

J. D. GREY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Personal Data

Birth: December 18, 1906, Princeton, Kentucky

Marriage: Lillian Tooke, September 16, 1927

Children: Mary Beth and Martha Ann, twins,
September 3, 1941

Death: July 26, 1985, New Orleans, Louisiana

Education

Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, A.B. 1929

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas,
Th.M. 1932

Pastoral Experience

Ordained, Immanuel Baptist Church, Paducah, Kentucky,
November 28, 1925

Student Pastorates in Tennessee

Vickery Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, 1929-31

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Ennis, Texas, 1931-34

First Baptist Church, Denton, Texas, 1934-37

First Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1937-72

During Grey's pastorate, church membership grew from
1,500 to over 4,000 and giving increased from \$26,000
to \$650,000.

Denominational Experience

President, Southern Baptist Convention, 1951-53

President, Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1949-50

Moderator, New Orleans Baptist Association, 1943-44

Baptist Hour speaker, 1949

Board member of numerous Southern Baptist and
Louisiana Baptist agencies and institutions

Civic Activities

Founder and President, Louisiana Moral and Civic
Foundation, 1956
President, Metropolitan Crime Commission of New
Orleans, 1968-69; Member, Board of
Directors

Honors

Distinguished Alumnus Award, Southwestern
Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964
Distinguished Alumnus Award, Union University,
1970
Clergyman of the Year, New Orleans Kiwanis Club,
1969
Honorary doctorates: Union University (1938),
Louisiana College (1952), Baylor University
(1953)

PREFACE

J. D. Grey, long-time pastor of the First Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, was president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1951 to 1953. At age 44, he was the youngest president ever elected.

During his 35-year tenure at First Baptist Church, New Orleans, church membership grew from 1500 to over 4000. Pastorates prior to FBC included the First Baptist Church, Denton, Texas (1934-37), Tabernacle Baptist Church, Ennis, Texas (1931-34), Vickery Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas (1929-31), and student pastorates in Tennessee.

Grey received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Union University in 1929 and the Th.M. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1932. He was awarded honorary doctorates from Union (1938), Louisiana College (1952), and Baylor University (1953).

Grey's additional denominational experience included president, Louisiana Baptist Convention (1949-51); Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee member (1950-70); and board member of numerous agencies and institutions.

An outspoken campaigner against crime and immorality, Grey was a founder and president of the Louisiana Moral and Civil Foundation and president of the Metropolitan Crime Commission of New Orleans.

Grey was the author of Epitaphs for Eager Preachers (Broadman, 1972), a humorous look at pastoral ministry.

In the interviews, Grey describes his childhood, youth, and early influences on his life. He gives his impressions of prominent Baptist leaders and preachers, including L. R. Scarborough, George W. Truett, and M. E. Dodd. Grey recalls his education at Union University and Southwestern Seminary, early pastorates in Tennessee and Texas, and his long tenure as pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans. The interviews cover Grey's two terms as SBC president and his involvement in Southern Baptist life for over four decades. Grey discusses his views of pastoral ministry and denominational service, moral and social issues, the Baptist World Alliance, and controversies in SBC life, such as the role of the Federal Council of Churches and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Historical Commission began its oral history interviews in the 1970's with former presidents of the SBC. Interviews with Grey were conducted by Lynn E. May, Jr., executive director, Historical Commission, in Grey's home, 4524 South Galvez, New Orleans, on November 13 and 14, 1975, and at the Historical Commission, Nashville, January 27, 1976.

For further information on Grey in the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives see the Baptist History File; Baptist Biography #9673; James F. Cole and Robert L. Lee, saint J. D. (Word, 1969; Call Number BX 6495.G78.C6.1969); Grey's Epitaphs for Eager Preachers (Broadman, 1972; Call Number: BV 4011.G73.1972); Grey's article, "Debate, Discussion for Decision, Not Division," Baptist History and Heritage 12 (October 1977):231-38; Baptist Hour Recordings 1947-48 and 1951-56 (Call Numbers: R208d and R208t); Southern Baptist Convention Annals; and Louisiana Baptist Convention Annals.

The original recordings of the interviews are available for use in the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (Call Number: R265t Gre, Series I and II).

HISTORICAL COMMISSION SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Southern Baptist Convention Presidents Program

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: J. D. Grey

INTERVIEWER: Lynn E. May, Jr.

DATE OF INTERVIEWS: November 13 and 14, 1975

PLACE: 4524 South Galvez, New Orleans, Louisiana

M: This is the first of a series of interviews with Dr. James David Grey, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is being conducted by Lynn E. May, Jr., on November 13, 1975, in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Grey at 4524 South Galvez, New Orleans, Louisiana.

J. D. Grey was born December 18, 1906, in Princeton, Kentucky, the fourth child of George Lindsey Grey and Lucy Ann Keeney. He had two older brothers, Leonard and George Goebel, an older sister, Undine, and a younger sister, Edna.

Ordained to the gospel ministry in 1925, Grey served student pastorates in Tennessee while in Union University. He was pastor of the Vickery Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, 1929-31, while a student in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He then served as pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Ennis, Texas, 1931-34, and pastor of First Baptist Church, Denton, Texas, 1934-37. He served as pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, from May 1, 1937, until his retirement at the end of 1972. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1951-53 and president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, 1949-50. He held many other places of denominational leadership during his long years of distinguished ministry.

Dr. Grey, we appreciate your willingness to narrate for us some personal recollections of your life, work, and ministry. Let's begin with the early years. Suppose you tell us what you remember about your childhood.

G: The first thing I can remember is when God saved my life. I was born in Princeton, Kentucky, Caldwell County, December 18, 1906. A few years after that, about six years, my grandfather died and my father had been working with the railroad at Princeton, and we moved out in the country to a little town of Lamasco. My father took over my grandfather's old place. But we lived in another place, sort of as part renter, half time sharecropper, whatever you want to call it. My grandmother lived with us, and we had a well out in the yard, an old cistern, that they used only in the summertime to keep milk cool. It was full of water. I was about five or six, and I remember distinctly on one of those cold winter days getting the lid off that cistern and falling in it. I can still remember as though it happened yesterday going down in that water underneath the ladder that they used to put the milk down there and coming back up. I remember coming out of the water crying and screaming, and my mother and grandmother were on the back porch. They liked to have had a fit. I felt maybe the Lord spared me that one time and a few other times in close calls like that. He seems to have had His hand on me.

My parents were nominal church members. The earliest influence of religion I remember was when I was in the first grade at the Lamasco school, taught by Luther Rogers, a Methodist layman. A Methodist revival was on at the Methodist Church, and we went each day to the morning services. I remember distinctly getting under conviction at that revival. I had the strangest feeling coming over me, but I didn't make any public manifestation. I mentioned something about it to my mother when I got home, and she made some remark to the effect, "Well, I'm glad." I didn't follow it up.

My other days back there in the country were rather rough and tough. I walked three miles every day to school after we moved to another place. We didn't have school but about six months, I guess, during the year. Then I moved to Paducah, Kentucky, with my mother and father and two sisters. My two brothers had gone off to the war by that time. I suppose I was about twelve, eleven or twelve. The war came on and, of course, they went off to service. My father worked at various odd jobs to keep body and soul together, and he finally started working for the Illinois Central Railroad. He worked for them, then, many years until he moved to California, after I went off to college.

We started going to the Second Baptist Church in Paducah, and I was converted there during a revival in which Dr. John W. T.

Givens was the preacher. After I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I had the pleasure at Louisville, Kentucky, of introducing him to the Convention and telling them he was the one who was preaching the revival when I was saved. My pastor was Brother H. W. Ellis, who that same week baptized me; then, he ordained me in 1925. He married Mrs. Grey and me on September 16, 1927. He had a tremendous influence on my life.

My mother was a quiet, good Christian. I remember the way she sang the old church songs. I remember once, when I was a very young child in the early twenties, just a young boy barely in my teens, that she had to have a serious operation. We were all there in her room that morning when they rolled her to the operating room. I can still hear her singing, "God Will Take Care of You" as she went in. I never heard her pray in public, and I never heard her teach a lesson. I never heard her sing in public. She was a good, devout Christian.

My father was just a sorry, indifferent church member. He never gave over ten cents a week to the church, and he fussed about it. He fell out with Brother Ellis and wouldn't stay for church to hear him preach. Now, that was after I went off to study for the ministry. My father would leave Sunday School and go across the parkway in front of our house, from the church toward our house, and get a Sunday's St. Louis Post Dispatch. A man once said, "Mr. Grey, are you going to stay for church?" My father said, "No, I can get more spiritual food out of this funny paper than I can to hear Ellis preach." Now, when I recite that in preaching to men in later years, I say, "God gave me a daddy like that so I can appreciate some of the old sorry, no-account, backslidden members that I have to "pastorize"; and it would make an impression on them, I think. It let them know that I did relate to them, see.

My parents weren't able to help at all in my education. They were proud of the fact that I entered the ministry. It's a thing that I hate to admit, but I'll tell it: We never did have prayer at our house until after I surrendered to the ministry. The first Thanksgiving after that, I suggested, and Mama agreed, that we start having prayer at the table. I never did hear my father pray, but when I was not there my mother or younger sister would pray.

During the revival meeting at the Immanuel Church, when I was in high school there about 1922, M. E. Dodd came to Paducah from Shreveport to hold a revival. We were going into our new church at Immanuel Baptist Church, Paducah, which was on Murrell Boulevard then. Well, I asked Mama to ask him and Brother Ellis to come to our humble home and have dinner with us at noontime. Mama fixed up a good meal, and Dr. Dodd and Brother Ellis came. Papa rushed home from the shops and washed up a little, and I'll never forget. During the course of the meal,

toward the end of it, Dr. Dodd said, "J. D., what are you going to do with your life?" Before I could answer, Brother Ellis said, "Dr. Dodd, I think God's calling J.D. to preach." I may be attaching a little more significance to that now in my mature reflection than it actually was; but I can still feel, this was as we were leaving the table, Dr. M. E. Dodd putting his hand on my head and saying, "Well, then, God bless you son. Give your very best to the Lord in that."

It came back to me in 1952 when Dr. Dodd died. I was in Toelloese, Denmark, attending a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. I had succeeded Dr. Dodd on that Executive Committee in 1950, and I served on it until 1970. I received a cable from my secretary saying he had died and would be buried the next day. I regretted I wasn't here. After I got home I had a letter from Mrs. Dodd, in which she enclosed some handwritten notes that Dr. Dodd had sent in a letter to me. He wanted me to have his funeral. I still have that paper. In it he said, in essence, "Don't talk about me but talk about the Lord Jesus Christ." Then, some two years after that, the First Church, Shreveport, placed at his grave in the Dodd plot in the cemetery a marble replica of his old pulpit over which he preached for 38 years in the First Baptist Church, Shreveport. They had me up there to deliver a message right over his grave using that stone pulpit. It was a very significant and very beautiful occasion. Dr. J. W. Middleton had already become pastor. He had Dr. Dodd's funeral and was there with many others.

When the question of where I'd go to school came up, I thought of only one place, Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, about 140 miles from Paducah. Brother Ellis had gone there, and several other men from our church who were his contemporaries had gone there. Then, of course, Dr. Dodd had gone there and his father-in-law was Dr. G. M. Savage, a venerable old man at Union. I entered Union in the fall of 1925, fifty years ago this fall. The only money I had, Dr. May, was the money I had worked for that summer at the Fowler-Wolfe Sheet Metal Works at Paducah for 27 cents an hour, ten hours a day, six days a week. Out of that I bought a few clothes and had enough money to pay my way down there to Jackson and to pay the entrance fee. I never shall forget getting off that old train in Jackson and walking clear up to the college carrying a great big old suitcase and a Number Ten Remington typewriter that I had somewhere along the line acquired, on which I could peck out a little bit. That was my start and I've told everybody how since then.

When I got there I was one of the most promising young preachers to hit the hill "six months from date I promise to pay and

if I can't pay, I'll renew it and pay the interest, at least." But the Lord opened up work for me. I was called to a church at the edge of Memphis, Brunswick, in Shelby County, within six weeks after school opened. I'd go down there two Sundays a month. I got \$12.50 each trip. Of course, I think I was overpaid then, but most of that was taken up buying bus tickets and train tickets to get down there and back. Then, I was called to another halftime church. Fortunately, I was a pastor all the time I was in Union. From the time I was ordained November 28, 1925, until I retired on December 31, 1972, at the First Baptist Church, New Orleans, I was not off the payroll of a Baptist church for five minutes. I always had a church; I accepted it, resigned, and went from it.

That happened when I finished Union in 1929. I was called to Vickery Baptist Church at the edge of Dallas. I started in the summer, six weeks before Southwestern Seminary opened. Mrs. Grey and I had gotten married in 1927, and that helped us greatly. She went to school with me two years in Union and three years in Southwestern. In my last year at Southwestern, my senior year, in June of 1931, I took the Tabernacle Baptist Church at Ennis, Texas, our Convention Baptist Church. The First Baptist Church there was Baptist Missionary Association and still is. We drove back to Fort Worth two days a week, 65 miles, and met classes, then came back home on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We weren't late for a class a single time nor did we miss anything, funeral or anything else even a night meeting, at Ennis during that time. I stayed there two years after I graduated from the seminary; and then, in September of 1934, I went to the First Baptist Church, Denton, Texas. I stayed there until May 1, 1937, when I came to First Baptist Church of New Orleans.

I didn't linger too long on my early life back there. I've covered the highlights of it, but the greatest influence, I presume, in my life was the Sunday School teacher I had beginning when I was about fifteen. She was then Mrs. Ethel Rice. In the first year she was teaching us her husband died, and I think Mrs. Ethel could not have been over ten years older, if that much, than the boys in the class. She's still living in Paducah, Kentucky. I don't know how old she is, she won't tell me. But on August 26, 1975, this past August, the First Baptist Church Brotherhood, New Orleans, had me to speak at their ladies' night. There were 450 people present for dinner, and I brought a message about my fifty years in the ministry; they were observing it. They surprised me by flying Mrs. Ethel to New Orleans. She's now Mrs. Stamper. She stayed a widow for many, many years and was secretary of the school board in Paducah, Kentucky. She's still active, viable, and dynamic. She shared in the occasion and brought a few words of greeting to the meeting that night. She was a great help to me.

I have a book, an encyclopedia, the first book I ever bought as a young preacher. She loaned me \$12.50 to buy it. I wrote in the front of it--I showed it to her when she spent the night here with us at the house--"Purchased through the kindness of my Sunday School teacher, Miss Ethel." She gave me a Bible when I graduated from Union. It's a Scofield, "verbally inspired, King James Scofield edition." She wrote in the front of it a very beautiful short poem that has been a great inspiration in my life. "Men may misjudge thy aim, think they have cause to blame, say thou art wrong; go in thy quiet way, God is thy judge, not they; fear not, be strong." She never could tell me where she found it, where she got it, and I never have been able to find out who wrote it; but it has been my life's slogan ever since.

But there was influence of others. I was in a one-room village school in Lamasco, Kentucky, the first school I attended with Mr. Luther Rogers as my teacher. He would have all the grades in that one room; you know those one-room village country schools. We would get up on the stage and sing church songs every morning. I say jokingly that the Supreme Court hadn't heard about it, or they would probably have stopped it. One song above all others was a song on heaven called "Golden Harps." Well, I'd sing that. I couldn't read words then, and I can't read music now; but it made its way into my boyish heart in the first grade. Over the years it stayed with me. When I was converted, became a preacher, and got out in the work, I'd ask Robert H. Coleman, Homer Rodeheaver, B. B. McKinney, E. O. Sellars, I. E. Reynolds, all these great singers, if they had ever heard it. I'd sing a verse and a chorus of it, and they'd say, "No, never did." Finally, B. B. McKinney said, "Yes, I think I know where I can get you a copy of that song." So, he got one by that old composer, Hartsough, I believe it's spelled. He rearranged it, had it copyrighted in my name, and sent it to me. Now when it came, the amazing thing is that our minister of music went to the piano, played through it, and I sang it; and I'd miss the words just in a couple of places and the tune in a couple of places.

I have that reproduced now, the music and this story which appeared in the Church Musician about 1968 or 1969 ["Boy and a Song," 18:44, Ja 67]. Wherever I go I offer it to the minister of music; I help them with it, most of them, and they take it and sing it. It is a beautiful song of heaven. It shows that when you plant something like that in the heart of a kid, it's going to stay there to help him and bless him in the later years.

Now the influences that sort of helped me set my pattern in the ministry, would you like me to say a little bit about that? I don't know whether I'm getting ahead or not.

- M: Are you talking about your call to the ministry now?
- G: No, not so much the call, but the things that made me know what kind of preacher I wanted to be.
- M: Well, we would like to get that. I wonder if we might get you to share a little further, perhaps, in terms of information about your family. You mentioned your grandmother. Was your grandfather still living when you were a boy growing up?
- G: No. My father's mother died the week I was born, 1906, December. My grandfather lived until 1912, and the only thing I remember about him was going to his funeral. I found a picture of him some years ago. It was in a bad shape, but I got a photographer to touch it up and print it, and one, also, of my grandmother. Now, that's on my father's side. Now, my mother's father was killed when she was just a young girl, and her mother was a widow for years; I remember her fairly well, Grandma Keeney. She was the one who was out there living with us at the time when I fell in that abandoned cistern. But, as far as any religious influence is concerned, I don't have any recollection. I was too young probably to remember anything about it, but I remember going to her funeral, also.
- M: Do you have any further recollections about the early school that you attended? You shared briefly something with us here. Were any of your brothers and sisters, you have two....
- G: I had two brothers and two sisters.
- M: Two sisters. I notice some are younger and some are older.
- G: Just one was younger.
- M: So, some were in school with you?
- G: No. The older sister was going to school about the time I was. Well, out at that one-room school I'm sure that they all came to school; but I don't have any recollections of any unusual experiences, except with my sister who was a little bit older than I. We'd walk that long distance to school, three miles, after we moved farther out in the country from Lamasco, way out in the sticks. We were sharecroppers on that farm one year before we moved to Paducah.
- M: What were you raising on the farm?
- G: We grew tobacco, corn, and the usual things; we raised hogs, cattle, cows--not for the market, just milk cows to sell and trade around.
- M: The early years of your education, then, were in the one-room school. For how long?

G: Oh, one year there at that school. We moved out to this other farm farther out in the country, and I went to the Cave Hollow School way down in the woods, way down in there. I believe this Miss Drennan was the woman teacher there. I don't remember too much about it, but I remember beginning in the third grade when we moved to Paducah. I remember distinctly the experiences there with one of the teachers I had, but not necessarily devoutly religious experiences. For instance, Miss Ada Brazelton was principal of the Longfellow grammar school, which I attended. She was a Presbyterian, I believe, and she would have assembly and always had prayer. I remember on April 6, 1917, when we declared war on Germany, she got all of us in the assembly. She read a passage out of the Bible and had prayer, and she wept. I remember that.

We were on the Illinois Central Railroad there at Paducah and they'd be moving troops and they would stop there. I don't know why exactly, but it was sort of a division point; and they'd march those soldiers in the town and back, I guess just for exercise. I remember I was standing out on the school ground, waving flags and cheering them on as these boys marched in formation. Oh, I mean a whole trainload of them.

I remember the first plane I ever saw was an NC4, a Navy seaplane that came to Paducah, about the time, I guess, the war was about over. All the schools turned out and we went down to the Ohio River there, where the Tennessee and Ohio run together, and saw that plane take off, coming down that river.

M: You mentioned, I believe, that one of your brothers, or both of them, went to the war? World War I?

G: Yes. Both of them went to the war, and they both enlisted. My oldest brother was a pharmacist's mate; I don't think he ever saw any active duty at sea. My younger brother, Goebel, lied about his age because he wasn't quite old enough, but he got in. He served for many, many years in the Navy as an enlisted man in food services, I guess part cook and storeman and so on. He is still living out in California. They were nominal members of the church, but they hadn't had any real dynamic experience. In 1940 my younger brother moved back to Kentucky, and I was holding a revival there. His wife had been a Campbellite up in Ohio, and they both came and made their professions in that revival. I baptized both of them in the Immanuel Church at Paducah and an uncle of mine who had also been a Campbellite. I believe that was about 1940.

Now I have mentioned about my father not being a very active church member, but he was not an immoral man. He never did drink, and I never heard him curse. He used some pretty stout words, but he didn't take God's name in vain or use common cuss

words. He was rather high tempered, and we had quite some tension in our home, but it didn't break up; I mean, it did stay together. I remember my father was very fractious and impatient. My two older brothers, of course, went to the service, and my older sister got married real early. Her husband left her, and she came back home with a little baby about two years later. I remember our raising that child, just a little bit younger than I am, just like my sister. Then this sister whose husband left her went to work and left home, and finally remarried.

M: That's your younger sister?

G: No. That's the oldest sister. She's three years older than I am. She's still living in California. My younger sister died, I think a couple or three years ago.

M: How do you pronounce her name?

G: Undine, Myra Undine. My younger brother was born the day Governor Goebel of Kentucky was shot. Papa wanted to name him George Goebel Grey for George Goebel, who was governor of Kentucky. I was in Frankfort, Kentucky, a number of years ago speaking, I was staying in the pastor's home and after I had spoken at the church that night, I read the life of Governor Goebel until about three in the morning. He was the original Huey Long; he believed in sharing the wealth. But it was a political thing that opponents had assassinated him, just shot him. He lived just a few days, I think. My father named my brother for him because he was born the day George Goebel was shot.

M: What do you remember about your family life? You mentioned that perhaps there wasn't as much emphasis on prayer and Bible study. What would you say was the philosophy of your parents concerning raising their children and so on?

G: Well, they believed in raising us with integrity, honor, and industry; and they did what was right. We lived most of that time when I was young, you know, out in the country way away from churches. We didn't have preaching at a Baptist church there but once a month. I vaguely remember going to revival meetings when I was a youngster. My father would go and Mama, too; all of us would go when we lived out in the country. It is still that way, I guess, in many rural sections where they are not close to any church. We didn't have much of a Sunday school.

After we moved to Paducah, well, then we began to change. They got quite active in the Second Baptist Church where Brother H. W. Ellis was pastor. Later it became Immanuel, and we lived right close to it. I remember they sent my older sister and me there to Sunday School the first Sunday we got there, and it

was a cold January day. As we were going back home I said, "Well, if they make us go, why don't they go?" She said, "We'll ask them." So at dinner that day we asked them. Papa hung his head and said, "We'll go." So they went on in about a week or two and moved their letters. Well, I hadn't been baptized yet, and my sister hadn't either. She went on and made a profession and was baptized in the church there, and then I did during this revival meeting.

M: You mentioned having earlier religious impressions in attending a meeting. What influences other than the minister in the revival meeting that you mentioned earlier? Who else would you say had some influence on your decision to accept Christ as your Saviour?

G: Well, I don't look upon that as a decision to accept Christ. I take it as my first real conscious awakening of the fact that I needed the Lord, but I didn't follow through on it. When these preachers came to preach out there once a month and at revivals, we would often have them at our house for a meal. As I remember it, maybe, there was an old Brother Kinsolving, a one-eyed preacher. I never saw him in later years. I remember now, my brother and father used to poke fun at me about the fact that these preachers would give me money to pray. Now, they wouldn't say, "I'll give you a nickel to pray," but they'd ask me to pray and I would say a few words as a kid, you know; and they'd pat me on the head and give me a nickel or something. But I didn't take it as I was doing it for getting paid for praying, they just wanted to give me the money. But I remember their visits to our home.

My father, even though I've said these things about his not being an active churchman, had respect for them. He was on a committee to go around gathering up groceries to pay off the preacher. They didn't have too much money, so he'd gather up hams, a side of meat, or something, you know, to pay the preacher; in that day a lot of times they did pay them in groceries and things like that.

M: You mentioned living your very early years on a farm. Your father was a sharecropper. Were you old enough before you made the move to actually help with the farming yourself?

G: No. Oh, I did little things; they made me think I was doing some work. I helped feed the pigs, helped them shuck corn, you know, like a kid would. But I never did plow, never did drive a horse or mule, or anything like that; but I was around them a lot. I remember a lot of happy times. Then, after we moved to Paducah, I'd go back in the summertime and stay with an old uncle for whom I was named. I named myself for him when I was about two. I was very fond of him at the time I was a baby. J. D., or "Polk", Mitchell was his name. He was very

illiterate; he couldn't read or write nor could his wife. They had no children. I'd spend about two months up there in the summertime, and he'd make me read wild west stories to him for half the night. He showed me a good time, and I helped him. I worked in the tobacco and the corn, hoeing it, you know, worming and suckering tobacco, and all that. He paid me 25 cents a day. He'd just save it up, and when I'd go back home he'd pay me off. He'd take me into Princeton, about eight miles, on Saturdays; and we'd go to Miss Lena Herbele's ice cream parlor and get ice cream. Things like that were the greatest in the world for a kid, but it was good experience.

- M: You have shared with us something about your high school experience. Perhaps you can share a little further with us about your involvement in not only your studies, but in other activities in your high school years.
- G: Well, it goes back before the high school. Actually, when I was in the junior high school they had an oratorical contest. A declamation contest, I guess you'd call it, and I entered it. I memorized Patrick Henry's "give me liberty or give me death" speech. I gave it at that occasion, and I was declared the winner. So, I got the nickname of "Patrick Henry." I remember they'd take me around to other schools where I'd recite that famous speech. We had several schools there: Whittier, Longfellow, Clay, and all of them. They'd have an assembly, the teachers and principals would arrange it, and I'd get up and give them Patrick Henry's speech. I was active in dramatics, in plays, and in debating in high school, all through it.

But I had to work. I didn't play football, never went out for football. As soon as school was out the other boys would go down to the football practice, and I'd run down to the Paducah Evening Sun on my bicycle and get my paper route and carry the papers. One time I carried the morning paper. I'd get up way before daylight, even during the snow, pushing my bicycle through snow, and deliver my morning papers; then I would go back after school and deliver evening papers. Later on I worked on Saturdays at odd jobs. The permanent one, the longest lasting, was working in the stockroom at the ten-cent store, S. S. Kresge. I bought most of my own clothes after I was about fourteen from these paper routes and other jobs that I had. It helped the family out because my father wasn't making much; and I did it and I'm glad of it.

I had a lot of teachers in high school who were very understanding, very sympathetic. I had some wonderful experiences there. I got to be president of the class; and of course, I guess every kid's ambitious about getting into politics, you know, running for offices. I would speak frequently and make announcements in the assemblies, and they called me, "our Patrick Henry." Paducah Tilghman High School is still in

existence there. They have a new building and the principal, W. C. Jetton, is still living there at Paducah. Every time I'm back there I try to find him and visit with him, or at least telephone him.

M: Are there any other among your teachers that you remember had any particular ...?

G: Oh, yes. There was R. L. Montgomery, who taught these men at the First Baptist Church, Sunday School teacher, and a very active Baptist. He taught all the commercial courses; I took typing from him, bookkeeping once. He and I were good friends, and over the years he always encouraged me. There was Miss Fay Champion, who was the librarian; she was a Baptist, too. Others who weren't even Baptists but were active at other churches encouraged me.

I surrendered to the ministry, I think, about in my junior year; and I preached my first sermon before I graduated from high school, May 12, 1925, the week that Brother Ellis went down to Memphis to the Southern Baptist Convention when the Cooperative Program was organized. I preached for him that Sunday morning and night. That was my first sermon, so my preaching ministry coincides with the birth of the Cooperative Program. Brother Ellis was a great encouragement to me in helping me learn how to outline a sermon. He would tell me how to go about it, and he let me have some of his notes. I would not take them and use them, but I saw how he did it; and I caught on.

I would go to hear every preacher who came to Paducah. I even remember hearing George W. McDaniel preach at the First Baptist Church once when he was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. M. F. Ham held a big revival there, and I went to it. E. J. Bulgin, the noted Presbyterian evangelist, held a meeting there in the tobacco warehouse which was fixed up for services. I attended nearly all services of it. Howard S. Williams, the lay evangelist of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, who was a newspaper editor and had entered the ministry, held a big meeting at Paducah. I attended those meetings. M. E. Dodd held a meeting at Fulton, nearby, once, and I got on the train and went down there one Sunday and spent all day. He had an afternoon service in a tabernacle, and I went to hear him. Even before I surrendered to the ministry I'd go to hear all these preachers; somehow, I think the Lord was just getting me ready for it.

I remembered how they did things. When I started out in the ministry I said, "Well, if he does it like that, and if that's his stance, his style, and he's done well with it, I'm not going to ape him, but I'm going to try to emulate." I didn't use those words, I didn't know what the words meant; but that's

what I was thinking: "I'm going to try to pattern my ministry after that." Different men have influenced my life; of course, we'll get to it later, maybe, but they contributed certain things that I admired very much. I wanted them as a pattern on certain things, though I didn't always follow it.

For instance, I admired L. R. Scarborough and his intense interest in evangelism; R. G. Lee--I heard him when I was in college--with his elegance and mastery of words; M. E. Dodd for his solid stand on the Word of God, doctrinal, you know, sound in the faith; and Brother Ellis for his devotion to the Scriptures and his desire to weave it into the sermon. George W. Truett, of course, had a great influence on my ministry beginning when I moved to Texas. I was pastor in the same association with him. I've been in many meetings with him, and I have been in his home. I've been on committees where he served as chairman. We were both in Dallas County Association and in the Texas Baptist Convention. I supplied for him, and he preached at Denton, my church. I didn't run after those men you understand, and I never asked one of them to recommend me to a church or do anything for me like that; but I did feel a comradeship with them and a great encouragement from them.

M: One thing that you mentioned here is the matter of poetry, the influence of a poem that a teacher shared with you. You have used poetry so well through your ministry. Where did your interest in poetry begin? Did anyone in particular contribute to that interest?

G: I can't point anybody out except as I am now recalling some, particularly in college, Union University. Mrs. Hardin, who was a daughter of an old veteran Baptist preacher, taught literature at Union, and she was always counseling us to memorize long passages. Some of it she required us to do, the great masterpieces of the past, particularly our own American poets, the down-to-earth men: Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Ralph Waldo Emerson, men like that. Little sketches are in my subconscious, and they just burst to the surface when I mention a certain poet a lot of times; and I'll instantly think of one of those poems. I hadn't even planned to use it in a sermon, but it will come in. Then I was influenced greatly not only by Dr. Lee but by Dr. George Truett. I heard him a long time before I heard Dr. Lee. But he would say, "the rugged old Carlyle was right when he said...so-and-so." It was very effective. It impressed me, so that, I guess, got me started using these things to shore it up.

I think a man can overdo it. Sometimes I thought maybe I did, you know, two points and three poems don't make a sermon. I have always remembered hymns. People in the service standing by me will offer me a book and I'll say, "No, thank you. I'll

sing it by heart." If I miss one word, forget one word, of course, others are singing it and that triggers me for all that stanza. I remember a lot of the hymns and bring a lot of those in, quote those.

