Now I might, by way of parenthesis, say, that many people said that God had prepared me for that two years because I was a commoner and could talk to the pastor at the forks of the branch--could talk his language--and yet, I had an earned doctorate from the seminary which the seminary professors would respect. In the educational field those degrees are important to them moreso than any other field maybe. And they said, "You are a theologian, and you can talk to them, and they can talk to you." I always said, "No, I am not a theologian. I just know enough theology to keep them from finding out how much I don't know when I talk to them."

But anyway, I mention that merely leading up to this. Carl said, "You are a man who can talk to them on their own level. I can't. I would be scared to death if I were thrown into that situation. I wouldn't know how to talk to those men, and they wouldn't listen to me like they listen to you because they recognize your degree," and so on. I said, "But Carl, that is behind us. We don't need a man that can talk to theologians anymore. We need a man who can love the people and be loved by them and bring the people together where there are differences and heal wounds that may exist." He still would not agree. Well, I made up my mind that I was going to try to hold him to the nomination. He got up the next morning and requested that his name be withdrawn. I burned some midnight oil that night, reading the rules of order to see if there were any parliamentary means of keeping him in the race, because I thought that we needed him so badly at that particular time. I discovered that if a man's name is placed in nomination and he withdraws it immediately, it is permissible; but once it stays in for a vote, it becomes the property

of the Convention, not the person whose name is in nomination. So I ruled him out of order on that basis. Someone, one of the editors as I remember it, got up in the press area--it may have been E. S. James--and made a motion that in light of the situation he be allowed to withdraw. Well, I said, "The only way it can be withdrawn is by unanimous vote of the Convention on a parliamentary." So the motion was made that in the light of the situation and Bates' request that the Convention unanimously vote to release him and let him withdraw his name. And they did so.

Well, then, that was a new ball game. I told him, in trying to hold him in there, I said, "Carl, you only lacked 335 votes being elected." It was almost a miracle, and I honestly felt it was God's will. I now see that God had another time when we would need Carl Bates, but at that time, I honestly thought that was right. So, we had another ballot. K. O. White--you can tell by that vote I mentioned, and this is not against K. O. White--ran a very poor second. When one man just lacks 335 votes of whipping the whole slate of eleven, you know that no one of those eleven had too big a vote. But anyway, as I recall, I think it was agreed that those that got a minimum number of votes--or it may have been to throw the thing wide open--I'd have to check the record to see. There were two people--that's right. There were two people--K. O. White and the one under him.

T: W. O. Vaught. And so a ballot was taken, purely democratic in nature. Had W. O. Vaught gotten the most votes, he would have been elected, but as it was, K. O. White got the most votes and he was elected. Now, I don't know of any more democratic way to do it than that. As for his one year, he didn't talk to me about this because I was his predecessor. I stepped out of the picture. I do know that his wife has been in bad health for years, and she was almost, not an invalid but a cripple. So, after he had served for this one year and coming near to the end of it eligible for another year, he announced that he would not be eligible for reelection because of his wife's health. That was all in the world there was to it. Now the devil can take all of this and put it in a pot and stir it up and come out with an awful smelling brew. But there was no hanky-panky, no finagling in any of this of which I know. I would almost stake my life on it that there was not.

I think, again, God works in all things for good to those who love the Lord. I thought Carl would make an ideal candidate that would please both sides of this issue. But as I look back on it, I think I can see God's hand working. K. O.'s being elected was certainly pleasing to those who had been with him in this controversy. It was not a repudiation of the others, but they could go home and say, "Now we elected a president. We may not have gotten everything we wanted in the Midwestern Seminary matter, but we elected a president." And I think it was good.

Now K. O. could have served for two years, could have been a good president for two years. But as it was, there wasn't a great deal going on during that year--it was sort of a settling down, a licking of wounds sort of thing. As I recall, there was nothing of any great moment that was done or started during that year. I have referred to it, without in any sense being unkind to K. O., as a sort of a housekeeping term as president. He could have been elected for a second term

without any question, but it was his own decision and his alone. He had no idea of being elected president of the Convention when he was nominated; and as I said, had Carl Bates stayed in for a second vote he would have been elected overwhelmingly in my judgment. But he withdrew, and we did the only thing we could do, we took the next two men. I think the minutes would show that a motion was made to do that. It wasn't a decision that I made or ruled as president, or that somebody with a pitchfork in one hand, forked tail, wearing a red suit and horns, and with a Mephistopheles mustache devised. It was purely a democratic development. After that one year he could have gone on for another year and made a good president. There wasn't any reason why he couldn't. He had all the ability. He didn't travel as much as I did, or some others, but it was due largely to his wife. He had to look after her. So, in Atlantic City the Convention elected Wayne Dehoney. But it was all aboveboard. There wasn't any scheming behind the scenes.

T: Dr. White told me that one of the real problems that he faced as president was the difficulty of carrying on his church program, and he made an effort to be in church each Sunday morning, at least, during the year of his presidency.

H: Well, I think it ought to be recalled that at that time he was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, which was at that time a most difficult situation. In fact, whether it was his successor or not I am not sure, but the man that preceded John Bisagno resigned, and it was reported to me that he gave as his reason that it was a hopeless situation. Somebody said, "Well, why in the world did John Bisagno go down there to First Baptist Church, Houston, from First Southern, Del City, where he had such a great program going?" I said, "Well, for one thing, it may be that the Lord sent him down there. On the other hand," I said, "If John Bisagno can't pull it out, then it is a hopeless situation." But K. O. had a difficult situation plus his wife's condition. I think that being the gentleman that he is, he might not have wanted to involve his wife to say that it was any condition of hers. It may or may not have been stated, but I am sure that was part of it. I am glad you mentioned about the church part because that was a legitimate thing.

T: He also raised with me something I would like to hear you discuss, and that is the real problem he faced with handling the correspondence related to the Southern Baptist presidency, and not having secretarial resources or expenses for carrying on the responsibilities of president.

H: Well, I don't know about his situation. I can only tell you what was told to me when I was elected. Porter Routh told me that if I needed extra secretarial help that the Convention would provide me with an extra secretary while I was president. I talked to Miss Lucy Gibson, my secretary, about it and she said, "Well, let's wait and see. If we ever need one, we can always do it, but let's wait and see." So, we never spent one thin dime for extra secretarial help. She did it all herself.

T: Was that really a contribution of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, to the program?

H: Well, it was in a way. She was my secretary and if she hadn't been doing that, she would have been doing something else for me. I didn't write any books during that two-year period. I have written fifty-two books as of now. Actually, I have written more than that. They haven't all come out, but they will be published. But I have fifty-two books that have been published since 1951, and she typed the manuscripts for most all of them--all of them until I retired. My wife, bless her heart, is a typist, and she has been my typist ever since. But she was just doing my work. Lucy Gibson felt a call of God to her work as much, I guess, as I did to mine. I used to tell her, "We're just two country folks that never learned you couldn't make a living without working." She would get in there and fight a typewriter like she was fighting bees. So we never got any outside help, though it was offered to me if I ever needed it. Now I don't know what the case was with K. O.

T: Do you think the expenses were high enough for the responsibilities thrust upon the president? Was there adequate finances left in the budget for expenses? Or was this again a contribution that your church made?

H: No. The church never paid a dime of my expenses in the things that I was doing for the Convention. Of course, they paid me my salary.

T: What about pulpit supplies on Sundays you needed to be away?

H: The church furnished them, but I wasn't out too many Sundays. I was out some. For instance, my wife and I made a trip to Latin America, Africa, and Western Europe, and I was out from the first of February until the third Sunday in March. Occasionally I would be out on a Sunday if I was somewhere for a specific occasion. For instance, I spoke at the 250th Anniversary of the Bear Grass Baptist Church in South Carolina one Sunday, and I had a supply then. Of course, I had an associate; and then we had a good many of the Baptist headquarters men in our church, and we could use them as we wanted to. But when we needed a supply, we just got one and the church paid for it. When I was away they always paid my supplies. I never paid for a supply. That was just a part of the program. For instance, one week I spoke in our church Sunday morning and Sunday night; then, I attended five state conventions that week--all the way from the east coast to the Oregon-Washington Convention in Klamath Falls, Oregon--and was in my church for prayer meeting on Wednesday night. And then I was back here for the next Sunday. So I wasn't out of the pulpit too much during the two years except when I was out of the country. The Foreign Mission Board paid my expense to the mission fields, but all of my travel expense in connection specifically with my work as president was paid out of the operating fund of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, unless it was paid by the Baptist group to which I spoke. My church never paid any of it; neither did I.

T: Was it adequate?

H: Yes. When I made a trip, I would charge the plane ticket, say, through my travel agent here in Oklahoma City, and they would charge it to the church like they did all my other travel. Then, I would turn in to Porter Routh an expense account for

the amount of travel and other expenses like meals, rooms, and so forth. Of course, if I went to speak at a state convention, much of the time they would pay my expense. If I went to another board meeting, they paid it. But the operating fund of the Southern Baptist Convention paid all of my travel expenses that were not paid by any other group or agency; and in that case, all I did was just send them an expense account as to the travel costs, meals, room, and such, and they would send me a check.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you and I could sit down with the Annual and go through and have your interpretations to many things, but we really can't do all of that. In the latter part of the 1960's there was a regular conflict apparently between some in the Convention and the Christian Life Commission, and on one occasion a motion was made to remove the Christian Life Commission. The Christian Life Commission was sustained, according to the record, as the result of a meeting and agreement between some of the former presidents of the Convention who brought a motion to support the Christian Life Commission, which the Convention subsequently approved. Do you remember that event and what was the background for it?

H: Well, of course, the Christian Life Commission by the very nature of its work is going to be a center of controversy. It is sort of the conscience of the Convention in a way. It pricks our conscience in the things that we are not doing and should do. It is sort of like the book that Foy Valentine wrote. I didn't read all the book, but I have never forgotten the title. I have used the title quite often in speaking and writing and have always given him credit for it, and wish I had thought of it first: Believe and Behave. You can summarize the apostle Paul's letters and his teachings with those two words. He would always start off by telling you about what we ought to believe and then how we ought to act in the light of it.

You mentioned the 1960's. Integration and all of those things made the Christian Life Commission somewhat of a storm center, and opposition had been growing and growing. Finally, they had this famous, or infamous, seminar in Atlanta when they invited the editor of Playboy Magazine down. Actually, those that were there said it was a wholesome thing. These Southern Baptist men, members of some of our seminary faculties, made that guy look like a fool; and the newspapers of Atlanta just played it up big, how they made him look so silly. They ridiculed the guy and praised our Southern Baptist people that put him in his place. Anyway, that was as hot as a two-dollar pistol in Denver. That was the meanest Convention I ever attended and the darkest moment in my own service with the denomination--and it has been from the beginning of my ministry. I have tried to serve my denomination--I was at that Convention, in connection with Volume 1 of the Broadman Commentary. But the brethren came out there with blood in their eye on those two issues--the Christian Life Commission and this other. Well, we had a pretty hot scrap over the Commentary. I got up and made a statement. They limited each person to three minutes, which was most unfortunate. The Committee on Order of Business did that. We were dealing, almost, with the lifeblood of our denomination in a way--its freedom; and to limit a man to three minutes! As Dr. Lee said to me one time on another occasion when they only gave him five minutes to speak on a program, "I can't even get my engines warmed up at the end of the runway in five minutes."

T: Do you want to go back and talk about the issue of the Broadman Commentary and pick that up or are you ready to go on to the Christian Life Commission?

H: Maybe I ought to finish the Christian Life Commission and then come back to this. What happened in that case, with all of the disturbance about the Broadman Commentary, my wife and I were sitting in the coffee shop of the hotel, eating breakfast the next morning. The Christian Life Commission matter was to come up on the program that day. Ramsey Pollard came over and sat down by me. Now anybody who knows Ramsey knows he was opposed to what the Christian Life Commission did. He said, "Herschel, I think that we are going to have a very unpleasant situation today if something isn't done." We have reached the point where, as you know, we Southern Baptist former presidents have tried to refrain from being too much involved. But he said, "I think we have reached the place where some with cool heads need to try to help this situation. Would you write out a statement, and you and I will sign it, requesting that the Convention not bring up this matter?" I wrote out something, and he said, "No, that won't do. It has got to be something a little different." He said, "Let me try my hand at it."

T: What did you write?

H: Oh, I don't know. It was pretty much what he wrote except mine was a little more of a soft approach. I was a little more diplomatic, maybe. Ramsey, you know, just says what he thinks, and that is a good quality. I am not criticizing because Ramsey and I are very dear friends. Ramsey said, "That won't do. It's got to be a little sharper than that." And so he said, "Let me write out something, and then I'll see you on the platform and we'll discuss it." So he came up on the platform at the Convention and showed me what he had written, and I made one or two suggested changes which he put in. Really, it toned it down just a little bit without hurting what he was saying, and we agreed that that was it. It happened that there was another former president nearby, and we agreed that he would go over and sit down and show it to him, and ask him if he would sign his name to it. I signed mine and Ramsey signed his. This man readily signed his name.

T: You didn't have a meeting then?

H: Oh, no. We didn't have any meeting. The only meeting we had was when Ramsey and I talked down in the coffee shop; then he came and sat down by me on the platform--I told him I'd just meet him up there where he could find me. Then, when we agreed on the wording we looked down there, and I don't remember who it was, but it was one of the former presidents--I think it was Franklin Paschall--and he went over and sat down by him. We agreed that he would do it. He asked him to read it and then asked, "Would you sign this?" He said, "I'd be glad to," and he did. And he found some others. Wayne Dehoney, I think, was the only one that was there at the Convention, a former president, that didn't sign it. Wayne was a little bit disturbed because he didn't get to sign it, and he said something to me about it. I said, "Well, Wayne, we couldn't find you." I think maybe he put his name on it later, but that was the only reason why his name wasn't on there.

The reason we did that simply was this. This crowd had had a taste of blood about the Broadman Commentary, and they almost had a Messianic complex there. They were going to clean up every problem Southern Baptists have. Their attitude was, "We are going to clean them up right here while we are out here in Denver, and we have got our crowd here. We are in the saddle." We felt that if that thing were left open and if that had been brought up on the floor, there would be blood knee-deep on the floor, and it would do almost irreparable harm to the fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention. And that is why we did it. We just said, "We do not think there will be any profit to anybody to bring this matter up and to air it at this Convention, and we request or recommend that it not be brought up." The Convention voted to sustain our recommendation.

T: Did anybody--the trustees, the commissioners, or the staff of the Christian Life Commission--make an approach to Dr. Pollard on this?