- M: You mentioned this early song that influenced you. Were there others that you can remember from your childhood or, say, high school years, or anything related in your memory in a special way?
- G: No. I can't say, oh, there were several that had a little passing or temporary influence of time and a little experience is connected with them, but that's the one that stands out because it got ingrained in me. It isn't so much the theology of the song or even the musicianship of it, but it's just a beautiful old song of heaven that I'd never heard since except where I have given it around. I've got a lot of people started singing it. Bill Reynolds took it and made an anthem arrangement out of it, and when the Convention met in New Orleans in 1969, we had the premiere of it in my church on Sunday night when they had saint J. D. [sic], the book, unveiled. I don't suppose you were there, but our choir sang it that night. I went to Memphis, Audubon Park Church, for a revival last May; one of my boys from our church, Howard Kolb is pastor there. On Sunday morning the choir sang the anthem arrangement of it. I never was a musician; but I always liked to try to sing, and I appreciate music, heart music.
- M: I notice that you, at times, in other places have mentioned John Jeter Hurt. I believe he was president of Union when you were a student there.
- G: No. He was pastor of First Baptist Church when I was a student at Union.
- M: Yes.
- G: H. E. Watters was president of Union. After I graduated in 1929, Dr. Watters left, I think he went to Georgetown, then the trustees elected John Jeter Hurt. But during the time he was at the First Church, Jackson, Tennessee, obviously, I didn't get to go much because I was out preaching; but I knew him and his son, John, who is now editor of The Baptist Standard. We were good friends. We were in the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity together. We have been friends through the years. But Dr. Hurt, I suppose more than anybody else, gave me more good, solid advice, well more in later years after I graduated than when I was there at school. I did have some fellowship with him, and I always admired him as a tremendous man. He knew Southern Baptist affairs. He nominated more presidents that were elected at the Southern Baptist Conventions than any man has ever done. I don't think he ever nominated one that wasn't

elected. He nominated M. E. Dodd, George McDaniel, then me, J. W. Storer; and all through the years every man he nominated seemed to have won. He had a way about him, and he had a particular philosophy. He told me about it and he's told others about it, how to nominate a man.

Dr. Hurt invited me back to Union in 1938, and they gave me an honorary degree. That was the first one, D.D., and I was the youngest alumnus of Union to receive it. I was a little over thirty. I spoke to some alumni meeting there in connection with the dinner meeting, and I used a lot of foolishness. They wanted that, you know. He wrote me a letter and commended me on it and thought it was good. He made this statement: "However, humor like sarcasm must be used effectively and not overdone and must be used in the right way. They are both good vehicles to convey thought, but not to be overdone." I have tried to remember that though it isn't always easy to follow, not to overdo foolishness.

M: You have used humor so well in your ministry and your speaking in many ways. Is this something that just comes naturally with you?

G: Yes. Yes, I must say it does.

M: Do you remember from childhood having...?

G: I do. That is one thing, since you bring it up, my father had a good sense of humor. He was rather ribald sometimes with it, rough; but he would always make wisecracks. He would always be calculated to get a laugh out of a crowd. He was not an educated man; neither he nor my mother had much education. I didn't get into many tough spots by acting silly in school, but I had a few rebukes from teachers. If you don't watch it you will kind of make yourself a general nuisance.

I don't plan humor too much. I may be going to make a speech somewhere that the occasion requires it, like an after-dinner speech or a service club. I never forget anything that happened like that. Frequently, I will recall something and tell it that I hadn't used for 25 years, hadn't thought of it for years; and it comes back to me. I don't keep notes on jokes or humorous incidents. Always, in hearing people speak I take notes on the fellow who is speaking. In our service club I take the bulletin and if there is something unusual, some scientific or historical data that I can use as an illustration, I will make a note on it and check it out; or if there is some little story I will make a note on it.

I have a whole file of just those rough sheets, but I have never transcribed them. I have often thought that I would get in there sometime and start dictating all those stories that I

know; and maybe, some day, bring out a book, Stories That Preachers Tell, and then add the come-on with it, Perhaps Shouldn't Tell. Some stories the preachers tell that perhaps they shouldn't. That will make them buy it, you see.

At the Convention, yesterday, the president was thanking everybody and they would give them a hand, you know, "Now is there anybody else we ought to thank?" I said, "Brother President, I think we ought to thank the Lord, but let's not give him a hand," and that brought a big laugh from the crowd. I wasn't trying to make him feel bad, but I just wanted to loosen it up a little bit. I never thought of it until he just hit that point, and it struck me as something I wanted to say. I was way back in the congregation. Oscar Johnson, you know, was a great humorist, and he was always a great inspiration to me; but I think too often he was thought of as a buffoon.

As an interesting little sidelight, and I don't think you want me to take time to tell it; but when I was elected president of the Convention there were some that opposed me, very much opposed me. I met Dr. Walter Pope Binns when I went up to Missouri in the fall after I was elected in San Francisco in June to speak at the Missouri Convention. He went to my room with me that night, and he said, "You know, Grey, you had the wrong press agents out." He said, "People said before you were elected, 'Why, you elect that fellow Grey and he will act a fool all the time and carry on a lot of buffoonery and embarrass us.'" Then Binns went on to say, "I must tell you that speech tonight at our Convention was a mark of statesmanship, and you have been misrepresented." I said, "Well, Dr. Binns, I never put out any reports. I never did ask anybody to tell people what kind of guy I am; I'm just myself, and they probably just didn't know me." They'd heard me pull a few funnies, you know, and they thought I was trying to imitate Oscar Johnson. We've all known men like that, all they have to them is a lot of nonsense, never get serious.

My wife often says, "I want you to write one more book, at least." I had the one only, Epitaphs for Eager Preachers. "I want you to write a serious one." I said, "I don't think I could." Some years ago Baker Publishing House did ask me to give them a book of funeral sermons, and I have a bunch of sermons I could put in a book on funerals; but I couldn't tell many stories in it. But I will say this: Whatever a man's personality is in the sense of communication, if he will use it and cultivate it and develop it, God will bless it.

The craziest thing in the world is when a man tries to tell a story and doesn't know how. He tries to be funny, you know, and can't. Some men I have known did not have a sense of humor, and when they tried to be funny it turned out to be funnier than if they had been funny. You've heard it, you

know. They start and get all mixed up, and come back; then they would have everybody dying laughing before they would get it all straightened out. They didn't intend it to be that way. I don't know, on the plaque they said there something about "broke and relieved tense situations by laughter." I'd get the crowd to laugh. There have been lots of times when things would get pretty sticky in a Baptist meeting, you know; and you come up with some little silly something and they laugh and forget about their hard feelings and anger.

M: Suppose you share with us a little further some impressions that you remember from the student pastorates that you had while you were a student at Union, perhaps something about your ministry, the people to whom you ministered, and things along that line.

G: Well, I just don't know what handle to grab hold of on that. You know how student pastorates go. There was a big fight on in West Tennessee, close to Memphis and Jackson, about calling old, retired preachers living in Memphis or Jackson as pastor, or these boys, as they said, "to come out and practice on them"; and the church would usually be divided up. About half of them would want the old retired preacher who wouldn't do a thing but just come out there and preach on Sundays and go back. They wanted them because they thought they knew something, you know, and they had known them in other years at other places. These weren't men who had been a great success; most of them never had been anything but small-town and country preachers. A lot of churches would get crossed up over that.

I was very fortunate in getting in some churches that had traditionally used students. I was so young, you see. I was eighteen when I went to Union and became nineteen in December. I was called to my first church before I was nineteen, and was ordained before I was nineteen. They were tolerant toward me. I always urged the people, even from my first pastorate, to help me, to give me advice. Any time I had a wrong interpretation of a passage, tell me about it. A lot of those old-time, country Bible students would do it, you know, in a nice way; and we'd talk it over, and I would thank them for it. Sometimes they were wrong, but I wouldn't argue with them; I'd just go on. Next time I would preach it like I saw it. They would give me advice on how to do things. In that day, 1925-29, country churches weren't too well organized.

They didn't have much going on, you know. It was usually a one-man show. You would go in and preach and try to get a little interest stirred up. I worked usually with the young people, the boys; I would go off on fishing trips with them and all that. The older people, I think, looked upon me with sort of an image of their son, you know; and they were patient, kind, and loving. In every church that I have ever been pastor

of I have gone back many times to preach. Thanksgiving I am going up to Memphis and around there and on to Paducah, to preach at Somerville on Sunday night, November 30. It was one of my first pastorates, and the county seat of Fayette County.

I can't think of any great outstanding things that happened, certainly no great evangelistic thrust. We'd have the usual revivals in the summertime. I'd get men in, you know, to preach for us. I'd do a lot of visiting in the community when I was out there, go around talking to people about coming to church and about the Lord. In those churches you didn't baptize in the middle of the year. That would be unheard of to baptize anybody in December or February. You always waited until August when the revival was on. Few of those churches had a baptistry in them; you would baptize down at the creek or tank. I baptized thirty-three people in my first baptizing in old Maple Leaf Pond out from Mason, Tennessee, not far from the Charleston Church. The mud was about as deep in there as the water. We'd get in there thrashing around, 34 people, and man it was just muck. But, anyhow, it was a blessed experience, and I learned a lot.

I never did have a church die on me, they always kept on. Some of them I got to go to full-time after I left; and in all of them I would always bring in Sunday School workers like Jesse Daniels. He was in charge of the Sunday School, one section of it, in Tennessee. Jesse would come to my churches and teach a study course. I'd have to argue like everything to get these workers, and they'd say, "Oh, them fancy guys from Nashville come in here with all those ideas that won't work down here"; but they'd come in and they'd make a way with them.

M: Did you have any Vacation Bible Schools in those days?

G: We didn't even know what it was there. Now, when I got to Texas, we always had those. My wife was very active working in them, and I would be, too, of course. We had some good ones at Vickery and Ennis and then one in Denton, but we were in a developing period there.

M: You mentioned the Cooperative Program came into being the week in which you preached your first sermon. Do you have any impressions from your pastor, Brother Ellis, when he returned about this meeting, and what did you do about Cooperative Program promotion?

G: Well, of course, it didn't catch afire all at once. It was actually born, and it had to crawl for a pretty good little while. In my early pastorates we didn't have the material furnished us to tell what it was exactly. I always preached missionary sermons, believed in missions, and urged the churches to give to missions; but some of the churches didn't have

what you would call a church budget. Those country churches would agree to pay the preacher so much and would take up a collection occasionally, you know, for a special cause for missions; but we didn't have a budget, certainly not going to missions.

But by the time I went to Texas and got this full-time church, Vickery, at the edge of Dallas, they were pretty well organized. Alfred Carpenter was there just before me, and he formerly held the chaplaincy commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. They were pretty well strung out on it. But I remember my pastor, before that, when the Seventy-Five Million Campaign came on, preached on this campaign. We got into it, our church got into the Seventy-Five Million Campaign. We needed to build a new church, but he said, "We're going to give to the Seventy-Five Million Campaign if we don't get a church." I got that impression from him of being a cooperating mission-minded pastor, and that's what it's all about. You see a church today that is not interested in missions, you've got a pastor who has lost his interest; and the leadership of a church seldom rises higher than its pastor.

M: One thing I want to raise is about your college years in terms of academic program that you followed. What was your major, and what are some of the other studies that especially contributed to your preparation for you life's work?

G: Well, I must be honest and truthful. I always try to be, and this isn't news to anybody who will ever read this or hear it; but I never was a great student. I got through high school all right, but I was not valedictorian of my class. The same at Union University. I didn't graduate up in the top three or four. I guess some of these extracurricular activities were my forte, like debating. I debated at Union and orated. At graduation I was one of the four contestants for the Strickland Medal. Dr. R. G. Lee was one of the judges, by the way, and he jokingly said we graduated from college the same year, same time, Union, 1929. He got a D.D. and I got a A.B. He was one of the judges, and I won the Strickland Medal.

Those things, while it was not formal education preparing me for the work as a preacher, certainly from the standpoint of preaching and influencing people, gave me great training in it. In my senior year at Union I taught a class in debating and debated all the way through. I think it is a great experience for a man who is going into any profession where speaking is important in communicating with others. He ought to know how to be a speaker. I made my emphasis there, and I didn't walk off with any scholastic honors.

I guess you'd have to say the same thing of the seminary. I was an average, just about an average student, and sometimes

not that much. I chide myself that I didn't get schooled in the thing of digging hard for things. Now, I guess I am flattering myself to say that you don't have to draw me a picture; I get things pretty quickly. I think it is a disadvantage to a fellow to be able to grab things quickly with first exposure. I always enjoyed research, and I was always interested in history and biography. My major in Union, I think, was Bible, and I believe my minor was literature. Of course, I had to take the usual science courses. I took a course in geology. I even took a course on landscape gardening, which has been a lot of practical help to me.

I got a letter this week from a layman in Dallas who's putting out a laymen's translation of the Bible. He said he wanted to ask me, as one of the noted scholars of the country, to translate a chapter in the Bible and to tell him what chapter I wanted to translate. Well, I'm not even going to answer his letter because I couldn't. It's a joke. Translating, I just take some other guy's translation and put it in my own words.

I was offered a position at Northern Baptist Seminary, as I was graduating from Union, to be a Fellow of Dr. J. R. Mantey to teach beginners Greek there. I took four years of Greek at Union, three of them from Charles Bray Williams, the noted Greek scholar who made the translation of the New Testament for the Moody Press. I was offered that, and I was planning to go to Chicago to be Dr. Mantey's Fellow. Dr. Scarborough came to Union and spoke in chapel. He hadn't been talking ten minutes when I leaned over to my wife--we were sitting together in chapel--and I said, "Let's go to Southwestern." I went and talked to him, and that turned me around.

I wrote Dr. Mantey. You see, I was to start the next fall, and I had accepted months before. He was quite upset that I had left him out on a limb, you know, with such a short time to get somebody. I talked to Dr. Dodd about it, and others. They said, "Well, if you are going to have your ministry in the North, I'd go there; if you think your ministry is going to be in the South, I'd go to a seminary down South." That's what I did.

Academic matters, I've always been a little bit embarrassed around academicians. It may or may not be known that Union University trustees offered me the presidency a few years ago. It was right after, I think, Warren Jones retired. Two members of the committee, Ramsey Pollard and Bob Orr, came down here and talked to me for a day and part of the night. I agreed to meet the larger committee of the trustees in Memphis, the selection committee; and I talked to them about four hours. But I just couldn't feel it. I didn't feel it was my cup of tea. I am not an academician.

When they asked me to be a field supervisor for a couple of fellows taking their D.Min. degree out in New Orleans Seminary, I resisted at first. Ray Rust came over here and sat here about thirty minutes and talked to me one day. He kept on until I agreed to take them on because these were two close friends of mine, Dr. Campbell of the Calvary Church and Billy Murphy; and I "walked" them through it last year. When I got into it I really enjoyed it, because it wasn't an academic exercise like I thought it was going to be; and I figured I was not a scholar.

I am going up in April 1976, to Boyce Bible School for a week to talk on the denomination. I am going to be part of the inter-term out at New Orleans Seminary here in January. So, I guess when I move into these areas, why, I've found with these boys it's nothing much more than extension of what we are doing here, except getting more into the concepts of what it's all about. That's what we talked about mostly. I had sixteen hours with each of them before the period. They asked me to take on some others this year, but I didn't know the fellow and I'm gone so much until it is really quite a bit of doing, the rushing, you know, and devoting those four hours each week to this.

No, I didn't learn really to be a great student. I guess I was lazy in a way, and I must say that I have a whole lot of books of sermons and current things over there, shelves of them, some of them I never did read. I just bought them because somebody recommended them, and I thought they would be interesting. I'm thinking about giving them to some young preacher. I have a lot of them autographed, and I will keep those. I like biography and history and things like that. I've been embarrassed lots of time. People will say "Have you read Elton Trueblood's latest book on so-and-so?" I'll say, "No I really haven't, I'm busy reading the Bible."

Most of my studying during all the years of my ministry was getting ready to preach. I felt it was a waste of time to read a lot of stuff that I didn't think I could possibly use in a sermon. I know that is very limited and very narrow, and that's why I was not known as a great student. I'm honest about it. Herschel Hobbs is a brain, and a scholar. Ramsey Pollard and I, neither one of us knew much, but we did a pretty good job with what little bit we did know. That's the main thing I think. That isn't to say that you shouldn't be a great scholar or student if you are bent in that direction.

- M: Do you have any recollections of any of your professors that you think you might want to share with us? Your college professors? We'll get to the seminaries a little later.
- G: Yes. I could have a good word about any one of them. I loved

every one of them. I never had a teacher that I despised. I just liked them, even an old German, Hess, who taught us math in Union. I was very fond of Dr. Charles Davis. I took geology from him and landscape gardening. He was the one they tried to ride out of Union. Dr. S. E. Tull led the campaign when he was at First Church, Jackson, Tennessee, because they said Dr. Davis believed in evolution. But he didn't, he just didn't want to admit that he didn't, classified as ignorant, you know. But Dr. Davis had a Ph.D. in Science, and I admire him very much. I've felt close to Dr. Davis, really because they had jumped on him.

When they criticized Frank Stagg out here at the seminary, you know, I was one of the strong boosters. I had him supply for me one time when he was under fire by some of the trustees. I don't know of what deviation he was exactly accused about the mediatorial work of Christ, but that didn't invalidate my friendship and admiration for him as a man and a person. It wasn't that I would approve anything that he was teaching that was different from what some of them thought he ought to teach, but I just didn't like to see a man kicked around.

Of course, Dr. Savage had been president of Union, G. M. Savage. His daughter, Emma, was M. E. Dodd's wife. Dr. Savage was an elegant man, baldheaded, and had a white goatee and mustache; he was very punctual, very precise about everything, no nonsense. We had a preacher's society there, the J. R. Graves Society of Religious Inquiry. What a name for an organization. We met two hours every Friday afternoon and we'd have a critic. One group would give a program on a preselected subject, and then Dr. Savage would tell us where we went wrong, give a critique on us. He would say, "Brother Grey, we did very well in listening, but when you're driving along the road slow down a little bit so we can see the scenery." That was the only criticism that he had, I talked too fast. They would correct our English, correct our wrong use of the Scriptures, and this, that, and the other.

Dr. Savage celebrated his eightieth birthday when I was a student there; and I. B. Tigrett, president of the G. M. & O. Railroad raised a thousand dollars. We had a celebration. Mr. Tigrett called me long distance one day, I was down in Somerville. He wanted me to speak for the students. I was president of the student body, and I represented the students when they gave him that thousand-dollar check in a ceremony at First Church. I took logic from him. He started us out in classical Greek, but before the year was out they got Dr. Williams and he changed back to Koine. But Dr. Savage was, well, he was just tremendous. Everybody looked upon him as Union's grand old man. Then, H. E. Watters, the president, who was a lay person, an educator, coached our debating team. I got mighty close to him and loved him. I have already mentioned Mrs. Hardin, who taught

us literature. Until yet, when I go back to speak at Union, I bring in some things she taught me, and I always pay tribute to her. I loved her.

Dr. I. N. Penick was our Bible teacher. He used a King James Scofield Bible, just verse by verse, chapter by chapter. But he knew the book, and I mean he was dedicated to it; and he didn't have any questions about the inspiration of the Scriptures. He had been a great debater. He had debated Campbellites, Russellites, Infidels, Catholics, I guess anybody that debated. Oh, I guess, he had about one hundred religious debates in his lifetime. Of course, he quit it in later years. But he was a solid man in the Scriptures, I mean just "stomp- down" solid. He was no scholar, except I mean, in the languages. He would occasionally drag in a Greek word or a Hebrew word that he had gotten out of a commentary; but I got from him an intense love for the content of sermons being biblically oriented. You have got to have the Word in there. He had a way of saying, "Whet your Jerusalem blade and go out after them." "Whet your Jerusalem blade." He called the Bible the "Jerusalem blade." He was constantly belittling preachers who didn't learn the Bible, who didn't know where to find a certain thing he was talking about. I guess you would call that a "survey course" or something like that, I don't know. It was listed in the catalogue as Bible 110 or Bible 120, or something. Of course, all of them had a great influence over me because Union was very much a Baptist school. They would have opening prayer in nearly all the classes just like at the seminaries. Do they still do that at the seminaries? Does the teacher open the lesson with a word of prayer at the beginning of a class?

M: They did when I was there.

G: Well, these teachers at Union did, most of them. These women teachers sometimes would lead the prayer and then other times they would call on a student to do it. I was active in the BSU work there, student work on the campus. Of course, I couldn't get mixed up in athletics because I had to go out and preach at these country churches. I would lead the cheering sections at some of the games, particularly basketball games, because they would have those on Friday nights when I would be in town. Dr. Scarborough said to me one time at Southwestern that he had never had a graduate of Union University come out there that didn't ring true on the Scriptures; they were all sound. There were seven of us from Union who went through Union and Southwestern together, seven of us.

The chapels there, of course, were always high hours. There was no compulsory chapel, but you'd get a great inspiration there, not only on spiritual and moral things but practical things like a discussion of how to file materials. Dr. Watters

had a great deal on that. Others would talk on how to plan your time, practical things, you know, that young kids need to hear, sources of material.

The first time I ever heard R. G. Lee was in 1928; he had just come to Bellevue in the fall of 1927. That's the year Mrs. Grey and I got married. He came over there to the West Tennessee Sunday School Convention and spoke in chapel on "Calvary." I thought, "I don't believe there is any one man that knows all the words that he used that day." Every time I see him I tell him about it. I saw him last Sunday and we had lunch together over at Lake Charles with our preacher, Hugh Van Eaton. He was eighty-nine last Tuesday and still going strong: well, he's slowed down a lot. But it was just an inspiration.

I had a tough time getting through. Lillian and I married after my sophomore year, and she graded papers for one of the English teachers. I taught debating, and Latin one year, and I taught trigonometry one term, freshman, you know. I enjoyed it.

M: Maybe you are belittling yourself on the academic. After all, if you were asked to teach these several courses it sounds like your professors had full confidence in your ability to handle it, or they wouldn't have asked you.

G: Well, I never thought about that, I don't know. There may be something to it, but I never was known as a serious student. I remember Dr. Dodd, even after I came here, told me one day, "If you'd just buckle down now and study a little harder, you'd do great work." I said, "Well, Dr. Dodd, I know a whole lot more now than I use." You know, I made some silly remark like that in reply.

I learned my specific assignments. Now, for instance, I'll illustrate what I'm talking about. About three years ago I went out to Southwestern and gave a Founder's Day address on the life of L. R. Scarborough. I don't know whether I sent you a copy of that. I sent you a tape of something that I did over this thing of S. E. Tull, and I put something of mine on the other side. I don't know whether it was a reminiscing thing or what, but anyway I just wanted to fill up a tape, not to waste that side. But, I dug into that so I could get my historicity authenticated, you know, on dates. I don't like to get up before a crowd and give the wrong date something happened, or give the wrong name to a man. I checked it out pretty closely, but I enjoyed the assignment. I didn't write out the address. I despised always to give a formal address, one that they would want a copy of beforehand.

I think W. C. Fields' department has ruined more good preachers, speakers at the Southern Baptist Convention, than anybody

else. As soon as the program was released he would start writing you to get a manuscript of your speech. Most guys dig laboriously and get that manuscript ready, and they send it to him and keep a copy. Then they get up there and read what they have written. Of course, they have got to have it ahead of time to give to the press. They have got to get screwed down to that manuscript, and it's very boring; I have read a lot of them. Dr. Lee told us that Sunday we had lunch together, "I never read an address in my life to the Southern Baptist Convention, I always gave them." I said, "I know how dedicated you are because you criticized me in San Francisco when I was elected because when I gave the address to the Home Mission Board, I read it, 'Strengthen the Home Base.'" The Board published it in a tract form. That was right before I was elected president. I said, "Yes, I remember you rebuked me and said, 'Don't ever read another address at the Southern Baptist Convention.'" "

M: You mentioned that you got married your sophomore year in college. Suppose you tell me a little about Mrs. Grey, how you met, and so forth.

G: I don't remember when we met. This is a little silly thing I use, and when they transcribe it they'll think I'm jokingly saying that it was a small social circle when it comes up that we were on the same bed together the first time we ever saw each other. Our mothers visited when we were babies, and they put us down on the big bed together. That's a fact. I didn't see her any more until we were both up in our middle teens. Her mother was a widow then and her sister, Louise, moved to Paducah from Cadiz, Kentucky, and they joined Immanuel Church. We were buddies and friends, the same age, and in the same BYPU and Sunday School; and we went to church socials. About all the social life I had revolved around the church. I never danced a step in my life, I never rolled dice once, I never took a drink of liquor, and I never knew a thing about girls. All I knew was just to be with the crowd around the church there. We'd go on hayrides and we'd go to social occasions; they would plan a lot of them for us. Lillian was always a very serious-minded person, very dedicated. Her closest friend and my closest friend were sweethearts, my boy friend and her girl friend, James Heflin and Laura, the girl he married. We were among several couples there that finally grew up together and got married there in the church. Lillian finished high school a year before I did. She's a few months older than I am; she was born in January, 1906, and I was born in December. She worked for Western Union for awhile and then she went to work for the church. I don't know, it just looked like we were in love for a while before we began to talk about it. Somehow you do know how you feel, but you don't verbalize it.

M: You dated in high school?

- G: Oh, yes. We went along together all that time around the church. We weren't together much around the high school because of the social occasions there that we didn't get involved in, dances and all that stuff. We were together, but it stemmed mainly from our church activities and association. Everybody in the church just knew it was "in the cards" for us to get married. J. D. and Lillian, you know. She was the secretary at that church for two years, over two years, I guess, before we married.
- M: How do you pronounce her name?
- G: Lillian Tooke, TOOKE was her last name. Her middle name was Gaines. When we married I weighed 220 and she weighed 120, and our school paper, at Union University said that Lillian Gaines Tooke gained one hundred pounds and turned grey in five minutes on September 16, when we married. We moved down to Jackson, Tennessee, and started housekeeping, had a little apartment; and she went to school and helped grade papers for the history teacher. I was a "big man" in my ATO fraternity; president of the student body, debating, and going out and preaching on weekends. We didn't do much courting, and we didn't have much of a honeymoon. We got married on Friday and started to school the next Monday. We went on through Union University at Jackson for two years, and then moved to Texas. She dived right into the work there. She didn't finish college, didn't get a degree. She just got two years, and then she got a diploma in Religious Education at Southwestern, and worked in the church. She has always been most active, and she loves people. She is out now visiting a lot of these old sick and aged people, people in trouble. She is teaching this class of elderly women; just goes all the time, and has not let up a bit since I retired.
- M: My wife and my mother-in-law have shared with me many things about how much they learned to love and appreciate you and Mrs. Grey, and how gracious and helpful she was to them during some rather difficult student days.
- G: Well, she always did. Landrum Leavell's wife told us when one of her children was born, they were living in Gulfport, Mississippi, that she was no more than there at the hospital when Lillian was the first one to visit her. She was just a pastor's wife from a neighboring town, you know. Well, I love her for that and admire her for it. She's got more compassion than I have, a deep love for people. I love people, but my gruff, rough nature belies it. She's going to let it be well known how she feels toward it. She'll knock herself out to help you, far beyond the call of duty.

You know that's a rare breed today. Preachers' wives, a lot of them, just barely go to church. One pastor's wife I know doesn't teach Sunday School; I don't know whether she even goes

or not. She doesn't work in the WMU; she'll go, but get there late and leave before it's over. I am amazed at the young preachers I'm with in revivals whose wives teach school. Of course, when it's a necessity, it's understandable; but I think that's making tightwads out of a lot of finance committees. They've got Peter Poe and John Doe under consideration for a call. They say, "Well, Peter Poe will have to get more money because John Doe's wife teaches and makes ten thousand dollars a year, so we won't have to pay him as much." You won't believe it, but I know that's in the thinking of some of these finance committees that bicker with preachers. I've heard them say as much.

M: It used to be a matter of whether the preacher's wife could play the piano or not; they would select the one that could.

G: Now my wife has always been behind the scenes. She's never been a soloist; she's never been front and center. She has never tried to exert influence or push her weight around in the church, never, never, never. Even in New Orleans she'd never go around and tell people who didn't know her that her husband was pastor of the First Baptist Church. She'd say, "I'm Mrs. Grey," and if it rang a bell with them and they recognized who J. D. Grey was, then okay; but, if they didn't, she didn't tell them. She didn't go out of the way, but I didn't blame her for it. She goes as an individual on her own. She never would get involved in church squabbles and differences of opinion; she would always try to be a peacemaker. She'd say, "Well, now, you all may not agree on that, but let's pray about it and love the Lord, and it will work out."

I have known preachers' wives who really ruined them, so dictatorial and demanding, always "goosing" for the preacher to get more money. I was with a pastor, oh, within the past year--I forget just where it was and I don't want to remember and his wife said to me something about this "bunch of tightwads here want to do this, that, and the other, and yet starve us to death." Well, I thought that was very ill-advised to make a remark like that to virtually a stranger. I had just gone there for a meeting. But my wife was never like that. I just hope she hears some day that I have said this about her because I don't usually tell her these things. (laughter)

M: I am sure she will appreciate it, and I am sure every word of it was well deserved. She is such a lovely person.

G: She has never been a problem to me on that at all. She has never pushed herself front and center. When she buys a new dress she always hates to wear it for the first time because she thinks she'll be conspicuous, and that somebody will say, "Oh, she's got a new dress." When we get a new automobile, you know, she'd just hate it until that breaking-in period, until

it had scratches and dents on it. Until that came she was very self-conscious. I bought her a mink stole for \$475, about twelve years ago, and she has worn it once. Somebody told her a crazy thing from another city that the church criticized the pastor because his wife had a mink stole, one a lady up in the prior pastorate had given her. They would say, "That fine mink stole that she wears." That came as a point of their criticism with the Pastor when they had the "fuss" there. You can't believe that! So she heard about that, and she won't wear that mink stole.

M: Are there any strengths that she has that you feel perhaps have supplemented you in your own personality or ministry?

G: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. She is a little bit more of an introvert than most. You know that complements me, makes up for it. She doesn't have too great a sense of humor. I mean by that, she doesn't like my foolishness.

When we were debating a constitutional amendment at the Southern Baptist Convention, some fellow presented a motion, he presented about three or four, having to do with the composition of the Executive Board, wanting to go back and let the associations name them, you know. Were you in there when that was going on?

M: Yes.

G: I wanted to get up and say something. She said (whisper), "Don't get up. Don't get up," and I said, "I am going to get up. This ought to be answered." I don't remember just what point it was that I made, but I got up and made it. I think it prevailed because the fellow's motion was defeated to lay it on the table because we had had nothing but rancor and debating all the year over it. It was the silliest thing I ever heard of, turning the pages back. I told him privately, "Son, in denominational structures you don't telescope one into the other. Each is a separate entity. They cooperate...."

Well, anyhow, she had always been that way about my sense of humor. She sometimes gets pretty critical of it, or about it, and I have profited somewhat by it. I guess I'd be a holy terror, or some kind of a terror, if it weren't for her holding me down. Then, there's another thing; she's not much of a gadabout. She doesn't want to do all this traveling; she just never did want to do it. She felt in going in meetings with me that she was a "fifth wheel," an extra expense to the church, extra time and burden to everybody if she went along in these revivals.

Now, some preachers' wives go with them everywhere they go. Mrs. Dodd always went with Dr. Dodd; Ramsey Pollard's wife goes

with him. Lillian goes with me occasionally, but very seldom, and it has to be an unusual situation. She hates to be away from her work here at the church now. She's just a member, but she hates to be away from it. I guess if she'd been a gadabout, we really would have been gone a lot.

M: You are parents of two lovely daughters who are twins, I believe.

G: Yes. That's right, they are twins.

M: Suppose you tell us a little about the family life when the girls came along, Martha Ann and Mary Beth, in 1941.

G: They were born September 3, just before World War II broke out. We had been married fourteen years, and it had been 35 years since there had been a baby born in the parsonage of the First Baptist Church, New Orleans; and the first time there had been twins born. Of course, it created quite a bit of excitement among our relatives and loved ones and acquaintances all over the Convention, the country, about having twins. That is an unusual feat, though you don't plan it. It just happens.

Then, certainly in the church, my wife had to work hard taking care of both of them, and at that time when we were young we didn't have but one automobile. I'd have to go around on Sunday mornings and pick up members of the Gospel Hour Choir to help the Minister of Music. I would take about twenty people down to WSMB to broadcast the Gospel Hour live. Many times she would get on the Napoleon Avenue bus, streetcar it was then, and go to St. Charles, then transfer to St. Charles Avenue streetcar, and take those babies on down to church. Of course, I'd come on to church after I had the broadcast. I felt ashamed of myself for doing that; but about 1946, the church gave us a car, gave me a car, and she drove the one we'd had. We had two cars then. She didn't have too much help. She didn't have a nurse maid much of the time, I mean a woman staying constantly with us to help. We had a pretty good old Negro maid at that time, Agnes Duseau, who stayed with us a number of years.

You know how it is about raising preacher's kids. You want them to feel they are human beings first of all, individual personalities; and you don't force them to do things because "you've got to do that now because you're the preacher's kids." We never did want that concept. We wanted them to do it because they wanted to do it. Naturally, we have no way of knowing all the things they did, but they didn't slip off and participate in a lot of things they knew we'd be against. We had some pretty strict rules about their dating when they got to the age where they could date, no "curb service," I always told them; "no guy driving out there honking and you running

out." They had a certain time to be in, and they never did violate that. But I would feel ashamed of myself when I was gone so much.

That was during the days when I was just "going up" you know. I went on the Home Mission Board in 1942. That was the first Southwide agency I served on. I had been to Ridgecrest to speak a lot of times for Training Union, Sunday School Weeks, and things, and I would go off to revivals; but I then began to be gone a lot. I'd take on more revivals. Lillian would never really fuss too much about my being gone and leaving her with the responsibility.

I didn't learn for us to play together much. We didn't do too much recreation together. I, of course, regret that sometimes. But there was one thing I was proud of, that I don't think either one of them ever at any time was ashamed of the fact that their daddy was a preacher. They felt that way before I was ever thought of to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention or moderator of an association even. I was proud that they never were apologizing for their daddy being a preacher.

When I would get in all those rough and tumble fights in Louisiana with the underworld and crooked politicians, they would always watch the news and look in the papers, always blowing my horn, you know, over what I was doing; and they still do. Sometimes my wife has wanted me to pull back, you know, "Now you don't need to get involved in all these things. Can't somebody else do these things?" I said, "I guess so, but they won't, so I am going to do them as long as God gives me strength!"

We had an average, reasonably spiritual home life. We used to read the Bible and have our prayer at the breakfast table when I was in town. Lillian was with them when I wasn't here. Of course, we always had our thanks at the table, and we'd read the names of the missionaries out of the publications. I had a little funny rule with them that if they mentioned a movie actor or a noted personality, they'd have to name a missionary to go along with it at the same time. We familiarized them. They were active in the GA's and music ministry of the church when they got up old enough. We never wanted them to feel that they were entitled to any special privileges and consideration because their daddy was the pastor of the church.

I don't know what other way it should have been than the way we had it. We tried to maintain that line of communication always with them, and hold up for them the purposes of loyalty to the Lord's service. We are proud of the way they have done in life. We wish they were a little more active in the church now, but they are not right now as active as they were.

M: The girls were twins. Any particular differences in the girls, characteristics that are impressionable?

G: Yes. There is a difference in their size, and weight, a difference I guess, in their attitudes toward life. Martha, the larger one, now teaching at Delgado College here, was a little more serious student than Mary Beth. Mary Beth, I always called her "Flippety Jibbet." I never knew just what that meant, but she was bouncy, jittery, and jumpy, full of vim, vigor, and vitality with a great personality. She got married before her first year ended at OBU. Martha fell in love, but they stuck it out until he graduated and then got married the year before she graduated with her B.A.

Mary Beth got married to this little "jerk" from Kansas. The next year the baby was born, and he drug her clear down to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and then to Wichita, Kansas; and finally, well, he left her. We brought her back home at her wish. She had a little boy about four or five. They lived here with us about two years, and then, she married this fine fellow, Jules Burg. He is with the Freeport Sulphur Company in electronics. He goes out on a rig a week, and then is in a week. Recently, he has taken legal steps to adopt the boy in his name. David is thirteen now and active in John Curtis High School, plays football.

Martha married Richard Cantrell. He is manager of a savings and loan here, West Bank Branch. They are very active in the church. He is active in RA's. They are quite different.

We gave both of the girls piano lessons for years. I don't suppose either one ever touches the piano now unless they lay a Bible on one and go and pick it up. We were disappointed in that. They both sang in the youth choir while Don Barics was here, about the time they were going off to college. Of course, they both got out of that.

M: Did Mrs. Grey find time, with a busy life of a pastor's wife and when the children came along, did she change her schedule a whole lot?

G: Not a bit. She was in youth work then; she was superintendent of the Young People's Department. Then, we later had another Young People's Department, and I think she was sort of the overseer of the two departments. She kept after her teachers, and I mean they had kids coming. She worked also in the Training Union. When we first came here she sang in the choir. She had a nice voice and read music pretty well, but sang along with the choir. Then after the children came, of course, she cut that out.

She was active in the WMU always. They tried to get her to be president of the WMU a few years ago, but I knew what her decision would be. She talked to me about it, but I said, "Now honey, you do whatever you want to do, whatever you feel comfortable in doing." But, with this feeling that she has about seeking the limelight, she'd rather work from behind; so she respectfully declined. I think it speaks or bodes ill for the women leadership in the church when they get down where they have got to get the wife of an employee to take that job in a church. I think the others, volunteers, lay people, ought to do it.

Mrs. Grey has also worked in other organizations. She has been very active on church-related things. She is on the auxiliary now of the Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center. She has been very active for a number of years in the auxiliary of the seminary here. In fact, she was president of it, I believe, last year or the year before. She was president of the Southern Baptist Convention Ministers' Wives in 1962. She had served on the state board of the WMU for a while. She never did service on the Southwide, but she's worked at Conventions for the WMU. But she's never been a wide-ranging lay leader like Mrs. Robert, Helen, Fling, who got to be Southwide president. Things like that never appealed to my wife.

She is more or less reticent and retiring, sincerely modest and shy in a right sense. For instance, when I'm either to speak at a significant occasion or maybe give a prayer. When President Lyndon Johnson was in New Orleans a few years ago, I was to give one of the prayers and she was supposed to go with me down there to sit at the head table. You can imagine how 90 percent of the preachers' wives we know would just jump at the chance and would have gone out and gone in debt and bought a fine dress; she wouldn't even go. When we go to a lot of meetings where her presence is really more or less demanded, they just have to pull her with a block and tackle almost to get her up on stage to sit with me at the head table. She doesn't want to do it. She just feels it's taking the limelight when you don't need to.

M: Since you've been married has she been a homemaker all these years solely, or has she worked as a secretary or other things?

G: Never. She has never done a day's work for pay in the business world since we married, except those years we were in Union. She graded papers, but I don't call that working in the business world. No, sir, she never did. She's worked with me in these smaller churches, and she's visited with me. We'd visit all the members, especially the old and sick people in the hospital. We'd go together a lot of times. She worked with the youth. She taught a young girls' class, and she'd be with those girls, active in the GA's, WMU work. She was always the

kind that everybody in the church loved; I never heard of any criticism made of her. She would sort of act as a cushion for me, to make up for my roughness, and forgive me a lot of my roughness and gruffness because she was so gentle and sweet, nice and gracious to people, thoughtful. She sends cards now to all these older people on their anniversaries and birthdays. Oh, man, she'll mail a "slew" of these two-bit cards, you know. It costs a dime to mail them now, but she'll mail them right on, and I don't say a word about it.

I give her more money now for the house than I ever did. I never did let money be an argument with us. There was a time when we didn't have a whole lot, but I never did force her to ask me for a dime to buy groceries. We'd agree on what she thought she would need, and I always gave her that, the first and fifteenth of the month. I still give her the same percentage but more than I ever did in my life. I insist that she buy clothes, because she hates to go buy a new dress. I took her over at Lake Charles, and I just made her buy a new pair of shoes, a nice pair of shoes, the other day. She didn't want to do it. "Oh, I can wear these old ones, I had them half-soled recently." I said, "You've been talking about wanting a pair of shoes like that, let's go get them." She's just naturally that kind of a person. I guess I ought to start telling her more often that I appreciate her for it. You know, we forget to do that sometime.

M: Yes. That's true.

G: I don't brag on my wife much in public. I have been sick and tired a lot of times of hearing these guys talk about "my dear wife," "my wife," and by golly a lot of them have fought like strange tomcats when they get outside. That doesn't mean, and it isn't to say, that when a man talks about his wife and his family a lot that they necessarily are always going to be fighting. But, I just never did do it. I think that is more or less the way she wanted it.

You know, the other night up there at Lake Charles at our state Convention I got to thinking after it was all over; they bought her a dozen beautiful roses. Those silly remarks that I made there, I didn't know what to say. I hadn't thought of it. I had made a little speech at the board meeting in the afternoon when they gave me that plaque. Then they gave the double presentation that night. I should have said something about her help in my achieving whatever had been done. Oh, I've said that before; I said it here three years ago at the Convention at my church just before I retired. But, I don't know, I guess maybe I ought to. When I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Lillian wouldn't go on the stage. She wouldn't get up there in Miami at the first Convention I presided over in 1952; then, in 1953, at Houston, Porter Routh just forced her

to come up there one session and introduced her, but she didn't want to do it. She was naturally modest, you know.

M: Now I believe you finished Union University in 1929, the year of the great crash; and then, went right on to the seminary in 1929. How did you all get along in those years, 1929-32, while you were in the seminary?

G: Gloriously. The Lord took care of us. I was called to that Vickery Church the summer of 1929. They paid me \$125 per month and allowed me to live at Seminary Hill. We'd go over there on weekends, we had an apartment over there, a room where we'd go stay and pay for it; then we'd usually eat with the different people. They didn't cut my salary at all; they didn't raise it, but they didn't cut it any. When we had a little problem, my wife had to have a goiter operation once, well, her father heard about it and sent her fifty dollars; and once I borrowed. There is one thing I wanted to tell in talking about that file of letters I have. I have a note that Dr. L. R. Scarborough, our seminary President, went on for me that is canceled, paid. I remember the circumstances. I went in to tell him that I had gotten behind because of an operation; that I needed to borrow a little money, and could he tell me how to go about getting it. He said, "Well, yes. You take this down to 'Mr. so-and-so' at the Texas National Bank; I'll endorse it, you sign it, and you can get your money." He signed it and started to hand it to me and said, "By the way, I didn't ask you how much you wanted." I said, \$75. So he signed the note before he filled in the \$75. I have that canceled note.

M: That's remarkable.

G: Well, it just shows you the great heart of L. R. Scarborough. That was about 1930, I imagine. Lillian had this operation in the summer of 1930 in Dallas. Now in those days doctors wouldn't charge preachers anything, but I was proud when we took out this Blue Cross policy. We asked the doctor what the fee would be, and he said, "Well, I never charge a minister anything." I said, "Well, I have insurance." He said, "Well, I'll take what the law allows or the insurance provides." I always had a feeling that a preacher ought not to be always asking for cut rates.

I read in Acts 28 when Paul and they were shipwrecked on Melita--this just hit me--that they were to gather up sticks. When Paul gathered up a bundle of sticks, a viper came out and fastened on him. So I say, "Preachers, you ought to gather up your part of the sticks. Don't sit over there on a chunk and let others gather them up. You carry your part of the load." I always felt that a preacher ought to hold his head up. That's why I didn't take any money for going to this recent state convention. The Executive Board said, "Now we'll pay the

expenses of the members that don't have them paid by the church or somebody." Why, I wasn't going to turn in any expense account to the Louisiana Baptist Convention after all the things they have done for me, at this convention in particular. I just feel a preacher ought to have a little self-respect; keep his credit up, never ask a man for a discount. If I find out a store does give it, I don't refuse it, but I never asked a fellow for it who wasn't in the habit of giving it.

M: From some other things you said, apparently Mrs. Grey was a very good home economist in terms of making funds go far.

G: Yes, she was and still is. She doesn't waste anything. We don't throw out very much food even yet. Well, she has just been everything that I needed. There have been areas of our togetherness that sometimes I felt should have been a little different, but you can't have every thing just like you want in this world, you know. If I had married one of these society belles that wanted to be wined, dined, and entertained all the time, I guess I'd still be pastor at maybe the Ennis Church in Texas, or maybe Vickery, or one of those country churches in Tennessee that I once pastored.

M: You mentioned that you changed direction in terms of your further education beyond Union University when you heard Dr. Scarborough speak. Do you remember anything that he said, or what was it that really turned you in the direction of Southwestern?

G: I couldn't quote any statement he made there. I can quote a lot of things he said after I got to Southwestern when I took evangelism from him. But it was just the great burden for the lost world that he had. I remembered in that speech in chapel that he almost wept as he laid on our hearts the lost condition of men. He had a great evangelistic heart. He had done a lot of evangelism and been known as a wise denominational leader. I had heard about him and read about his being leader of the Seventy-Five Million Campaign and one of the beginners of the Cooperative Program. I just said, "Well, if this man's spirit is manifested in that school..." I said this to myself. I am verbalizing now in words that I couldn't have used then. "That's where we want to go to get some of that spirit."

I mean no reflection on any other school, because it comes and goes depending on the personality of the president and the leadership of the faculty; but always I felt that at Southwestern, spirit was the big overriding thing. They give proper emphasis to scholarship, I know. Midwestern Seminary furnishes more missionaries than any other, a higher percentage. Did you know that? Then, Southwestern is next. A high percentage of their students go into foreign mission work or other mission work. It is a great emphasis there, not only in chapel

and on mission days, but in a lot of the classes constantly. Our committee is coming back to recommend at the Norfolk Convention that on this Missions Challenge we've got to get down there in these colleges, Baptist colleges, and fire them up on missions. That is the thing about Scarborough that turned me around.

I really never was too enthusiastic about going to Chicago. It was a thing that sort of appealed to my pride, I guess, a little bit, the fact that I was going to Chicago to be a Fellow in Greek to J. R. Mantey. Dr. C. B. Williams had taught Mantey and H. E. Dana both. They collaborated in writing the Greek Grammer--Dana & Mantey [A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament]. I had my Greek at Southwestern from H. E. Dana. You would have thought being with those men that I would have been a Greek scholar. But I don't know the difference between an iota subscript and a middle voice verb. (laughter) No, I was kidding there. I had an appreciation for Greek. I still use it a little bit, but I just figured I wasn't cut out to be a scholar, an academician; and I didn't think I would ever want to be a professor, so I just tried to learn how to be a preacher, pastor.

M: You said that Dr. Scarborough, of course, had an influence on your coming. You mentioned his assistance to you at the time of financial needs. What are some influences that this man that we all recognize as a great man in history had on your life during your student days?

G: Well, he was a deep man, a spiritual man, without piousness. It was genuine with him. You know you can hear a preacher preach and almost cry, and you can tell when he's putting on and when it's coming from his heart, and he just can't help it. I felt it was his great spirit and his compassion for the lost and interest in preachers. I didn't have the close contact with him during my seminary days that I had after I got out. We'd go back there and then also meet him at conventions. I took evangelism from him, but in those days they had more time and fewer students, and they would stop to chat with you. He'd see me come in on Mondays, "Well, Brother Grey, how are things going over at Vickery? Are you and Dr. Truett still holding Dallas together?" Stuff like that you know.

Marshall Craig was at Gaston Avenue, Wallace Bassett at Cliff Temple, and Dr. Truett at First Church. Now what better setup would a young preacher want, to go to meetings when those men would be right there. You'd sit next to them. I've gone to many a meeting after I went to Denton on the Executive Board of Texas, and Dr. Truett would be on a subcommittee or chairman of it. He'd say, "Brother Grey, if you're not in a big hurry to get back to Denton, will you be kind enough to have lunch with me?"

After Dr. Dodd held that revival in 1922, he kept talking there about their rebuilding their church with this ten-story tower with the chimes in it, you know. He kept on about it, and I said something about coming down. He said, "Well, yes, come down there for the dedication." So Papa got me a pass on the Illinois Central, and I rode a day coach down there. Dr. Dodd met me and had me stay in his home. Dr. Truett spoke at a banquet on Saturday night when they were trying to raise the last \$150,000, so they could dedicate it debt free. Then Dr. Truett preached the next day. I went out there to Dr. Dodd's house for dinner on Sunday, and I sat right there at the table with George Truett. The first time I ever heard him preach I went to sleep, because I had lost all that sleep on that trip, you know. I was just a high-school kid, I think I was a junior.

Oh me, I have a snapshot that I made of Dr. Dodd and Dr. Truett. I had one made for me with Dr. Dodd, but I didn't think to get one of me with Dr. Truett. I never shall forget those days. Dr. Truett never let me forget it, and years afterward I saw him in Texas; and he mentioned that we met in Shreveport. That's why I like to encourage young preachers who don't have an inside track on a lot of things. I want to try to give them one, help them. Now you understand what I mean by that?

M: Yes.

G: They are not kin to the president of a seminary or head of the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Some boys are just way out there in the sticks. There are thousands of preachers in the Southern Baptist Convention who could have come here when I did and could have done a lot better job than I did, but I just happened to be the one. God brought the circumstances about that led them to me in 1937. I just happened to be the one there at the time. A lot of fellows could have done a lot better job there at that church than I did if they'd had a crack at it. I'm getting real emotional here, you led me in to it.

M: These were your impressions of Dr. Truett as a preacher, of course. What are your impressions of him as a person? What did you really learn about him as a person?

G: Well, it's just like when you stand before a great mountain. He's there. You just feel like you're in the presence, I felt I was in the presence of somebody great. I might have heard others elevate him to that stature more than should have been, but I just felt it when I would hear him preach. His very tone of voice, you remember how he preached, did you ever hear him?

M: I heard his voice on tape, but I never....

G: I have 25 records around there on that shelf of his sermons, two sermons on each one. I've got a cassette of him, and one of M. E. Dodd's sermons. I'll give you one before you go. Dr. Dodd's "Divine Call to the Ministry" which I got from a wire recording, and Word Publishing brought it out some years ago. You recall when that happened?

M: Yes.

G: Well, I've got that sermon and then on the other side of it Dr. Truett's sermon on "You Are Not Your Own, You Are Bought With a Price." I copy that sometimes from my turntable to a cassette. I sit and listen to it and weep as I hear it. There could never be another one like him. Now this wasn't a great adoration I had for him because they say, "Well, there will never be another Truett, never anybody like that"; but he just happened to impress me at the time, and I haven't gotten away from it. I have never gotten away from it. I have the letter he wrote when he asked, "Would you be so gracious as to preach for the Lord to my people," on a certain Sunday in April about 1936. It was before I left Denton. I was in a revival in Houston and got a wire from my associate pastor saying, "The church voted last night for you to accept Dr. Truett's invitation." I didn't know what in the world they were talking about. I came back home and there was his letter inviting me. Lillian, I guess, had told my associate about getting the letter and opening it. He brought it up to the church, and they urged me to go and supply for Dr. Truett.

M: What do you remember about that day?

G: That day?

M: Yes. When you supplied in his pulpit.

G: Oh, a whole lot about it. Of course, I went into his study. That wasn't the first time I had been in there, but there was a little private "get-ready" room, I guess you might say, as you go in the auditorium. Bob Coleman came in, and he went through the order of service with me and told me just where we would go and sit, where I'd stand up, and what I'd do, and so on. Even then, I didn't mind calling the shots. He said, "Now you'll read your Scripture here and preach..." I said, "Well, if you don't mind, Brother Bob--everybody called him Brother Bob--I'd rather just read my Scripture when I get up to preach rather than have a break after it." He said, "Well, all right, if that's the way you want to do it, fine." They put me up at the Mayflower Hotel right close by on Saturday night, and I preached both times on Sunday.

I had supplied for Wallace Bassett over at Cliff Temple even while I was at Vickery. A lot of people in Texas said when I

came to New Orleans, "You go on down there, and you just get on ice. Dr. Truett will be going on in a few years, and we will bring you back to Texas." I said, "Man, there ain't no way." (laughter) But, oh, I could talk to you by the hour about the impressions of George W. Truett. My seminary diploma that came from Southwestern shows him as president of the Board of Trustees and L. R. Scarborough as president of the school. Maybe you think I don't treasure that.

M: Oh, I know you do.

G: I had it made permanent, you know, put on a plaque like that rather than just in the frame. That's the way to keep them. They don't keep in a frame like that because they are always curling up and getting yellow.

I don't believe that there was a young preacher ever more favored and blessed by association with great men like that. I never "put on." I got so hot at Porter Bailes, pastor of the First Church, Tyler. As we came from Denton through Ennis down here to start, the last of April, 1937, I had a habit of stopping at a town to get gas or eat and I'd call the preacher of the town that I had any chance to know and I'd say, "Well, this is J. D. Grey and" "Oh," he said, "Grey. I know where you are going." I said, "Where?" He said, "You are on your way to New Orleans to start to take over the church." I said, "Well, I am going down there, yes, sir, moving now." "Well," he said, "I can tell you how you got called to that church." I said, "Well, what do you say?" He said, "Dodd got you called." I said, "No, sir, you couldn't be further from the truth; Dr. Dodd did not recommend me. I don't even know that they checked with Dr. Dodd because John Huff, my predecessor, and Dr. Dodd were just like that." (cross fingers) Dodd's name was poison in this church because of that when I came here. I didn't tell him all that; I just passed it off, you know.

I can tell you all the circumstances leading to my coming, but that is another story. I didn't use those men. I never asked a man like that to do a favor for me in my life, get me on a committee, a board, or anything. That's disgusting. It's reprehensible to me that a man has to pull some wires like that to get recognition.

M: Let's take a little break here. We are getting quite close to the end of the tape.

G: I have the program but don't have anything further particularly to add to that right now.

M: All right. Suppose we perhaps think a little further about your seminary years in terms of any of your professors that you had, your study program while you were there, and any

impressions that you recall from those days in terms of preparation for the ministry.

- G: Well, of course, there were plenty of experiences, and again, I wasn't a star student. I was envied by some because I had a good full-time church all the time we were at the seminary, both the first two years at Vickery at the edge of Dallas and then, the last year at the church at Ennis, about eleven hundred members, when I went there.

All my teachers there made a profound impression on me. I mean each man stood high in a certain regard. Dana, of course, and his great heart-power in interpreting the Scriptures. His "Philemon" was a classic. I mean when we studied Philemon there would always be a lot of extra people come in, and boy, I mean he would go through it. He would really make that thing live. He knew how to take the complicated Greek structures and break them down in modern English in such a way that you would just feel you were there, walking among them and talking their language. I loved him and admired him for that.

Then, of course, in theology, W. T. Conner. He was a great theologian. He was practical, down-to-earth, and a good old plain Arkansas guy. He had a practical approach. When we would get on the question of alien immersion, he would structure a debate in the class. I took the side against accepting people by alien immersion, and a young fellow by the name of Craig who had been to Biola, Bible Institute of Los Angeles pleaded for it. We had quite a go at it. One day in class Craig asked Dr. Conner some complicated question about eschatology. Dr. Conner said, "Well, I don't know, Brother Craig," and Craig proceeded to answer his own question. Dr. Conner said, "Excuse me Brother Craig, I didn't say you didn't know, I said, I didn't know." Oh, he could dress them down.

I fell in love with W. W. Barnes, professor of history, early in the proceedings. I had a prejudice against him when I first went in because I had heard that he believed in open communion and alien immersion. But he said one day in class, "Mr. Grey, if you were pastor of a church that would accept a Campbellite on his baptism, what would you do?" I said, "Well, Dr. Barnes, I would take him and teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly, like Ananias and Sapphira did Apollos." He said, "Ananias and Sapphira?" He went right on, didn't even say he knew I meant Priscilla and Aquila. But I momentarily had a mental block, and I said, "Ananias and Sapphira." Not a fellow in the class caught it. Nobody laughed, nobody ever said a word to me about it. Afterwards, I told Dr. Barnes, "That tied me on to you with bonds of love."

The last time I ever saw him I gave him a box of cigars, RoiTan cigars. He had retired. I preached in Dallas at this Vickery

Church in a revival in 1972, and a fellow said, "There's a Colonel Barnes here who wants to see you." I said, "Where is he from?" He said, "I don't know, he lives in Dallas and wants to see you." He came in and he said, "You don't know me, but you will when I show you my New Testament." He took a little Testament out of his pocket; and on the inside was a photograph made of Dr. Barnes and me, made together, at the New Orleans airport. I remember distinctly when Dr. Barnes' son came through here on his way out to service overseas during World War II. Dr. Barnes had come down here to spend some time with this son, and I took him to the airport. He made this picture of Dr. Barnes and me, and he had it pasted in the front of his Testament that he carried in his pocket all during the war. I loved Dr. Barnes.

Of course, there was B. A. Copass in Hebrew and Old Testament and old Dr. Jeff Ray, Jefferson Davis, down-to-earth, practical, fussy little old guy in homiletics. You think back to professors who are rough and tumble and hard on you. They are the ones that you'll rise up to call "blessed" because they made you get it. Oh, he was a perfectionist. He'd belittle the fellows for saying, "Now between you and I," and "I want to say if you want to do this see John and myself." Oh, he belittled preachers who made such simple errors as that. In homiletics now, he would teach us not only the structure of how to build a sermon but how to express it. We didn't have the modern techniques of preaching on television. I don't recall that he ever had any of us preach a sermon. We would have to turn in sermons, both outlines and written sermons. But it is his homespun philosophy.

I think it is basic because all of these men had at one time or another been pastors, they had some pastoral experience. I think it is a terrible mistake to grab a young fellow just out of the doctor's class in Hebrew and Greek and put him back as a member of the faculty next year when he has never had any pastoral experience except maybe a quarter-time country church somewhere. They have criticized teachers here at the New Orleans Seminary because they'd have these returned missionaries, like Anderson, Shepherd, and Watts. But they were men who made a great contribution. They weren't retired, they were experienced, same with these professors at Southwestern.

Well, I just thought a lot of all of my professors. There was no bickering among them, they wouldn't undercut one another, and they were loyal to the denomination. Sometimes they would make a little wisecrack, "Well, you'd better do it this way or Nashville will get you on the carpet, you know." They'd joke about it, but nothing serious like I have heard in more recent years. Loyalty to the denomination!

Dr. Scarborough's main word was "cooperant." He was the only man I ever heard use the word, and I don't think there is such a word. We must be "cooperant" instead of we must be "cooperative." That's why I made my address at Southwestern on Founder's Day, "The Doctrine of Cooperation as Enunciated and Illustrated by L. R. Scarborough and Others at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas." They laughed a little bit because it was so long. Then I gave the zip code. (laughter) I researched how he helped structure the 75 Million Campaign, how he was a great "stirrer-upper" of the brethren on cooperation. He taught that to us. Of course, that was against the backdrop of J. Frank Norris' antithetic attitude there, you know. He was an antithesis to us, so that "locked us in" more firmly. You either went with Frank Norris or you stayed loyal to Southern Baptists. That's all there was to it. Oh, man, on this oral history I can tell you some personal experiences there. I don't guess you want it now, though. We'll get it later.

M: Well, there's no reason to wait, go ahead.

G: Dr. Truett and I had Ollie Webb's funeral. Ollie Webb was assistant to the president of the Texas and Pacific Railroad, and he was a deacon in our church. He was killed about 1941, late in the fall. We had his funeral here, and then the railroad had a private car that carried his corpse, his family, and me to Dallas. Dr. Truett and I had his funeral in Dallas. We rode out to the cemetery, and Bob Coleman drove the car. I sat on the back seat with Dr. Truett going and coming. I said, "Dr. Truett, I have been wanting to ask you or Dr. Scarborough this question: 'Do you think the debate that you all were supposed to have had with Frank Norris on the radio out there was wise, or was it ill-advised?'" He said, "Brother Grey, I'm inclined to think it was a waste of time." Norris would have them come on the radio and speak for a while, then he would come in and start preaching. He wouldn't mention any of the arguments they made. He would just start preaching the gospel, you know, and that made a big impression on the country boys out there.

Then, I said, "I was in Minneapolis this summer preaching at Dr. William B. Riley's church." Dr. Riley really wanted me to succeed him up there in the First Baptist Church. Dr. Riley said, "You know, I love George Truett. We used to be close, but in recent years because of my friendship with Frank Norris, we have become somewhat estranged. I would love to reestablish that before I die and let him know that I love him." Then, he said, "I know about Frank Norris. I believe that he was absolutely devil possessed." Literally. He said that. Dr. Truett said, "Yes, Riley's a great man. We used to be close friends." I said, "Well, he told me that, and he also said that he regretted in recent years that you all had drifted apart in your

friendship and he would like to reestablish it, to die knowing that you felt kindly toward him." He said, "I have nothing against him; I still admire him." I said, "Well, you'll probably be hearing from him." I don't know whether he ever did or not. "But," I said, "He told me something about Frank Norris you might be interested in hearing." Dr. Truett said, "Well, what did he say about the man to the west of us?" I never heard him call Frank Norris a name but "the man to the west of us," over west of Dallas. I said, "Well, he said that he believed that Frank Norris was one man who was literally devil possessed." He said, "He knew him right well, he should know. He should know." That's all he said.

M: You found him restrained then and at other times, too, in his comments.

G: Yes. He was judicious. If I had been in his position with all that had happened, and if Frank Norris had done the things to me that he had done to George Truett, I would have said, "Well, I'm glad other people know the scoundrel like I do. They've found him out." But, no, no, he said, "He should know him. He should know him very well."