H: No. After Dr. Pollard and I had agreed on the wording--I am glad you asked that question--he looked down there and saw Valentine. He walked down--and I think there was something in that statement about the future conduct or programs, I don't remember the details now--but anyway, he went down and sat down by Foy Valentine and read it to him and said, "Foy, Herschel Hobbs and I have drawn this up, and we are thinking of getting other presidents to sign it, and present this to try to head off any unfortunate situation here. Is this agreeable to you?" He read it over and said, "Yes." But he did not himself initiate it. It was after the statement had been drawn up--after Ramsey and I discussed it and I tried my hand and he said, "Well, that's too long, let me try it." So he tried it, and came to me, and I edited it a little bit--added a word, took out a word or two--and then we agreed on it, and then he went and showed it to Foy Valentine. That was the first Foy knew about it.

T: K. Owen White also did not sign this statement. Did you try and approach him, do you remember?

H: Ramsey did what was done in getting them to sign it. I don't know. I was not aware that he didn't sign it. The only one that said anything to me was Wayne. He said, "Why wasn't I asked to sign it?" I said, "Wayne, we couldn't find you." But Ramsey was the one that got the men to sign it. So I don't know about K. O.

T: You think it was right to sustain the Christian Life Commission?

H: I think it was right to try to save the Convention from a traumatic experience. I personally did not agree with what they had done. I thought that it would have been better had the Christian Life Commission followed another course at that particular point, but what was done was done. And there were those who felt strongly that they had done the right thing. There were those who felt they had done the wrong thing. A debate would not have changed anybody's mind. It would have only hurt the Convention and the fellowship of the Convention. I think the Christian Life Commission, though, got the message, and that was about all that Convention could have done if they had fought for two weeks over it. I don't think Southern Baptists are of a mind as a whole to do away with the Christian Life Commission. A lot of

people would like to. A lot that want to keep it don't always agree with what they say and do, but that is the kind of job they have. It's sort of "if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen," and that's the kind of job that Foy has. It will always be controversial.

T: Isn't that part of the issue within the denomination at every point? That we are always under challenge and that we are denominational servants--even other commissions besides the Christian Life Commission, other boards?

H: That's true, and as I said in my president's address in San Francisco--tension. I hope we never see the day when we don't have tension. If we ever get to the point where we are so flabby in our convictions that we don't have tension, then we are really in a bad fix. Controversy doesn't worry me. Now the newspapers, you know, don't understand us Southern Baptists. I remember in Houston, years ago, I sat through a session one afternoon when J. D. Grey was president. You weren't there then, but J. D. gave his famous lecture to the press that afternoon--his book, Saint J. D., they put that in there. It's a classic. But I sat through all of that and when it was over I walked out, went up to the hotel, got me a bite to eat, and I walked out and saw a man selling papers that had a big headline, "Southern Baptists to Divide." I bought a paper, and I thought, "What in the world!" I got a paper, went in the lobby and sat down and read it, and all it was doing was reporting what had happened that afternoon. Yet, they said we were going to divide. We weren't about to divide. It was just Southern Baptists carrying on their business in a normal way. When you run an open, democratic convention like we have, you are going to have that. It's these conventions where they have a little hierarchy that says, "Jump," and everybody says, "How high?" They are the ones that don't have any controversy. The Lutherans and the Presbyterians have been acting more like Baptists of late than they have ever acted in my lifetime. That's healthy, as long as we don't let it fester. You know, doubt is a good thing if you don't let it fester. Doubt is a protective mechanism. If you tell me drinking arsenic won't kill me, I'll doubt you. So controversy, debate, open debate, is good. Southern Baptists always have had a Convention--whether it is association, state, or Southern Baptist, they come together, openly speak their minds, and make decisions. Then when we go home, we always go home singing, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

T: You started to mention the Broadman Commentary. What were the factors behind the Broadman Commentary?

H: Well, I was on the Advisory Committee for the Broadman Commentary. We had one meeting and discussed principles and policies, and that is all we ever met. Men were selected to be editors and co-editors. Clifton Allen was the general editor, and they had Frank Stagg, and I don't know who all the others were. They selected the writers, and we had no part whatever in selecting writers. We did agree at that meeting that we ought to have some Baptists other than Southern Baptists to write some of the work to give it a general Baptist flavor, not just Southern Baptists. We did not name people. For instance, we didn't say, "Let's get Dr. Davies to write Genesis." We simply said, "We think we ought to get some Baptists other than Southern Baptists to join in and give it a wider Baptist flavor." When

the first two volumes came out, I was asked to review Volume 8, as I said, and I did. I read every word of it. I gave it a good review, and I would give it a good review right now. There has never been any question raised about Volume 8, I am happy to remark. It was written by Frank Stagg and Henry Turlington.

T: You reviewed it for a magazine or for the Sunday School Board?

H: I reviewed it for the Broadman Press. Then they used the review in their publicity. Wayne Dehoney was asked to review Volume 1, but I'll let Wayne tell you about his review. I am not going to comment on it one way or the other because it was his review, not mine. However, later on, when the pot began to boil and they began to put ads in the Baptist papers with pictures of Volumes 1 and 8 and quoting from my review of Volume 8, I began to get a few letters. People who knew my theological position as being conservative--I call myself a progressive conservative--didn't understand what I said about Volume 1. Well, I wrote James L. Sullivan and told him, "Now, Dr., they asked me to review Volume 8. I reviewed it. I read every word in it. I wrote my review. It was a favorable one. I will stand behind my review of Volume 8. But it is misleading to quote from my review in an ad that involves Volume 1, when I did not read Volume 1." I read it before I went to Denver--ever word of it. But I didn't read it before because I was not asked to review it. I said, "I would appreciate it if you would not associate any statement I made about Volume 8 with Volume 1." He wrote back and apologized and said, "You are right. We did not intend to mislead anybody or to use my material about Volume 1." But he said, "That is the sales department that is doing that. But it will not be done anymore." And it was not. Frankly, I read Volume 1 before I went to the Denver Convention because I understood it was going to come up. I didn't agree with a lot of things that Dr. Davies said. I didn't agree with a lot of things Dr. Honeycutt said about Exodus. I never read a commentary in my life in which I agreed with everything. I have always been grateful that I was asked to be one of the writers. I wrote the material for I and II Thessalonians and was the only pastor as such asked to write a part. Now, Charles Trentham, at that time was pastor of the First Church, Knoxville, now at the First Church, Washington. He was a pastor at the time, but he was a seminary professor before going into the pastorate, so in a way he was more related to the educational field. I had no relationship whatever to it, professionally. But, be that as it may. I might, if I were going to rewrite my material, change some of it. I hope I've thought a little bit since that time.

But on the other hand Dr. Davies in Great Britain is considered a conservative. He, I think, has a very good treatment of the creation, the flood, and the fall of man, and some other things. I just don't go along too much with this documentary hopothesis. For instance, the idea that the writer of Genesis had source material doesn't bother me. Luke clearly says in the opening verses of his Gospel that he had gathered material, oral and written. I do not think that takes away the element of inspiration. The Holy Spirit can guide in selecting material. A man said to me one time when I told him that I planned my preaching program ahead of time, "Isn't that sort of ignoring the Holy Spirit?" I said, "No, I think the Holy Spirit can guide me a whole lot better in planning a six months' program than He can to figure out on Saturday night what I am going to preach on the next day." So

source material doesn't bother me at all. I think the way some scholars use that idea is not the best.

For instance, to say, arbitrarily almost, that Genesis belongs in the eighteenth century, B. C., who says so? Archeology now has revealed that the instances recorded in Genesis belong exactly where Genesis puts them, in the time of Abraham and so on, not up in the eighth century, B. C. in the time of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The more scholars learn about the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, the more it is going to be established that Moses did write it. We will have completed the cycle and come back to what has been believed all along by most people. I think Moses wrote them, and I think eventually that it will be proved. Now that doesn't mean he wrote every word of it; he had source materials. He certainly didn't write the last chapter of Deuteronomy because it tells about his death and burial. I think Joshua wrote that, and, incidentally, that's Elliott's position on Deuteronomy. He says, "I think for the most part Moses wrote Deuteronomy. There are some editorial additions to it." But we accept in the New Testament the idea that in the King James it says, "Jesus said, This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." And we readily admit that the best manuscripts do not include "and fasting." There is editorial material. So that part doesn't bother me at all. I don't agree to trying to put this up in the eighth century, rather than back where the book says.

I didn't find Davies' commentary objectionable as a whole. I strained out the gnats, as I saw them, and drank the milk. And I do that with every book I read. You know, if a man just reads a book that he agrees with all the time, it is just like sharpening an ax by rubbing it in butter. Sometimes I read books that I know ahead of time I am not going to agree with, for no other reason than to sharpen my ax to sink it in their heads. But in Denver when they set the rules for the length of discussion on the motion made by Brother Turner . . .

T: Did you know he was going to make that motion?

H: Yes. I didn't know exactly what the motion would be, but it had been generally publicized that he was going to make a motion.

T: He didn't consult with you?

H: Oh, no. He didn't consult with me. I'm just one of the members of the "Who's Through Club." (For Presidents' Club). I had been out of the presidency a long time. For a number of years the presidents have had the unwritten agreement that former presidents do not speak. They don't debate issues. I said, "Well, foot! I'm not going to abide by that." Now we do have an understanding that no former president will nominate anybody for president with the idea it might give that man an unfair advantage over somebody else. But I said, "I'm not going to be muzzled. I think that men who have been president are in position to give guidance and we have an obligation to do it." I have noticed that some of the others have been a little more open to speak since I started doing that.

T: Let me ask, Where did that come from? Is that just an unwritten tradition?

H: It just grew up. Nobody knows where. It just became the practice.

T: Do you remember who told you that was the rule?

H: I don't recall anybody telling me. It was just around here, there, and yonder. For instance, some former president would say, "Well, I've had my day, and I'm going to sit back and let them run it now." That sort of an attitude. Well, I still think that I am a part of the Convention, and if the church which I am a member of sends me as a messenger, I ought to do more than just go there and wear out a chair and the seat of my breeches.

Anyway, I didn't know who was going to speak against the motion. I did know James L. Sullivan would, and I knew Clifton J. Allen would. I wrote Sullivan a letter before I went to the Convention, and I said, "I intend to speak in defense of the Commentary, at least against the idea of banning it." I did. I was the only person other than Sullivan and Allen who did. They did it, more or less, from an official position. That's the thing that sort of gets your goat. I told earlier about Brother Moore's statement about my signing the charges against Dale Moody when I didn't do any such thing, and yet, he never made any correction on it--never even wrote me a letter to say he was sorry. I don't hold it against him, but I think it would have been pure Christian courtesy to mention it. I was chairman of the Committee on State Papers, and I have seen him dozens of times. He has never spoken of it. We treat members of the family worse than we do outsiders, you know. A year later, when we were coming up to the next Southern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia, we knew that this thing was going to be brought up again in some way or another. One editor wrote and said, "Where were the leaders of the Convention in Denver. Not a one of them stood in defense of Dr. Sullivan and the Sunday School Board." I wrote him and I said, "My dear brother, if you will go back and check the minutes you will find that I did. It was the darkest hour of all of my ministry in serving the denomination. I stuck my neck out a mile and got it almost chopped off. I don't mind getting my neck chopped off, but I would like to get a little credit for it in print." He never wrote me a word. He has never corrected it.

That's why I say that journalism is going to have to answer some questions when they get up before the Throne of God. It won't be about whether they are going to heaven or hell or not, but it is going to be about what rewards they are going to get. Some of them, I think, are going to be given an eraser, and they are going to have to spend a million years just going around erasing spots off the sky. I hope so anyway. That includes all journalists--newspaper, public, and all. Anyway, I love them. They're human, but sometimes, you know, you can act subhuman. Human is to say, "I'm sorry" or "Thank you." You are right and it's ignored. If it was some crackpot writing about something, I could understand. But I'll say this. In all of my years as a pastor, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and all, I never got a letter I didn't answer. It might be the screwballingest thing you ever saw, but I'd at least say, "Dear So-and-So, I got your letter, appreciate your thinking about me and sharing your views with me. Sincerely yours." I, at least, acknowledged it.

But now, I never did get to make the real point of my statement. I started off with only three minutes. I knew I had to make it very brief. I started off by saying that the Commentary was not as bad as some had made it out to be. I told them I had read it and had found that it was helpful, though I didn't agree with everything that was in it. About that time, they began to call time. Well, I was watching the lights up there on the podium and I still had a minute. W. A. Criswell held up one finger. They either did not catch the point or they ignored it. He was trying to show them I still had a minute. I started to ask him to call the Convention to order and give me the minute. Then, I thought, "Oh, foot. They are going to vote the way they want to anyway," and I sat down. My main but unspoken point was this. In a Convention that size seventy-five percent had not even seen the book, and ninety to ninety-five percent had not read it. If more than that had, they had really done a lot of swapping of books because of the number that had been sold. A Convention like that was in no position to approve or disapprove of a book. I wanted to say that I would not want a book of mine handled that way, and that I would get up and object if this motion was that we go on record as approving Volume 1, because I felt it was completely out of the scope of the range of the purpose of the Southern Baptist Convention. But I never got to make that point.

Last December, while I was in Florida, a local Baptist Faith and Message group had a breakfast and invited me to be there. They said, "We just want you to know that we are human beings and not a bunch of ogres." I said, "Well, I'll come with two or three understandings. Number one, I want the associational missionary to come with me; number two, there will be no publicity about my coming nor that I've been there; number three, I do not propose to get into any kind of argument or debate. If that starts, I'll just ask to be excused." He said, "We won't do any of that. We just want you to come and eat with us and see that we are just ordinary guys." Well, I did, and I found that was true. There was one hothead there. I spotted him almost as soon as I sat down. In the course of discussion of what went on in Denver, I said, "Well, I really think that was aimed more at Criswell, who was my very close friend, than it was at me or anybody else, because he is a strong conservative and outspoken in it. He had made some statements during the year that some people had interpreted as, 'We've got us a champion now. He's our boy, and now's the time to do the operating. We're going to clean things up when we get to Denver.' Well, there were a lot of people back East, you know, who didn't go to the Denver Convention. They were saving their money to go to Tokyo to the Baptist World Alliance. When Criswell got up and presided as president, as he should have done, favoring neither side, that crowd interpreted that as turning on them or betraying them, when they thought he was going to be their knight in shining armor. But he did what a president should do, he presided without favor. I have an idea that a lot of that venom was poured out, it was the meanest Convention that I have ever attended. Other people say that it takes the cake among Southern Baptists for that sort of thing." When I made that statement this fellow's face got red as a beet, the one that I had already picked out as being a hothead. He said, "That is right. All that Criswell had to do was to say one word, and he wouldn't say it." I think that bears out what I had said.