I went down to Fort Worth and to Frank Norris' "mule barn" to hear him preach. He called on me to pray one night while I was at one of his meetings. You see, at Ennis I followed his brother-in-law, W. E. Britton, who had been there twenty years. He married Maude Gaddy, and Dr. Norris' wife was Lillian Gaddy. Old man Gaddy was a leading old pioneer preacher in Texas, and he was alleged to have fallen off the back of a moving train, but some of Norris' critics said he pushed him off. Of course, I can't preach that, but you know he killed D. E. Chips out there in 1925. His church burned. An insurance man in Fort Worth said he wouldn't give Frank Norris a fire insurance policy on a crowbar he owned in the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. (laughter)

I've been in his home--talked to him. When I went to Ennis from Vickery he wrote me up in his paper as "a fine, promising young preacher who has a mind of his own. He's going to Ennis, and those denominational hierarchs down there won't push him around and tell him what to do; he'll stand up." Well, it embarrassed me. I went to Miami to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1946, and was in the dining room having breakfast one morning and he came clear across the room and said, "Hello there, Grey. How are you my dear friend?" He sat down at the table and started talking to me, and I was scared to death that all those Baptists would see me talking to Frank Norris.

M: When was the first time you actually met the man, and what were your personal impressions and further contacts with him?

G: Frank Norris?

M: Yes.

G: I just really can't recall the first time I met him. He would always start a sideshow at the Southern Baptist Convention meetings. He would announce it and he would tune it up right loud. I used to go with a bunch of "rough preachers" out to hear him at those meetings. I never did go up and speak to him; but when I went to Texas in later years, I went down to his office one day and visited him. He was very gracious. Now that's before I went to Ennis, you see, to follow his brother-in-law. I went to a service one night he was holding, and he didn't call on me to pray the night W. B. Riley preached. But he was holding a Tabernacle Revival on Lipscomb and Murphy Streets, and he made a big speech introducing me; and had me get up and lead the closing prayer. I had just come from the seminary, and that nearly did me in. I thought I was done for then, but I just had the wrong idea about it. I never talked to him at any great length about things. I always kept up on what he was doing, and I read his paper. I just knew a lot of it was lies he was running; John R. Rice was his main henchman then.

When I went to Ennis I was kind of on a spot because Mrs. Britton was always so strong for her brother-in-law. She said, "He's got more sense than any five preachers in Texas." I told Dr. Scarborough that, and he said, "Why she underestimates Frank. He'd get mad, because he thinks he's got more than all the preachers." But anyway, she was a strong, driving woman. She taught the men's Bible class down there. We would frequently pick her up when we would go down to Ennis and were going to school in Fort Worth. We'd take her to Ennis with us on a Thursday, and she would spend the weekend and come back to Fort Worth with us on the next Tuesday. I would always have her teach the men's class; I taught it after I went there. I bragged on "Miss Maude," you know, just loved her before everybody; and she loved us.

When we first went there, they had just finished the parsonage. Dr. Britton was killed when they were building this parsonage. He was out there kind of as "a sidewalk superintendent," you know, and a piece of scaffolding fell off and hit him right in the head. He lived a few hours. He had a brain concussion, and it killed him. We bought their new furniture. They went on and finished the house, and she furnished it. We took over her payments at the furniture store, and she gave me a roll-top desk that he had used. I went to Denton with it, and then I left it up there. It would be worth \$500 if I had it now, and old-fashioned roll top desk. But that was an unusual experience with me to be that close to those "warring factions." Of course, there was never any doubt in my mind about where my

loyalties lay. It wasn't because they were the "in" guys, but they were the "good" guys. Norris, I think though was good for Baptists. He put the "cocklebur" under the tail of Texas Baptists and Southern Baptists. We need somebody like that to keep reminding us, you know, unless we get to thinking we're God.

M: I've heard some criticize some of the Baptist greats like Dr. Truett and others as being in part responsible for turning Norris sour on Southern Baptists. Did you find any evidence of that?

G: I agree with that concept to a great extent. Norris was editor of The Baptist Standard at one time, as you probably will remember. When the controversy first started, if they had been more conciliatory and reasonable and had sat down together, I think they could maybe have saved him for the denomination. I don't know.

I felt that way about Lee Roberson in Chattanooga. In 1951, before I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, in fact, in the fall of 1950, I went up to Chattanooga at his invitation and preached the sermon of the opening of the school, the convocation. I preached in his church and in the opening of school, and I had a good reception. He invited me to come back the next year to hold a revival meeting; and I accepted. Then, when I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in San Francisco in June of 1951, I wrote him. I said, "I am sure this will be misunderstood, but because I'll have to attend most of the state conventions, and Board meetings I'll have many other speaking engagements, and also carry on my church work, I'll just not be able to keep that meeting." He wrote back and said, "That's what people said, 'That you wouldn't come now that you are president of the Southern Baptist Convention.'" I had told him when I was there that I admired him tremendously for his drive, and I said, "I just want to keep you tied on to Southern Baptists." I had that feeling about a lot of these "wild Indians."

I have always felt that way about Paul Driscoll. Paul, of course, was a loner. I know that. He did a lot of things a lot of them around here couldn't approve of; but, I think it is better to try to hold all those fellows and prove that we are democratic and make for a variety of opinions among us. I have often told scholars in our fellowship like Joe Dawson and others that I thought sometimes the liberals were more narrow-minded than the conservatives. They consign a fellow to the nether-regions simply because he said a critical word of somebody for his higher criticism he preached. They wouldn't tolerate him, they just cut him off, with "Oh, don't put him on there." Dr. Dawson was a brilliant old man you know. He said, "Well, there you are partly right, I think." Of course, he

went through that Texas controversy, and Norris was always debating him. I have one of Norris' sermons. Man, when he preached, he could preach up a storm; he had tremendous force, power, and drive. I always admired the men who got things done, who believed something and got up and said it, whether I agreed with them or not. I can't stand a guy who compromises and pussyfoots around, who is scared he is going to make an enemy and is afraid to do anything.

These men like Dr. Truett were always considerate. He would always call me Brother Grey. Now, he would have had every right in the world to call me "J. D.," but he never did. I don't mean I was so chummy-chummy with him, but I have been in his home, in his study; and I've been on committees with him. Louisiana College had a big deal down here in the fall of 1941, a big fund drive, and he was the speaker. I went there right after our twins were born. John Wright and I went up on the stage together and I said, "Let's go by and speak to the old chief." There were two or three fellows ahead of me in the line, and as soon as I came by, he said, "Well, how are you, Brother Grey? Now you take your place among the patriarchs. You are a father of twin daughters." I didn't even know that he had heard that we had had twins born, you know. But he was so kind; he said, "We still miss you in Texas, and hope you'll come back one day." That's the last time I heard him preach, I believe. Yes, I think that was it.

M: Do you think of anything about your pastorate at Ennis and the church that you have not shared already with us? You were there, I believe, 1931-34.

G: Yes, June, 1931 to September 14, 1934. The Southern Baptist Convention met in Fort Worth in May, 1934. Lillian and I went up there, and we encountered Dr. and Mrs. Dodd on the street. He was president. He said, "I've been looking for you; I want you to come to Shreveport next summer and live in the parsonage. Mrs. Dodd and I are going around the world, and we want you to take the whole month supplying for me."

I said, "Well, Dr. Dodd, I feel honored that you would even think about me, and I would love to do it; but I can't because my wife and I are planning to go to Los Angeles in August this year to see my parents. I haven't seen them since I went off to college and they moved out there in 1928." You see, that was about six years. Without going on and saying how sorry he was that I couldn't come, he said, "Well, how would you like to preach in Temple Baptist Church while you are out there?" "Oh," I said, "I would love it." He said, "All right. We'll see about it."

I hadn't been back home a week after that Convention when I got a letter from E. L. Compere, a big man from Shreveport who had

moved to Los Angeles, a very wealthy man, inviting me to take the month of August to preach at the Temple Baptist Church. I believe he said he'd give me \$150 a Sunday. In 1934 that was a lot of money.

M: It sure was.

G: Well, I wrote back and thanked him and told him I couldn't take the whole month, but that I'd be glad to take two Sundays. So, he said, "Okay, take two Sundays." Then the next summer, 1935, after I moved to Denton, I went back again. All because M. E. Dodd did that little favor for me which I didn't ask him to do. That was while I was at Ennis.

The first time my voice was ever heard at the Southern Baptist Convention was in Washington in 1933. Dr. Dodd caught me one day going over to the session. He was presiding as vice-president. That's where he was elected president. Fred Brown had been sick, you know, and had just served one year. Dr. Dodd said, "J. D., come on up on the platform with me; I've been looking for you, and I want you to lead the opening prayer." In those days, the Program Committee didn't put everybody on there that was going to pray; they just put the speakers on and reports. So, I think the first time my name was mentioned was in the proceedings of the Southern Convention Annual in 1933.

The people at Ennis took great interest in us and were proud of us. They had had an older pastor and wife who had raised their children there, two boys, and they had been pretty wild. Mrs. Britton said they neglected them to take care of other people's kids. We go into the life of the people. Many a night we would drive in from class in Fort Worth. We lived in a nice two-story house that they had built for Brother Britton. As soon as we would unlock the door a bunch of young married couples would surprise us with a spread supper there in the house. They did so many things like that. There was an older set of people there, city farmers who had big landholdings and farms. They would get together socially and they would always have Lillian and me there; nobody our age was there. They were all much older.

One woman who was there was Mrs. Castellaw. Her husband was a druggist, and they had a son who was killed in a Baylor bus wreck in 1927. She was the daughter of old Dr. Pender who was one of the main heads of Buckner Orphan's home. She never mentioned that boy's name, just pretended she never had a son. Over the years when I would preach there as her pastor and would tell a story about someone being killed, she would just nearly have a fit. She never mentioned his name, never went to his grave; but after her husband died she moved to Denton.

I saw in the papers that Mrs. Castellaw had given a million dollars to Baylor University to build the Jack Castellaw Communications Center. We went through Denton when I was preaching at the Texas Evangelism Conference in January; and we went to see her. She was invalided almost and crippled. She got to talking about him, so I said, "How old was your son?" She took my hand and said, "He was five days older than you. He was born December 13, 1906, and you were born December 18." I said, "When I read that I was so happy that you had come out of it to where now you would mention his name and that you were helping Baylor in honoring him." She said, "You didn't know I had that kind of money, did you?" I said, "Well, no, I didn't, but it wouldn't have made any difference if I had." She had lived very modestly, prudently.

After the will was probated when she died, they phoned me and said, "She had at the top of her list that you would have her funeral if you were in this country." I got up there and the executor of the will took me to lunch. He said, "Well, she's given nearly a million dollars to Baylor; but she made some personal bequests, and you and your wife are the first ones listed." He said, "When the will is probated, we will send it to you." I didn't ask him what it was. I got home and told the kids about it, and they said, "Well, how much do you think it is Daddy, a thousand dollars?" I said, "Honey, I don't know, and I couldn't care less." It turned out to be a thousand dollars. By the time Texas got its cut, I got \$975, but that is the only time I have ever been remembered in a will. We felt like we were just their children.

Then, when Denton called me--every church I went to was a total surprise--I hadn't planned it and I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay at Ennis; but Denton held the challenge of those two great state colleges there. It was a prestigious pulpit, an influential pulpit, because you reach people from around the world in that pulpit with those colleges there. I was just 27 when we went there, a young age for such a responsibility.

M: It really is.

G: I mean that a church that size would call me. Of course, I was always pretty good size, big, you know; and it made me look more mature than I really was. I had a strong voice, and I had more gall than a Missouri mule, I guess. But when I went to Denton, I wondered....with all those professors. Every time I would get up to preach I would have a dozen or so professors, Ph.D., Masters, students, and all that in the services. But I was just determined I'd preach something they didn't know much about, the Lord Christ. So I preached Jesus more than I ever did. I didn't try to match their wisdom and philosophy, science, and all that. I just preached and visited among them and was one among them and friendly with them. I worked hard

on tying the towns-people to the college crowd, because you know they hate each other like the devil is supposed to hate holy water. I always was either joking about it, belittling them, or I was talking seriously about it. "Now we've got to pull together here in this church," I would say.

Those fights would even come in the church, you know. Some of the old retired farmers who had moved in there from the farm, church, home place to educate their children were always "cussing them professors" in the deacons' meetings. I tried to bring them all together. I was sort of like the other Kentuckian, Henry Clay, sort of a conciliator to bring divergent elements together. And I think I had a little success with it there at Denton. Then, of course, when this thing opened up here in New Orleans, I had no desire at all for it. Actually, it was a smaller church than I had in Denton, the building, Sunday School, membership, budget, and everything else; but, I saw it had a future to it.

M: You're talking about your New Orleans pastorate.

G: Yes. The First Baptist Church, New Orleans.

M: Suppose you share with us a little about the events leading up to your call. I think you mentioned earlier that Dr. Dodd, as far as you knew, did not recommend you. How did the church come to seek you?

G: All right. In 1936, Kearnie Keegan was president of Mandeville Encampment, and he had me down one summer to preach, the summer of 1936. I. E. Reynolds was leading the singing. Mrs. Grey came with me, and we got into the life of it. There were a lot of the kids from the New Orleans church over there. Cunyus Skannel used to bring those caravans of buses, you know, from Shreveport and North Louisiana. We had a good time; we went along fine and had a successful encampment. Growing out of it, somebody from New Orleans in the Training Union work--they had a Watchnight Service at the Baptist Bible Institution, and they would bring in an outside speaker, so they brought me down, December 31, 1936. I preached over there and a lot of them from the church were there. Ollie Webb had gotten me a pass on the Texas Pacific Railroad to come down here, but it was a round trip pass; and it ran out December 31. I wasn't going back until the next day, so I called John Huff of the First Baptist Church and told him my plight. I didn't know him. I had heard him at St. Louis when he preached the Convention sermon in May, 1935, while I was in Denton. He got on the phone and got hold of Ollie Webb. I don't know where he found him, but he called me back--I was staying at Baptist Bible Institution. He said, "If you will go down to the Whitney

National Bank Building on a certain floor, one of Mr. Webb's men will be there and will have a pass ready for you, even though it's a holiday." So I went and got it.

All right, John Huff resigned just a short while after that to go to the First Baptist Church, Chattanooga. He had been here eleven years. On one of the last nights before he left town, he and his wife had dinner with T. Harvey Hedgepeth and his wife, Laurie Lee. Hedgepeth was Assistant General Counsel of the Farm Credit Administration here, and a teacher of the men's class at First Baptist. He was on the pulpit committee and he had them over to their house for dinner. He said, "Dr. Huff, would you mind giving us the name of some young preacher you think we might consider?" He said, "No, I have determined I'm not going to have anything to do with the selection." Mrs. Huff said, "John, why don't you tell him about that boy Grey that we heard from Denton, Texas, at the St. Louis Convention last year at Oscar Johnson's church?"

Well, what happened was, Billy White was preaching on Sunday--the Convention met on Sunday in those days, you see. I mean they convened over the weekend. Oscar Johnson had Billy White preach upstairs in the main auditorium and B. B. McKinney to lead the singing. He met me one day and said, "I've been looking all over for you." You see, I had already been to Los Angeles, Temple Baptist, and he had heard about me; and I'd met him in Texas and talked to him. He said, "I'm going to have an overflow crowd. We'll have more of our own people than can get in the building, so I want to have a service in an auditorium downstairs. Dr. Brown, one of our deacons, will be in charge; and I want you to preach." "Well," I said, "I have nothing to lose, so what." When I got up there to preach before I took my text, Dr. and Mrs. Huff came in and sat down. Well, I would not have known them had it not been for the fact that he had preached the Convention sermon in St. Louis just a day or two before that.

So he said, "Yes, yes, we heard him." He said a few nice things about me, so Harvey Hedgepeth went to the next meeting of the committee and brought it up. One of the men said, "Well, we've got 35 names already. We can't take on every name that is suggested to us; by the time we check these out we won't get anywhere. So, they broke the meeting up without doing anything else. At the next meeting this fellow said, "You know, I have been asking some of the young people who heard this man Grey over at Mandeville last year, and also at the Watchnight Service, and I think maybe we ought to check him out." So, it went on from there.

I can tell you a lot of other incidents about the committee. They went one day without asking me to Houston, where I was going to preach in a Youth Revival at the Second Baptist Church

where F. B. Thorn was pastor. I had a spell of the flu and couldn't go. So, then, they found out that I was going to be in Marshall, Texas, in a revival the next month at Eastertime. So they wrote me, and made a date to come up there to see me. The chairman of the committee, J. Herman Hitt, and T. Harvey Hedgepeth came up there for church on Sunday morning when I preached. We went out to Ollie Webb's lovely country estate at Jefferson and had a lovely dinner, and then spent the afternoon walking across his pasture and around the place talking about New Orleans and the opportunity there. They went back to the hotel and had supper with me; then they caught the evening train and went back to New Orleans. I preached my last sermon of the revival and went on back to Denton. They got the committee together and wired me at Denton to come down a week later to meet with them and speak in Prayer Meeting, look the church over, and talk further.

Ollie Webb wired me one day to meet him in Fort Worth. He said, "I am coming through there, and there is a matter I must talk to you about." I had had him speak at my church in Denton, and he was living at Jefferson; but he had his letter here in New Orleans at that time. He had been in First Church, Dallas, but he was on the Texas Pacific from here all over the country, you see, from New Orleans to El Paso. So, I read his telegram asking me to meet him that next afternoon. In the meantime, a guy who was out raising funds for Southwestern Seminary came by my study at Denton to talk to me. He said, "By the way, guess who is going to go to the old First Church, New Orleans." I said "Why, who?" He said "McKinley Norman." He was pastor of Waxahachie, Texas, and had been an evangelist for years and was a great fellow. I loved him, thought a lot of him; but I began to wonder. I didn't tell him about my telegram from Ollie Webb wanting to talk to me, and that I had had this correspondence with New Orleans. So, I went down there, and as soon as Ollie Webb got off the train--I was going to speak at Travis Avenue at a Sweetheart Banquet that night--we talked for about twenty minutes because the train stopped there for just a while. I told him about this. I said, "Now, look, Mr. Webb, I don't want to get in a Democratic Primary down there. If they are going to have a whole lot of guys--you check that out." So, he went on to New Orleans on that train and the next day he wrote me and said, "It is very untrue. I don't know where the report got started, but definitely you are the only one they are considering; the very opposite is true."

I found out when I got here what happened was that McKinley Norman was on the Baptist Bible Institute Board, along with Mr. N. H. Pope in the church who was head of the American Express Company. One night they had a meeting of the board, and they took McKinley Norman to dinner, had him come to Prayer Meeting at our church when Dr. Anderson was the supply pastor, and they

took him to the train. Mr. Pope, who was always "Dale Carnegie" to everybody, said, "Dr. Norman, why don't you come down here and take this church? You could do us a good job." Norman went back and told people that he was about to be called to First Church, New Orleans.

I came down here on April 7, 1937. They called me the next Sunday, a unanimous call. I had preached on Wednesday night, and they had a big crowd there; and I talked to the committee off and on. I got here, I think, on Wednesday morning, talked to them, and then went back to Denton; and they telegraphed me that they had given me a unanimous call. I announced that we were coming on May 1. I believe that was the clearest leading of the Lord in a situation both as far as I and they were concerned. The question I asked the committee when I talked to them, and there were some very knowledgeable, professional men on there, "What do you all want to do? Where do we go from here?" And they talked about the new growth that was coming to New Orleans, that it was a world city, and how Baptists here didn't stand very high. We didn't have but 22 churches at that time, as I recall it. The Seminary was getting its second wind, Baptist Bible Institute.

Things were beginning to move and they presented to me that no other Protestant church in town could do anything worth writing home about, and they wanted me to come and give them leadership. Dr. Huff was a noble, wonderful fellow, but he was sort of a "Chesterfield." He played golf every afternoon, had lunch down at the St. Charles Hotel, and wore a frock coat on Sunday morning in church. They wanted to "get with it." I felt that there was an opportunity, and it turned out that way.

I had an interesting thing happen. First Church, Greenville, South Carolina; University Baptist Church, Austin, Texas; St. Charles Avenue Baptist, New Orleans: all three at one time inquired about me. I was oriented to the "student situation." They had a lot of students and they made overtures and inquiries. I am not saying that I could have had any one of them, but at least they were interested. The First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia, took Mrs. Grey and me over there, and we stayed a week after Charles Daniel resigned. I preached on Sunday, but I couldn't feel it and they didn't feel it. When I began to ask if I would get a unanimous call and they said, no, I went back and said, "Forget it," because God wanted Ted Adams at Richmond; and he wanted to save me for New Orleans. That was 1935, and I came here less than two years later.

M: You were 28 years old then?

G: Yes. Well, I was 28 in 1935.

M: Yes. So you were....

G: Approaching 29.

M: Yes. You were approaching 29.

G: They called George W. McDaniel from Texas, a big fellow when he was 28; and they thought they could duplicate the George McDaniel experience. They had heard that I was a doctrinal preacher, and they checked it out with Dr. Maddry. Baker Cauthen was head of the Missions Department at the seminary at that time. He had given them a good letter of recommendation on me and urged them to take me. I don't know who in the world brought my name before them, but I didn't know anybody there. But it was an eye-opening experience, and it shook the church at Denton up. Everybody was talking about it, saying "Are you going to Richmond or not?" I announced on Sunday morning that I had just sent this wire to T. Justin Moore, chairman of the committee in the First Church, Richmond: "Please drop my name in any further consideration." They applauded first, and then somebody got up and started to sing the doxology. Those professors, all of them, marched down and started hugging us, right there in the middle of the service. Then, they gave us a brand new automobile in about three weeks. They traded our old one in and got a new Olds for us. Well, it was just a marvelous experience, a once-in-a-lifetime experience; but I'm grateful.

M: What kind of reception did you receive here when you came to begin your pastorate in this congregation?

G: Just marvelous, marvelous. If there was anybody that held back, I don't know of it. I got criticism which came to me, and I took steps to correct it. My closest confidant was a man named S. S. (Stanley) Carothers. He had married the daughter of old Dr. Borum who at one time was with the First Church, Jackson. Miss "Buzz" they called her. He came to see me one day when I was taking on a lot of revivals and conventions, and he said, "J. D., don't try to be an M. E. Dodd and George Truett both before you're forty years old." That shook me up, you know. I didn't resist it.

M: You mentioned W. B. Riley. I just wondered how you came to know him, how he came to know you.

G: I have never thought about that. I actually don't know.

M: I believe you mentioned that time he had perhaps the idea in mind you would succeed him there.

G: Yes. He had already announced his intended retirement, and he had that tremendous school there, where Dr. Moyer was dean. He was still president. He had what he called the Medicine Lake Assembly out there. The first time I ever met George Wilson,

who is Billy Graham's business manager, was out there as manager of this assembly. The first time I ever met Ernie Wells was at his church. Ernie was there in school. You remember who Ernie Wells was, he was my associate here. He led the singing and Dr. Riley had me preach at Medicine Lake. He also had me preach on Sunday night in Minneapolis at his church. I had dinner in his home that day, August 17, 1941, just a few weeks before our twins were born. He had Ralph Herring also up there.

What I think happened was that he asked somebody down here, maybe M. E. Dodd or somebody and maybe more than one, to give him some names of promising young Bible preachers in the South that he could consider. He just confided to me up there, and Ralph was there about the same time during the week at Medicine Lake. I preached out there two or three times; and then, I preached on Sunday and had dinner with him in his home. He was just getting the feel of it, you know, what we believed and all this, that, and the other. I had no impression that it appealed to me, or if they wanted me, because things were just beginning to pop open here, getting ready to move forward. I didn't want Yankee land, particularly when he wrote me a letter saying, "You are a great preacher, you've got a great future," but, he said, "A lot of the brethren up north won't use you because you smoke." I was raised in Kentucky on tobacco row in Bell County, Kentucky. I wrote back saying, "Well, I can appreciate how they feel about it, but I had rather stay in the South, whether I smoke or not, than to go up there in that north country."

I preached at the Tremont Temple, Boston, and about the same thing happened. I preached as supply there on two occasions when they were without a pastor. Some of the deacons and committee talked to me seriously about it, but I had no feel for it at all. I just didn't want to leave here. The same thing happened at Temple Baptist, Los Angeles. Of course, they had had one experience getting a Louisiana pastor, and he didn't stay but seven months, you know, Dr. Dodd. I wanted to branch out, to preach everywhere I could. It was a prestigious thing to go to those world-famed pulpits, you know. But they are not as great when you get there and look at them as they are at a distance, because distance has always been an enchantment to a few.

Dr. Riley and I had a good friendship out of that, and we corresponded. Once he and his wife were going through here on their way to Florida; and I met them down at the hotel for dinner. He was very fond of me, but we didn't press it any further; and Ralph Herring didn't either. Ralph wasn't interested or impressed.

I admired Dr. Riley for his stance on things, because he almost single-handedly held back Shailer Mathews' type of modernism in the Northern Baptist Convention. He fought it for years up there and held the forces together, the Conservative part of them, you know. His influence was felt greatly all over the Northern Baptist Convention, though his church, I don't think, went into the American Convention. I remember when I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, I preached at Chicago at the American Convention and their general secretary, when I was up in Minneapolis, was the secretary in Minnesota, and was a member of Dr. Riley's church. When I was in Chicago that time, Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, the great Yale historian, was president; and he took me to lunch. This man, Dr. Reuben Nelson, was with us. He said, "Dr. Grey, this is a very strange thing, but if you had listened to us in Minneapolis twelve years ago, you very likely would now be president of the American Baptist Convention instead of the Southern Baptist Convention." (laughter) I didn't dwell on it, I just made some little remark, turned it off, you know.

M: That's interesting.

G: Being in the company of Kenneth Scott Latourette was a privilege. While I was in Boston, at Tremont Temple, that summer, two Sundays, I got a call from the pastor of the University Baptist Church where Yale is located. Where is that? Hartford?

M: Yes.

G: Dr. William Lyon Phelps was a member of that church. I didn't know the man, but he was at Calvary Baptist Church, I believe, right by the university. I wanted to go so bad I could taste it, but I had the other commitment somewhere. I don't know where it was, but it was a revival somewhere, and I couldn't go. But I wanted to go mainly because William Lyon Phelps was the main deacon in that church, I was told, the main member in it. I don't think I would have done them any good, but the fact that I was preaching at Tremont Temple, you see, attracted this fellow's attention; and he called me and asked me to come for that meeting.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Southern Baptist Convention Presidents

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: J. D. Grey

INTERVIEWER: Lynn E. May, Jr.

DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 14, 1975

PLACE: Home of J. D. Grey, 4524 South Galvez, New Orleans,
Louisiana

M: Suppose we begin in our session here on November 14, 1975, Dr. Grey, talking together about beginnings of your ministry here in New Orleans. You shared with us earlier your call to the church, coming from the pastorate at Denton. When you came to New Orleans, what were some of the challenges that confronted you here in the church itself, some of the needs that you saw that you attempted to meet in your ministry?

G: Organizationally, it was very weak. Dr. Huff had been a great man, but he didn't have a knack for getting the Sunday School, Training Union, WMU, any of them, organized or of putting out effective church publicity. Immediately we began to "shore up" the organizations. I didn't have an educational director the first year, but we dived into it. They were running about four hundred in Sunday School when I came. I think Training Union (BYPU) had about 45 the first Sunday night we were here. But we began to sell the program to people and meet with the teachers on Wednesday nights. We started a Wednesday night Teachers' and Officers' Supper Meeting and had someone teach the lesson. We challenged them so that everybody would get involved. I always was one to use a lot of slogans, cliches, you know: "Job for everybody and everybody with a job." It was my feeling always that when you get people involved in the program of the church they'll feel it's more theirs. I don't use the phrase "use"

people because I think it has a bad connotation, but "involve" the people. Of course, that's just as plain as the nose on your face. I started along that line.

Then, too, I began to argue for a stronger stewardship emphasis. They had had a pretty good stewardship emphasis, but it had been "the tap on the shoulders" of the richer guys to make up the deficit. I remember the first year we were here we had to carry forward a two-thousand-dollar deficit in the budget. They always would do that, but they didn't have a budget in the sense of what we called in Texas, "financing the church through the Sunday School." In other words, I began to try to teach them that we ought to teach stewardship to these children coming on. Some of the older men, experienced men on the committee, said, "Oh, it will cost more money to buy envelopes for those kids, and more trouble trying to keep up with them than it's worth." I said, "But they won't always be kids." So, I lived to see it. That's the advantage of a long pastorate; you see some of your concepts work out in the fruition that you predicated.

I think of one particular young fellow who is very active in the church still, and has been very successful, Buddy Watkins. His daddy was an active deacon, an old Georgia boy named Red Watkins. He was just a kid and he would give his nickels, you know. But we were training them and getting a unified budget, totally and putting everything in the budget. Now we were supporting the Rachel Sims Mission at that time, but we did it by having a mission box in the back of the church. What came in through that over and above, you see, supported the Rachel Sims Mission. It took care of Gladys Keith down there; she was head of it at that time. Later, of course, it was taken over by the Home Mission Board and is still operated down there. That's what we call the "Irish Channel" of New Orleans, you know, down at 729 Second Street. But that was a case in point.

Then, they had not had revivals at all. I preached in, I think, the first one. Incidentally, over the years, I have preached at the invitation of the church in six revivals. I would preach myself. Sometimes I got an outside singer; sometimes I used our own. We started having revivals emphasizing evangelism, having a closer cooperation with the association and Convention, becoming truly a Southern Baptist Church, giving more and more to the Cooperative Program.

I emphasized missions to them and continued through the years, pointing up always that we, of all churches, should love the Cooperative Program and the denomination because we were a product of it. When the Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845, and the Home Mission Board was started, our church was two years old. Two men from our church went to Augusta when the organization of the Southern Baptist

Convention began: Hinton and the first pastor, William Russell Holman. The only two people from Louisiana were from our church: the pastor and the missionary. I kept saying to them that when the Home Board was organized, one of its three avowed purposes was to win the city of New Orleans to Christ; and over the years the denomination has put hundreds of thousands of dollars into Baptist causes here in New Orleans.

The Home Mission Board owned the property of the First Baptist Church until a number of years ago. There was a thirty-thousand-dollar gift lien contract and the Home Board cancelled all those contracts, but we were getting ready to pay it off. I always challenged them with the idea that because we've been given this, we owe it. "So," I said, "Of all churches that ought to be stackpoling with the denomination, it's this church." And I just kept hounding on that, harping on that.

I was determined to bring in our noted leaders and speakers. I didn't have an assistant, well, I never had an assistant until recent years and then just once or twice, but they weren't men, except one, to fill the pulpit in my absence. I'd get men like Dr. Scarborough down to supply; our state secretary, Dr. McCall, when he was president of the Baptist Bible Institute here, and others; and let our people hear the denominational leaders. I think a lot of pastors make a mistake of not bringing those men in, the president of our college; and I just started doing that.

We started then a good church paper. L. A. Myers came as my assistant and educational director about the second year I was here. He was later editor of The Arkansas Baptist. He taught journalism in Southwestern Seminary. Later, he was editor of Baptist New Mexican. He was a wonderful fellow, a cranky, old-maid type fellow; but he started and named the paper that the church still has, The Evangel. We got a mailing permit and started mailing it out of all the homes. They weren't doing that when I came, they just handed it out on Sunday. Well, I said to them, "When they get there on Sunday what's the use of telling them about what's going to happen this Sunday. They are already here and will get into it. Why not get a word to them before Sunday so they'll come anticipating it and be in the program." I think a good, strong paper is necessary.

Then, I began to think about a projection in the community, because Baptists, you know, traditionally, had not stood very high in New Orleans. We were overshadowed by "you-know-who." I think in recent years that "you-know-who" has gotten worried somewhat, I mean our Roman Catholic friends. But Baptists were considered very second-class citizens here. Now the church had made waves back in the day of J. B. Lawrence. He was once pastor of the First Baptist Church, New Orleans. He took on the gambling crowd and the crooked politicians, and one of them

challenged him to a duel. There was a lot about it in the newspapers, and when he left here the papers editorialized on him as the community leader and a man of courage.

Before him, C. V. Edwards was pastor of this church from 1899 to 1909, and he built the old building at St. Charles and Delachaise. He had challenged, under the Gay-Shattuck Law in Louisiana, to close bars on Sunday in Louisiana. He created quite a disturbance here on that to get some results. But they let the community know that that church had a position of influence in the community. When I came I read and heard about all that; and I'd always been interested in projecting the influence of the church of which I was the pastor in the community life. I began it here in earnest, and the field was wide open.

That would be a whole segment to talk about. Some day the complete story may be told about all those things. Basically, I have never felt I was in politics at all. I felt I was in citizenship, and I never got into partisan politics. It was always on the issues, morals, what was right and what was wrong. I never hesitated to speak out on them, and fortunately the church backed me as far as I knew. There might have been a little "mouthing" around when I would particularly jump on some crooked politician who had given somebody in the church a job; and they wouldn't like it. But I think a preacher ought to do that. The church ought to be a force in the community, whether it's my church or others; and that's one weakness in many places. Preachers are free to take a stand on these issues.

Now, if you want, I can start back and tell you of a few highlights in my earliest ministry.

M: Suppose we go back to the beginning of your interest in this particular area and then, we can come back and pursue it here. When did you first begin in your pastoral ministry to deal with social concerns?

G: I was called to a large halftime country church, Charleston Church in Tipton County, Tennessee, not far from Jackson where I was in Union University. The first year I was there I kept hearing these stories about moonshiners down in the Hatchie River bottom, about how they were making whiskey and how they were bootlegging it. Of course, we had national prohibition during that day. So, I announced one Sunday morning that I was going to have a meeting that night of all the men in the community who wanted to clean that nest of crooks out, because they were in cahoots with some crooked officials. I don't know why in the world I jumped up like that all at once. That was my first incursion into it. All those men met, and I fired them up and they organized. Some of them went into town and got deputized the next week, and they made some raids down there. One

of the strongest bootleggers was one of the first men I baptized the next summer. I baptized him, his two boys, and two of his daughters in that first baptizing at old Maple Leaf Pond when the mud was deeper than the water, the summer of 1926. I did that just to stir them up, I didn't go out on raids with them.

I'd had the influence of a preacher in Paducah who was chief of police while he was pastor of the East Baptist Church there, a fellow named Leigh, Allie W. Leigh. He would preach in the pulpit with his six-shooter strapped on his side. He would leave the pulpit after the invitation and go out with his men on raids. But I didn't want to go into it like that. I thought that was a bit much, you know, as Spiro Agnew always would say; but I did want to inspire the others.

All right, when I moved on to Texas to Vickery, I wasn't there too long. Vickery is a small community at the edge of Dallas, and I didn't get involved in it. But, when I moved to Ennis I got very active in the wet-dry issues because prohibition, nationwide, had been repealed by Franklin D. Roosevelt when he came in as President. An old Catholic priest there, Father Patrick Joseph Murphy was head of the Texas Catholic dry and an old man. He and I became fast friends, and it was legendary there in that community about how the young Baptist preacher and the old Catholic priest were such good friends. We set up a county-wide organization, got out letters on it, canvassed, stalked the county; and we kept Ellis County dry. They voted dry, but that wasn't such a big battle though they did fight us. The drys did win. We organized the county on a precinct basis, got leaders in it. But that old Catholic priest was a great inspiration to me in doing that.

When I moved to Denton they didn't even have or wouldn't allow the picture shows to open on Sunday, because of all the students there in the schools. We had quite a hassle getting started but finally had a referendum on it; and, of course, I took my stand to keep them closed. Finally a compromise was effected whereby they would open after church at one o'clock, and go until five in the afternoon. They worked out the compromise somehow, but I always took my stand on it and also, stumping the county speaking for the drys. I became active in the interest of the Texas program of drys. They didn't have as good a one as they have now, but I'd go around making speeches for them way away from Denton.

Then, down here in Louisiana I was one of the founders of our Louisiana Moral and Civic Foundation. Really, the genesis started in my study down at the old church August 24, 1941, I believe. We met and we saw the old Anti-Saloon League was passe. I was chairman of the Finance Committee, and the last year we worked we raised \$845 total funds. I said, "We've got

to get a better organization," and we did. We organized the Louisiana Moral and Civic Foundation, and it continues to be a viable organization for temperance and fighting pornography, narcotics, and all that.

M: It was organized that year, 1941?

G: I believe it was 1942. Actually, it was organized and we met September 21, at the Emmanuel Church of Alexandria. That was the first time I got close to my longtime friend, Herschel Hobbs, who had just come to the Emmanuel Church from Alabama. He says that I was the first man to write him a letter welcoming him to the state when he came. We have been fast friends, just like brothers, ever since. I served later as president of the LM&CF and was on its board of directors a number of years. I succeeded in getting our church and many other churches to put the LM&CF in their budgets instead of coming around and making a temperance speech, you know, and taking up a collection.

I became interested in New Orleans with corruption in the police department. We saw it rampant, and I began to speak out against the administration. I preached a sermon back during the war on "Vice, Incorporated." I preached it on the radio, the Gospel Hour Radio Program. I was quoted in the Associated Press. A fellow sent me clippings from the Commercial Appeal in Memphis of these things that I said in "Vice, Incorporated." I just laid the challenge down that our mayor, police chief, and other officials, district attorney, either are incompetent and can't enforce the law or they are crooked, getting payoffs, and won't enforce it. I just put it down that simply.

Out here in Jefferson Parish we had Sheriff Clancey, who ran the parish in the same way until the Kefauver Committee came down here and got him on the mourner's bench in the fifties. There was a young Methodist preacher out there, Dana Dawson, who is now pastor of the First Methodist Church of Baton Rouge. His father died recently. He had been a Bishop of the church. Dana Dawson opened up out there in Metairie, which is Jefferson Parish or county as they call it in other places, right at the edge of New Orleans. We had wide-open gambling dens flourishing all around here. You remember from your student days, I imagine, those things. I began to fight them, and I began to speak out in the pulpit in sermons and get with other preachers. I was chairman of what they called the Social Betterment Committee of the Protestant Ministerial Union. That was before we had a Federation of Churches. I got with Dr. W. W. Holmes at the Rayne Memorial Methodist Church and some other preachers: Horace Clark, of the Assembly of God; and dear old M. M. Snyder, who is still living and is about 95, a Nazarene preacher; and we got organized. Then, we began making speeches before the Young Men's Business Club and other service clubs. That was a great

day when we got this thing out of the pulpit into the forum of citizens and began to get citizens aroused.

Well, then things got so bad here until we had a Special Citizen's Investigating Committee set up by the Commission Council when Chep Morrison was mayor, over his protest. They hired a man from Chicago who was a member of the F.B.I., named Aaron M. Kohn. He came down here as the investigator and prosecutor for the Special Citizen's Investigating Committee, called S.C.I.C. They had volumes and volumes of reports of their hearings and investigations. But then, it was taken to the Supreme Court, and the S.C.I.C. was declared unconstitutional and it was washed out. From the information deduced in these investigations, twenty top-ranking New Orleans' police officers were fired and were charged, many of them being tried and convicted.

Then, out of it came, after S.C.I.C. was declared invalid and unconstitutional, the Metropolitan Crime Commission which was organized in 1954. I was not active in it to start with, but I became active in it about 1958. I went on the Board and I was president of it for two terms, 1968 and 1969. The Metropolitan Crime Commission, is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, nonprofit, independent organization. It is still pretty active and effective in the community, and Mr. Kohn is still our Managing Director. It became so strong there was an article that appeared in the then being published Collier's Weekly, which now has gone out of business, entitled "It's a Raid."

Universal International brought out a movie entitled, of all things, Damned Citizen. A fellow named Herman Webber, the producer, came to New Orleans to work that up, and he called me for a conference. He came in and told me what he was fixing to do. This was 1954, the year we finished our new building. He came to see me and he said, "We want you in the picture." I said, "How come?" He said, "Well, we began to research the files on this story, and we found this name Grey, a Baptist preacher, always popping up in the news stories, saying something about conditions in New Orleans and in Louisiana." The story is based on Francis Grevenberg whom Governor Bob Kennon named as superintendent of police. He went far beyond anything the Governor expected he would do in reforming. He would take bulldozers and break down barns where these gangsters kept over them, destroying all of them. Man, he raised Cain from Dan to Beersheba and back again. I was in there saying "Sic 'em." So they made a movie of the work of Francis Grevenberg.

It opened up, and it's still showing, a lot of times on the late shows and on off days on the local stations. I've had a lot of people write me or call me and say they had seen me on it. One said she saw me up in Alaska and other places showing the bulletin board in front of the present First Baptist Church

with "Pastor Grey's Subject Sunday--Vice, Incorporated." Then, it goes inside and shows Grevemberg coming in to talk with me after he has been appointed by the Governor as to whether he should take the job or not.

It was filmed right there in my study. Keith Andes played the part of Grevemberg and I played myself. Aaron Kohn was in it, and much of it was filmed in our building. They erected a set on the second floor of our educational building and paid the church a fee for the use of it. My part in it was just an introduction. They alleged, though it didn't actually happen, that Grevemberg sought my advice and that I counseled him to stand up for what was right and go in there and do the job that ought to be done which, of course, I didn't.

I didn't know Grevemberg personally, but I wrote him letters encouraging him. That showed that the people outside of the ministry and our Baptist circles, and even out there at New Orleans City Hall took notice of the fact that a preacher had been vocal and was leading others to be vocal on these moral issues, and in fighting the underworld.

M: Dr. Grey, you shared with us something about your involvement in community affairs, social concerns in fighting crime in many ways. What kind of opposition did you encounter in these fights for the right?

G: Well, I wish I could tell you a glamorous story about threats to kill me and people shooting at me and all that, but not any of that ever happened. One of my young men was a radio announcer, and one day he came to me and he said, "You know, I'm worried about you. I want some of the men to stand guard outside." That was down at the old church where we had a lot of shrubbery out right around the building. He said, "When you're in there jumping on these fellows as strong as you get, somebody is going to take a shot at you." I said, "Oh, no, they're not. Don't you worry about that." He said, "Well, I'm concerned about it."

It never happened; the worst thing was a few dirty letters I got. I kept some of them, and I'd laugh about it; but there was no threat in them. A few semipious souls, who weren't members of my church, I know, wrote anonymous letters saying, "Why don't you stick to the Bible instead of getting into politics and all that." But strange as it may seem, over the years a feeling sort of built up, you know, "Well, if you want something done or things straightened out, get hold of Grey; and he'll start hollering and something will happen."

Well, I appreciate a reputation like that. I think a lot of people, really rough and tumble men, people that appreciate a "gutsy" stand, started going to our church. Maybe I won and

baptized a lot of them because I did have a strong stance on those things.

Most of all I thrilled that my church stood by me in it, I don't mean by a formal vote, but by their expressions and by the absence of criticism and negativism. There were times when there were votes taken by the deacons of "pledging our pastor our support."

On one occasion I had gotten some words sent to me about some things that were pretty bad that were going to happen if I didn't change my tactics. I got three of the most faithful and the old best thinkers in the church, one of them was a lawyer. I remember one Sunday afternoon I took these three in my car and went up to the house of one of them; he came out and I just said, "Now, brethren, I've been here these few years, and I've done these things. Now, I want you to tell me, do you feel that I ought to maybe turn the corner and not get on these things as strongly?" One of them, chairman of the Pulpit Committee, was head of the Wholesale Hardware Company and very successful, J. Herman Hitt. And to a man they said, "No, we're proud of you in it, and everybody in town is proud of you; you go right on like you are doing."

But I never did let it become my major emphasis. When some hot issue was up, I didn't care what it was, I was sure then to preach the hottest of all Gospel sermons. I seldom ever brought those issues into the pulpit as we moved along in it. Now, of course, on this general frontal attack on the crooked underworld, I wouldn't call their names too often. You know you can get a lot of lawsuits on you there, but I would say, "the elected officials, just pick out any you want; they are either incompetent or they are dishonest." And I'd leave it at that. Later, when they narrowed down to specific names I didn't bring the problems of the Metropolitan Crime Commission into the pulpit. When I was elected president of it in 1968, well along in my ministry, I made a simple statement about five minutes on Sunday morning, and I still have a tape of it, of my position in representing the church in the community, and that I was not going to turn away from my ministry to the church. During all that time the church had its greatest growth.

When I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention we built that \$1,625,000 edifice, total cost. Then, I began to wonder, "Well, is the name of Baptists dragging in the mud? Are we dishonest?" But then I would look on the wall here and see a certificate of appreciation signed by the mayor and the entire city council of New Orleans, and then in 1972, the year after I announced my retirement, the Times Picayune Committee selected me to win the Times Picayune Loving Cup for 1971. I said, "Well, maybe it's been worth it all; it hasn't hurt the cause, it has helped it."

George Healey, editor of the Times Picayune, phoned me one day. He and I had worked together when I was chairman of the Billy Graham Crusade in 1954; and he was sort of a backslid Methodist, but a good friend of mine. He said, "I want you to go to lunch with me." We went down to the International House and he had a private room. I said, "Who else is coming?" "Just the two of us." He said, "Well, J. D., maybe you are wondering what I got you down here for." I said, "Well, I don't have any idea." He said, "Well, the committee has unanimously selected you on the first ballot to receive the Times Picayune Loving Cup for 1971." You could have knocked me over with a feather. I said, "George, I am grateful and I am humble, but most of all I am amazed and surprised." He said, "Why?" I said, "Give J. D. Grey a Loving Cup? I thought you would give me a baseball bat after all my stands." I had taken stands against him and the Times Picayune's position on certain things, publicly calling their names. He said, "No, we are broad-minded enough to know that we have differences of opinion, but this is for your total involvement."

You see, I had served on so many boards. I have awards from the United Fund, and I have spoken so much for them, United Way it is called now. I have served with the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross; and man, I have served on nearly every board in New Orleans except Knights of Columbus. I have helped raise money for most of the charitable things in New Orleans out in the community. I have spoken to all the service clubs in New Orleans, just about; and I felt a total community involvement, not equated in terms only of my stands that were unpopular with some people on these issues.

Now, there was one little exception that I must mention because I didn't realize I was going to get into partisan politics when Mayor Chep Morrison ran for governor against John McKeithen the first time. I wrote him a letter and told him that I appreciated him. We had been friends for many years, and we still were. I thought he was a doggone good mayor. He later became ambassador for the Organization of American States, and then wound up being killed in a plane crash down in Mexico. I wrote him a personal letter on my letterhead at the church. Nobody asked me to, just out of the blue I wrote him a letter and said, "I appreciate you. I remember all the things you have done to be open-minded. When the seminary started you were there and you welcomed them. When our church was dedicated you accepted a part on the program and represented the city at it. You have no prejudice. I think you would bring dignity to the office of governor."

The next day or two one of his men called me, a fellow named Winston Lill. He said, "Dr. Grey, Mayor Morrison was so overwhelmed with your letter that he wept, actually, when he read it. Could we use that letter?" Well, I had written it, and I

meant it. I said, "Why, certainly." I didn't think to ask him how he would use it. Bless your heart, the next week that letter appeared in about a three-fourths page ad in every newspaper in Louisiana. "Prominent Baptist Leader Writes to Mayor Morrison"; didn't say I'd endorsed him, "Writes to Mayor Morrison."

Man, then, did the fat hit the fire, and the egg hit the fan. I started getting letters particularly from north Louisiana, telling me that I should resign my church, apologize, and leave the state. I had Baptist preachers to write me. One of them died just not long ago, but we made up before he died. He wrote me that he had always loved me but that he was ashamed of me for supporting that Catholic.

I didn't intend for that letter to be used like that. I wrote it as a personal matter. I had thought maybe they were just going to quote from it in an article or something. Lord, it was a full-page display of my letter on my letterhead of the First Baptist Church. One or two young fellows in the church were strong against Catholics, former Catholics these were; and they were strong against them. They called up and usually talked to Mrs. Grey, not to me. They were unhappy, but nobody quit the church; as far as I know I think I have lived it down.

Oh, I could tell you a lot of funny things about it, but that was the only time where maybe my incursion into political and civic matters "got my foot in the lard bucket," so to speak.

- M: This seems to have been something unintentional on your part. You were used....
- G: I never did go out advocating candidates. Of course, in every election a lot of people phoned me, and would say, "Which man should I vote for?" I never would come out and tell them, you know, exactly. I'd just point out a few issues, different things, and say, "Well, you've got to go in there decide for yourself."
- M: I noticed in the Times Picayune back in 1939, this was a couple of years after you came here, that they indicated you preached a very strong sermon on "Abolishment of Graft," and called on Governor Earl K. Long to do something about it, and it seems like he took his text for his address from the Bible.
- G: Yes. The note of his text was, "Righteousness Exalt the Nation, but Sin Is a Reproach to Any People." I didn't recall it was 1939. Was he governor in 1939?
- M: This was a July 10, 1939, article.

G: Well, it was a headline in the paper, lead headline?

M: Right, it was lead headline on your sermon.

G: When he took that text, I wrote him a letter, I wired him. I invited him to come next Sunday morning because I was going to preach on his inaugural text; I just said "Governor Long's inaugural text." I lauded him for it if he was sincere in doing it, and if that was the only way to get this point across. You see, we had just been through all of that horrendous mess that exploded when the governor of the state and the president of the university were both sent to the penitentiary, Dick Leche and James Monroe Smith. James Monroe Smith, after he served his term, came back here and joined our church. By the way, he paid his debt. Oh, man, I have had more experiences like that. I just preached what you would expect on that text Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness Exhalteth a Nation, but Sin Is a Reproach to Any People." I talked on "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" and all of those things, bits of literature, and other things to show that we need righteousness in government, in our city halls, in the capitol, and everywhere else.

He and I became fast friends, and he told somebody once, "Everybody talks about this Billy Graham preacher, but I'd rather hear this Grey, New Orleans preacher, any day." (laughter) He later was baptized in 1955, by Dr. Palmer, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge. He had been raised a Baptist, he and Huey both. I saw Norris Palmer in 1955, in London. I said, "I just got a report that you baptized Governor Long, and I understand your deacons are quite upset about it." He said, "Are they really?" I said, "Yes, they could have gotten mad at you because you didn't hold him under long enough." (laughter) I noticed in Greene's history here of Louisiana Baptists, House Upon A Rock, that he mentions all the Baptists who have been governors of Louisiana, and he doesn't mention Earl. He mentioned Huey, but didn't mention Earl. I guess that was an intentional oversight.

M: It may have been in view of more recent developments. During these years of your community involvement you mentioned the support of the United Fund or Community Chest, as it was originally called. I noticed in a clipping that I read that it said, "The man who sings 'God Bless America,' and yet keeps his pocketbook zipped up when Community Chest workers come around is inviting socialism." Do you want to elaborate on that a little bit for us?

G: Well, that was in the days when we were beginning to get those approaches and advances in socialism, which is just about the concepts that socialism advocates. I was simply saying that it is our opportunity as free Americans to give to charity rather

than be taxed by the government to make us feed others. Of course, it turned out that we did it this latter way, and I guess most everybody accepts it now as the norm of life. But that was the point I was making. I just tried to grab every-thing and use everything that I could, issues of the moment.

They were fixing to open up a harness race trotting track out in Jefferson Parish, and I preached the sermon, "If Dobbin Be Hitched, Who Takes the Ride." Now, that was a novel way I had of attacking harness racing as it was being proposed, that the community will be fleeced, poor people that can ill afford even to buy bread.

I always made my position clear when people would say to me, "Well, why are you talking about gambling being so wrong? Churches have it." I said, "What church has it?" "Well, Parish so-and-so." I said, "You won't find a Baptist church that has it. It's mainly the Catholic churches. Aside from that, we are not jumping on a couple of fellows in a back alley rolling dice for two bits. We don't say it's right, but they are not the ones. We are jumping on the political people, the officers, who are sworn to uphold the law, but who take graft on the side, and let prostitution operate. They are leeches, and it is against the economics of a city and state and the nation to depend on gambling for any reason at all. It is economically unsound. Forget the morals of it, religion of it." I always tried to make that clear in my fight on liquor and everything else. They expect preachers to get all excited about these things because it is against religion, but, it is the economics of it, tax wise. My base of argument is always usually on those points, and that's what I was saying in that Community Chest report.

M: There are many evidences, Dr. Grey, that you, across the years, have been a very popular speaker and certainly a preacher very much in demand for revivals and other Baptist meetings. This, of course, is a fact. Let me ask your viewpoint here. Why do you think this was so? What about your ability as a speaker and preacher that you think appeals to people as you reflect them?

G: I think it would be very improper for me to agree with you here. Anything I say on that could be used against me. I am not willing to admit that I'm all that great. Of course, sometimes, the way they talk, they finally convince me. (laughter) No, I guess maybe one reason is that I always had a sort of free-wheeling, extemporaneous, semi-extemporaneous, approach to these commitments or to these occasions, rather than the stilted, formalized, written addresses. Now, the only addresses I ever wrote out and read was due to the insistence of the Baptist press in Nashville. Here I mean addresses at the Southern Baptist Convention. Of course, the president's address is

always printed in the Annual, and I naturally dictated that. I never wrote one out by hand, I dictated. I can't write because my mind goes so fast; I guess I'm bragging when I say that my hand can't keep up with it. I'll be thinking one thing and writing two other things, so I talk it. I talked this book, Epitaphs for Eager Preachers; I dictated it. I do better when I start talking from notes, you know. So I guess, maybe, my style had a popular acceptance as against the erudite, scholarly approach of some men who are perfectionists.

I have been embarrassed when I have been on a Convention program and somebody would come along with a scholarly address, you know. Oh, he'd quote the authorities and everything; and I would just get up with some simple outline and a few ideas that had come to me on the spur of the moment, with some illustrations and statistics that I had in mind. I felt like he had just outstripped me, though I never felt I was in a popularity contest when I was speaking on a program with others. I tried to weave in a little humor to break the tension of the situation. I know there are a lot of places where my style has not been accepted. People haven't been interested in getting me to speak, though, I have had others enough to keep me busy; and I've even had to turn down some.

Clovis Chappell once said, in talking about his style, "Grey, I always found that in a big city, even in Washington, Charlotte, and Jackson, Mississippi, that they have enough people that like your kind of stuff to always give you a crowd." So, I figure that there are a lot of people in New Orleans that maybe call me "old loudmouth," and this, that, and the other, who wouldn't come to hear me and wouldn't join the church; but there are enough of others who didn't feel that way to make up for it. I'd let those people pick out any church they wanted, where people would be quiet and scholarly.

I have been grateful for the opportunities of having somebody with influence believe in me. The man who ran interference for me in Texas was T. C. Gardner, Secretary of Training Union there. I didn't "run after him" or "kow tow" to him, but we got acquainted while I was pastor at Vickery. He was from Tennessee, and I was from Tennessee. He kind of took, as they say, "a shine" to me, and he gave me my first crack at a big Baptist Convention.

We had a Baptist Training Service Convention. They called it the Baptist Training Service before Nashville changed it to BTU. They had a convention at Thanksgiving time, and we met in Mineral Wells. I brought the closing message, which was a service of dedication. I preached in the city auditorium there. I was just a very young preacher, in my early twenties, at Ennis at that time. God gave us a glorious service. We had about 153 come up surrendering to special service and

rededicating. I can see them now. Old Dr. J. B. Tidwell, professor of Bible at Baylor, a fine, big, scholarly old man, was out there in the crowd. He would holler to me, "Brother Grey, go on another verse, they are still coming." Now, that was the head of the Bible department at Baylor University who was saying that to me as I was giving the invitation at that service for dedication. Well, then, nearly every year, thereafter, as long as I was in Texas and even after I came to Louisiana on two occasions, or three, Gardner would invite me back for the Texas convention.

I got to Ridgcrest because Jerry Lambdin was at Beaumont in 1937 at the Thanksgiving Training Service convention. I came from New Orleans to Beaumont and spoke on the program, and he and I got acquainted. I went to Ridgcrest to preach the Training Union Week the next summer.

Young preachers ask me, "How do you get started in being invited?" I say, "Well, every time you are asked to speak, get up and do as good a job as you can. There will be somebody there who will hear you and recommend you to somebody else who will be asking about a man of a certain type; and word will get around. Just give it your best and hang in there, and God will open up doors for you."

I'm so grateful. I never pulled wires, and I never asked to be considered. I can't remember any time in my whole ministry that I ever asked or suggested to somebody that I would be a good one to do so and so. I don't say that with false modesty, I am just trying to tell the truth. That's a long answer to a short question.

M: That's all right. That's exactly what we want.

G: I will be 69 next month, December 18, 1975, but I still have more invitations than I can get around to. I am constantly working on my style, not to be boring or nostalgic and reminiscent. The trouble with a lot of preachers as they get older is that they have so much to tell about, and it's good to have a little start on nostalgia; but you better use that always as a launching pad to take off and move ahead. I still try to keep fresh and bring new ideas, and keep cutting down on time. Because, you know, usually, the longer a man lives and the older he gets, the longer he speaks. He has got so much to tell he just doesn't want to stop before he gets through telling it all.

M: We were talking earlier about a sense of history. Why do you think it is important for a pastor or a preacher to have a sense of history?

G: To me that question is on a par with why it is important to a preacher to study the Bible. I think that unless we have an appreciation for what has gone before, our forebears and the sacrifices others have made, we don't have any right for anybody to ever remember us or anything we have done. It's another case of "noblesse oblige"; and if a man with any imagination and information cannot take great highlights of history be it secular, biblical, religious, or local church, state convention, association history--and pick out incidents in that to build a great challenge on, he just can't preach.

I remember one time editors and state secretaries were down here in New Orleans in the meeting, and they asked me to speak. I talked on the Baptist growth in New Orleans from its earliest start, and then I built up to the factors that contributed to making the Baptists grow. I took the text from Isaiah, "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation" (Isa. 60:22). I pointed out how the Baptist work in New Orleans started from nothing and God blessed it. I cited instances like two pastors who stayed at their posts and died of yellow fever like Isaac T. Hinton, pastor of First Baptist Church. I would frequently refer to that.

My first year here, maybe our second year, we were celebrating our 95th Anniversary of the church. That was to be the 95th birthday of the church, December 28, 1939, and we staged a celebration. We had a banquet, and we got a speaker over here, I forget now who it was. I started writing the history of the church, and I got a picture of Dr. Russell Holman, our first pastor, and first secretary of the Home Mission Board; and I had an artist to reconstruct it. I went over to the Home Mission Board and presented it to them. It was on the front cover of The Baptist Review edited by E. P. Allredge with the history of our church on our centennial in 1943.

I started it in 1939, and every year we would take some notice as we built up toward the hundredth anniversary in 1943. We owed sixty thousand dollars when we came here; and I started the thought, "Let's be debt free by our centennial." Well, man, we were debt free and had about ten thousand dollars in the building fund for the new building in 1943 on our centennial.

I made much of those occasions. On my own personal anniversary with the church, I would never say, "The pastor's fifth anniversary." It's the fifth anniversary of pastor and people. And I tell young preachers now, "The reason your churches take no notice of your anniversary is because you have built it on the wrong basis. You have said, 'My anniversary.'" Well, a man and his wife don't have "his anniversary" or "her anniversary," they have "their anniversary." Preachers can do that, and it isn't focusing a lot of honor and glory on them. Many

times you are embarrassed because the record for that particular year has not been the hottest and you are ashamed of it, but you tell it and that will be a challenge for you to do better the next year.

I think men need to save these memorabilia. I have precious things in my priority memorabilia files that no money could buy. I don't know what I am going to do with them when I pass on, because I don't think there will be enough people left to appreciate even knowing who the guy was that gave it to me or wrote it. I think we need to inspire young preachers and other Christians to have that sense of history and appreciation for our past.

You know, for the Bicentennial of our country a lot of people are still floundering around. They don't know what they are going to do; they don't know how to take hold of it. I see in it an occasion to preach every Sunday on the facets of God in our national life, tell it all. Tell them about Watergate and all the crooked things, but tell them that we are going to overcome them. Oh, man.

M: It's a marvelous opportunity for Baptists to review their total heritage including their religious heritage as well as their political heritage.

G: And not let the secular world take it altogether. Let them know that God was in it.

M: Right.

G: Oh, I don't mean that Thomas Jefferson and all those fellows were Bible-toting, tithing, soul-winning, Wednesday night Prayer Meeting Christians; but they had a sense of honor and they recognized God, and they put it all in that Declaration, the Constitution, and everything else.

M: Dr. Grey, suppose we look now at some of your denominational involvements in Baptist life. You have served as an officer in Baptist associations. I believe you preached the annual sermon back in 1930, at the Dallas County Baptist Association. Suppose you share with us something about your earlier involvements in denominational life, both on an associational and state level.

G: Again, I was blessed in a timely way. I walked on that bridge that bridged the generation between the greats of yesteryear and the near-greats or would-be-greats of this year. I mean those men like George W. McDaniel, M. E. Dodd, George W. Truett, L. R. Scarborough, and on and on. I came on the scene when they were at their peak, their greatest. I have already said in the early tapes that I was pastor in Dallas at Vickery Church close by Dr. Truett. I was fortunate in this regard.

At that particular time in many places they were a little slow in recognizing newcomers and young men, and in a lot of places they are still that way. You have to stay there and prove yourself for twenty years before you do anything. A lot of colleges and universities won't give an honorary degree to a young man who has already achieved somewhat. They want him to spend a lifetime proving that he is worthy of it, and then they'll give it to him at the end of the way when he gets his Social Security. But I have always been a believer in the idea that we ought to recognize fellows, if they have any ability, to start out with.

I was very fortunate being among a bunch of those men who were much older. You will notice, in the picture I showed you yesterday out of this scrapbook from 1930, the picture of preachers at the Dallas County Baptist Association, that these men were old men. They were Dr. Truett, Dr. Boone, and several others, Dr. Sallee, T. O. Sallee, who was the associational missionary. They were all up in the years, and there I was just about 22 or 23, well, 24, actually, that December. I was with them, and I went to all the meetings. We would have a workers' meeting every month in Dallas County Association, and I would go to that workers' meeting. I didn't care how boring the things were. I'd go there. I would shake hands with the people and meet them. I guess I was always kind of an extrovert. I wouldn't be "pushy," but I'd listen to the speakers. Before I was ever called on to lead in silent prayer even, I'd met those fellows and had gotten in with them and participated. I would talk to my church about it, you know.