They were not against me personally because the very next day a man from Arkansas came to me and said, "I am going to make a motion to change the wording on

'The Baptist Faith and Message' about the Scripture to read 'the Scriptures are infallible,' instead of 'without any mixture of error.' What do you think about it?" I said, "Well, I'll oppose you for two reasons. One, I think the statement is stronger the way it is. Infallible has two meanings; one is without error, the other that it fulfills its intended function. A dull knife can be an infallible knife if you use it only to cut butter. You will weaken the statement by putting in that word. I know it's your pet word, and it's the pet word of a lot of people, but it isn't as strong as the words 'without any mixture of error.' Two, I'll oppose it because while I do not question but that some day 'The Baptist Faith and Message' will be revised as the 1925 issue was, I think it should be done by a committee as we revised the 1925 Statement, and not by somebody jumping up on the floor of the Southern Baptist Convention and making a motion and the people voting it without thinking it through. I will oppose your motion." I might say, as long as there is breath in my body and I can climb the steps, I will continue to oppose such motions. I did and the Convention supported me. So it wasn't against me as a person. It was just a psychological situation where people did things that I am sure many of them were ashamed of.

In that Baptist Faith and Message breakfast when I explained what I got up to do that day, and asserted my faith in the Scriptures, and so on, not in a defensive way but just talking, one man said, "Dr. Hobbs, I was one of those men who shouted you down that day. I thought you did not believe the Scriptures, and I was wrong. I am sorry, and I apologize." Well, there was a big man. I didn't get my minute. Maybe I should have insisted on getting it and making the point, but I just didn't. I was told later by a friend who was sitting toward the back that he was in a nest of men that were just so wrought up they were literally frothing at the mouth. Suddenly he pointed to them and said, "How many of you have read Volume 1?" Not a one of them had read it. You know we read about the old frontier revivals when people would get down on all fours and run around barking like dogs? That was sort of the same thing. One of the ushers ushered me and my wife down that night to the reserved section for former presidents and their wives. You remember that hall was a mile long and two inches wide. That is the only time they have ever done that, but they did have that section there. This man had just resigned a position with the F. B. I. He had been called to preach and was going to the seminary. But he told me, "After what I saw this morning, I am having some second thoughts. I don't know whether I want to be a Baptist preacher or not." My wife and I spent an hour talking to that man, telling him, "Now, listen, don't take this as a picture of Southern Baptists. This is not Southern Baptists in their true spirit. This is something that I have never seen before, and I hope I never see it again." I don't know whether we helped him or not, but I hope so. The darkest moment I might say in my whole denominational service was that moment when the brethren whom I had tried to serve so many years yelled me down when I still had a minute. If any of them had taken the trouble to read all the books I had written, they would have known that I am a middle-of-the-road conservative. If I hadn't had some time left, I would have deserved to have been yelled down, but they were not fair. It didn't hurt me, it disappointed me. I didn't carry any grudge, but if I had to pick the blackest moment in my denominational service, that would be it.

T: Do you think Dr. Criswell was in error in not calling the Convention to order more frequently and prohibiting the exhibition of emotion and shouting during debate?

H: I wouldn't say so. I think W. A. did a pretty good job just keeping them headed in the right direction. You know, we had a rough Convention in New Orleans, and he presided there. But it was not as rough as the one in Denver.

T: Would you have done it differently?

H: Well, yes, I guess I would. I would have used my gavel more and demanded order, but it's the temperament of different people. For instance, someone has said Dr. Truett knew less about parliamentary law than any man that has ever presided at the Southern Baptist Convention. I am sure he didn't take the time to read up on it. I boned that thing before I went to the Convention the first year. The second year I had learned by experience a lot of things. But Dr. Truett took the attitude that it is just Christian common sense, and we are going to be Christian brethren.

W. A. Criswell was somewhat the same type. If he had wanted to, he could have used parliamentary law and demanded certain things, but it is just not W. A.'s nature. W. A. is a pastor par excellence, a preacher, a prince in his own pulpit, but he doesn't have any particular desire for that sort of thing. For years he kept refusing to let his name go up for president. People would nominate him and he would withdraw. He told me one time, "I can't be there, but if they nominate me you get up and tell them I asked you to withdraw my name." But one day I got on to him. I said, "W. A., as pastor of the largest church in the Convention, you ought to take more part in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention." He said, "Well, I do everything they ask me to do. I speak every time they ask me." I said, "Any other Southern Baptist preacher would give five years off his life to get to make some of the speeches you make, but you don't do anything else." Of course, at one time he had served as president of the Sunday School Board. I said, "You are on the Annuity Board because you can walk across the street and meet with them. You don't give any time. You go to the Southern Baptist Convention and nobody ever sees you. As close friends as you and I are, I rarely ever see you at the Southern Baptist Convention. You go to your room. You must eat your meals in your room, because I have never seen you in the coffee shop. When you go to the Convention you get up on the top balcony behind a post." That's just his nature. He said, "Well, what can I do?" I said, "Well, at least, you could walk across the platform once or twice and let the people know you are there and that you are interested in what is going on. When I was president of the Convention and I was fighting for the Convention's life, I didn't see you one time. I knew you were there. I'd hear people say you were, but I didn't see you. You didn't come around and say to me, 'Stay in there boy, I'm for you,' or you didn't sit on the platform and give moral support. You were either in your hotel room, up in the top balcony, or you left and went home for Wednesday night prayer meeting." He said, "That sort of thing is so foreign to my nature." I said, "I said, "I know it is, but you owe it to the Convention." I think that may have been the turning point in his finally agreeing to let his name be put up for president. But he said, "The happiest day of my life was when I turned that gavel over to my successor." I am sure it was. No, I don't criticize W. A. for anything he did or did not do. But you have

asked me the question, Would I have done differently? Yes. But then, if you asked him about some things I did, he would probably say he would have done them differently, too.

T: Some have suggested to me that the Sunday School Board leadership picked the wrong people to defend their Commentary. Did they ever discuss with you at all the part you played in the defense? Did you counsel with them at all on possible people to defend the Commentary?

H: I don't think the Sunday School Board leadership made any effort whatever to get anybody to defend it. They didn't ask me. I wrote Jim Sullivan a letter and told him I was going to speak against the idea of banning the Commentary, and he wrote back and thanked me. In my judgment, Jim Sullivan certainly was in his every right to get up and defend the Sunday School Board's position. As far as right goes, Clifton Allen had every right to defend the procedure in the Commentary because he was the general editor, but he was not the man to get up and try to appease that crowd. If I had been choosing, I would not have chosen him. It's nothing against Clifton, he is a friend of mine. If the Sunday School Board erred in this matter, it was in not trying to get somebody to defend the Commentary. There were people there by the armload that would have gotten up and defended it, and if they had been asked, they would have taken the position that I took. Nobody loves to get in a fight like that and stick his neck out. So they weren't asked to do it, and they didn't do it. I told Sullivan I was going to support the Sunday School Board and the Broadman Commentary against an effort to have the book withdrawn, not because I agreed with everything in that book, but because of a principle. I think that history will vindicate my position that that was one of the lowest points in our Southern Baptist history as far as our Baptist principles are concerned and as far as our Baptist conduct is concerned.

T: There are other observations here on the Broadman Commentary and these issues and rumors in the background.

H: Let me say this about that Broadman Commentary before you get away from it. I've got some books that haven't been selling so well. I wish somebody would jump on one of them, because that was the best sales talk that Volume I ever got. People who would never have bought a copy rushed to get them. They sold out at the Convention. People were almost standing in line in bookstores all over the country to buy a copy before they were banned. You see, the Convention's request had to be implemented by the action of the trustees, and they did not meet until the summer assembly at Glorieta. And so, there was a rush on that book. I understand somebody took the book out of Dargan-Carver Library, and they can't even get one to replace it because the Sunday School Board won't let them have it because the Convention said, "No." They have some over there in the warehouse. We may have to have a special election to get that done.

I think Broadman Commentary is a very good work. My greatest criticism of it is not some of the handling of material, though I don't agree with many things in it, but that it is too technical and lacks the preaching homiletical element. When I write a book on my own, I don't ask anybody, I just go on and write it. But when

I write as one of many writers, I want to be sure I am somewhere in the ball park. When I started writing my material on the first chapter of I Thessalonians, to be sure I was on the right track I wrote my material and sent it to Clifton Allen and Frank Stagg, the New Testament editor, and asked them to criticize it. The only criticism was that I had made it too homiletical--too much preaching in it, not just sermons, but I had tried to put in kernels of preaching truth. I understand that they made that same criticism later of Francisco's work on Genesis. I don't know this to be an absolute fact, but it was told to me by someone who was supposed to know, that they sent it back and said, "There is too much preaching in it." He took some of it out. So, it was written for preachers, of course, but laymen too, and I think it would have been much stronger had it had more homiletical helps in it.

One man, an editor, who wrote an editorial after examining Volumes 1 and 8, said, "Don't waste your money. Don't buy it." He condemned the whole twelve volumes when he had seen only two. Yet, when the Convention was over in Denver, someone asked him, "Do you have a copy of Volume 1?" He said, "Yes." He said, "I'd like to buy it if you don't want it." He said, "I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for it."

I wrote Dr. Davies when I got home and apologized. I said, "I tried, for what little effort it was worth, to prevent the Convention from doing what I think they'll be ashamed of in years to come, but without success. Now, I want to apologize to you. I have no authority to apologize for Southern Baptists, but I want to apologize to you for what was done." I tried to explain to him what it meant--to interpret the event to him, the situation, the location of the Convention, the constituency, and so on. I got a very nice letter back from him. In fact, we corresponded for a while and exchanged some books that each of us had written. I have found Davies' treatment of certain parts of Genesis very helpful in my study and in my writing.

But you started to talk about a matter that we discussed earlier, and before we get away from this controversial aspect, I want to emphasize again, by making another statement, the fact that there was no deal in getting K. O. White elected for one year. It is surprising how much some people, and especially some preachers, can talk about something about which they know absolutely nothing. In fact, the less we know, sometimes, the more and longer we can talk. There was no deal. To begin with, I was the president of the Convention. I repudiate any suggestion that I would be a party to such. I have never made deals, and I never will. K. O. White is too much of a Christian gentleman to be a part of a deal. If he couldn't be elected with dignity as anybody else, the last thing he would have wanted was to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Knowing him and his nature, I doubt if he even wanted to be president at all. On the other hand, if a person would just stop and examine that idea of a deal, even on the surface, it will fall flat on its face. For instance, go back and review events. If there were a deal--I almost resent the slur on my intelligence and that of anybody else that might have been a party to such--if there were any deal, why would we let Carl Bates get into the picture at all? If I would stoop to that, I would have also put a halter around his neck and tied him to a post somewhere, because I knew how popular Carl Bates was and is. If there were any deal, who got to fifteen thousand messengers and got them all to vote, the majority, on the second ballot for K. O. White? It's silly! It makes no sense whatsoever. I wanted this statement in the record for any future student or historian to see that Baptists in 1963 did not make any deal.

T: I'd like to raise one other matter about a Southern Baptist Convention in Philadelphia in 1972, when an attempt was made to repudiate the entire twelve volumes of the Broadman Commentary. You were the spokesman after Turner made his motion. What was behind that? Had you and others agreed that this would be the strategy to attempt to put this down, to defeat this?

H: No. Now this is not directed at you in any sense, but I don't know why people always think that when events happen that they had to be devised in a cloakroom somewhere. I think the Spirit of God still works in men's hearts, and the way that took place was simply this. It was announced in the Baptist papers that Brother Turner was going to bring such a motion. I was in my study and read it--my study at home. I had had a mild--if there is such a thing as a mild--heart attack in April of 1971. It was a small blood clot in a small blood vessel on the outside of my heart. It wasn't on the inside where the real work goes on. The Lord just built some scar tissue around that vessel and rerouted the blood. The doctor says I am getting more blood to that muscle now than I ever got before in my life. He said, "You're going to live ten years longer by having had that heart attack." But my wife was overly solicitous about my welfare, and I appreciate it. I read this thing in the paper and the burden began to settle on my heart.

T: This would be 1972?

H: Yes. In 1972 before the Convention in Philadelphia. I read this story and the burden settled down on my heart that somebody had to oppose that. You remember the motion was to be that the entire Commentary, twelve volumes, be withdrawn and a new commentary written by writers in a more conservative vein in keeping with the Baptist Faith and Message. Baptist Faith and Message is the thing that drew me into it. One old boy, after the Denver Convention, when I opposed the effort to change the Statement of Faith, wrote me and started it off, "Dear Grandfather of the Baptist Faith and Message." He wasn't a pastor up at the forks of the branch either, Brother. He was in a First Church. But he went on and chewed me out. That doesn't bother me because I've been chewed out by experts. But anyway, I wrote him back, and I noted his title, and I said, "I appreciate your calling me a grandfather, but as for my being the "Grandfather" of the Baptist Faith and Message, I am not so sure of that. I think that title might belong to E. Y. Mullins. I am a grandfather. I've got two of the loveliest granddaughters you ever saw, and sometime, if you will give me a month, I'll be glad to give you just a bare outline of a few of their many sterling qualities. Sincerely yours." That's all I ever heard about it. But anyway, the fact that that motion was to involve the Baptist Faith and Message is the thing that pulled me to it like a color does a bee to a flower. I carried that around in my mind and on my heart for a day or two and didn't say anything to my wife about it. One night I woke up about two o'clock in the morning with that on my mind. I rolled and I tossed and I couldn't go back to sleep. Finally, I got up and went to my study which was at the opposite end of the house, I was just sitting there in the chair at my desk, not doing a thing, just sitting there. I heard a noise and looked up, and my wife was standing there. She said, "What are you doing here?" I told her what was on my heart. I said, "I've got to oppose that at the Convention." She said, "You are going to do no such thing. You are not going to go up there, get up on that floor, get into a debate, get excited, and have

another heart attack." I said, "Well, Honey, I am not going to get excited. I am going to write out what I am going to say, and get up and read it." She said, "Well, if you are going to do that, then we just won't go to the Convention." I said, "Yes, we are going. I've got to do it. I am the person to oppose that because of my being chairman of this Baptist Faith and Message Committee. I can oppose it with more effect than anybody else, I think. Not because I am Herschel Hobbs, but because I was the chairman of the committee. He's proposing to get a group of men to write a commentary in keeping with the Baptist Faith and Message, and he's throwing out the preamble altogether. I am the man to oppose that motion." Well, we have lived long enough together, nearly forty-seven years now, that we know one another pretty well, and she didn't say anything more. I wrote out what I was going to say. I read it to her and she said, "Well, that sounds all right, but I still don't think you ought to do it." But when we got to Philadelphia, I went around to Carl Bates and said, "Carl, I understand that this motion is going to be made, and I have a statement opposing the motion written out. If you don't mind, I'll try to be in such position that you can legitimately recognize me first, after Turner presents his motion and discusses it. I think I can head off a lot of unpleasantness and maybe a fight." He said, "All right." So, he is the only human being on the top side of God's green earth, except my wife, that I talked with about that. That shows there was no back room conspiracy.

As I recall, Turner made his motion at an earlier session, and by the bylaws it was referred automatically to the Committee on Order of Business. They set a certain time for it to be discussed and acted on. I was there on the platform, and got a spot where Carl couldn't help but see me. In fact, I was just right across the way from him. The second that Turner said his last words and turned to leave I jumped up. I said, "Mr. President," and I was the first one to speak. Carl Bates recognized me. I got up and started to read my statement, but I saw I wasn't going to have long enough, time enough, so I summarized it. I had five points which I gave in opposition to the motion to withdraw the Commentary and have it rewritten, etc. One was I never read a commentary in my life with which I agreed 100%. Another was, I never read a commentary in my life but that, agreeing with it or not, it helped me in my understanding of the Scriptures. Number three, no man alive can write a commentary that will be satisfactory to all Southern Baptists. I don't know the other two. Anyway, as soon as I finished, somebody moved that the discussion close and we vote. We did, and they reported several different figures as to the result. Turner said that he lost by a narrow margin. One report was that it was about three to one. But someone on the tally committee told me that it was more like five to one. It was a strong defeat for his motion. After that, in a press conference, he said, "I will have no more to say. I have had my say, and the Convention has acted." We haven't heard another word from him. There were at least a half dozen people, and perhaps more, on the platform. Nobody had asked any of them to do it, I am sure. One was a layman. They all came around to me and said that they were there to speak against Turner's motion, but that the motion to cut off debate didn't give them a chance to do it. They were not mad. They just said, "We are glad it was like it was because you answered his motion, and the Convention apparently was satisfied. But we were there prepared to oppose it."

In Denver, when I finished my incompleted statement about Volume 1 I can see how people would think that I perhaps didn't accept the Bible as they did when I said that this Commentary is not as bad as some people make out that it is. As I indicated earlier, I never did get to make my real point because of that situation. After I got through and turned away, Fred Swank, pastor of Sagamore Hills Church in Fort Worth--one of the grandest guys the Lord ever made, a good friend of mine through the years, member of the Radio and Television Commission--came up to me and said, "Herschel, you know you don't believe that. What are you doing running with that crowd? You know you don't believe what you said. If you do, you have no business being the preacher on the Baptist Hour." I said, "Now, Fred, you got me all wrong. I don't agree with everything in that Commentary. That was not the point I wanted to make at all. They wouldn't let me make my point." That is all we said. But I mention that merely to point out that one of those on the platform in Philadelphia, ready to oppose Turner's motion, was Fred Swank. He came up to me and said, "Herschel, I was right there behind you boy! I was going to get up and speak and support your position, but they shut off debate." So, you see, it wasn't just a matter of finagling nor was it a matter of one theological position against others. But here was a man who by his theological position would perhaps be more nearly in agreement with Brother Turner, but he was not agreeable to his motion in that instance. It was every man acting on his own.

T: Another area that I would like for us to discuss briefly is the matter of the Baptist World Alliance, some of your involvement with that, particularly the Tokyo Congress. During the course of that Congress the nominating committee proposed the nomination of Dr. Hargroves, and Duke McCall made a motion from the floor that you be nominated as president of the Baptist World Alliance. Tell me something about that.

H: Well, in order to do that I have to go back to 1965. In all my ministry I had attended only one Baptist World Alliance--Baptist World Congress--and that was in London.

T: You did not get to the 1939 meeting in Atlanta?

H: No. The fact of the matter is I had a revival conflict, and I held a revival meeting. That was when I was shortly out of the seminary. I did attend the one in Cleveland. But I had never been on the Executive Committee of the Alliance. I had never had any doings with the interworkings of it. I knew the people, especially the Southern Baptists. The Executive Secretary and I were longtime good friends, Bob Denny. But I had never been involved close up. I got a letter one day from a man saying, "I'm on the committee to nominate a president for the Baptist World Alliance in Miami Beach."

T: This was in 1965?

H: Yes. He said, "The Southern Baptists on the committee feel that it is the year to elect a Southern Baptist, and we are agreed that if any Southern Baptist is elected, you are the one it should be. Would you permit us to put your name up in the committee?" I wrote back and I said, "Well, you couldn't have surprised me more if you had hit me with a rock. Up to now I have hardly even prayed in secret at

a Baptist World Congress. All I can say to you is, I am not seeking it. I wouldn't do one thing to get it, but if the brethren want me to serve, I will serve." Prior to that time, Ted Adams was chairman of the program committee, and I had been asked to deliver the keynote address. I think maybe at that time there had been some discussion, though I don't know that for a fact, among some of the Alliance leadership--the Southern Baptist segment, at least--of the possibility that my name might be put up. So when Ted Adams suggested that I be asked to deliver the keynote address, I was told that Bob Denny said, "Well, you know what you are doing, don't you?" In other words, "You are putting him before the people at a very crucial point." Ted said, "Yes, I know exactly what I am doing."

Well, anyway, when we came to the meeting in Miami Beach, there were, I guess, two to one, or maybe three to one, Southern Baptists over everybody else there. In the Baptist World Congress, a worldwide body like that, it is difficult to act through normal democratic processes. It is more of a representative democracy as in many phases our Southern Baptist Convention is. But they had a nominating committee, representatives from not all but most of the countries in the Alliance, all sections, at least, of the world. This committee meets, and they nominate to the Congress, and the Congress votes to approve. In the history of the Alliance there has never been a time when they didn't approve the nomination. So when the committee met--I know this from inside the committee--there were three names in nomination. Dr. Tolbert of Liberia--Dr. Joe Jackson, I believe, nominated him; Harold Stassen was nominated by the American Baptists; and somebody nominated me from the Southern Baptists. They took a first ballot. I think there were forty-five people present. Harold Stassen got three votes. Tolbert and I got twenty-one apiece. So they dropped Stassen's name, and then discussed the two of us. Finally, the man from Finland--I don't remember his name--got up and said, "If we were not meeting in the heart of the colored world next year, I wouldn't feel this way, but we will be in Tokyo; and I think it would be a great testimony to our faith if a colored man presided." And that threw the thinking that way. So on the second ballot I still got a strong vote, but Dr. Tolbert was nominated by the committee to be placed before the Congress.

When I learned the outcome from someone--I don't remember who it was now--it was all right. As I have said, I have never sought these things, but I am just enough of a fighter that if I let my name be involved I like to win. So, I was let down a little; but it wasn't serious, it was all right with me. After all, I never dreamed of being even nominated in the committee, let alone being elected. So then they came to me and wanted me to be the North American vice-president. Two other Southern Baptists were elected vice presidents but one was to represent the women and the other the Negroes. But they considered me the North American vice-president and in a sense, the first vice-president, though they don't number them. I had debated quite a bit about whether to accept that or not. I had plenty of work to do, all the work I needed to do, and I told whoever it was talking to me, "I would be willing to adjust my life and schedule in order to fulfil the duties of president. But frankly, I don't think the vice-presidency is important enough for me to change the whole style of my life." For one thing, I had figured if I were elected to that job, I would probably give up the "Baptist Hour." But I wasn't willing to give it up for the vice-presidency. And I said, "After all, I think I have to consider my own ministry. The Southern Baptists on the committee asked me to meet them in Porter

Routh's suite. He was chairman of the committee. I don't know who all were there--Porter Routh, Jim Sullivan, Wayne Dehoney, Alma Hunt, Grady Cothen, and others I don't recall. Anyway, they tried to convince me that I should accept this vice-presidency. Somebody said, "If you accept this vice-presidency, you will be a sure thing to be elected president in Tokyo in 1970." I said, "Well, now listen, I wouldn't walk across the street to accept this position on that basis. I would feel like a buzzard sitting on the fence waiting for somebody to die. If you want to convince me at all, what can I do now? Forget the presidency. If I am never elected president the world won't come to an end; neither will my life. I have had all of the honors, if you want to call it that, that Baptists can give me. More than I deserve by a thousand miles. But what can I do now? If I let you put my name up, what will I be able to do for the Kingdom of God and the Baptist cause?"

Then they began to talk about this: That Southern Baptists had come down there and the idea was pretty well across the country that this is the year to elect a Southern Baptist. Now there are some, whether it is right or wrong, who say that George W. Truett is the only out-and-out Southern Baptist ever to be elected president of the Baptist World Alliance. Mullins was, of course, one of our great leaders, but he did have Northern Baptist ties or background. The same is true of Adams. So in a sense, Dr. Truett was like Billy Graham--he was a world Baptist, though he happened to be a Southern Baptist he belonged to the whole world. So some felt that Southern Baptists had never had a president who was just Southern Baptist from birth to that time in the Southern Baptist tradition. And they said, "There is going to be, we fear, and especially since the election of a black man, an awful reaction in some areas of Southern Baptist life." After I had agreed to accept it, Porter Routh told me, "I am glad you are going to do this because you can imagine how I feel as Executive Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and chairman of this committee getting up and bringing the report nominating an African for president when everybody is expecting a Southern Baptist to be elected." He said, "If I am going to be out on that limb, I want you out there with me." We just laughed.

But, anyhow, they began to talk to me along that line. That if you accept this vice-presidency, when it is pretty well known that you were the man who was going to be put up for the Southern Baptist man, people will say, "Well, if it's all right with him, we'll accept it. We may not like it, but we'll accept it." "And you can help contribute to the harmony among Southern Baptists and their spirit." Well, now, that was the first thing they had said that made any sense to me. But still that wasn't enough. So Grady Cothen got up and walked to the end of the room and turned around and said, "I have worked with Herschel Hobbs for about fifteen years, as a fellow pastor in Oklahoma City and in other ways in the denomination, and I have watched him come up from a virtually unknown to the highest office that Southern Baptists can give." Then he said, "Herschel, Southern Baptists have been good to you. There was a time when you needed Southern Baptists. You don't need them anymore. /Now I am quoting him./ You don't need Southern Baptists anymore /not that I was such a great guy, but I'd been around, you see. I could sit back and rest on the past./" Well, I'm not given to emotion. You can quote, "Twinkle, twinkle little star" to some of my good friends, and tears will run down their cheeks. But I'm not that way. My

emotions run deep. Our people here at the church know that if I get teary-eyed, or if my voice reflects a sob while I am in the pulpit, or if at times I can hardly speak, they know that I am stirred to the bottoms of my feet. But when Grady Cothen made that statement, I say it without shame, I broke down and I sobbed. I didn't want to be vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance, yet, from that moment on I knew I had to be. Without saying a word one by one they left the room. I had my head bowed, and my eyes were blinded with tears. I could not have seen if I had looked up, but I do remember one--Alma Hunt was the first one who just silently got up and left the room. When I got control of myself there was no one there but Porter Routh and me. And Porter and I wept a little together. It was a tender moment. We talked to one another. I said, "Porter, I don't know. I'll give you my answer." I said, "You know, after all, I am like the man who said, 'I married a wife.' I never make a major decision like this without talking with my wife because it involves her, too, one way or another. But I'll let you know."

So I went up to my room. My wife was there. I found that Alma had gone up there and talked to my wife about wanting her to encourage me in it. Well, there was no pressure, just woman-to-woman talk. My wife said, "Well, now, I am not going to pressure him. He'll have to make up his own mind." Well, I went up to the room after that and she and I began to talk; and, frankly, she didn't want me to do it. She said, "You offered yourself for this and they turned another direction and that's all right, but you've got all you can do, and I don't think you ought to take on any other burden like this. You had planned to make some adjustments in your life if you had been elected president. But I personally don't think that the responsibility of this office is great enough or important enough for you to do what you planned to do, so I just don't think you ought to do it." Well, again, I lost control of my emotions. I told her, "Hon, I've got to do it; but I can't do it without you." And, of course, the end result was that she said, "Well, whatever you do you know I'm with you and behind you. We always have been together." So I called Porter and told him I would accept it.

The next day I was elected the North American vice-president. I have told what happened in embracing Dr. Tolbert. In the meeting of the Executive Committee after the Congress broke up, he said, "Now I live in Africa, and many times I will not be able to be at the Administrative Committee meetings. When I am not there /he had told me privately/, I would like for you to fill in for me." I said, "The only way I'll do it is for you to state it publicly before the Executive Committee"; so he did. He said, "I am appointing him," as he called me, "my deputy to serve when I can't." As a result of that I did preside at more Administrative Committee meetings than he did. I was on hand and was a sub-president in a way, without title, because I was more available than he was because of geography.

Well, there was never any word or promise or anything about Tokyo. I wouldn't have paid any attention to it if there had been. I was told that when they presented me as the vice-president from North America that Duke McCall whispered to somebody and said, "You are now looking at the next president of the Baptist World Alliance." That was his word, not mine. Well, I went on and served on the Executive Committee and as vice-president, attended the meetings, and went to a number of places. There

were many times when I was asked to go on trips, like to Russia and some other places, when I couldn't because I had other commitments. But anyway, I enjoyed it. I made lots of good friends that I might never have met, from other parts of the world as well as here in the United States. As we were approaching the 1970 Congress, naturally people began to talk. "Who is going to be the next president?" Southern Baptists, a number of them, would talk to me, and I would just say, "Well, I am not seeking it, but I'll say now as I said in 1965, if they want me to serve I'll do the best I can."

The first time I got any word that Carney Hargroves was going to be the new president was in Denver, at the Convention. Of course, Carney and I are good friends, our wives are, too. They are wonderful people. Actually, Carney, by virtue of tenure of office, is the man that should have been elected. Just as Dr. Tolbert was the man that should have been elected in Miami Beach. I said this many times publicly, and I have said it in writing. I wrote an article and put it in all the Baptist papers because I wanted Southern Baptists to read it--and I said that Dr. Tolbert was at the time and place that God wanted him to be. Some had thought that the place to elect him was in Tokyo, but that would have been too late. I know that was God's will, even though it meant that I was not elected. It said to the world, here in the deep South--you couldn't go much farther south without getting salt water on your feet--the deepest of the deep South with the Southern Baptists at least two to one over everybody else there, and as John Soren, the outgoing president from Brazil, said after the election, "This is a great moment. Southern Baptists are in a vast majority here, and you could have elected anybody you wanted, yet, without one murmur or negative vote, you have elected this African, this black man." Well, that's why I think he was elected at the right place. If he had been elected at Tokyo, people could have always said, "Oh, yeah, but he could never have made it in Miami Beach! Those Southern Baptists wouldn't have voted for him." I had a few friends who wanted to nominate me from the floor. I wouldn't let them do it. I said, "If you do, I'll withdraw."