Bob Coleman, Dr. Truett's associate, met me at one of these meetings. He was chairman of the nominating committee for that year, the first full year after I went to Vickery. He put me up to preach what they called then, I believe, the Introductory or Annual Sermon of the Association. That particular year Dr. George Truett was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He had been to South America on a preaching mission and he came back and gave a report. They put me on the program to speak just before he preached. There I was, a student at the seminary, and I got up to preach that sermon in the presence of this world-renowned president of the Southern Baptist Convention, George W. Truett. Of course, I was scared within an inch of my life. Lillian didn't go with me; she stayed on the campus and went to school. Dr. Scarborough and some of them asked her, "Aren't you going over with your husband when he preaches at the association?" She said, "No, he needs me to stay home and pray for him more than he needs me there." So she didn't go there, but I went and preached.

Then, when I moved to Ennis, Ellis County was a much smaller association. I was active in the workers' meetings there, and I served. Then, when I got to Denton, I became a member of the

State Executive Board of Texas. I was active on it. Of course, Denton, First Church was a very prestigious church, and it still is in that association and in all of North Texas. It is just about forty miles north of Dallas. I don't know, I just moved into it. I didn't plan it.

When I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1951, I had served as moderator in the New Orleans Baptist Association and was president of the Ministerial Union here and the Pastors' Conference and later, the Federation of Churches; but when I was elected president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in Shreveport in 1948--that was the Centennial Year of the Louisiana Baptist Convention--I was proud of one thing. Six men jumped up when they declared nominations open; the first man nominated me and the others sat down. They all said, "We were getting up to nominate Grey, too." I was the only one nominated, and, of course, I went in. I went on the Home Mission Board at the San Antonio Convention. I think it was 1943.

M: 1943 [Should be 1942].

G: Yes. I became a member of the Home Mission Board, and I appreciated that so very much because two secretaries of the Home Mission Board had been pastors of this church, J. B. Lawrence and Russell Holman. Dr. Lawrence was a much older man, and he didn't take a shine to many people or get too close to them, but I always felt that I had his ear any time I wanted to talk to him and get a friendly word from him. I loved him and I think he loved me. I served on there then for several years, and I was on it when I was elected president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Then, in 1949, I was elected in Oklahoma City as the first vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The vote narrowed down to two top runners, Bob Kerr, senator from Oklahoma--at that time I believe he was governor of Oklahoma--and me. He and I were in the runoff. They made a motion that the one getting the....no, they just nominated the two for first vice-president; the constitution had not been changed. They made a motion that the man getting the highest votes be first vice-president and the man getting the second highest be second vice-president. So, Bob Kerr was the second vice-president and I was the first, right there in his home state of Oklahoma. But I knew all these country preachers back in the deep South and out West and they didn't know him except the name. He was a politician who happened to be a Baptist, but he was a great man. We had a good friendship later.

I went to Chicago and I presided several times in the sessions. Dr. Lee was president, and he would ask me to preside if it wasn't too hot or thorny a session; he would preside at those.

But, then, I was named chairman of the Committee on Order of Business for the San Francisco convention in 1951, and I functioned in that job. It was set up a little different then. It was loose-jointed and would just be named each year. Now they rotate it, you know. It was at San Francisco that I was elected president of the SBC.

M: We want to go somewhat into detail there. Suppose we back up a little further. I noticed that you served, as you have indicated, both in Texas and in Louisiana as a member of the State Executive Board or Executive Committee. In your experience, what role did you find these denominational entities to have? What was the role in Texas and Louisiana of the Executive Committee? What part did you play?

G: Well, in the Executive Board of Texas I served on some subcommittee. I don't remember whether it was the Executive Committee or the Executive Board, but I know Dr. Truett was on it and was chairman of it a while. I'd go down from Denton there quite often when the state secretary would need to have counsel. First it was J. Howard Williams and then R. C. Campbell. R. C. Campbell succeeded him in 1936. We would have matters committed to us by the convention or by the Executive Board itself. Texas had a large Executive Board, I guess over two hundred in it now, because Texas has so many associations. The convention did not pay the expenses. They had to go at their own expense or their churches would send them. Of course, in Louisiana the board pays the expenses of traveling and lodging. But I enjoyed my service on that board.

I never shall forget when the time came that we were to elect a successor to J. Howard Williams when he resigned to go to Oklahoma City to be pastor of the First Baptist Church. I had held a revival with R. C. Campbell at Lubbock, First Church, the fall before. We came to that meeting in Dallas, and they just nominated them from the floor and voted. That morning Walter McKenzie called on me and told me before the meeting that he wanted me to read a Scripture passage and lead in prayer. Dr. McKenzie was pastor of Waxahachie when I went to Ennis in the same county, and he had gone to Austin, University Baptist, and he was president of the Executive Board or chairman. I could think of nothing except the first chapter of Acts and the selection of Matthias, so I read that Scripture passage, and led in prayer; and I thought it was very appropriate.

When it wound up, we elected Bob Campbell. They began to "kid" him, and word got back to J. Howard Williams; but he laughed about it and made a joke of it. "Successor to Judas," you see the situation there, made it appear that Dr. Williams was Judas and he was being selected. (laughter) Some of them started kidding me about it. Things that people would kid me about, I always would get as big a laugh as they would.

I think this is my point of view, I try to make it that, I always enjoy a joke that is pulled on me, and I laugh as heartily as one that is pulled on somebody else. I purposely have set up situations where a laugh would come at my expense. I didn't on that occasion. I was innocent in that, and at first it shocked me a little bit; but they still kidded me as long as I stayed in Texas. Dr. Williams and I, of course, were fast friends when he became president of the seminary. He had me out there to preach the commencement sermon and do a lot of things.

M: You served on that board or committee, Executive Group, in the Texas Convention from 1934 to 1937; and then, three years after you came to Louisiana, you were elected to the Louisiana Convention Executive Board. Did this body function any differently from the other in carrying out its duties?

G: I never thought about it. Of course, Texas was larger, more impersonal, therefore; and Louisiana was smaller and closer knit, and you got to know everybody. Your whispers, even, in meetings were heard by everybody, I mean figuratively speaking. I believe the Louisiana Board had a little more democracy in the way it operated. When I came I think F. J. Katz was executive secretary. The executive secretary had much to do with calling the shots. W. H. Knight, I think, succeeded him, but he was more influential.

Of course, at Denton, in 1934, I went on the State Board immediately after going to the First Baptist Church at Denton. I don't mean immediately, but I mean the next fall at the state convention. I served on it all the time I was there, and then, when I came down here it was three years, I guess, until a place came open from New Orleans.

I always went to the conventions and participated in them, and let it be known that I was a cooperating Louisiana Baptist. I don't think there was any wire-pulling or pressures put up for me to be a member of that board. I served on several significant committees of the convention in Louisiana from the start; and I always enjoyed the work, and getting acquainted, and the fellowship with people. That covered a lot of getting out to speak at many associational meetings, their annual sessions. I would go out as a guest speaker and then, in those state conventions; that kept snowballing, you know.

In 1950, I became a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. M. E. Dodd had been on it sixteen years, since the Congress met in Berlin in 1934. Dr. Dodd had had a heart attack, he had already resigned at Shreveport; and he was very much incapacitated. He wrote them and told them that he was naming me as his proxy. He called me and asked me if I could go as his proxy. He said, hopefully, "I wish you

would be elected to take my place since I won't be able to serve anymore." I would call him every night from Cleveland, Ohio, about what was going on up there and report to him, not that I had to do it but I just had a sense of wanting to do it. I could tell you about some disappointments he had and relayed to me at that time.

M: Suppose you share . . .

G: Well, some of this has been left as unwritten history of Southern Baptists, which is nothing to be ashamed of. Dr. Ellis Fuller was greatly admired by many of us and represented Southern Baptists, and Dr. Dodd had a strong feeling that Southern Baptists ought to have the next president of the Baptist World Alliance in 1950, because we hadn't had one since Dr. Truett had been president in 1939, at Atlanta. So I went up there and sat on meetings of the Executive Committee. I wasn't on the nominating committee; but I knew that they were nominating Ellis Fuller, that there was some question about whether his health would let him do it or not, and this, that, and the other. Dr. Dodd was very disappointed when I told him how the tide was going, that it looked like Dr. Fuller would not get elected. He was president, of course, of the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville.

I guess it was providential that F. Townley Lord of London was elected as the president. The immediate predecessor had been C. O. Johnson who was elected at Copenhagen in 1947, and didn't serve but three years; he wanted it that way so we would get back on the five-year cycle of alliance meetings. It met first in 1905, then every five years thereafter, but during the war it didn't meet.

So, Oscar Johnson wanted to get back on the five year cycle. A lot of the brethren from other countries felt that since we had had an American they ought not to have an American this time. Those overseas brethren don't think of Southern Baptists, American Baptists, and National Baptists, incorporated and unincorporated; they just think of Americans, you know. We are all Americans from the U.S. They said then, too, that Oscar Johnson was Southern Baptist, and I said, "Why, yes, he was a Northern Baptist with a southern exposure." He was pastor of a dually-aligned church, Third Church, St. Louis. He did a grand job and was a close, dear friend of mine. I loved Townley Lord. He was a gracious old fellow, and all the time he was president we worked together. The next year I was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and our paths did converge quite often.

Anyhow, Dr. Dodd was very disappointed when Ellis Fuller was not elected. That next October, I believe it was, while on a preaching trip out in the West, I spoke at the New Mexico

Convention with him. I took a picture of him at that meeting and they went on to California; I came on back home, and he died the next week. That was the last picture that was ever made of Ellis Fuller. It was on a slide, and I gave it to the Southern Seminary later.

There has been a strong feeling over the years that Southern Baptists didn't get their fair share of representation at the Baptist World Alliance; particularly of these would be the matter of top leadership, the president. I was on the nominating committee in London in 1955, and I saw it shaping up very clearly that we really didn't have an outstanding out-and-out, clear-cut candidate who was a typical dyed-in-the-wool Southern Baptist to be president. Some men who had been mentioned had been active; but some of them had acted in a churlish sort of way. I won't call any names because this will be recorded in history, and they were close friends of mine. One of the older men I thought acted very childish on the matter of Southern Baptists being neglected.

On this committee, I soon came around to feel that Theodore Adams was the man. While he was a Northern Baptist and had all his education and past experience until he came to First Baptist Church in Richmond in 1935, after I had been over there and drew out of the picture, went out of the picture, then he was called. But I felt that Ted would be a good president. So, Mrs. Martin, of Virginia, and I talked about it and we agreed that we would support Dr. Theodore Adams. She had been president of the WMU, and she was, as Dr. Leavell used to call her, "high priestess of the WMU." She had a lot of funny ideas, but we got along just fine. He got a majority vote on the first ballot, and I think that he served very well.

Then, I was on the nominating committee in 1960, when we met in Rio. Well, I knew we didn't have a Chinaman's chance there, because we agreed to get Joao Soren, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rio, and we did. Then, we all said, "Well, in 1965 maybe Dr. Hobbs will be elected in Miami Beach." Lo and behold, we get down there, and the thought came up about getting an African. So, we got Bill Tolbert, who did a good job, a gracious man. Then, we thought, surely, Tokyo would be the time for Herschel Hobbs to be elected president. He was a great scholar, and he had come on the Executive Committee meantime and was known among them; but, that's quite a story. I served on the nominating committee there, but they just darted off and left us before we could even "get our mule hitched up." They left us high and dry because they were determined that they would elect Carney Hargroves. You want me to tell you about that?

M: Yes. Please share it with us.

G: All right. The committee was announced. The chairman of the committee was L. Venchael Booth, a black man, and a Baptist pastor in Cincinnati. He had a part-time affiliation with the American Bible Society, a wonderful fellow and I love him; but he got up and called the meeting of the nominating committee right after the close of the morning session. Well, we got up there and I thought it was only for organizational purposes. So, lo and behold, without notifying all the committee and being sure that they were there--we didn't have too big a committee--the first thing I know he said, "I want Dr. Grey to be our historian to tell us what we've done in the past and correct us on any names that we overlook and so on," and then somebody else as parliamentarian, all that rigamarole with a lot of poppycock.

Then, he immediately declared the house open for nominations. Harold E. Stassen, who was two or three times a candidate for the Republican nomination for President of the United States and was a Baptist leader, got up and immediately made a long speech, nominating V. Carney Hargroves. He recited that he was born and raised Southern Baptist, educated at Southern Seminary, and was pastor in Philadelphia, Germantown, I believe. Then, the dear brother from Moscow, I forget who it was, but one of those brethren from Moscow who had to speak through an interpreter, got up and made a big "spiel" about how Dr. Hargroves had compassion and love. He had visited them and had prayer meetings, and they all would wind up weeping in Christian fellowship and all that.

Well, I turned to Duke McCall and Jim Sullivan, who were on the committee with me and Alma Hunt and said, "My goodness, I didn't come prepared today though I can do it, but it looks like this is what they are going to do, so I'll nominate him." They had told me that I should nominate Herschel. So, I got up and made what I thought was a comprehensive speech, nominating Herschel. So, they said, "Well, we won't take a vote on it here. We will call the meeting of the committee tonight after the session at another hotel, the Imperial." We were at the Budakan where we had the sessions in a committee meeting room.

That night they notified all the committee and they were all there. They didn't have the repeat of speeches of nomination, they just called off their names: Hargroves from Philadelphia; Hobbs of Oklahoma City. They didn't have any speech identifying, telling who they were, or anything else. So, they started balloting. I think Erik Ruden, who had been the secretary in Sweden, was nominated also, and he got a few votes; but it began to shift there and I could tell on the ballots. But it was so poorly managed; it was absolutely contrived, I know it was.

Now get the picture: In that organizational meeting when the nominating speeches were made, I pleaded with them. I said,

"Well, brethren, I thought this was just to get organized then notify everybody and have the meeting." But they said, "We are so pressed; we'll save time if we move on with the nominations now." So they made the nominations, and got the whole committee then together. I don't think we had half of the committee present.

I'm going to go back and check my records so if I am ever put on the witness stand, I'll tell exactly the detailed facts, how many were present in that room at that meeting. I know we didn't have half of them there. But they were all there that night; and then as I said, they didn't have identification speeches of these men. I tried to get the floor to tell them about the man I nominated. They said, "No, that's not necessary; it's already been done. They have been nominated, so we will vote." So, they just passed out slips of paper, and Hargroves got it.

Now, that was the second time that we had been "sand bagged," as we say. When Herschel was sandbagged in Miami Beach, he was pretty hurt about it; and I can't blame him. We had to plead with him to take the position of vice-president under Tolbert. I remember that Alma Hunt, Porter Routh, and I believe, Duke McCall and I went up to his suite in the hotel the next morning and talked to him. We said, "You have got to accept the vice-presidency under Tolbert, or it will look bad for you and for Southern Baptists." So, he agreed to do it.

Then, that night in Tokyo after this committee voted and he was out, Duke, Jim, and I said, "Well, we ought to tell Herschel. Let him get it from friends rather than just be announced from the press or in public." So, they called his room. Oh, it was late, nearly twelve o'clock, and I was staying way over at the New Otani Hotel. My wife was over there and I told her how long I'd be gone. He and Frances already had their pajamas on in bed. They might have been reading a little or watching television. So, we went in the room, Frances was there in the bed, you know, and just told him what happened and how we regretted it. We were disappointed that we failed to get it across. He was very understanding, and really had a greater spirit of acceptance of it than he had at Miami Beach. It seemed to me like he had gotten wind of it.

Then came the first time in the history of the Baptist World Alliance, in its sixty-five year history, that somebody got up and nominated a man from the floor when the report of the Nominating Committee was presented. Were you there? Well, Duke McCall got up immediately after the Nominating Committee presented its report nominating Carney Hargroves, and nominated Herschel Hobbs. It was the first time, but our constitution does permit it, though it was the first time it had ever been done.

Then, Harold Stassen came and they got the rule going around about, you know, "not, one man, one vote, because the larger convention--" meaning, of course, Southern Baptists--"who has the larger number of delegates here, representatives, will outvote the smaller conventions." So, in the sense of fair play they agreed to give each one so many votes, electoral votes; and on that basis the committee's report was accepted. We just gave up.

One or two of our Southern Baptists, particularly the female of the species, disappointed me, because I know they sold out, that they would not stand up for Southern Baptists getting a president. I don't know whenever we will get a president.

M: Was that within the Nominating Committee procedures when they . . . did they throw their support to Dr. Hargroves?

G: They weren't both on the committee. One of them was on there, but she was very quiet and didn't have anything much to say. The other one was sitting on the platform the morning that Duke got up and made the nomination. I came in on the platform--committee members were supposed to occupy the platform if we wanted to, but I didn't go up there too much of the time. The representative of Liberia to the United Nations, a woman Baptist leader, was the speaker that morning. I went up and sat right behind her, and I was going to get up to raise a point of parliamentary order. This lady, a Southern Baptist, turned to me and said, "J. D., don't start any trouble. For goodness sakes we Southern Baptists are embarrassed enough as it is. Just go on and elect Hargroves and let it go." I didn't even respond, but I didn't get up. I will never feel right toward that individual, and I was the one who nominated her to be on the Executive Committee. Now I am not going to mention her name.

When the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance was self-perpetuating, it would always select those, then would co-opt others from certain conventions. Duke McCall and I led them to a change in the constitution, whereby the constituent bodies would nominate people to the Alliance, Nominating Committee whom they want to serve on the Executive Committee. It is an unusual Baptist procedure, but we felt that it was the wise thing. Then, the Southern Baptist Convention began to pay the traveling expenses of the Executive Committee members overseas. Up until that time, we each had had to scrounge around and get our expenses up ourselves.

M: Did you talk to the ladies we are talking about here to find out why they would not support Herschel Hobbs?

G: No. I didn't pursue it any further. I just figured as we Frenchmen say, "c'est un fait accompli"; it was just an

accomplished fact. It was done, and no rehashing of it or warming it over would do any good. So, I just let it pass by.

You know there has been a strong advocacy among some of our Southern Baptist leaders, and a few of them on the Executive Committee, that we cut back on our contributions, because the Southern Baptist Convention pays, oh, I don't remember what percentage of the total budget of the Baptist World Alliance. My soul, it is way over 75 percent, I am sure. They want to let us pay the bills, and they run the show. But, we were at a disadvantage.

I saw it the year before when we met at Baden, Austria, near Vienna. The Executive Committee met there in 1969, and I was there. At that meeting we elected an executive secretary. Billy Graham was chairman of the Nominating Committee that brought in Bob Denny's name, and those brethren from Scandinavia and England fought him to a standstill. Billy Graham stood up for him, but they said, "He is not a theologian. He is not versed in political matters." Billy came back and answered--of course, Bob had gone out of the room--"I have been with him when he has been with the heads of state and with the heads of churches and he holds up his end. He does well; he is a diplomat and a statesman." So, we batted it all down finally, and he won the nomination. So, we had just elected an executive secretary.

Cyril Bryant is editor of the paper, and Owen Cooper headed up the men's division. I forget about the women's work. But there we had two or three in top leadership as Southern Baptists, so, it wouldn't have been too proper, maybe, to have elected a Southern Baptist in Tokyo in 1970. You have to accept the hard facts and realities of life. If we got an executive secretary who was Southern Baptist, why, they would have thought we were hoggish to insist on getting a president. I agree with the point.

The last time I saw Dr. Dodd, just before he died, I went by Shreveport in 1952, on my way to Oklahoma early that summer. Dr. Dodd had had his heart attacks, and he had already retired from First Church, Shreveport. I phoned ahead of time and missed a change of planes there in Shreveport and went out to the house. Mrs. Dodd got him downstairs in his pajamas and dressing gown. We sat in his study down there and talked a long time. He autographed my Kerfoot's Parliamentary Law that I used when I presided at the Southern Baptist Convention. I have the autographs of most of the presidents back to Fred Brown. Before I left I told him I was going to Denmark the next month and I would be representing him and thinking about him, and that I wanted him to pray with me. So, I knelt down in front of him--he was in his chair--and he put his hands on my head and prayed for me. But he said this interesting thing

in rather a great, strong emotional surge, "I have served on that Executive Committee for sixteen years, I believe he said, spent twelve thousand dollars of my own money going to the meetings and traveling all around the world, then never got elected president of it." He sort of half cried and laughed, you know, as he said that. But it gave me an insight that he evidently did want to be president some day, and I don't see why he couldn't have been. But, of course, he was kind of old when he got into it, and his years and clocks had run out on him. But it was understandable.

You know you look at the feet of clay of some of our greats. To recite a thing like that is not to reflect upon him, but it is to make me appreciate that he was human. He didn't claim to be God. I could give you several stories about other leading Southern Baptists, some still living, who had little instances like that in their lives which showed me they were just as human as anybody else.

M: We will want you to share some of those with us. Why don't we talk a little further about the Baptist World Alliance. Do you have any other reflections about the Alliance?

G: Oh, yes. I had many, many experiences that I could relate, and I saw some significant things come to pass. We had commissions in the Alliance; one of them on theology, doctrine, and polity; another one on missions; another on stewardship.

I was on the one on evangelism. Roland Leavell was chairman of that commission, though he was not a member of the Executive Committee. You see, it is so structured that they bring in consultants and extra people to work on the various commissions. Well, Dr. Leavell had health problems; and since I was on the commission, he turned over to me a lot of the work. He would always challenge the commission. He talked to me privately about wanting some day to have a great, worldwide, simultaneous evangelistic crusade in every one of the countries of the world.

We met at Rochester, New York, about 1958, I guess, or 1959. We were talking about the plans for the program at Rio de Janeiro. Dr. Leavell couldn't go, so I was elected chairman of the Commission on Evangelism. We started structuring some studies and some plans looking toward a worldwide evangelistic crusade.

At the meetings of the Alliance--they met every five years--they would have the plenary sessions with everybody. Then, we would have the various commission meetings. So, they set up a program for the Commission on Evangelism to have in a huge gymnasium there. It was not the big stadium where Billy Graham spoke with two hundred thousand people present but a gymnasium where we had the day sessions and all the sessions except the big one in the

Maracanazinho. This was in there and I was chairman of sessions there.

As it wound up--you have to correspond with a guy clear across the world, getting suggestions about speakers; and that would conk out, and you would get these declinations and all--I just began to throw together a program. We were within ten months of the meeting; and I had to find out who was going, who would be acceptable, and who would be willing to speak. So, I grabbed a lot of men and had them on there. I got Lester Harnish; I knew him in Los Angeles, Temple Baptist Church. He was gone from there by that time. He is now pastor of Third of St. Louis. I got Charlie Bowles who was pastor of Hunter Street, Birmingham, once and went to San Antonio, First Church. He had a heart attack and died a little later. He preached on the program. I presided at that session. I got preachers from England and Germany and testimonies from Orientals. We had a tremendous program.

I was on the Nominating Committee there in Rio, and I was the first person to walk up to Joao Soren. I met him and his lovely wife who looks like a movie star, and his beautiful daughter who was just as lovely, walking outside. This was before the Congress really got under way. Our committee had already met and I could tell the way it was going; so I said, "Well, Dr. Soren, it looks like you are going to be the next president of the Baptist World Alliance." Oh, he was so modest.

Now prior to that, I'll say, he had written me. I had known him on the Executive Committee, and he, as you probably recall, was pastor of the First Church of Rio and was a graduate of Southern Seminary. So he wrote me and asked me to preach for him on Sunday morning in the First Baptist Church of Rio. I did and he interpreted it for me. Oh, I'll never forget what a crowd we had. There were people there from over the world. I was trying to relate to the Portuguese-speaking people there in Brazil, so I told a joke. When I gave it in English, they laughed; but when it came to the Portuguese, they didn't.

Quickly, here was the story about it: I said, "You people down here raise coffee, but we in New Orleans know how to use it and appreciate it about as well as anybody in the world. Out on the plains in south Louisiana, the cattle range, they make coffee in a inverted cowbell and when the coffee gets so strong that the clapper stands straight up, they drink it." Well, the English-speaking people laughed; but when he interpreted into Portuguese, they didn't. I asked one of the missionaries later, "What happened to the joke, the story about the cowbell?" He said, "All Joao Soren said was, 'that when the wooden spoon floats.'" I said, "Well, I don't blame them for not laughing, that isn't funny at all." That shows my rapport with Soren.

(laughter) I enjoyed the Rio Conference very, very much. I had never been to Rio before.

I enjoyed the Miami Beach Congress fairly well. I continued to go to the meetings of the Executive Committee in between times. The expenses were paid, and I felt that I was of some service. I served on one committee on the admission of Mozambique and the Baptist Union of Angola in Africa to the Alliance. I sat on a committee with these Russian brethren and, of course, they would speak through an interpreter; but I had a lot of chances to argue with them about the superiority of capitalism over communism.

I was indeed honestly happy when we went to Tokyo, and I asked that they not consider my name any more. As you know, now the Nominating Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention elects and recommends the members of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance. I had served twenty years and I was getting ready to retire; I just didn't feel I ought to keep on serving on and on, and on, on that committee. I wanted younger men, vigorous active men to go on there. Duke McCall has been on there longer than any Southern Baptist, and he's got a lot of years left to continue to represent Southern Baptists. He, Porter Routh, and Baker Cauthen, and others represent us in a creditable way. I am happy about my work on the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, but I'm glad it's all over.

- M: I note you were elected president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1948, at the meeting, or did you preside at the 1948 meeting and the 1949 meeting?
- G: No. I was actually elected in 1948; then, I presided the first time in 1949 and then again in 1950.
- M: As a president of Louisiana Baptist Convention give us some insight into what a state convention president does. What involvement did you have during that time of denominational leadership?
- G: I don't believe the president of a state convention's position is a whole lot different from that of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is a position with a lot of honor and a lot of respect, but it didn't have much authority or weight to it. There were a lot of people, I am sure, who listened to me because I was president; but I think most of the time people were just being generous in giving a man attention or cooperation because he is in that office, unless he has the innate ability to influence them or persuade them. The years as president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention were very

uneventful. We didn't have too much excitement going on, and we didn't have too many problems. Things went along very well, we kept growing.

My really greatest activity in the Louisiana Baptist Convention came after I was president. I was on the committee that erected our Baptist building in Alexandria. Inside the hall there my name is on the plaque. I succeeded in getting them to select an architect, Carl L. Olshcaner, who was the one that built our church, a member of our church. Then, I continued to serve off and on the Executive Board of the state Baptist convention until I went off. You serve two three-year terms, then you have to be off a year. I went off in this convention in 1975 for my last go-around.

I was on the Louisiana College Board for a number of years as president. During that time we were expanding and getting our obligations in a little better shape. We did a lot of building. That was during, of course, G. Earl Guinn's administration. We had a lot of problems arise there at that time. It could always be calculated on to find Dr. Guinn in at least one scrap. One time I went to a board meeting he had a battle open on about three fronts; but we stood with him and helped him out. People criticized him.

M: Did they criticize his administration or the college or what?

G: Well, of course, it was just a matter of a lot of people being indifferent toward Dr. Guinn. He was a brilliant man and a great scholar, but some felt that maybe he hadn't read Dale Carnegie's book on How to Win Friends and Influence People. I told him that once in a meeting when the committee had been investigating a lot of criticism that was being leveled against him and his administration. The committee came in and gave some of the points of criticism, yet they made a recommendation that we would certainly back the president and stand with him. I said, "Well, I'll tell you this. We've got a wonderful president, but he sure didn't teach Dale Carnegie how to write that book." They all laughed and he said, "Well, I'll promise you this. I'm going to get it out and read it again myself." I loved him personally. He and I were very close friends through all the years.

M: I understand a lot of criticism was leveled from some quarters relating to the president's home. Were you on the board at that time?

G: Yes. But I think that was wholly unjustified, because actually no Cooperative Program funds went into the building of that house. Maybe there were some hidden costs like buying the land and so on, but I believe funds for it were raised independently and given by individuals. I don't think the Cooperative

Program was penalized to build it. I would like to believe that even those who criticized most sharply for building such a fine thing came to see later how it was used as the official residence of the president of the college, in receptions and entertaining guests. It's kind of like the President living in the White House in Washington, it was the desirable thing to have.

I have been to a lot of campuses like Oklahoma Baptist University, where I visited and stayed a week with John Raley and his wife a number of years ago. He had a much more elegant home than we built Earl Guinn. Dr. Naylor had the same problem when they erected his residence at Southwestern Seminary. It's always the case of the "have-nots" criticizing those who do have. More generally or not I was on the "have not" side. I mean I was in that category, but I never criticized the fellow who did have a nice place.

M: Do you find criticism of this nature coming more from the rural pastors, or are the "have nots" among the town pastors too?

G: Well, these were not the "have nots" but were the "did nots." I mean guys who hadn't achieved much, maybe blaming somebody for not pushing them into a bigger spot than they had, or giving them denominational recognition. I imagine there were some who were sore at Dr. Guinn for the fact that they never got an honorary degree. For years the college there was very stingy with them. I don't think they are very generous at some schools even until now, though they have limbered up somewhat. Some of the brethren, I can't recall any particular individuals, at the time made the impression on me that they were kind of sore, period, because the college hadn't done this, that, and the other to recognize them. Constantly we would hear the complaint, "They don't honor and recognize the alumni of Louisiana College like they ought to." They would fuss about that.

M: Speaking of honorary degrees, and I know this is asking you to be a bit subjective, what was it that prompted Union University to give you an honorary doctor's degree at such an early age? This was, I assume, rather unusual?

G: Yes, it was, and I wondered about that same matter myself when it happened; and I still wonder. You never stop to look a gift horse in the mouth so I didn't decline it; but it just happened that Dr. John Jeter Hurt was president of Union at that time, and he hadn't been president too long. I don't think it was because he was especially fond of me, though he was fond of me. We were good friends. But I had come to the First Baptist Church, New Orleans; and even in those days it was thought to be quite a prestigious pulpit. Of course, it had, I think, a lot more prestige given by people than it was really entitled to. It wasn't all that big, but it was in a big city, biggest

city in the South at that time. I graduated in 1929 and I got the D.D. in 1938, I was just 32 when I got it. Up until that time, I think, that was the youngest age they ever gave one.

M: Louisiana College also gave you an honorary degree.

G: I believe that was about 1951 or 1952. That was when I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and then Baylor gave me a D.D. in 1953, at the conclusion of my term as president.

M: Dr. Grey, we are vitally interested in your leadership across the years in the Southern Baptist Convention. Tell us about the first meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention that you remember attending and what impressions were made.