T: This was in Miami?

H: Yes.

T: Who wanted to do that?

H: Oh, I don't remember who it was now, but anyway, I wouldn't let them do it. So I got this word about Carney. I didn't have any objection to Carney Hargroves.

T: Now this was the committee that met to propose a nomination?

H: No. This was just skuttlebutt at the Southern Baptist Convention at Denver, prior to Tokyo. A man came to me and said that somebody had come to him--I am not going to call names deliberately. I will call some names, but I am not going to call certain names. Somebody had asked, "Who is going to be the next president of the Baptist World Alliance?" And they said, "Carney Hargroves." The person was later put on the nominating committee. Well, they came and told me that and I said, "Well, I don't know, maybe he will."

Anyhow, we went on to Tokyo, and by that time the committee had been appointed. It was made up of a majority of Baptists from Europe, the Far East, and Baptists in the United States other than Southern Baptists--a strong majority. I don't think it's unfair to him to say that in words to me, Dr. Tolbert more or less assumed that I would succeed him. I think he wanted me to succeed him from things he said privately. I question seriously that he had anything to do with appointing the nominating committee because he was in Liberia. Whoever did it, I am sure, submitted the list to him, but he would not, maybe, know some of the ins and outs. The Baptist World Alliance is sort of like a little United Nations. Southern Baptists pay the bills by a vast majority of money, but they want us to pay the bills and let them run it. The year before, when Joe Nordenhaug died suddenly, and they had to elect a new Executive Secretary, there was an effort on the part of European Baptists to prevent Bob Denny's election. Billy Graham got up and spoke for Bob, and he was elected. But some European Baptists wanted to elect a European. Incidentally, up to that time, there had never been a person other than a European as the Executive Secretary. Now Joe Nordenhaug was a citizen of the United States at the time he was elected, but he was a former European and had European connections. I was in favor of Bob Denny. There were some who said, since Bob is not an ordained minister, he could not make the great speeches that somebody else could make. I said, "We don't need a person to make great speeches." They said, "He is not a theologian." I said, "We don't need a theologian. If we need a theologian, he can always select some theologian among Southern Baptists to represent the Alliance. We need an administrator, and we did." Joe Nordenhaug was a great guy, but his strong point was theology and that side of it, not administration. I'd be the same way, I guess, if I were in that job. After Bob's election, somebody said, "Don't you think that hurt Hobbs' chances of being elected president in Tokyo?" He said, "No. I think it helped him." Well, whether it did or not, I do know that it was used as an argument against my being elected. Because here is Denny from the United States and a Southern Baptist. Of course, they had had Englishmen as Executive Secretary and would elect an Englishman as president, you see; but it is different when it happens to you.

I got a copy of the committee that was sent out in a letter to all members of the Executive Committee, and as soon as I saw the committee, I knew. If I had been a betting man, I would have given odds that I would not be elected because I knew that committee would not elect a Southern Baptist. Now, we might as well be honest and frank. You don't ever solve problems by putting salve on them and saying they don't exist. Sometimes you need a surgeon's knife, and I think the Baptist World Alliance needs a surgeon's knife right now. I think Southern Baptists are putting an unbalanced proportion of money into the support of it while many conventions are going along, almost, for a free ride. They throw in a token now and then. Like the world that looks to Uncle Sam for money for this, that, and the other, yet, they take his money and despise him because he's got it and they have to ask for it. I think it would be a healthy thing if Southern Baptists gave less money. This is not rancor or sour grapes. If everybody were putting in his equitable share, according to his ability, I think that there would be a better spirit in the Alliance. Because in so many of these other small countries the man can't even pay his way to the annual Executive Committee meeting. It has to be paid out of funds provided otherwise,

and his convention doesn't give enough money in a year to pay his way even to those meetings. And yet, he has as much vote as any Southern Baptist member. I think that it is an unwholesome situation. I'm sure I don't have all the answers, but I think it's something that needs to be gone into, if the Alliance is going to be a wholesome, effective instrument in the future.

When we got to Tokyo I followed the pattern I have always followed. I just kept my mouth shut. My whole philosophy of life is against trying to do anything to promote my cause. If it comes, I'm grateful. If it doesn't come, then if I've got to get it by working for it some other way, I just won't have it. The committee met, and I had been told that a Southern Baptist on the committee was for Hargroves. Duke McCall, who was on the committee and was championing my being elected, told this other person who happened to be a denominational employee--at least it was reported to me that he said, "You'd better remember who your friends are, because after this Congress when we go home, you are going to have to work with them." I was told later that this person voted for me in committee. I suppose that's true. I wouldn't dispute it. But I am sure that influences were used in other channels that didn't help my cause.

When the committee met for its final meeting to make their decisions, they met after a night session. My wife and I went on to the hotel and sat up and watched television awhile. We couldn't understand Japanese, but they had some of the most beautiful color on television I ever saw. So we watched that awhile, and then we went to bed. About 11:30 somebody knocked on our door. I got up and opened the door and there stood Duke McCall, Jim Sullivan, J. D. Grey, and Wayne Dehoney. They came in the room and said, "We've just come from the meeting, and they voted to nominate Dr. Hargroves." J. D. Grey said, "George W. Truett couldn't have been elected down there tonight." Well, these men were all upset. I was told later in a private conversation with one of the men who was on the committee there, and I have no reason to question his word, that in Miami Beach when it got down to the nitty-gritty between Tolbert and me, the Southern Baptists were still contending for a Southern Baptist. One of the American Baptist members of the committee--there were only three of them--but one of them said, "We want to go in there united, and we want to elect a colored man at this Congress for Tokyo. If you will go with us on him now, we will go with you on Hobbs in 1970." Now, whether you call that bargaining or swapping out, I don't know. That was reported to me by a reputable person, and somewhat on that basis it was settled. Some people have short memories because it was the very group that said that who pretty well joined with the Baptists of Europe and the Far East--not everybody in those areas, but I mean enough of them that they had the balance of power. The Latin Americans, where Southern Baptists have strong mission work, and Africans, under the same circumstances, were more or less supporting a Southern Baptist candidate. But the majority was pretty well set.

Again, let me say this, Carney Hargroves is a good man. Carney had nothing whatever to do with this. I am certain of that. I think his attitude is about like mine. He is a good man, and I love him. I don't in any sense resent him being the president, and I never had any ill will about it toward him or anybody else. I was disappointed in some people that I thought were friends, but in the long run it was

best for me that I was not elected. In my room that night, Duke McCall said that back in Copenhagen or somewhere, he had brought to the Congress a bylaw allowing nominations from the floor for a president. They put it in, but he said it had never been used; but he said, "I am tempted to test it at this Congress and see if it works." Well, that was all that was said. They went on out, and my wife and I went on to sleep. The next morning I went over to the Congress. You see, this election didn't come until, I guess, next to the last day. So I went over the next morning. I got a taxi and went from the Imperial Hotel over there . As soon as I walked into the building I ran into Wayne Dehoney. He said, "I have been looking for you." I said, "What do you want?" He said, "Well, let's go downstairs. I want to talk to you." So we went downstairs, got off in a room by ourselves, and he said, "I am not coming to ask your permission, because I think I know you well enough to know that if we came at you that way, you would say 'no,' but to tell you that some of us have discussed it, and Duke McCall is going to nominate you from the floor, and just see what happens. The only thing that they have asked me to find out is, if he does, will you stay hitched and not jerk the rug out from under his feet by withdrawing your name?" I thought about it some and finally said, "Well, I wouldn't give the rappings of my finger to get anybody to do that, but if by using my name on this occasion to serve notice on the Baptist World Alliance that Southern Baptists are tired of being the patsies and paying the bills and yet being kicked around as we have been in the past, then I'll say, 'Yes, I'll stay put.'" But I said, "I don't think it will succeed, and it certainly isn't an effort on my part to try to be president anyhow, but I think the time has come when we need to stand up and just let the world know where we stand."

When the time came for the election, my wife and I did not go to the hall. In the meantime, word had gotten around that Carney was going to be nominated, and so Southern Baptists sort of got mad, miffed, or disinterested--whatever degree you might call it--and they went shopping and sight seeing. Hundreds of them didn't even go to the meeting the morning the election was held. They didn't know that a Southern Baptist was going to be nominated. I am reasonably sure that if they had known it, I would have been elected. They didn't know it. Anyway, there still were enough Southern Baptists there to have elected a Southern Baptist, but where some other Baptist groups voted as a block, Southern Baptists didn't. I got that through a man who was a Southern Baptist who served on the tally committee.

Mrs. Hobbs and I were in our room, and the phone rang. It was Dr. Tolbert. He wanted to know if I could come over there. He wanted to talk to me. I said, "Doctor, I can't. I deliberately stayed away this morning." He said, "Well, could I come to your room?" I said, "You know you'll always be welcome in my room; but," I said, "Have you heard what's going to be done this morning?" He said, "Yes, and that's what I want to talk about." I said, "Well, Doctor, as much as I love you--and I'd be glad to see you anytime--it wouldn't do any good for you to come over here and talk to me about that. I have given my word to some very close friends. They are sticking their necks out, and maybe, you might say, risking their future in the Baptist World Alliance, and they are doing it not for me as a person but they are doing it for a principle. I promised them that I would stay hitched, and there isn't anything you could say that would change my mind."

T: Was he trying to get you to withdraw?

H: Yes. He didn't want it. He felt like it would just create a great furor and a fight. There were others who felt the same way. He was not acting alone. He said, "Well, Herschel, I love you and I respect you and hearing you say that, I will not come. I wouldn't try in any way to pressure you to change your mind. Duke got up and nominated me, and you'd have thought Duke had blasphemed the Holy Spirit, the way some of the European brethren reacted. It was just unheard of, said they; it had never been done. Yet, they had voted to put in this bylaw, but they didn't want to use it. Of course, if it had been to accomplish their purpose, I don't imagine they would have been so hard about it. I wasn't there, and all I know is just what I was told. Harold Stassen proposed a method of counting votes. He said, "Now, we all know that Southern Baptists are the largest group, and they have got more people here than anybody else." He had figured out and proposed, or else he was asked to figure out, a formula for counting the votes on a percentage basis, which actually put Southern Baptists at a disadvantage. It was some kind of a "rule of thumb" political method of counting. I don't know enough about it. For instance, they would take the percentage of Southern Baptists overall, say twelve million, as over against one fraction of a million in Britain, and then percentage wise, their votes would count more than ours. Harold Stassen is a Philadelphia lawyer, so I guess it would take a Philadelphia lawyer to figure it out. That's all. I'm just trying to rehearse the thing and put down a little history. There are no sour grapes in it for me. As I said, over and over again, there, as in the case of Bill Tolbert, so was Carney Hargroves. He and I are good friends, and we will remain such.

T: Isn't he a graduate of Southern Seminary?

H: Yes. In fact, he's a southerner. I think most of his ministry has been up there. Harold Stassen tried to get me to accept this vice-presidency for a second five years. I told him, "There is no way that you can get me to accept it. There is no case where a man has been reelected for a second five-year term, except for Dr. Zhidkov, who was a vice-president from Russia and could not get out of the country to attend the Congress. No one else representing that part of the world could, so Zhidkov was elected for a second five-year term. It has always been one five-year term, no more, and I have served my five years." I may have been a little blunt, I don't know, but I said, "You know, as well as I know, the only reason in the world you all want me to serve another five years is to throw another piece of sop to Southern Baptists. I am not going to be that sop. I don't know what Southern Baptists' reaction is going to be. They may just yawn and go on about their business, or they may get up in arms about it. But whatever it is, it will just happen because I know it would be a mockery for me to accept the vice-presidency for a second time. Now you can get you another Southern Baptist if you want to, but it will have to be someone other than Herschel Hobbs.

Well, as I said earlier, the Southern Baptist crowd, for the most part, did not know that I was going to be nominated. We didn't air it. In fact, it was a test case more to try to say something than to get a man elected. And that is the only

reason I agreed that I would stay hitched if I was nominated from the floor. I was in agreement that the time had come when Southern Baptists needed to say something to the Baptist World Alliance. We were tired of paying the major share of the bills and yet, being more or less kicked around, ignored, used, criticized, whatever you call it. I think we accomplished that purpose. I don't know what the future will hold, but I hope that it was not in vain. After each of the Congresses in Miami Beach and Tokyo, I went to the platform--especially in Tokyo where it was public knowledge that I was nominated, openly--but I went to the platform the morning after Carney was elected. While he was on the platform, I stood there and pledged my love and my loyalty to Carney Hargroves, and said that I was going to pray for him and support him. Dr. Tolbert was there, and one of the most cherished pictures that I have in my historical collection is a picture of me standing between Carney Hargroves and Bill Tolbert with my arms around both of them, and all three of us with a big laugh on our faces. Even my wife asked me, "How do you feel?" This was a day or two afterwards. I said, "Well, first I was disappointed because /as I had said before/, I have never run for an office, but I've just got enough spunk that if I let my name be involved, I want to win." I wouldn't give you two cents for anybody that had any other attitude. At the same time, I have never done anything out of the way, underhanded, or anything else to try to get something. I have let the events take their course. I said, "Well, of course, at first I was disappointed, but now I am relieved." She wanted to know again what I meant. I said, "I mean simply that I did not either time run for the presidency of the Baptist World Alliance. I allowed my name to be put in nomination by people who wanted to do so. The way I feel is that twice upon request of my Southern Baptist brethren I allowed my name to be placed in nomination and in that sense, I offered myself to the Baptist World Alliance twice for service in the service they wanted me to render. Both times they said, "No." I feel relieved. I have no remorse. I have no regrets. I have no ill will." Just as I said, "I feel perfectly relieved, and as Longfellow's poem says, 'I can look the whole world in the face. I owe not any man.'" I don't expect to live to see the time when it will be the "natural" time to elect another Southern Baptist. If I do, I'll be a hardy old codger.

T: Would you be surprised to see a Southern Baptist elected in Stockholm in 1975?