G: Well, the very first meeting was 1929, when we met in Memphis; I was graduating the next month from Union. I didn't take in too much of it. Dr. George Truett was president. My wife came over there on Friday afternoon on a bus from Jackson, and I went to the bus station and met her. They were debating the issue of whether to combine the Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board, and there was a fiery speaker on the platform. As we came in all the entrances to the auditorium were crowded, and we edged our way through so we could see this fiery gray-haired man speaking. I turned to her and said, "There's J. Frank Norris speaking." About that time he said something, and Dr. Truett rapped his gavel and said, "Sir, we will not have any of that in this Convention." He had made some personal remark. But I found out it was not Frank Norris but was Frank Tripp, who later was a leader of the Hundred Thousand Club under J. E. Dillard. He was also head of the hospital here and chairman of our Building Committee of the First Baptist Church. I loved Frank Tripp and admired him very much; but he was an enthusiastic fellow, and when he believed something he would get up and debate it. There was some issue that Dr. Tripp was debating heatedly.

Incidentally, for my Mission Challenge Committee you did a grand job on researching the efforts to combine the two boards over the years. We were given copies of it in our last meeting in Atlanta, where words of appreciation were spoken for what you did in research on that thing. It must have taken you a lot of time to get it together, but it was very helpful.

Anyhow, that was my first one and that was in 1929. Well, I didn't get to go to another one until in 1933, when it met in Washington. The only reason I went down to Memphis was because it was right close by. No church paid my expenses, as I pastored those halftime town or country churches in my West Tennessee student pastorate. When I was at Ennis, Texas, in 1931, I couldn't go, and then 1932. But then in 1933 I did go to Washington with three other preachers in one of their cars; and

we paid him a little bit on the gas to take us up there. That was a memorable event. It was at that Convention that they began to talk about the Hundred Thousand Club which Frank Tripp headed up. I believe it was just about born in the Washington Convention.

At that Convention here is a little delicate thing that I think the records show: F. F. Brown, of First Church, Knoxville, was elected president in 1932, and he was to serve at Washington; and there was no limitation on the length of time a man could serve. M. E. Dodd was the first vice-president. Dr. Brown was ill during that year; he couldn't function too well and did not attend the Washington Convention. Consequently, Dr. Dodd presided. When it came time for the election of officers, somebody nominated Fred Brown for reelection. Dr. Dodd did something that many people criticized him for. I never did discuss it with him later in life, whether he should have done it or not. But he said, "No, Dr. Brown is sick; he has told me that he will not be able to serve, and I believe it would be an imposition on him." So, they withdrew his name. You would have to look at the record. I don't have it before me, the Annual Report, but Dr. Dodd was elected president at the Washington Convention in 1933.

At that same Convention J. E. Dillard, I believe, was second vice-president; and he was presiding when we took the vote. Dr. Dodd had turned over the gavel to the second vice-president. They didn't furnish us ballots like they do now. We just took a sheet of paper and wrote the name of the man we wanted on it. That was the first thing I said in discussing anything at the Southern Baptist Convention. I stood up and yelled out, "Brother President," and he said, "Yes, young man?" I said, "This is J. D. Grey from Texas; do we sign our ballots? Put our name on them or not?" He said, "No, don't put your name on them unless you are voting for yourself." Well, that brought a big laugh, you know. It kind of peeved me a little bit that a man in his position could be so impatient with a young preacher boy, who was attending his first Convention.

M: That was Dillard now?

G: J. E. Dillard. I think he was the second vice-president presiding during that period of election. Well, I didn't know whether we ought to sign our ballots. I didn't know whether anybody would try to stuff the ballot box. Later on, in 1964, in Atlantic City, Joe Burton said that somebody had stuffed the ballot box and voted for certain people. I was on a committee appointed to study it, and we came in with a recommendation of the computerized ballot. We locked that in and also voted to make the Credentials Committee an active, vital committee. It hadn't done anything up until then. They had never had a case referred to them before; now they are very active at the

Convention. That was my first Convention, really participating in. The next year we met in Fort Worth, and Dr. Dodd was the president. I told you in another one of the tapes prior to this about meeting him on the street and his inviting me to go to Shreveport, and I wound up going to Los Angeles. Oscar Johnson, C. O. Johnson, pastor of Third Church, St. Louis, and quite a popular speaker, was to be a featured speaker one afternoon at the Fort Worth Convention. We met out in the old stockyard's colosseum where they had the rodeo, and the smell of horses and cows was all over the place. For the rodeo, like many places at ball games, they had cushions they would rent to people who go to these events; but they provided them for most of the messengers to sit on those old rough benches. Oscar Johnson got up and one of his first remarks was, "This is the first Baptist convention I ever went to where all the messengers were sitting around on sofa pillows," calling that little old straw cushion, a sofa pillow.

Well, Frank Norris was standing at the side about where the Brahmas would come out during the rodeo, and he just laughed out loud. Dr. Truett and Dr. Scarborough were sitting on the platform, and I remember distinctly seeing Dr. Truett raise up and pull his cushion out from under him and put it down on the floor. Oscar Johnson nearly broke up the meeting with that remark, all the Baptists sitting around on "sofa pillows." (laughter)

M: Interesting.

G: Well, it's just human interest. I don't remember too much about all the proceedings of that Convention. I remember the different speeches that were made, the sermons preached, and how impressed I was by how strong we were. I never imagined I'd even be up on the platform for anything, much less holding the gavel.

M: Frank Norris at this time was still a cooperating Southern Baptist, I guess, wasn't he?

G: Well, I think his church continued to call themselves affiliated with Southern Baptists, though the Texas Baptist Convention booted him out back there. I'd have to look up the records to see when it was, but I think at that time he had already been put out of the Texas Baptist Convention and the Tarrant County Baptist Association. But he would come to these meetings, and he would mill around among people. I've seen him at many of the Southern Baptist Conventions over the years. He would hold "rump" sessions out in a park somewhere.

You know, that is a point, Dr. May, that I think somebody has got to do some study on, get some guidelines drawn up, particularly nowadays with this charismatic movement going on. Two churches in Dallas, one in Monroe, Louisiana, and others in other places have been excluded from their local association, yet they

will call themselves Southern Baptists because they send money to the state convention and to the Cooperative Program; and they will elect messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention constitution does not make allowances for the fact that they must be members of an association or a state convention, so they go even though they can't fraternize with their district association or with their state Baptist convention. They can go as bona fide messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention. Now we are going to have to restudy that some way or the other to get that thing shored up. I see that the charismatics have called for a convention in Dallas in July of 1976. They are sure they are going to get organized, maybe not in competition with the Southern Baptist Convention but in their community of interests and fellowship together with this charismatic concept. We might have a problem on our hands there where it would be a strong doctrinal issue.

M: How would you see this particular matter in relationships now between the church and the association, the church and the state convention, and the church and the Southern Baptist Convention? Your understanding of Baptist polity is that each of these denominational organizations is an autonomous body; herefore, at what point does doctrine come to bear on the relationship of the church to....?

G: Well, up until this time it would be over simplistic. It seems like the decision is totally up to the local church. If a Catholic church wanted to start sending money to Alexandria and part of it go to the Cooperative Program, according to that, they would be entitled, if they wanted to, to send messengers to Norfolk, Virginia, next year to the Convention. I don't have the wording of the constitution before me right now, but in talking about the messengers, I don't know whether it uses the words "cooperative fellowship with us, having so many members, or having made a contribution of at least \$250 to the overall work of the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention." But there has always been that argument. I remember in our church history class under Dr. Barnes at Southwestern, there would be a debate over "Do you pay your way in or buy your way in by contributing \$250, or is it a membership basis--so many messengers for so many members?" But I do believe that we are going to have to do a little shoring up there.

Now, you see, periodically we have had a threat come along to disrupt our fellowship. A good many years ago, of course, the evolution fight came on, and we had a big hassle over that; but that sifted down and we finally all got together where we wouldn't make that a test of fellowship. Then, we came along on the question of the second coming of Christ, and there are a lot of brethren who are radical premillennialists. I am a premillennialist, but I am not a radical one. They wanted to make that a test of fellowship. Then, in more recent years, while I was president, there were some who wanted to make a

question of alien immersion and open communion a test of fellowship.

A man introduced a resolution in Miami, the first year I was presiding in 1952, Brother Jesse Yelvington of Texas, that we would not seat messengers from any church that received people by alien immersion or practiced open communion. I ruled his motion out of order on a technicality, that a constitutional amendment cannot be considered beyond the second day of the Convention. It must be introduced the second day, and I said, "It's out of order for that reason." He dissented and I encouraged him to appeal my ruling and he did. The Convention voted to sustain the president.

My thought was that I knew the Convention wouldn't adopt it as an amendment next year, but to lie on the table all that year we would have all kind of rhubarb and hassling and argument in the press. We would have nothing but "an up-scuttling" and a "yow-yowing" the whole year over a constitutional amendment that I knew, or just felt like, didn't have a Chinaman's chance to pass. I was sincere, and I didn't violate any breach of etiquette or anything else in ruling as I did. He was out of order because it wasn't introduced soon enough in the Convention.

Then, in Oklahoma City in 1949, when Dr. Lee was president, I was elected first vice-president. That had nothing to do with my election, but E. P. Alldredge came--one time he was with us and another time it looked like he wasn't--with the motion that we amend the constitution or the bylaws that we would not seat messengers from a church that had any affiliation, directly or indirectly, with the then, I believed they called it, Federal Council of Churches, now the National Council of Churches.

Dr. Lee showed his statesmanship and proved he was nine feet tall when he relinquished the gavel to the first vice-president, not me because I hadn't been elected yet, and said, "Let me in a point of personal privilege ask you to defeat this motion because it is divisive; it will be disruptive of our fellowship, and I think we ought to defeat it right now." And coming from him, great conservative that he was, it had no association with the National Council, ecumenicals, you know. You remember all that, that incident in our recent history. But these things at times unsettled our fellowship.

For years I never did go to a Convention that the Baptist papers did not predict that we would have one grand, knockdown, dragout. But usually the things they predicted the big fight would be on never did even come up. So I got to telling the press boys, "You guys are just bad medicine for us. You psychoanalyze us and put it in people's minds that we are going to fight, and some go there dedicated to fulfilling your prophesy. Why don't you keep quiet on it? These things are not going to

come up. If they do, we'll just have a little friendly debate and Baptist scrap and go on our way."

M: I notice that you spoke at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference back in 1946.

G: In Memphis? No, no, Miami, Florida.

M: Was this your first time to speak to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference that you recall?

G: I believe it was. M. E. Dodd was the president. I don't even remember my subject at that time, but I could very easily find it. I also, incidentally, preached at the Convention. W. A. Criswell and I preached at the closing afternoon session on Sunday afternoon. I had Bron Clifford with me, whose daddy at one time was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Boston; and he was a great, tremendous young evangelist. Dr. Dodd was sold on him and had him at Shreveport, and on the basis of that, I had him down here. He was here with me just before the Miami Convention. He had just at that time received an offer from Metro Goldwyn Meyer in Hollywood to go out and play the part of Marcellus in Lloyd Douglas', The Robe. We had a press conference while he was here and announced to the world that he was accepting their offer.

Well, he went down there with me; and he was introduced, and he spoke to this Pastors' Conference. He and I were seen around together quite a bit down there. He was a tremendously impressive fellow and preacher. But he got his "foot in the lard bucket" a little later on. He went out there to Hollywood, and he got to going the ways of the flesh. I have a documented file from people out there, stories that a newspaper columnist gave as testimony to the fact that he was a grand fellow because he could drink as much as he could. All of that came out. Now that was long after the Miami Convention and his revival here with us. But it just shows you how easily a man of M. E. Dodd's posture can be deceived by brethren. All of his presentation was showmanship as the Pentecostal say, "Standing in the power of the flesh."

I got off the subject, didn't I. It's so easy for me to do. But, in those days, Dr. Dodd, as the history of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference shows, was the conference. He didn't have any officers; he carried it on. But he started it, and Herschel Hobbs was the first one to be elected by the brethren as president. Then they decided that a president was not to serve more than one year. I have spoken many times at the Pastors' Conference, though I never was an officer of it; I never cared about it. I guess of all the Pastors' Conferences since that date, I have spoken to at least a third or fourth of them. I have many of the sermons written out that I preached to them, or tapes of them.

- M: From this early meeting of the Pastors' Conference and from that time to this, has there been a change in the programming and also the place, position, oh, how would you say it? The role played by the Pastors' Conference?
- G: I have a concern at times that it is trying to upstage the Southern Baptist Convention. The presumption is that when the preachers first get there they are all hungry for preaching, for speaking; and they get it satisfied by one day that is constant, sermon after sermon, and a night session with all of that business going on. Then, when the Convention opens--you know the mind cannot absorb any more than the seat can endure--so they go to conking out on the Convention sessions proper. Then, too, it is thought by some that it is the springboard for them to get into Convention leadership, and many of the men who served as president were immediately lifted out of the presidency of the conference and made president of the Convention, not by design or purpose necessarily, because Dr. Weber is a case in point.

I love Dr. Weber and he is doing a grand job as president; but he was president in Dallas at the Pastors' Conference and he was then, subsequently elected Southern Baptist Convention President at Dallas. The exposure he got for the grand job he did at the Pastors' Conference, of course, made him a natural for being elected president of the Convention. Ramsey Pollard was another who served as president of it and got elected president of the Convention. Herschel Hobbs is another one, there are probably several others of them.

M: Wayne, also.

- G: Wayne Dehoney? Well. It doesn't always follow, but I will tell you what gets a man elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention more than anything else. I know it was true in my case. It is exposure you get to these various state evangelism conferences. Now I know for several years I had been very popular in going to several different states and preaching at their state evangelism conferences, and right there you touch the grass roots movement of Southern Baptists as you do in no other way. I suppose by the time we got to San Francisco in June of 1951 that I had spoken to over half of the state evangelism conferences. That very year I had made trips to California, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, and all through there. I had spoken at those pastors' conferences and the preachers who were there voting at the present convention knew me. I was a fresh voice and a young buckboard who could relate to them. The older men favored me. You get that exposure there; and many of the men, Ramsey Pollard and Herschel, both included, two of my dearest friends, and I all got our big exposure through either the state evangelism conferences or the state conventions where we were guest speakers, you see, at one time or another.

- M: I notice for a number of years prior, and as you say in the year itself, that you were on the Pastors' Conference program on June 19, two days I believe, before your election as president of the Convention.
- G: Well, I don't recall that, but I preached at the Convention in San Francisco for the Home Mission Board and gave its report on "Strengthening the Home Base." As I told you in the other tape, they published that, and I still have in tract form the publication. I made a strong case for the fact that we do need a Home Mission Board. That was the address that I read; and Dr. Lee said after I was elected, "don't ever let me hear you read another address to the Southern Baptist Convention." I do not recall that I preached at that. But I was chairman of the committee on Order of Business at that Convention, too, and that had me up before them. In the nature of the very circumstances I was up before them quite a bit. I had preached on The Baptist Hour before that.
- M: And you had served at first vice-president, also, prior to that time.
- G: Yes.
- M: What are other factors that you see that actually made them involved in your election or contributed to your election as president of the Convention in 1951?
- G: Well, it definitely was not any well-structured and planned wire-pulling, political campaign. As I'd move around over the country for weeks preceding the Convention, the brethren would say, "Well, you're going to be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in San Francisco." So, I said, "Well, greater fate could befall nobody except Southern Baptists for that thing to happen." And I made light of it. With God as my witness not one time did I ever bring the subject up, such as "Who do you think is going to be elected president in San Francisco?" I never did one time.

I hate to admit for posterity to hear this and read it that the hottest I ever got was in Florida, when I was on a trip down there speaking with Joe Dawson, C. H. Bolton, who headed the Baptist Foundation, and a guy by the name of Cliff Walker, who was on the staff of George McGuire, the state secretary. We were speaking in a series of missions conferences all over Florida; and after it was over, a missionary, D. F. Stamps, foreign missionary to China, wrote me after I was elected president, that it was reprehensible that I would scheme and politic as I did to get elected president. He said in his letter he had "proof of it" that on a certain trip in a certain state, on a five-day speaking engagement, that I brought the subject up in an automobile; and when the other people in the car didn't indicate they were in favor of my being president

that I blew my cool, got mad, and actually said some very strong things for a preacher to say. I wrote him back and said, "Beloved, I don't know who your informer is, but he is a liar and I would face him."

I lived to see the day when I was in a revival in Daytona Beach and that dear old missionary was there. He autographed my Bible. I have it over there. He was about 86 years old. He begged my pardon. He said, "I found out that I had been deceived about that matter." They dealt later, for other reasons, with this Brother Cliff Walker. Now, when he reads this, or hears it, I hold nothing against Cliff Walker; but if he indeed was the one who reported it....I know it wasn't Joe Dawson or Charles Bolton. I don't even remember that the subject ever came up, I certainly didn't bring it up.

I didn't know who was going to nominate me at all--didn't have any idea. John Jeter Hurt was the one who did it, the president of my old school. He nominated more presidents at the Conventions than anybody else. I was president, also, that year of the Southwestern Seminary Alumni Association. That was the third year I had served as president. That gave me a pretty good exposure, you know, to our Southwestern graduates. I was the first man to graduate from Southwestern ever to be elected president. Of course, men connected with Southwestern were; Dr. Scarborough was president, and he wasn't a graduate of Southwestern. Dr. Truett was president of the Board of Southwestern, but he wasn't a graduate of it. Is Jaroy Weber a graduate of Southwestern? I know he attended there, but if he's not then I'm the only graduate Southwestern has ever had. Ramsey Pollard didn't graduate.

- M: I think Jaroy got his B. D. at New Orleans, but he did some work, I believe, at Southwestern.
- G: Well, it's really beside the point. But in 1951 I was, at that time, the youngest president ever elected. I believe it was John A. Broadus who was just a few months older than I was. He was younger at the time he presided than I was when I presided. But I was younger at the time I was elected, because I was elected a year before I presided.
- M: You mentioned John Jeter Hurt who nominated you at the Convention, and you shared with me some of your correspondence relating to that event. I found a letter there from Dr. Hurt to you, and I wanted to ask you about some of the things that he said, if you might fill me in here. He said, "Some of the super-loopers are not thrilled, of course, because they are afraid of one who lives close to the grass roots." What was he talking about? Do you remember that?
- G: I guess he was talking about the established, old-line makers of opinion. You see, Louie Newton, president of the Executive

Committee, president of the Convention, John Buchanan, Walter Pope Binns--leaders in the Executive Committee for years and a dear old man from Georgia that was in so long and leaders like that were friends of his, but they didn't relish a young upstart coming in.

Now let me say a word about Dr. Hurt's philosophy as he told me once, and I think he has got it in one of his books. He would wait until everybody else was through nominating, or just about ready to close nominations, and he wouldn't come to the platform. He would get up way in the back of the house like he was representing the commoner. "Brother President." "Yes, Dr. Hurt?" He would take his time to deliberately walk up to the microphone. He didn't rush up there and grab it to put his man in first. He made it appear, you know, that it just came to him on the spur of the moment. He didn't tell me that he was going to do it. Now, your've got to ask a man's consent before he is nominated, but I had been told that he was going to. I was sitting right there on the stage at my desk, you see, as chairman of the Committee on Order of Business. He came and nominated me, and then, they had the voting by secret ballot. It was in the afternoon. There was a tie between Marshall Craig and me. R. C. Campbell was nominated, and J. W. Storer was nominated. He was pastor at that time in Tulsa.

I've got a story there about how there had been influence from Oklahoma on people in California, pulling for his election. Actually, some of the students at Golden Gate got some of those letters, and they resented it very much. They said that Andrew Potter, who was a close friend of Dr. Storer's and was at that time secretary in Oklahoma, had written those letters to them out there urging them to support Dr. Storer. Of course, they didn't at that time know that I was going to be nominated.

Well, anyhow, in the final runoff it was between Marshall Craig and me. They announced, then, that they would have the runoff vote just before the session adjourned that afternoon, and a lot of people had left. So, on the second ballot, I didn't get but 99 more votes than Marshall Craig. We both got fewer ballots than we got in the first primary when they had so many nominated, you know, because people had left. I barely beat by 99 votes. Of course, that isn't something I would like to put in headlines, but it happened.

M: It's part of the record.

G: Keegan told me after it was over--he was a dear friend of mine and he had just gone the year before to be Southwide BSU secretary to succeed Dr. Frank Leavell, who had died--that Frank Tripp, who was a member of my church and head of the hospital here in New Orleans, was at the Convention and told him, "Kearnie, I came out here believing that J. D. Grey had a good chance to be elected president, but," he said, "I am staying

down there at the headquarters hotel and these old giants of leaders down there, the old veterans, are going to cut him to pieces in that election if he lets his name go up." He said, "You are closer to him than anybody else. I think you ought to go to him and ask him to not let his name be put up, and if it is to withdraw because he is going to get clobbered."

I said, "Well, how did you answer him?" He said, "Well, you tell him. Can't anybody tell that fool anything. He won't listen to you." They laughed and made a joke out of it. But he said, "I knew that he didn't know what he was talking about because I had been talking to people over at other hotels, too; and I knew what the score was and that it was just as strong for you, stronger even, than it was for the candidates for the old regulars, so to speak."

But there tends to be a polarization of sentiments around a particular type personality and one who is dedicated to a certain set of beliefs and things. If it hadn't happened that year, I doubt I'd ever been elected though I'd been nominated again. But I'm glad it happened the first time I was put up.

M: You mentioned the matter of grass roots. Now, in our conversations thus far I get the impression that perhaps you have approached your entire ministry from the matter of touching the people where they are in the grass roots rather than through channels necessarily.

G: That's always been a thought I had; I mean I just came by it naturally, I guess, it grew from my childhood. I have always wanted to pay some attention to the child who is ignored.

George Ritchey, pastor of Mansfield, Louisiana--his lovely wife died a few months ago--said that Johnny said to him one time at Shreveport in a state convention, "You watch J. D. Grey when he comes out of a Convention session. He passes right by M. E. Dodd, W. H. Knight, and all the big shots, and goes right out there on the sidewalk and starts glad handing and backslapping a bunch of country preachers, just guys in small situations."

I said, "Why, of course I did, because those fellows out there are more of my breed. I respect Dr. Dodd and Dr. Knight and other so-called big shots, but I'm not looking to them for anything; I have their friendship."

I didn't plan this, but I liked it because I was a commoner, one that was calculated to respect the brethren in the less important places that we very foolishly categorize people. And in my years since I retired as a pastor in 1972, the great delight I have is going to little churches that years ago would never have thought of asking the pastor of the First Baptist Church of New Orleans. They didn't even imagine that he would take time to come or could afford to do it, you know. But now,

I go to a lot of those places where I sometimes barely get much more than my expenses. I have a lot of fun, a lot of love, a lot of welcome.

- M: Dr. Hurt made this statement, and perhaps you can let me in a little on the man himself. After speaking of one who lives close to the grass roots, he said, "They are afraid of one who lives close to the grass roots," and then, you said Dr. Tripp said people would cut you down if your name was put up. What was this all about? What reason would they have to do that to you?
- G: They were the establishment. I mean the men who had been tried and true leaders in the Convention felt that one of their representatives should be elected. J. W. Storer, for instance, I presume that they were thinking about him. He had been president of the Executive Committee; he had been Mr. Nashville Baptist. Some of the pastors in Tulsa told me he wasn't much of a Baptist back there, and that he wouldn't even cooperate with the association. They tried to get a Baptist Book Store branch there, and he opposed it. He wouldn't go along with them; but he was big at the Southern Baptist headquarters level in Nashville, in other words. These men felt their buddies and cronies ought to go on and continue things as they were, and they just sort of resented the intrusion of a Johnny-come-lately, an untried and unproven man, particularly.

Did I recite on the other tape about Walter Pope Binns telling me that I had out a bad press before I was elected? He said many thought I would embarrass Southern Baptists with my buffoonery and all. He said, "Man, you have been misunderstood." Well, he was in that group. He was probably one of them that Frank Tripp was talking about when he said "they're going to cut him to pieces." He meant by that, of course, that they would just defeat me. One of their nominees would get it, and it would be embarrassing to me to get beaten. No physical violence was going to happen, but they were using just figurative language. They didn't necessarily oppose me, I think, on my doctrinal stance for they knew I was a rock-ribbed J. R. Graves type, West Tennessee Baptist; but, I guess, it was just on the matter of being young and inexperienced. You know we are afraid of things like that when we get older; we don't trust the Johnny-come-latelies.

- M: Was there anything said on your part about the matter of your smoking, for example, being a factor in this?
- G: It didn't come to my attention. It couldn't have come from Dr. Hurt because Dr. Hurt smoked a lot. He used to dry smoke. He'd just keep a cigar in his mouth and never light it; and all those old-timers, John Buck [Buchanan], my soul, Louie Newton, they all smoked pipes. That night in Springfield when Walter Pope Binns came to my hotel room, we sat there for two hours

and smoked cigars, and talked these things. It was not a problem then.

After I was elected, I thought it would be the right thing, so Sunday morning I called Dr. Lee and told him I would like to come by. I wanted him to pray for me and give me some suggestions on how to do. So I went in and we talked a few minutes, and he just said, "Well, let the Lord lead you. Just do what you think you ought to do, and I'll pray for you. Then we prayed, and he put his arm over my shoulder; and he said, "A lovely lady did say to me, 'I do wish our president didn't smoke.'" I said, "Dr. Lee, you tell Mrs. Lee that I said I will not embarrass Southern Baptists by my smoking."

I did kind of go underground and actually refrained from it for a good little while. I was a little more careful and guarded about it, particularly when I was among others whom I knew it would embarrass. There are things like that you don't just publish in the newspaper right off; it has to just leak out. I say about smoking like Abraham Lincoln said about liquor, "It has many defenders but no defense."

M: Dr. Cox enjoyed a good pipe as you may have been aware.

G: Yes, I knew he did.

M: When did you first begin, by the way?

G: About the time I came to New Orleans. I used to fight it. As a younger minister I used to criticize smoking, 'cussing, and all that; I put it all in the same category. I finally made up my mind that if a man could be as great as B. H. Carroll who was known for his smoking, and also Charles Haddon Spurgeon, it wasn't all that big a sin. Of course they allege, you know, that you'll influence the young people to start. Well, I guess maybe some do, and yet, most of their daddies smoked and many of them their mothers. I don't think that's a big thing there. But it has been a point of great annoyance to my wife. She asked me even this morning if Dr. May, "Does he smoke?" I said, "I don't think so." She said, "My goodness alive. I don't see why you would do it around him." I said, "Because he is in my house and my study, and he can stand it; he's been around men before."

M: Certainly. It doesn't bother me, but I just wondered if some were trying to make it an issue, you know, at the time.

G: No, they wouldn't dare do that; it wasn't even thought of. My soul and body, many of the men who have been elected such as Herschel Hobbs, Ramsey Pollard, Louie Newton, on back; well, Casper Warren smoked with me and others of them, but it was just one of those things. There wasn't any issue made of it, but they were knocking me.

Now, I know that this thing should be on the record and I won't give all the names, but Dr. Lee told me that after I was elected a committee came to call on him. He told me the chairman of the group. They said, "We hear that Grey is likely to be elected, and he will embarrass us by the dirty stories he tells." Dr. Lee said, "Well, I've heard Dr. Grey tell a lot of funny stories, but I never heard him tell one that was dirty." Then he laughed and pushed my arm like that, and said, "They told that one that you told about brotherhood."

I went over there to speak to his brotherhood and I told a crazy story about a kid who was page to the Pope in the Vatican. It was his job to go in every morning at eight o'clock and knock on the door and say, "Your Holiness, it is eight in the morning and people are all happy, the sun is shining." The Pope would say, "Thank you, son, God and I know it; God and I know everything." Well it went on days and days like that, and he got tired so one day he varied it. He knocked and said the same thing and the Pope said, "Thank you, son. God and I know it; God and I know everything." That kid said, "Huh, You're crazy as a peach orchard shoat. It's four o'clock in the afternoon, raining like hell, and a revolution is on." Dr. Lee said, "I told them, 'Well, my men laughed at it, and if I had been telling it, I would have left that word out; but we thought it was funny.'" He said, "That's the story they used to prove that you told dirty stories."

One of those men has tried to get elected time after time after time and has never made it, a rather pious brother but a good man. He had done a good work, and we are good friends; and as far as I know he doesn't know that I know. He went to Dr. Lee and tried to scuttle me. I don't know how he thought Dr. Lee could stop it, because the incumbent can't stop a fellow from getting elected if the people want him. But that's one of the hazards of it, but it never did worry me one bit.

- M: Has there been a good bit of this kind of behind-the-scenes activity among Southern Baptists in the election of their officers across the years?
- G: I haven't seen that. No, I haven't been familiar with it really. I didn't know about that particular instance until later. A few years ago one man, they said, hired a public relations firm to circularize the leaders in the Convention about his qualities. We went to one Convention and we had to drive quite a way in the limousine from the airport to the headquarters hotel. There was a businessman in the city of a certain aspirant; and he said, "We are plugging for Dr. so-and-so to be elected this time, and we want you to support him." He said, "By the way, we've got a room, a parlor, up on the tenth floor of headquarters hotel," or whatever floor it was, and "we've got cokes there and sandwiches. Come by and bring your friends and meet Dr. so-and-so, and let's have some

fellowship." Just like a political campaign, you know, but I can't believe that that man would be so little and designing as to set up a politically orientated campaign to get elected. It sure didn't work because as I recall he wasn't even nominated that year. But that's very unusual. That's the exception.

M: Exception and not the rule?

G: Oh, yes. And all this business about wire-pulling, swapping out, and all in a back room, I just don't believe it. I prove it by the thing that happened in Dallas when we elected Jaroy Weber. His name hadn't even been mentioned by other people, you know, and he came from behind.

On that question of political crushes and swap-outs and so on, we've got to be realistic in life. I knew you when you were a student here in the New Orleans Seminary, and I have been very fond of you over the years. I would be willing to go a second mile on this little project we are in just because of my respect for you and acquaintance with you, and my knowledge of you. Now if some fellow from off across the country.... A lot of people have wanted to come to interview me who were going to write an article or something like that, and I just shoved most of them off. I sent them a biographical sketch and gave some of them a copy of the book that Jim Cole and Bob Lee wrote. I said, "You can find out all you need to know about me in this book. We don't need to take a day to talk about it."

If a man is a graduate of a school I attended and I know him, or I've heard him speak, or I've been on committees with him, or if we are friends, naturally, I am more inclined to vote for a fellow like that if he is nominated than some fellow over there that is just a name to me. I know nothing bad about him. I'm not voting against him, but I'm voting for this friend of mine. I know there have been a few overly pious brethren who have tried to make it appear that it was a big swap-out, a political campaign and all that kind of stuff.

I had a letter a few months ago from some youngster in the Southwestern Seminary. His professor had assigned him a project on evaluating the motivation of the presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, and he asked some silly questions that I didn't even take time to answer. I just threw it in the wastebasket, stamp and all, and didn't pay any attention to it. He asked about the President's position of prestige or influence or "the desire to be big dog" that motivates men who want to be president of the Convention. I resented it on the very suggestion that a man wanted to be president. I guess everybody down in his heart might aspire and hope some day he might be, but if he begins to articulate that desire and ambition, people soon find out. I just can't see that angle in it. I may be so naive I don't even notice it.