H: Oh, I'd be utterly amazed. If I had to guess, I'd put my first guess on an Oriental. We had never had an African until Tolbert. Now the talk is, "We have never had an Oriental." Dr. Baker James Cauthen told me in Miami Beach, "It will be some years before we will have an Oriental that is, in my judgment, mature enough to be president of the Baptist World Congress." Now that time may have arrived. So I would say that the next two times that the Congress meets in 1975 and 1980, they will elect either an Oriental or a European, or they will elect a European or an Oriental. Those two, in my judgment, will be the areas of the earth to furnish the next two presidents. By that time Latin America may be saying, "It is time for us to come around again." Or it may be Canada, and it is understandable. It may be the Islands of the Sea, you never know. So I don't expect to live to see the time when it will be the natural thing for another Southern Baptist to be elected. If I had to predict, I would almost predict that nobody that I know of who is living now will ever see a Southern Baptist as president. As they used to say about

churches in trouble, before they could have harmony, there would have to be a lot of slow walking and low music. I suspect that's true, but I don't know that even that would do it, because unfortunately, there's a spirit. We work toward unity, and maybe that is just an emphasis on the need for the Baptist World Alliance. But we are so far from being one in our faith and love. Maybe that's why we need the Alliance. I am not saying we should get rid of it, but I think there are some things that ought to be done to update it and make it more effective. But there is a spirit, unfortunately, in certain parts of the world that is similar in the religious life to the political spirit toward the United States in the United Nations. We're the big, rich nation. They want our money, but they had just as soon we send them a check and stay home. I sort of have that feeling about the Baptist World Alliance at this stage of the game.

In Austria, in 1969, a group of us agreed to collaborate in writing a book on the history of the Alliance and sell it in Tokyo with the proceeds to go toward the needs of the budget. We didn't sell as many copies as we thought we would. Paul Stevens was the man who conceived the idea, and the Radio and Television Commission did the publishing of it. They asked me to write on preaching at the Baptist World Congress. Well, in order to prepare that, I had to go back and read every message that had been delivered at a Baptist World Congress since 1905, the first one in London. I think it ought to become required reading in every homiletics course in every seminary. It is some of the richest preaching I have ever read in my life. I was blessed beyond measure. I have quoted some of the ideas that I ran across. Old Dr. Myers' first sermon in which he made this statement, "We were Christians before we were Baptists," talking about that deeper unity of faith that should exist in all Christians, not the emphasis of denominational names and things of that kind. But what started out as a great ideal I am afraid has gotten involved in too much sectional politics, or rivalry, maybe, is a better word. I think there needs to be some operating that would help the patient. But I have only good will for the Baptist World Alliance. I'll work with them and support them in any way I can. I have not attended an Executive Committee meeting since Tokyo, but it was not out of any sense of ill will or even remorse. (I attended the one in 1974 after this recording was made.) In 1971, the first year after, I was recuperating from a heart attack. They met in Canada, and I had looked forward to going, but when I had this heart attack, I couldn't go. In 1972, they met in the Caribbean at Jamaica. I didn't want to get too far away from my doctor, so I was not venturing out too far. In 1973 when it met in Switzerland, I had retired. I had nobody to pick up the tab. You see, the Southern Baptist Convention pays the expenses of the members of the Executive Committee that are officially elected by the Southern Baptist Convention, but I am not one of those. I am one of the co-opted members where the Executive Committee itself, after it is elected by the various conventions involved, meets and they have a certain number of vacancies where they can co-opt a person because that person is wanted on the Executive Committee for some reason or another. For instance, Paul Stevens is a co-opt member because Paul is an expert in radio and television. They want him on the committee for that knowledge. I am a co-opt member, simply because that is the only way I can be on. I was a member of the Executive Committee from 1965-1970 because I was a vice-president. But when I went out of that office the only way I could be on was to be co-opted, and they co-opted me. But I had nobody to pay

the bill and when I retired from the pastorate, frankly, I just didn't want to spend that much money to go to Switzerland for a one week's meeting. I expect to attend the one in Louisville, and I think I shall request that they not co-opt me anymore for the simple reason that I am retired with no one to pay the cost of my attending the meetings. I am not in the position to do it myself, and I think it is unfair to the Alliance to have a man on the committee that never goes. It is better to let them co-opt somebody who can go and be active.

T: Have there been other times when the kind of thing you described as taking place in Tokyo occurred?

H: I was not involved. I was at the London Congress, but as I said, up to that time, I had not even been asked to "pray in secret" at a Baptist World Congress. My wife and I went to the one in Cleveland. But I did not know any of the interworkings. I really didn't even know what was going on. But there was another case, as I understand it, (it was pretty well understood among Southern Baptists) that Louie Newton would be elected. As it turned out it was Ted Adams. Ted is a good man. But if you can believe what you hear there were some shenanigans going on there. Not on the part of Ted Adams, let me hasten to add. Ted wouldn't be a party to that, and neither would his wife. They're just as clean as hounds' teeth. I don't know what they were. Just that here was a man that everybody more or less conceded is going to be elected, and then all of a sudden he isn't. It's sort of like in sports when all the experts pick a certain team to win; if the other team beats them, then it is an upset. So maybe the experts guessed wrong. I don't know.

T: Dr. Hobbs, you have related so many fascinating things in our series of interviews this past week. There are a couple of matters that we said we would talk about later and haven't done. Let me just say what they are, and we may decide that we need to stop and pick them up again: your acquaintance with Billy Graham; your acquaintance with the Presidents of the United States--you mentioned John F. Kennedy, President Johnson, President Nixon; then the presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention--a number of them your personal friends--Dr. J. D. Grey, Dr. Wayne Dehoney, Dr. W. A. Criswell, Dr. K. Owen White. Are there particular matters you would want to discuss? Let me ask about your relationship with Billy Graham. How did you come to meet him and know him?

H: Well, the first time I ever heard of Billy Graham was when he was the star speaker for the "Youth for Christ" movement out of Chicago, or in that general area. I was never a great fan of the "Youth for Christ" movement, because it was an anti-church movement. It grew up during World War II, and their approach, I know, down in Mobile where I was pastor when I first came in contact with it, was that the churches were not doing anything for the young people. "Now you young people come to us and we'll do something for you," which to me was anti-church. Well, it may have been true in some parts of the country, but not true in the South, because the Southern Baptist Convention had a strong program for the youth. So I was never favorable towards that movement in the experiences I have had. So when Billy Graham suddenly shot up out of the common herd into stardom, I stood off and looked at him. I thought, well, is this going to be a glorified "Youth for Christ" movement? If it is, I don't want any part of it.

T: Now this would be by the time you had come to Oklahoma City?

H: Yes. The meeting that he held that really skyrocketed him was in Los Angeles. Was it in 1949? Incidentally, Angel Martinez was asked to hold that meeting. He told me that one time, but he said, "My calling is to hold revivals in local churches and that was a city-wide revival, and I turned them down." They got Billy Graham and, of course, you know what's happened since then. Billy went to Atlanta and had a crusade--big crowd, thousands of "decisions." I still don't like that way of reporting, but anyway that's what they call them. I said, "Well, anybody can have a great crusade like that in Atlanta. There are Baptists falling all over themselves over there." Again, at Fort Worth, he had the similar thing. I said the same thing about Fort Worth.

But when he went to London and had a great crusade and then went to New Orleans and had one, I said, "Now wait a minute, Herschel Hobbs, you'd better take another look at this man. There is something unusual about him, and God, it looks like, has His hand on him." And so, I began to study him. While he was in Fort Worth I tried to call him one day. I was chairman of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, and I wanted him on the program. I could get to his staff, but I couldn't get through that door to Billy. Finally, I just gave up, and I wrote him a letter. I told him I had been trying to call him to be on my program, but I couldn't wait forever. Later, when I met him, I told him, "Billy, I can get through to the Lord quicker than I can to you." We laughed about it. But anyway, the first time I ever met Billy was on a plane. He was going home from the Fort Worth crusade in 1951. Billy Souther and his wife, Mildred, were sitting in a lounge parlor back in the back of those DC 7's. I went in and sat down in my seat, and learned later I was sitting by Jack Dempsey. Billy Souther came up and told me, "Billy Graham is back here. Come back here and meet him." So I went back there, and I met him and chatted with them until we took off and were on our way. When we got through talking, I went on back up and sat down by Jack Dempsey, and we visited. While Billy was in the crusade in Fort Worth, some of the pastors here wanted to invite him here for a crusade, and they asked me if I'd join them. I said, "No. I've got to know more about this man." I had seen so many of our Southern Baptist pastors in some of our more-or-less leading churches endorse some young evangelist, and he would go up like a skyrocket and come down like a burned-out Roman candle. I wanted to be sure. That word got back to Billy through somebody, but later on, after I had told myself I had better take another look at the man, I called some of these fellows and asked them to come by my office on the way to the Pastors' Conference on Monday morning. I told them, "I am now ready to join with you in inviting Billy Graham to come here for a crusade." So we did, on the condition that we would invite all denominations to participate. I wanted that for three reasons: one, I didn't want them to say, "Those old selfish Baptists are off over there sharing him by themselves"; two, we needed their help to finance it; three, we wanted to get the non-Baptists out to hear the gospel as he preached it, and that was the only way we would get them. Anyway, he came.

T: Was that about 1958 that he came here?

H: 1957.

H: We were in this hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland. Billy Graham and his party were in town, and had heard there was a group of Baptists at this hotel. So they came over about dinner time thinking they might run into us. They didn't know who was there, and sure enough, we were there at the same time.

T: Was this a meeting or were you just on a tour?

H: We were on a tour--this Brownell 153 I mentioned, going to the Middle East and back to the BWA Congress in London. Billy and his team were holding a series of weekend crusades in Europe. They had just been in Paris, and were up at Lucerne resting before going over to Zurich for a crusade the following weekend. So while we were there in the dining room, I walked over to Billy's table, shook hands with him, and said, "Billy, I am praying that you are going to come and hold a crusade in Oklahoma City for us." He thanked me. I went back and sat down. In the course of time, he accepted the invitation and when he did arrive I was in Kansas City at the Southern Baptist Convention. He was up there, but he got on a train, he and his team, and they came down to Oklahoma City ahead of schedule. They got off the train here, and a newspaper reporter asked him, "When did you decide it was the Lord's will for you to come to Oklahoma City?" He said, "When Dr. Herschel Hobbs walked over to my table in the dining room in a hotel in Lucerne, Switzerland, one night and told me he was praying that I would come. I had a number of fleeces out to decide if it was the Lord's will and every fleece had come back yes, and that was the last one. I had told the Lord, I want him to ask me personally." He didn't tell the reporter why, but it was because he knew that I had been slow. Charlie Matthews, David M. Gardner, Louie Newton, and maybe some others were sort of slow. Yet, I have told Billy many times since then I wish God would raise up a thousand like him. Little did I know what was happening that night when I walked over and spoke to him at that table.

We have played golf together. I told him one day while we were playing, "Billy, I had no opposition to you personally, but I knew your background in the 'Youth for Christ' movement; and, frankly, I still believe that God's redemptive purpose runs through his churches. I am not discrediting what you are doing, but I still think the local church is the key." He said, "Will you do me a favor?" I said, "What?" He said, "The next time you say that, will you quote me as having said it?" I have quoted him all over the world to this effect. He said, "Without the local churches, I'm dead." He won't go into a community and hold a crusade unless the pastors and churches, the most of them, invite him.

There are certain radio evangelists and independent groups of fellows who don't love Billy very much, because for years they have been saying to people, "Your churches waste your money. You give your tithe to me. They send it to the Cooperative Program, they send it to these seminaries, and they are teaching heresy and modernism, and all. So send your tithe to me." Billy came along, and he began to get on the radio with his crusades and all, and he said, "Give your tithe through your church. Send me something out of the rest." Well, that didn't exactly endear these other guys to Billy.

But Billy Graham is one of those choice men that comes along every several generations. I just hate to realize that Billy is like some of the rest of us and the years

One of these days he is going to have to slow down real fast. We need men like him so much. I think he is one of the great men of our time. Now do you want me to say anything about the presidents of the Convention that you have known.

H: I had in mind the Presidents of the United States. I'd like to wind up with these others.

T: Oh, Yes.

H: Well, of course, I mentioned my brief experience with Harry Truman. I was supposed to appear on a program in Kansas City one time after he got out of the presidency. A campaign was being launched to raise money to build a Baptist hospital there, and I was asked to come up and speak at the city-wide rally. Truman was the honorary chairman, and was supposed to be on the platform and say a few words. When I got there, his sister, Mary, or Mary Ann, was there to do it for him. He was at some political meeting. I was a little disappointed that I didn't get to meet him then.

T: Was he President?

H: No. He was out of the White House then. That night after the meeting I flew home. The next morning the paper told how he was taken to the hospital the night before for an acute appendectomy. I laughed and said to my wife, "That will teach him. That's what he gets for not coming to my meeting last night."

I actually met him when I introduced him to the Convention, as I told earlier. I think I pretty well went into the matter about President Kennedy.

T: Yes.

H: And for the most part, President Johnson. I was invited to be one of eighty men at dinner at the White House the night that President Johnson announced in the afternoon that he was going to the hospital to have his gallbladder removed. Wayne Dehoney was there. He was then president of the Southern Baptist Convention. I don't know why I was invited. But Daniel Poling was there, the president of Holy Cross University, the presiding bishop of the Methodist Church, and also then the president of the National Council of Churches. I mention them to show that this was a group of men that supposedly represented--at least they were representative of--the leadership in various fields of life in America. For instance, Gregory Peck and Hugh O'Brian were there representing the entertainment world. Harvey Firestone was there. George Meany was there. At first we had the cocktail hour, and we preachers got together over in one corner for self-protection. We were talking about what we did when we got caught in one of those situations, and I said, "Well, I never drink Coca-Cola because they'll think it's wine. I never drink ginger ale because they'll think it's champagne. I always drink tomato juice." And Daniel Poling said, "Well, I don't think you're safe there either. J. C. Penny is a teetotaler, but recently he attended a party in Philadelphia, and the next morning the paper said that he was there seen drinking a Bloody Mary." He was drinking

tomato juice. Well, anyhow, we went in first of all for a two-hour meeting with the President and his Cabinet and General Maxwell Taylor, where they briefed us on matters that were not known to the public, but they wanted us to know about them. We were sworn to secrecy until the matters appeared in the paper. Some have appeared since then, some never have. We were asked then to go home and to think them over and write the President himself any words of advice, critical, approving, whatever. He said, I guarantee you I'll read every one of the letters, and I'll refer the letters to the department head to which they should go.

Then after that we went through a small room, and each one of us shook hands with the President. They took pictures of us. Later, he sent me an autographed copy of one where I was shaking hands with him. (I have one of me coming out of President Kennedy's office. I happened to be between him and Bob Kerr. Pierre Salinger was standing there with the camera, and as we walked out, without any warning, he snapped the picture. It makes me look like I was caught stealing the cream out of the jar or something. Bob Kerr is saying something and the President is looking across at him laughing.) But after we had done that, we went into the dining room to eat. The President called on me to lead in the prayer of thanks for the meal, and later came to me after the meal and apologized for calling on me without warning. But he said, "I figured Bob Kerr's pastor could pray without any previous warning." We laughed. I said, "Yes, I think so, Mr. President."

Well, we were seated ten to a table. The President, Vice-President, and members of the Cabinet were hosts at each table. Bill Moyer was at one table. Each one of us stood up and introduced himself and told who he was and what he did. There was the president of American Airlines, presidents of some of the biggest banks in New York, and people like that across the nation. Harvey Firestone sat on the President's right and George Meany on the left. He had capital on one side and labor on the other. When Bill Moyer's time came to introduce his table, he said, "I wondered why the President waited until after three o'clock this afternoon to announce that he was going to the hospital for surgery. Now I think I understand. He didn't want the stock market to crash this afternoon and entertain Wall Street here tonight for dinner."

I asked Wayne Dehoney, "Wayne, what are we country boys doing here?" But it was a delightful experience and really a memorable one for us. The things that we heard that night! President Johnson had two of those dinners. Why he stopped I don't know, but I am glad I got in on one of them. When we started to leave, I was talking with Dean Rusk. He had made a statement about Communism in Africa, and it didn't quite jibe with some of the things that I had found and understood, so I was talking to him about it. It happened that I was the last guest to leave. The President and Vice-President were standing shaking hands with the guests as they left. So before I got to the President, I came to Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey. I said, "Mr. Vice-President, I've got a crow to pick with you." He looked at me like he didn't know whether to laugh, cuss, or cry. He said, "What is it?" I said, "You stole my trademark." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "H.H.H., and I can prove you stole it from me because I am older than you are." And we laughed. I said, "You know, the first time I saw it in the newspaper one morning it said on a headline, 'H.H.H. says so-and-so,' and the first thought that went through my mind was, 'I didn't say any such thing.'" He just hollered. Well, he

took me over to the President. He said, "You've got to hear this story." And he told him about it.

Well, the President and I had a brief visit. As I have indicated, through Bob Kerr we had a rapport that ordinarily we might not have had. I had had the invocation at a fund-raising dinner here in the city for the Democratic Party. I am an alleged Democrat, but I have never voted a straight ticket in my life, and I don't ever intend to. But anyway, they asked me to have the prayer, and I did. Johnson was then Vice-President, and he and Lady Bird Johnson were here. We had a brief visit with them, going back to remembrances about Bob Kerr and his death. I have corresponded with him a good deal. When he was having some trouble with the Kennedy family, I wrote him a note. I said, "Mr. President, you are doing exactly right in exercising restraint in this matter. Give them enough rope, and they'll hang themselves." And that is what happened.

T: Of what particular issue were you speaking?

H: Well, it was just some trouble between him and the Kennedy family, particularly, I think, between him and Bobby. That was about it. Of course, the Kennedy family sort of branches all through marriage and lots of folks involved in government, and he was having some problems with them. Then, I wrote him in another time of crisis in the country--I believe it was the Vietnam War. I said, "Dear Mr. President, I am not writing to ask for a thing in the world, I just want you to know that I am praying for you and your house," and signed my name. In a few days, I got a nice, personal note back. It said, "I want to thank you for praying for me and this House," and a personal note. That is about the extent of my contacts with him.

I had heard some people call President Nixon "Tricky Dick." Billy Graham and I were playing golf one day, and we were talking about Nixon. He had just been defeated in the bid for governor of California. I mentioned that, and Billy said, "Yes, but you know, I think the Communists are more responsible for that than anybody because he went after them hammer and tongs when he was a congressman. I have known Richard Nixon for many, many years before he became a famous man, and I have never known a finer Christian gentleman than Richard M. Nixon."

Well, I took a new look at Nixon. And in all of the present trouble through which the President has been going, I have had reason to recall that appraisal by Billy Graham many times. Because of that, I am still contending in my own mind and heart that the worst you can say about him is that he may have made some mistakes, but they were not of the heart and they were not immoral but just judgmental. For instance, they accuse him of covering up after he found out about Watergate. I don't know that he knew about it as early as some say he did, but I suppose he did. As a pastor, if I had found out that the chairman of the deacons and the church organist were having an affair, I wouldn't get up in the pulpit next Sunday and announce it and publicly fire both of them. I would work at the thing behind the scene, quietly trying to straighten it out; either settle it, clear it up, or clear it out without a big show and a hurrah and a scandal. I don't think that by doing that I would be doing the church an injustice. I think that would be doing them a service to keep the church from going through such a traumatic experience.

I had a situation like that right here in the First Baptist Church--a deacon and a woman whose husband had been killed in an accident. She went to him for counsel on some tax matters. They became emotionally involved, and I worked and worked with this man and woman trying to straighten them out, but to no avail. Finally, I told the Minister of Music to call this woman up--she was a choir member--and tell her that she was no longer to sing in the choir. I didn't do that, though, until I found out that it was known by more than three or four people. When one of the staff members told me that he met up with a member of another church and they asked him, "How are things going at the Peyton Place Baptist Church?" I called the Minister of Music. I said, "Well, the thing's out. It's all over. There's nothing we can do now. That woman is not to sing in the choir anymore until she straightens up." And he told her. I called the deacon myself. I said, "Until this is straightened out properly, you are not to take up the collection, you are not to usher, you are not to do anything of a public, prominent nature in this church, because the thing is known now. As long as it was not known, I tried to go along a normal keel, hoping you would straighten up and straighten out, but now it is too late. I have got to think of the church." I don't think I was dishonest or disloyal. I think I was using the best judgment I had, and I think President Nixon did that. (This was said before President Nixon's resignation and the tape revelations.)

T: What happened in the instance of these people? Did they drop out of your church?

H: The woman went to another church, and by a coincidence, "question mark" the same Sunday she joined, this man also did. He divorced his wife though she did everything in the world to try to save her marriage. I know that to be a fact, because I was involved with them trying to do it. But it just was one of those cases where there wasn't anything you could do. It is like when a person dies, as long as they are living you do everything you can to preserve life, but when they die, the only thing to do is bury them--and the sooner, the better.

My wife and I were invited to the White House for a dinner the night that Johnny Cash and his family put on their show at the White House. We had a delightful time. They first put on a show in the East Room, and then we went through a receiving line--Johnny Cash and his wife, Mrs. Nixon, and President Nixon. I just said, "I am H. H. Hobbs from Oklahoma City." "Oh," said he, "you're Billy Graham's friend. Billy and I have talked about you a lot. You are pastor of a big church, aren't you?" I said, "Well, it's pretty good size." He said, "Well, that's what Billy told me." And then we talked a little about Billy.

Incidentally, when I was talking with President Johnson when that picture was made, he and I were talking about Billy Graham. Billy had called him when he heard on the news that he was going to the hospital to tell him he was praying for him. So it seems that every time I have known a President, Billy Graham has gotten involved some way. The day I visited with President Kennedy and we were talking about the matter of church and state and religious persecution, he said, "Some of our people in Latin America are giving your missionaries a pretty rough time, aren't they?" I said, "Yes sir, they are, even last night." I told about an incidence where Billy Graham was speaking at the Congress (we would call it) of Columbia and some shooting broke out--some rebels. Time and Newsweek Magazine had Billy praying,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They tried to play it up in a big way. Later, Billy and I were together down in Latin America. He was holding some crusades when we went on our Latin America-African tour in 1962, and we arranged ahead with him that we would meet him in Lima and have some time together. I was talking to him about the story that had just come out. He laughed and said, "That story was all wrong. I wouldn't have been standing up there praying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' I would have been under a table praying, 'Lord, help those guards to shoot straight.'" But he said, "Fact of the matter was, we had been there, I had spoken, and we had gone." Billy wasn't even there when it happened.

Anyway, I mentioned that to President Kennedy. He had not read it in the paper that morning. But it just occurred to me that every time I have been to see a President, we have talked about Billy Graham.

That one occasion was the only connection I have had with President Nixon. They had a buffet dinner. Another group was giving a birthday dinner for him in Washington that same night, and they didn't know he had this show planned. So he left us there to eat as soon as the receiving was over, and went to appear at this other affair. That is about the extent of my "walking among kings" in Washington.

T: Did you meet the Queen of England at the Congress in 1955, or were you not one of those invited?

H: No. As I said, they didn't even let me pray in secret at the Baptist World Congress then. The nearest we got to the Queen was to go and watch the Changing of the Guard.

T: We need to talk about some of the presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. I wonder whether you would want to take a few minutes to talk about J. D. Grey, or should we do that on another occasion?

H: No. It would be hard to talk about J. D. Grey in a few minutes at any time, but let me just say this. The first time I ever saw J. D., he was walking across the lobby of the city auditorium in Birmingham, when the Southern Baptist Convention met there. I guess it was about 1938. He had just gone to the First Baptist Church, New Orleans, not too long before that, I believe in 1934, and I didn't know him. He didn't speak to me. I didn't speak to him. I just saw him. But when I moved to Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1941, he and I just sort of hit it off. I guess we both have got enough meanness in us that we just felt like we were pen pals or heart pals. We have been together--J. D. and Lillian, Frances and I. We are just about as close as people can get. J. D., in my judgment, is one of the choice men that I have ever known among preachers. The people that do not know him may think that he is old rough, tough J. D., you know. But he has got a skin as tender as a baby's. I don't mean he gets his feelings hurt easily or anything like that, but he is sensitive to criticism. It hurts him if people don't understand him or if they maybe don't appreciate what he does. But everybody knows J. D.'s sense of humor. I don't have to go into that--his repartee.

He was the youngest man ever elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention at the time he was elected. Since then they have elected younger. J. D. and Lillian, I think, are perfectly matched. She sort of balances his enthusiastic, bombastic spirit with her staid, rather stoic, sort of way. After it was announced at the session in San Francisco that J. D. was elected president of the Convention, he and Lillian, Frances and I, and our son, Jerry, went back downtown on the way to the hotel and stopped to eat at the Golden Pheasant. It is not there anymore. I checked on it last year. J. D. was as high as two kites. I told him, "Well, buddy, I couldn't do anything to help your cause except vote for you, and I did vote for you." Lillian said, "Well, I didn't vote for him! Imagine a young man like him president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Two years from now he'll be out and sitting in a rocking chair on the corner of the stage like an old man." She sort of keeps J. D.'s feet anchored to the ground. But they are both grand souls.

You know, there are two kinds of friends. There are those who want you to do something for them and those who want to do something for you. J. D. is the latter. Kearnie Keegan, J. D, and I were good friends. Kearnie was my predecessor at Alexandria. He later went on to be B.S.U. Secretary at the Sunday School Board and died of a heart attack while in that job. He was in St. Louis on his way to Hawaii to dedicate a B.S.U. Building at the University of Hawaii when he died. J. D. has always played around with hobbies, and one of his hobbies has been records and tape recordings. He got out a record and put it out through some agency in Nashville--"Kearnie Keegan Sings Again," I believe, is the name of it, or "Kearnie Keegan Sings." He sent me a copy. They can be bought at the Baptist Book Store, but he sent me a copy--autographed it. I brought that down to the church. and I played that at a coffee break. The staff, who didn't even know Kearnie, was just enthralled with it. I sat there and wept like a baby. I could just see old Kearnie singing songs like "The Lily of the Valley," "Dear Old Mandeville," and "Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There." He was a master.

I've got lots of friends among preachers, and there are a lot of them who are close friends. But if I had to name the three closest ones, I guess the closest of all would be J. D. Grey, Ramsey Pollard, and W. A. Criswell. When I say, W. A. Criswell is one of my closest friends, somebody might say, "Well, that's name-dropping." No. I have known him when he wasn't. I drove the getaway car at his wedding. I knew him in the seminary.

The Young Adult Division of his church was planning a banquet--they have one every year and always honor somebody. This particular year they were going to honor him with a "This Is Your Life" program. They invited people secretly as, you know, the format of that program on television. They invited his sister from California, a dear woman, a member of a church where he was pastor when he met his wife; R. G. Lee who was there to talk about evangelism--his contribution to it; and, of course, Betty, his wife. They asked Betty, "Who does he consider to be his closest friends, one layman and one preacher?" She said, "The layman is Allen Wilkinson of First Baptist Church, Muskogee, Oklahoma, and the preacher is Herschel Hobbs,

First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City." I mention that merely to show it is a mutual feeling on the part of both of us. There are a lot of things we don't agree on. We couldn't be farther apart on eschatology. We both believe in the "blessed hope" of the second coming of Christ, but the details we don't agree on, and we don't discuss them.

You just don't talk about some things with your friends, like the decision of the Supreme Court on prayer in public schools. Billy Graham, of course, blasted them the following Sunday. I would have, if I could have gotten to them as soon as I read the newspaper reports, which were misleading. I was then president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and I was on my way back from Kansas City where I had spent the day with Elliott and that group. Huntley-Brinkley on N.B.C. tried to contact me for a statement. My wife said, "Well, he's on a plane. You couldn't reach him." The Lord takes care of his own and fools, too, and I have always figured I came in there somewhere. The next morning before the press could get to me, I had on my desk from Barry Garrett in Washington a copy of the full decision and his analysis of it. I read it, and when the press called me, boy, I was a statesman, you know. People said, "My, you really did see through that and analyze that quickly." Well, what people don't know won't hurt them, you know. We don't let out all the tricks of the trade. I told Barry Garrett, "If you never do anything else you have justified your employment up there for the rest of your life by this one thing."

Well, Billy, of course, had blasted loose. In fact, he was getting up his sermon for the following Sunday on "The Hour of Decision" when one of his aides came rushing in the room. They had torn the news off the news machine that either Associated Press or United Press puts in his home. He doesn't get any money for writing his column "My Answer," but they give him that machine. After he read that story he threw the sermon away he was preparing, and he prepared one that just blistered the Supreme Court.

Well, The Christian Century sent out a telegram to me and to the head of every religious denomination in America at that time calling on the people of America to settle down and study that report. They claimed it wasn't as wild as it was reported to be. They wanted to know if we would permit our names to be signed to it. I wired back that they could put my name on it, and it came out on a Monday. One of Billy's aides said Billy was resting in the afternoon, and he went rushing in with the paper and said, "Billy, Herschel Hobbs has signed a statement with nineteen other religious leaders in America, calling on the people to settle down--that the Supreme Court decision is all right," or something like that. He said it was just like a spring had broken in that mattress right between Billy's shoulders. He came up out of that bed--"WHAT?"

Well, of recent date Billy has changed his position and has said it's all right. I think what happened to Billy was the same thing that would have happened to me if I hadn't gotten some help at the right time. He got out on a limb, and he didn't know how to get back on the tree. He finally found his way back. We have talked about everything under the sun, but we never have talked about that Supreme Court decision.

Ramsey Pollard is just Ramsey. There never was a grander guy. He is from Southwestern Seminary. I think this gives you a pretty good insight into him and his wife, Della, of course. Ramsey is just like a worm in hot ashes. He doesn't stay one place very long. I am not talking about a church. He wants to move--move on down the street, or get over here, somewhere. When he's had enough of whatever it is, he says, "Come on, Della," and he just goes walking on. Della can stay there or she can go with him, but he's gone. So now, Della is writing a book, and she's going to call it Come On, Della. But those three men are some of the choice people of the earth to me.

I have never expressed it, but every time I think about them I think that I am going to tell my wife, "I'm going to die some day, and they are going to conduct my funeral." I've conducted thousands, but they are going to conduct mine some day. If I had the say-so, I would like to have those three men some way or other involved in my funeral. Yet, I hate to burden them with it. They might be glad to do it for all I know.

T: One other thing I wanted to ask earlier, and we didn't really talk about it and that was in reference to "The Baptist Faith and Message," the statement that is included in there, the Bible "without mixture of error." How did that come about?

H: Well, that was in the 1925 Statement, and I am not so sure but that it is in the New Hampshire Statement. As any serious student of the Bible knows, especially if he studies from the manuscript standpoint, there are errors in the King James Version. None of them are so great that they affect seriously the meaning of the Scriptures. They are little things, like a word added or something. Before we had the printing press, manuscripts were copied by hand. If you wrote a note on the margin, and fifty years later somebody came along to copy that, he might think that note was a part of the text and write it in. We have been able through manuscript study to get rid of most of them, if not all. I think we are as near now as maybe it's possible for us to get back to the original of the Greek New Testament through manuscript study. We are back within the fourth century after Christ. We are a long way from there on being back to near the source of the Old Testament. But when we speak of the Scriptures being "truth without any mixture of error," we are thinking about the original manuscripts, not any one version that we have today. Of course, somebody will say, "Well, we don't have the original manuscripts." Well, that's true, but still, they did exist at one time. I think we are just about as near back to the original text of the New Testament as we'll ever get. We may be right back there to it. So that's what we mean when we speak of "truth without any mixture of error."

T: In trying to tie in a couple of ends, one other is, you became president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Is it true that there was some resistance to your being elected president of the Convention because of the fact that your church is located across the street from the Baptist Building and there was fear of concentration of power?

H: I never heard of it if there was. The fact of the matter is, I was nominated one time when they were meeting in our church, and they met Tuesday through Thursday

afternoon. Thursday was my day to play golf. There wasn't much going on so I went out and played golf. Lo and behold, I got back and found out I'd been nominated for president against a pastor of a country church, and he won. If I had been there, I would have withdrawn my name. You know, the idea was, "Let's elect a country preacher. We elect these city preachers all the time, let's elect a country preacher." I think it was a good deal, but some of my closest friends really kidded me about it. They said, "If you had known how to milk a cow, you'd have made it." When I was finally elected, if there was any such talk as that, I never heard it. The fact of the matter is, I am the first pastor of this church who was ever elected moderator of the association or president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, the simple reason being that I was the only one that ever stayed long enough. Not that the others weren't capable, but you have to wait your turn.

T: Well, thank you, Dr. Hobbs.

H: There is one other thing I wanted to mention while we are talking about the presidents. Of course, R. G. Lee is one of the incomparables. He and I have been good friends. I was scheduled to nominate him at one time for president--when he was elected president of the Convention--but circumstances ruled it out. I had heard so much about Dr. Lee. Some of my friends of my generation had talked about how they had had him in a revival, and he would come in just in time to preach, and then hurry out to go to the hotel, and that he didn't mix with the people. This had been the tale told to me. I wanted to have him, but I dreaded it. So I had him come down to Mobile to hold a meeting for me. He came down on a train, and I met him and took him over to the Admiral Sennes Hotel and checked him in, got him in his room. Then we went down to the dining room to eat. After we had finished eating, he called the waitress over, and said, "Little lady, have you got any cornbread and sweet milk?" She said, "Yes." He said, "Will you bring me some?" She brought it to him, and he sat there, crumbled his cornbread in his sweet milk, and with a spoon sat there and ate it as we talked. I said, "Well, he is just a human being after all." I never again had any anxiety about him. He held a tremendous meeting, and I never had one problem with him. He stood around and talked to people just like any other preacher.

We went out to the home of one of the richest families in the church to eat the Sunday meal. The World Series was on the radio, and we were eating just as the ball game started. He just kept the rug hot. He would come back to the table and eat a bite, the crowd would yell, you know, and he would run in there and listen, come back, eat another bite, and it was that way all through the meal. But he was, and is, a nut on baseball. He was a baseball player, you know.

But he closed out on a Monday night. He preached "Payday Someday." Our auditorium was packed and jammed, we had them standing out in the yard. The United States Navy band, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, played that night at the high school, and I thought, "Boy, they have ruined us." But as it was, we had more than we could handle, and they just had a little handful. Some of the fellows at the next meeting of the Kiwanis Club, of which I was a member, mentioned it to me, I kidded them, saying, "Next time you guys will call me and find out what I am planning before

you make your plans." One couple came three hundred miles to hear that sermon. We had planned to give Dr. Lee $1,000, and then pay the expenses of the meeting. We had just about enough money on hand to do it. Well, then that night came, and we passed the plate and got $780 loose offering. The Finance Committee had counted the money after the meeting. They said, "Well, we've got enough money here to give Dr. Lee $1,000 like we said and pay all the bills, too. Then we've got about $500 we can put in the building fund." I said, "Not while I'm your pastor." I said, "The people didn't give that money for the Dauphin Way Baptist building fund. They gave that money as a love offering for this revival and primarily for R. G. Lee. As long as I'm your pastor, it's going to go to R. G. Lee." So we gave him $1,500.

The next day I went by to pick him up to take him back to the train. He told me, "That's the largest offering I ever got for a revival." I'm sure he has gotten larger since, but that was a lot of money in those days. He said, "When I was a young boy in college I came one summer down here to Mobile, and worked unloading banana boats to make some money. I was sitting here last night after I got back from the church, holding that $1,500 check in my hand, and I was looking out the window right across the street at that house where I boarded when I worked unloading banana boats. I remembered how I would come in at night so tired I could hardly climb those steps to get upstairs to go to bed. I sat there thinking of all of that and of this great meeting we have had, and this $1,500 check for one week of preaching, and I cried and thought, "How great and good God has been to me!" That's another side of R. G. Lee that a lot of people don't see.

Wayne Dehoney says, right or wrong, I am the man who is responsible for his being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, though I didn't do one thing about it. I said, "How in the world do you figure that, Wayne?" He said, "Well, you gave me my first exposure to Southern Baptists." He said, "When you were president you had me on your program to speak, and that is the first time I ever got any exposure before Southern Baptists." Well, that didn't elect him president of the Convention, but that is the way he puts it.

Franklin Paschall is another great guy. I think men like him and Wayne are the hope of the next twenty-to twenty-five years in our Southern Baptist life. They are sound in their faith and have tremendous ability.

I was to hold a meeting for Frank in his church in Nashville. He called me on Friday and said, "Some of my friends in Kentucky are wanting to nominate me for president of the Southern Baptist Convention. What do you think?" I said, "Well, Frank, I'll be over there tomorrow. Why don't we wait and talk about it then?" While I was there during that week we talked about it, and I encouraged him to let his name be put in nomination. The only problem was, Wayne Dehoney was president and they were both from Tennessee. Wayne, at the time, was at Jackson, Tennessee. I said, "That is the only problem I see. At the same time, I don't know as there has ever been a pastor of your church that has been president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Yet, you are sort of at the heart of our Southern Baptist life."

T: R. B. C. Howell was pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville.

H: Oh, is that right? Well, that was a long, long time ago. I had forgotten he was pastor of that church. But anyway, we talked about it, and I said, "I think you ought to let them put your name in, win, lose, or draw." So often a man has to be defeated before he is elected. There are very few times they are elected the first time up. I was, Wayne Dehoney was, I think, and Franklin Paschall. But still, Franklin wasn't so sure. But I encouraged him to do it.

Five years before that I had told Owen Cooper in Dallas, "Owen, five years from now you ought to be elected president of the Convention. It is time to elect a layman, and there isn't a layman who is more conversant with the life of Southern Baptists and their business affairs than you are." He laughed it off. Then I saw him again later and I mentioned it, and he said, "Well, I may do that." I said, "Well, if you do, I don't get out and campaign for anybody, but when people ask me who I think ought to be the next president, I tell them what I think. And that would be what I would tell them." Finally, though, he backed off and said, "I have been elected president of Mississippi Chamber of Commerce, I've got my business, and I don't have time." So he said, "I'm not going to let my name go up. And when Franklin called me the next week, I told him, "Franklin, I don't get out and get in the campaign for anybody. I don't think that's the way to do it, but I certainly would encourage people to vote for you if they asked me what I thought." He said, "Well, I think I'll let my name go up."

So, as it happened when we went to Detroit he had to stay home for a funeral. The night before the election the next morning, he called me from Nashville. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "Well, the funny thing is I don't hear anything, and that either means that people have made their minds up and are not talking, or it means they are not interested enough to talk." He said, "Well, what do you think about me?" I said, "I still think you ought to let your name go up. I haven't heard anybody say that it is a closed issue, that it is all settled. I think that Southern Baptists need a man like you to follow Wayne, and I think you ought to let your name go up." He said, "Well, I'll be up there in the morning. I have to stay home for this funeral." So the next morning he was elected. After his election, my wife and I went around to their room and talked to him and his wife. He told me, "Friend, last night, if you had said, 'No,' I would have accepted it. Your answer to me last night determined whether I would let my name be put up or not. That answer is the thing that put me right now in this office, plus the votes for me. But if you had said, 'No,' I was going to withdraw."

So you never know what you do. Well, he made a great president. And, of course, Owen Cooper is doing a great job as a layman.

I guess we are coming about to the end of this, and I just want to say this. I have given forty-five (six) years of my life to the gospel ministry. I have always been pastor of a church. I have never asked anybody to recommend me to a church, but I have never been without one, not even when I went to the seminary. I was called to a church before I ever resigned my college pastorate in Birmingham. The only Sunday I got to attend church while I was in Louisville was at Crescent Hill that morning, Walnut Street that night. It was a Sunday when a church was calling me--another halftime church. So I have always had church work. As I said before,

"If I had a thousand lives to live, I'd give every one of them to the pastorate; but I would also give an equitable amount of my time to the denomination as I was asked to serve. I wouldn't seek the job to serve, but if I were asked to, I would. Because I feel that I am just as much serving my church when I am doing denominational work as I am when I am standing holding somebody's hand at a hospital bed. Of course, you can overdo it. But I am talking about an equitable division of time."

I have tried to serve Southern Baptists. I write this little book on Studying Adult Life and Work Lessons. The way that came about was, I started writing out some materials and mimeographing it for the Sunday School teachers in my own church. I didn't think the material help that was being put out was strong enough, and our teachers were concerned. Our educational director went to a Southwide meeting of educational directors, and they were all facing the same problem. He told how we were solving it, and they all wanted to get on our mailing list.

Well, I wrote A. V. Washburn, and he said, "We'd be glad for you to do it." I think they were getting a lot of static, too, at that time. Of course, Life and Work was new, and they were just getting started. So, I started mailing it out, just one copy to a church. I said, "If they can't reproduce it on their own, they don't deserve it." But the thing got out of hand. Churches like First, Dallas; Bellvue, Memphis; First, New Orleans; First, Nashville; Oklahoma City; churches all over were using it. In one association in Florida a Baptist deacon who was a printer took pictures of it, printed it, and distributed it to all the churches in the association.

So it got to cutting into their literature sales, and the only way they could get the money back they had invested in developing the plan was through selling literature. I talked to Jim Sullivan about it. I said, "Now Jim, you all gave me permission to do this, but if you don't want me to do it, all you have to do is tell me so. Because I have given my life serving my denomination, and I am not about to do anything now that will hurt it." He said, "I wish you would. It would help us because we need the money to get back this money." I said, "Well, I'll have to write a letter and explain it to the churches." He called me not long after that and said, "I have never received so much 'dirty' mail in my life as I have gotten from this. /I imagine from Sunday School teachers, not preachers./ I wonder if you would do me a favor." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Would you write this out on a crash basis and give it to us, three months at a time? We'll put on a crash program. We'll publish it and send it out to the people--sell it." I said, "Yes, provided you let me write it in the way I want." Because we had always disagreed on how much depth we should use in our Sunday School literature. I thought we should go deeper. He said, "We won't even edit it." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Will you write a letter to these churches and tell them what you are going to do?" I said, "Yes." "Will you tell them that you are going to continue to send this material until we get this book out?" So I did. That's how the thing got started.

They send me a report on sales now each quarter, and it delights me when I see it. The first quarter they put it out they sold 100% of their projected sales. Now, after about four years, something like that, the last report showed that they sold 238% above their projected sales. So, apparently, it is doing some good. I mention that merely to point out that I have always tried to serve the denomination. The

denomination has been so good to me, and I have tried to show my appreciation in what little way I could.

It has been a delight to be with you, and if at any time we get together and decide there is some more of this oral history you want to record, I'll just sort of oil up my tonsils a little bit, and we'll let go.

T: Thank you, Dr. Hobbs. I appreciate it very much, and I have enjoyed being with you.

H: We are talking about being tired. I was telling Brother Tonks about when I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I flew into Virginia. That was the fourth state convention that week. I still had one to go. It was foggy everywhere, and everybody was missing their appointments at state conventions. But believe it or not, I didn't miss a one of mine. It just happened that my schedule would be such that when I'd get to a place, they'd find a hole in the ceiling and get through. But anyway, when I went into Virginia, I got up and I told them, "I am so glad to be here at this convention, and it just feels so good to be here. In fact, I feel just like one of you. I don't know which one, but whichever one it is, you ought to go home and go to bed, you're tired!" And I guess that's the way you and I feel after these days together.

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