- M: One reason why I sort of raised that question: In his letter that I mentioned to you of July 16, 1951, after your election as president, he went on to say that certain individuals were afraid of those who lived close to the grass roots. He then went on to say, "That's where I have always found shelter." I assume he is talking about among the grass roots these are his people.
- G: Dr. John Jeter Hurt was a Chesterfield. He was a Virginia gentleman of the first rank. He was a close personal friend of George W. McDaniel; he nominated him, in fact. But yet, he loved the common man. I recall now that the poor, woebegone, bedraggled students in Union who had the toughest time found an ally and a friend in Dr. Hurt; and the humble people in the church, he seemed to pay more attention to them than he did the big shots. He had been pastor at Raleigh, North Carolina, before he came to Jackson. He had had an illustrious career and had been well known and used in Southern Baptist Convention circles. He was saying, still coaching me, "Now don't forget the pit from whence you have been dug and the rock from which you were hewn, where you've come from."
- M: I see.
- G: I have always tried to follow that even before he wrote me. There is an old country saying up in Kentucky, "Take an old poor hog up and fatten him, and he'll grunt at you."
- M: Dr. Hurt went on to say--let me repeat what he said awhile ago, "That's where I've always found shelter though I've ganged with those who are called of the Lord to fix things also." I wondered if he....
- G: That's irony. That's sarcasm.
- M: Sarcasm?
- G: He meant to say "those who feel called of the Lord" or "feel predestinated and foreordained"....What? To fix things?
- M: Yes.
- G: You know, honestly, it has been so long I've even forgotten the content of that letter. I have it in that scrapbook?
- M: Yes. It is in the scrapbook.
- G: I should have that in my presidential file, I guess. Are there many other letters in there about my election?
- M: Yes. In the scrapbook it looks like there are many letters on your election as president. These are letters of congratulation to you from across the Convention.

- G: Well, as an archivist, would you recommend that I leave those in that scrapbook, or should they be stacked and put in a file in the presidential letters' drawer?
- M: Well, I think they ought to be a part of the record of your presidency, because it does give some indication of people's regard for you, their evaluation of you as a person elected to an office, a high office, in our Convention. I don't know, maybe we can talk a little further about this. The scrapbooks contain really a record of a lot of materials that are nowhere else, I assume, brought together at least in one place.
- G: That's right.
- M: There are clippings from the secular press as well as the Baptist papers and so forth.
- G: Well, it is sort of an arbitrary collating that I did. I thought that those having to do specifically with my election would make interesting...., putting all that together.
- M: Sure.
- G: The accounts of it and reports of it are there. Then, the actual service as president is in the two subsequent books.
- M: Well, it's a good way to do it.
- G: But I have my letters in here, ones of controversy and others, you know. I had a lot of controversy particularly when Harry Truman nominated Mark Clark ambassador to the Vatican. That was the first year I was president. I opened up on that from Dan to Beersheba.
- M: I noticed in looking at your first year as president that there were a number of issues, but before we get into some of those, I'll take a minute and turn this tape over to the other side. Suppose you share with us that instance, then, about the Program Committee on Order of Business at the 1951 Convention?
- G: The 1951 San Francisco Convention. Well, I was searching around for some "pizazz," some sparkle in the program. I knew that Kearnie Keegan was going to have Dale Evans and Roy Rogers there. Herschel Hobbs was president of the Pastors' Conference, and he was going to have Billy Graham to preach. At that time Earl Warren, who was alleged to be a Baptist, was governor of California, and he later, as you know, became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Fuller Warren, alleged to be a Baptist in Florida, was governor of Florida. I thought, what a nice thing it would be to have this Baptist governor of California welcome the Convention and present a box of California oranges, and the governor of Florida, Fuller Warren, to

respond and present a box of Florida grapefruit. We'd get some fun going there, two Baptist governors, both of them prominent.

Well, I shared this idea with Dr. Dodd, and I wrote to the pastor at the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, who later became the secretary of the Kentucky Baptists, Harold G. Sanders. I said, "Slip around to the back door of the governor's mansion, tell him what I have in mind, and ask him if he will be open to the suggestion of being invited." So, he came back with the report, "Yes, the governor will go, he'll be glad to go along with it." I was just about ready, yes, I did, extend the formal invitation; and I don't recall whether I got a letter of acceptance, but Sanders had told me that he would.

I talked to Dr. Dodd about it. Then, the Saturday Evening Post came out with a story about the scandal connected with the racetrack at Hialeah, Florida, alleging that Fuller Warren had netted four hundred thousand dollars in graft off it. It seemed to be an open-and-shut case that he would be prosecuted in federal courts.

Dr. Dodd called me just as hot as a pistol and said, "J. D., you can't have him, why that man is in all kinds of crime. You must not have him to speak on that program." You see, I hadn't even talked to my committee about it; I had just tried to set it all up. But I had gotten the acceptance of Earl Warren of California. I don't recall whether I had a letter from him or somebody else had gotten word from him that he would come and do it. He did come and welcome the Convention. I was at a radio station being interviewed that morning, and I couldn't be there to meet him when he came.

I had to write to Harold Sanders and get him to withdraw it; and in some way the exchange of correspondence got in the press, got in the papers. I was really embarrassed about it in a way. I have all that correspondence in my file, my drawer out there, when I get around to that. But anyhow the whole thing blew up. Of course, it wasn't announced out there.

Earl Warren, I don't think, is as much of a Baptist as we thought he was; he later became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. I have been meaning to look in my files and see if, indeed, I did have a letter from him, because that is one of my hobbies, collecting letters and signatures of noted people.

Then, when Harry Truman nominated Mark Clark ambassador to the Vatican, I opened up on it here. I preached a sermon from my own pulpit, it was on radio; and the deacons had several thousand copies of it printed. "What? An Ambassador to the Vatican?" Then, I went to the Houston Convention. I didn't get one letter from anybody in New Orleans objecting to what I had said; but, boy, when it appeared in the Associated Press that I

had said some things at Houston, Texas, about it, the lid blew off. Why, they started writing me letters from San Francisco, Chicago, and Boston, letters you'd have to write on asbestos paper, they'd be so hot. Those Catholics didn't know J. D. Grey. They thought I was just a bigot who didn't love anybody, but the Catholics of New Orleans knew better. They allowed me to say what I wanted to say.

There was a preacher down in Florida who gave up his church and became an Episcopal rector on the strength of the way we were mistreating the President of the United States by criticizing him for what he proposed to do. I have got correspondence on that; he wrote me a letter, you know, when he left the Baptist faith down there. Oh, it was hairy, man, it was hairy.

I've got a whole segment on controversies that I got into during the time I was president.

M: Well, it might be well, when you come to Nashville, that we deal in specifics with some of those controversies and issues that were raised during the years you served as president. Do you remember anything else about the 1951 Convention? Any other issues that came up there that were of note?

G: Well, the proceedings of the Convention were rather bland. I mean there were not many thorny issues at the San Francisco Convention that I recall. It was the third and last year of Dr. Lee's administration, and it was on a high spiritual plane. Dr. Lee kept it on that all the time he was president.

I remember the night that Roy Rogers and Dale Evans spoke. Kearnie was in charge of the program, and it seems like the youth had that night's program. He had deputized me to go out to the sidewalk, to meet their car and escort them in. So I met Dale Evans and Roy Rogers at that time; and I didn't even think to get their autograph, which I wished later I had done. Kearnie up there was announcing. Now this was before the election. He said, "My dear friend of many years, Dr. J. D. Grey, of the First Baptist Church of New Orleans, is now going to escort Dale Evans and Roy Rogers to the platform." So, they came up and gave their testimony. They didn't even have "Trigger" with them. (laughter) I had some great experiences of meeting people like that and being in on the ground floor of those things that happen.

You know a funny thing. Jim Cole tells it in saint J. D. A bunch of them went out that afternoon to eat after the final second ballot was taken; the results were going to be announced at the opening of the evening service. Well, somebody slipped around and told me that I had won, and I knew it when I went over to preside the last time at the Southwestern Alumni Association. Perry Crouch of North Carolina succeeded me. I had had it for three years. Bob [R.C.] Campbell was in there, and he had

also been nominated. Of course, he is a graduate of Southwestern, and he is from North Carolina. He was eliminated on the first ballot, and it was known. He got up and said, "I want to tell you all why J. D. Grey beat me in this election today." Everybody just sat there listening, you know; and I, too, wondered what he was going to say. He said, "He got more votes than I got." That broke the tension, you know.

When I presided at Southwestern meetings, I would wear a red necktie. So, I bought a red necktie, and when I introduced my successor, Perry Crouch, to succeed me as president of the Southwestern Alumni, I presented him this red tie as an insignia of his office. Of course, that got a big laugh. He never wore anything but a black tie.

Jim Cole was just a young preacher, and he and some guys had gone out for supper. There was an opera house next door to the Cow Palace where the sessions were held. When they came back Jim rolled down the car window when he saw some people coming out of the building; and thinking they were Southern Baptists, you know, he just yelled out, "Hey, who's our president now?" This fellow says, "Damned if I know, Harry Truman, I reckon." Jim said, "I concluded right then he was not one of the delegates to the Convention. (You dear girls that are transcribing this, please believe me that's just reporting facts as they happen. I ordinarily don't 'cuss like that.)"

M: Dr. Grey, this, I believe, was the first time the Convention had met on the West Coast.

G: Right.

M: Did you find the people, Southern Baptists from the area out there especially appreciative of having the Convention come out their way?

G: The Southern Baptists out there?

M: Yes.

G: Oh, it tickled them red, white, and blue. They pulled heaven and earth and one corner of the hot place to get us to come. The Baptists in Washington and Oregon were together in one Convention; they had a loose affiliation with us at that time, but I don't believe they were bona fide members. Ben Milam was out there and he was the old staunch stomper, and they all wanted us to come, particularly the seminary, which was just getting started. B. O. Herring, I believe, was the head of it at that time. Wasn't he the first president out there? From Baylor?

M: The second president.

G: I remember going out to the seminary one day during the Convention, a whole bus load of us. They took buses out there to see their property. It was not out at Strawberry Point, but in town in sort of a bad location, an old abandoned building. Then, I remember going when Harold Graves was inaugurated the next year, I was president then, and Porter Routh, Fred McCauley, and I were out there. We had to take an early morning flight after we had had the inauguration ceremonies, where I spoke. Dr. Storer was there because he had been Harold Graves' pastor and friend in Oklahoma. It was early, and we went into the coffee shop at the airport, we all three had on black neckties. This waitress came up, a real bouncy gal, and she said, "Well, are you fellows undertakers who have been to a convention?" There we all had on black suits and black ties, and until now that has been a joke between Porter and me.

But it was a blessing to them. The feeling was that we would bring strength to their work, give them some exposure, and let people know who Southern Baptists were. It's doubtful that meeting on the peripheral like that, or when we met in Philadelphia, and even up in Chicago, whether we do that much good for the Baptist image in that section. They sometimes treat us with contempt, but I am willing to go along with it. It always cuts down our attendance. We had a very small attendance in San Francisco.

M: Was there any carry-over that you could determine during that meeting from preceding Conventions?

G: Well, the preceding Convention was in Chicago in 1950. No. We didn't have anything lying on the table, any pending amendments as I recall it, except we had this Gardner Committee. It was a standing committee on Relation with Other Baptist Bodies, and then, they dropped the word "Baptist," changed it to other "religious" bodies. W. R. White was the first chairman of it, elected by the Convention; and during Dr. Lee's administration Dr. White had to resign. Dr. Lee just arbitrarily named--he may have gotten it confirmed by the Executive Committee later--T. C. Gardner of Texas as the chairman. He came in punching at the National Council of Churches every time he gave his report, punching at open communion, and churches that received alien immersion. He just punched at them all the time. I think that's what egged E. P. Alldredge on to introduce his motion, you know, in Oklahoma City to amend the constitution and read those people out of the Convention in 1949.

That furnished the basis of my presidential address at Miami, my first presidential address, when I said, "This is not a body to draw up creeds; it is not a creedal body. We are for combining, eliciting, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the gospel." I made that my theme. You can read my presidential address in there, and I came down hard on it.

I was known as one rock-ribbed, J. R. Graves' kind of type, West Kentucky, West Tennessee Baptist, and I told them up in Virginia, "Now I wouldn't take a Campbellite in on Campbellite immersion if he had been dipped in every mud puddle between here and New Orleans; but if you take him in, I'm not going to read you out of the Convention because you've done it, because I don't believe that ought to be made a test of fellowship in a convention." I think that was a view that we still hold in as Southern Baptists; however, there are some who are beginning to say, "Well, you can't raise any criticism of anybody's doctrinal position."

One man at our Convention in Miami Beach described the creedalists. But I found out in the final analysis that he was talking about that group headed by Bill Powell that had something to do with the Baptist Faith and Message [Fellowship]. They pointed him out. Well, I didn't know who it was he was hitting at, but he got headlines in many of the Baptist papers.

I suppose anybody could raise the question about some fellow's doctrinal integrity, but we cannot make the doctrine test on these things that are not all that important. Now on the fundamentals, yes, on the inspiration of the Scriptures and the deity of Christ and all that, I think we can bear down on that. We should have some body of truth to which we all subscribe.

M: I believe, in reading some of the press releases relating to the 1950 Convention, that your name was brought in nomination for the presidency. Can you share a little with us about that?

G: Well, it was just mentioned; I wasn't nominated. No, Dr. Lee was nominated in Chicago, and reelected.

M: Yes. I knew that he was reelected.

G: Some reporters there got the notion, and there was one picture taken of Herschel Hobbs and me. The caption read, "Two who may be groomed and considered and nominated for presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention." So, that was a joke through the years between Hershel Hobbs and me, that we were both being touted by some people as possible presidents.

It did eventually happen but not immediately; because there was nobody as long as Dr. Lee agreed to go up for a third term. We all held our breath after Chicago, that Dr. Lee might go up for the fourth time in San Francisco. It came out one day; Albert McClellan gave a news release that Dr. Lee had given, saying that he would not allow his name to be put up at San Francisco for a fourth term. There was a great sigh of relief.

E. D. Head, who was the president of Southwestern, my alma mater, came through New Orleans; and he telephoned me one day. I don't know why I dared to mention this, but I had just gotten

one of the state papers, and Dr. Lee's picture was in there. I said, "Have you seen the paper where Dr. Lee says he is not going to stand for election a fourth time?" Then, he said, "Well then, that opens the way for you, doesn't it?" I wondered, and meant before he died to ask him, if he was being sarcastic or if he was sincerely interested in me and friendly in my behalf. I kind of think it was the latter because Dr. Head was always nice to me, and we had been friends before he was elected president of Southwestern. He was pastor of Houston "First Baptist." I respected him and loved him.

He had me on the campus for a revival. In fact there were numerous occasions before I was president of the Convention even, where Union and Southwestern both honored me far beyond anything I deserved. I get embarrassed sometimes by the way they just keep on doing it. There comes a time when people say, "Why good night, can't we hear about somebody besides this guy, a graduate of this school?" Well, they do, but they just....

M: Dr. Grey, it has been just delightful.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Southern Baptist Convention Presidents Program

INTERVIEW BETWEEN:

INTERVIEWEE: J. D. Grey

INTERVIEWER: Lynn E. May, Jr.

DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 27, 1976

PLACE: Historical Commission, SBC, 127 Ninth Avenue, North,
Nashville, Tennessee 37231

M: Dr. Grey, it was a real privilege to meet with you in November in your home and begin the oral history interview series with you. Now, as we begin Series II, during this trip to Nashville, we would like to perhaps begin right about where we left off and that was, I believe, with the 1951 Convention meeting when you were elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Would you share with us some of your recollections of the events of that particular convention that led up to your nomination and election as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

G: Do you want me to tell the whole story?

M: Yes. I would like for you to tell it all.

G: That was at San Francisco. I had served as first vice-president of the Convention the year before in Chicago. That was in 1950, and I was named chairman of the Committee on Order of Business for the San Francisco Convention. Of course, I had the responsibility of being on the platform. I was representative of my committee at every session, and Dr. Robert G. Lee, of course, presided.

Before we got to San Francisco several had said that I was going to be nominated for president, and I said, "Well, I just don't believe it." I didn't believe I'd have a chance to get elected, because I was very young at that time. This was in June, and I had become 44 the December before that. I said, "I don't believe it will happen." But they said, "You just leave that to us," "us" meaning a group of friends of some fellow pastors, some preachers. I had been going around all over the country speaking at state evangelism conferences, associational meetings. I got a wide audience there in those places, and the brethren were very gracious to me. Will Henry Knight was our state secretary in Louisiana, and he told several people that I was going to be the one to be elected.

When we got to San Francisco, Kearnie Keegan, our dear friend over the years, the late Kearnie Keegan, told me that Frank Tripp said to him one day, "Kearnie, I came out here believing that J. D., Grey, that is, had a chance of getting elected president; but I am staying down there at the headquarters hotel, and those fellows are going to cut him to pieces by the election of an older man." They mentioned the name of a prominent leader that I won't mention here. He said, "I think you ought to talk to him and urge him to pull his name back and not let them nominate him." Kearnie said, "Well now, Dr. Tripp, you know J. D. Grey as well as I do; and if you want him told that, you tell him, he's your pastor." So, that was that. But Kearnie confided in me. He said, "He just didn't know; I was staying over in another hotel, and it was a different story there."

Now if anybody is listening to this, or reading it, thinking there is always a dark, back-room, cigar smoke-filled room of lobbying going on about electing a president, that is not so. Naturally we favor a man that we know, one we believe in and like; but it isn't a matter of arm-twisting. A certain group of people likes a certain man for some reasons, and another group likes another man for another reason.

Kearnie said, "I wasn't beginning to come to you and tell you that; and I told Dr. Tripp so, because I didn't think it was as dark a picture as he painted."

Well, when it came the time for nomination I didn't at that moment know who was going to nominate me. I had not asked anybody, and nobody had volunteered; and I hadn't raised the weight of my little finger to have it come to pass. God is my witness.

M: When did you first hear that your name would be placed in nomination?

G: Oh, a specific date, Dr. May, I could not determine. I could guess somewhere back in February. I spoke in Brownwood, Texas,

at Howard Payne College at a pastors' conference. H. H. Hargrove was pastor of Coggin Avenue Baptist Church, and he was finishing his doctor's work at Southwestern when I was finishing my Th.M. He's the man that I acquired this Webster wire recorder from that I gave to the Commission recently.

He came to my room at the hotel, and he said, "J. D., I hear your name is being prominently mentioned to be president of the Southern Baptist Convention at San Francisco." He went on to say, "You're young and it will come to you in time; but I am very interested in Wallace Bassett being elected president. I would like to ask you to sort of call off your dogs (laughter)--that's the way he expressed it--and let Dr. Bassett be elected this time, and your time will come."

I said, "Well Hub, I haven't put out any dogs; I wouldn't know which dogs to call off. I haven't asked anybody for it." I said, "I would favor Dr. Bassett, too. I admire him as one of our strongest denominational leaders, and from my early days in the seminary when he was at Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas, and I was going to school in Fort Worth and pastoring at Vickery in Dallas. We were dear friends and I admire him, but I can't do anything about it." Now that was one of the first real strong statements from somebody that I got that I was going to be nominated.

John Jeter Hurt had nominated six presidents of the Convention, all of whom were elected. He nominated M. E. Dodd, George W. McDaniel, and I don't know who else in between there. He nominated me, and after me he nominated J. W. Storer; but he nominated all six. Well, when we came to the nominations he came up and made a speech nominating me.

He used one illustration in there that I think won a lot of friends for me. He said, "This man was in the great world-famous pulpit of the Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles, right down on Pershing Square last Sunday, preaching." I had gone there on my way to San Francisco and supplied; they didn't have a pastor at that time. He said, "Would you believe he got up in that sophisticated pulpit on Sunday, and his subject was entitled, 'Hell Fire and Damnation'? And, he said, 'He actually preached on hell fire and brimstone and damnation.'" Of course, that brought a good laugh.

But he used it to illustrate that maybe I was a commoner and could reach the masses, that I had that common touch, and I wasn't afraid of a big awesome situation like this great Temple Baptist Church of Los Angeles.

But anyway they took the votes. At that time everybody just took a sheet of paper and wrote on it the name of the man they wanted. Several of the men were nominated, and the minutes of

1951 show among them: J. W. Storer of Tulsa; R. C. Campbell, secretary in Texas; Marshall Craig of Dallas; and I don't recall, maybe one or two others. Then they voted and then took the first ballot. They had to have a runoff between Grey and Craig, so, they made the announcement that they would vote now on these two. Well, by that time, a lot of people had left, and there were many, many less votes cast in the runoff ballot than were in the first. Actually, I got far less votes in the second ballot than I did in the first. I did not win over Dr. Craig but about 99 votes. A lot of my friends had thought it was a cinch, so they voted and left. Of course, you know how it is now. I served on this committee, later, of former presidents to structure a plan to make the elections more precise and exact in starting to use the computerized system with ballots punched out.

M: Did you bring it up earlier in the Convention meeting, also?

G: This method?

M: No. No. The election time, the time of electing the president.

G: I think so. It had to be before, I think, not later than the second day, I believe.

M: Yes.

G: Earlier. But I was chairman of the Committee on Business that year and I, of course, was before the Convention quite a lot. Also, I preached the sermon for the Home Mission Board that year on "Strengthen the Home Base." In one of our prior conversations I told you about Dr. Lee's word to me, "Don't ever read another address before the Southern Baptist Convention." Then, they announced my name that night.

There was a humorous little incident happened there that Jim Cole and Bob Lee had in the book, saint J. D., about the night, if I could tell it again. Jim Cole, who was editor of our Louisiana Baptist Message, had gone out to dinner with some friends; and he was very interested in how it came out because he was strong for me. When they returned, they were driving along beside the auditorium, and there was a crowd of people coming out of a building there which was the opera house. They were a crowd of people who had nothing to do with our Convention. Jim Cole rolled the window down, and yelled to a man there, "Who's our president?" This man used some pretty strong language, and said, "Damned if I know. I guess it's Harry Truman." So, that gave a good laugh to the boys, and they realized that this man was not attending the Convention. He shouldn't have been talking like that if he were.

It was first thought that I would go in as radical and rough. One great leader, Walter Pope Binns, confided in me the next November when I went to Missouri to preach at the Convention. He was president of William Jewell College, and he came up to my room after the session that night. He said, "Grey, you've had the wrong publicity out on you; I never have known you very well, but I've heard you a few times. Some of the men have said, 'Why if Grey is elected he will carry on a lot of foolishness and be a buffoon, worse than Oscar Johnson with all of his clowning.'" He said, "Your address tonight to the Missouri Baptist Convention was expression of a real Baptist statesman, and I am glad I got to know you as such." I said, "Well, Dr. Binns, I've never asked any publicity agent to put a caricature of me out, and maybe my informality and few jokes I try to tell leave the impression with people that that's all I am."

The next year the Convention met in Miami and that was the first year I presided. My dear friend, Theodore F. Adams of First Baptist Church, Richmond, saw me in the Columbus Hotel going out, and said, "J. D., some of the brethren who are not quite as conservative as you were a little bit apprehensive when you were elected; they were afraid that you would try to be favoring all the time the fundamental and conservative brethren and kind of put down those who disagree with you," but he said, "You are not that way." I said, "No, Ted, when I was elected I made a vow to the Lord I would be the president of all Southern Baptists and not just my friends." He said, "That's right."

I'm rather proud of the reputation that I got for fairness and clarity in my rulings; I don't know whether I deserve it or not. Many have said that I was fair and clear in my presiding of the sessions. I let everybody have his speech. I would call my friends out of order, some of these big shots, old-time leaders, just as quickly as some young country preacher, if they were out of order. I feel the president has an awesome responsibility when that gavel is placed in his hands. It does much toward locking in a man on more solidarity and firmness, because he realizes then that he represents something besides himself. He represents all Southern Baptists, in a sense. I don't mean he speaks for them, but he somehow is in a nebulous way a spokesman for them, nothing binding; but you know what I mean.

M: Well does this not especially hold true among non-Baptists or people outside maybe the ranks of the Southern Baptist Convention--their view of the president of the Convention as spokesman. In other words, if they want the Convention to speak to an issue, while you were serving as president, did they ask you for your viewpoints?

G: Yes. They frequently would get in touch with me, like October 22, 1951, when President Harry Truman nominated General Mark Clark as ambassador to the Vatican. The papers immediately began to call me as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and ask me, "What do Southern Baptists think about this?" "Well," I said, "I haven't asked them yet, but from commitments they have made in the past and our feeling about freedom of religion and separation of church and state, I rather imagine they are going to be opposed to it."

I began to inveigh against it everywhere I went, speaking against his appointing a man to a political entity, ever so small as the Vatican is, and I urged him to call it back. I went to Washington to a Presidential Conference. He had asked several of us to go up there for a conference and had leaders there, a White House Conference. I didn't talk to President Truman about it, but I did speak to several senators, among whom were John Connally of Texas and our men from Louisiana; and I got their promise that they--of course, they volunteered it--would fight it. Finally, I think it just died; it never was brought up for action and was virtually withdrawn; and we have not had an ambassador to the Vatican, as such, a representative.

M: Were you in touch with Dr. Dawson about this matter at the time? J. M. Dawson?

G: Oh, yes, yes. I knew the stand of Dr. Dawson and his committee on it; they and the Convention issued many statements on it. Mine were mainly given in speeches. I went to Houston to speak to the Texas Convention the next week after I got back from Washington after the President nominated him, and I spoke out against it in Houston. The Associated Press, United Press, caught up my statement about the thing; and the papers in San Francisco, Boston, and Chicago quoted me and carried stories about it. I received some red-hot letters from Catholics in those cities, far away from New Orleans, criticizing me for my stand; but not one came from a friend in New Orleans.

I had preached on it in my own pulpit, the First Baptist Church of New Orleans, and my deacons had copies of the message printed, "What? An Ambassador to the Vatican?" But nobody in New Orleans rapped me, because they knew me; and they knew that while they disagreed with me they gave me a right to my opinion. I said it in good taste and they gave me a right to my statements on it, to say what I wanted to say about it. I wasn't abusive or mean or belittling, but I did it, I think, in the best taste.

I felt I carried an awesome responsibility to say something when they were expecting somebody in the Convention to say something. It doesn't matter what a head of a commission says,

if the president of the Convention is quiet on something, it sort of goes under the rugs. Now, that isn't to say we have a new concept of the office of the president, but it is what people expect of him. Even after a man serves in an office, all of us have a feeling that there are certain things we must and must not do as a former president, one who has been trusted by the Convention. I will give you a case in point. Someone started, I think it was Dr. Dehoney at Dallas, the very happy custom of having the former presidents have dinner with, I jokingly say, the reigning monarch, the current president; and I think the Executive Committee picks up the tab on it. We have dinner together and just chat informally in fellowship, and then, he discusses with us some issues that are coming up; and we sort of advise him. If he wants our advice, he asks for it.

In Dallas, a couple of years ago, the question came up, should a former president nominate anybody for president of the Convention? The consensus among us was virtually unanimous, it was eventually unanimous that a former president should not nominate a person for election as president of the Convention. Now, I answered Dr. Criswell's question when he brought it up, "Well, I'll answer it because I violated that rule in 1958, I believe it was, in Houston, when Brooks Hays was being elected a second term." He was getting a lot of flak because of his stand on the race question. Somebody said, "If you, Grey, will nominate Brooks Hays it will be a shoo-in. They usually re-elect a man a second term, and we believe there won't be any opposition at all." So, on that basis, I got up and nominated him for a second term. Little did I know that some lady would jump up out in the audience and nominate Bob Naylor, president of the Southwestern Seminary, in competition, because she didn't like Brooks Hays over the race question. But, Dr. Naylor withdrew and asked them to drop his name. Now we have the rule in there that before a person is nominated you must get his consent.

Robert G. Lee, our most illustrious living former president, said, "All of us have so many friends, and we are going to lose friends and offend some by bucking for one man against others." He just thought that we had had our say in it, our time, and we ought to pull back and let somebody else select a president; and I agreed with him.

- M: To what extent have you seen the role of the Convention president change? I think you have shared a little with us about that from some of these changes of procedures, but how would you describe the role of a president of the Convention?
- G: It has metamorphosed considerably. It has changed a good deal in recent years. You know, as someone said, "You are not old when you are rheumatic; you are old when you are reminiscent."

But I remember, back there in 1933, M. E. Dodd had been elected president of the Convention, the Washington, D.C. Convention. W. E. B. Lockridge, whom you knew in Louisiana and who was at that time pastor at Terrell, Texas, came down to Ennis to speak to my Brotherhood; and he spent the night in my home with me. Dr. Lockridge said, "Well, Grey, I got a letter today and guess what? It's from the office of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, on the letterhead." Now, I haven't researched it, but he left the impression with me, and I have always believed, that never before had the president had stationery printed, stating there, "Office of the President of the Southern Baptist Convention." So, he started a trend. It came in a very subliminal way, a very quiet way, letting it be known that there was a physical office of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and it is attested to by this printed letterhead. So the Executive Committee every year after has beautiful letterheads and envelopes drawn up for the office of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Well, I don't think the most nonconformist and most radical conservative among us would object to such a practice as that. We know what it means. It means that is just the place where he gets his mail, and where you get in touch with him if you want to write him and fuss about something.

But the role is sort of more like, I think in recent years, of just a counsel or, a consolidator, and a peacemaker, one whose voice is listened to when issues are brought up in the Convention councils, the Executive Committee, and other places. I don't know why but they kind of attach to the office an aura of, not infallibility but a little more wisdom maybe than the fellow had when he was just in another position.

It was a wonderful experience, and I am glad I had it when I was young instead of when I got up past 65, like several of them did, because I don't think at 65 a man can really keep up the physical pace. Now there has been a great advocacy to let him serve one year only. Well, heaven's sake, he ought to be present in all the state conventions; and he couldn't possibly cover all of them in one year. His presence there is not too significant any more than a grandmother being present when her daughter's first baby is born. She can't do a thing in the world, but just standing around sort of gives assurance to the young mother. Maybe the president is somewhat in that role of giving encouragement.

I think that they would make a mistake to limit it to one year, but I am glad they limit it to two. When I was elected president in San Francisco the next year, Dr. Hurt, who nominated me, set the plans in motion to amend the bylaws that a president can't serve but two years. Dr. Lee had served three years.

M: Earlier ones had served many years.

G: Yes, many years, and some thought that Dr. Lee might go up for the fourth trip. Anyway, I think it is wise to limit it to two years; that settles it once and for all. They say, "Well, they honor more men." Well, for goodness sake, we have thirty four thousand pastors. Let's give every man a day then, you know, maybe that will help a little bit, or an hour.

M: What would you say about the idea of it being an honorary position?

G: Well, it is a position of honor.

M: It is a position of honor, but is that the purpose of it, to honor an individual?

G: No. I think not. I think in most cases it should be a reward to men for service rendered. We have many great and noble men who knock themselves out serving Southern Baptists and some of them, never were nominated. I always had a feeling about Frank Tripp, who recently died in Montgomery at 85. He was one of our great leaders, virtually the father of the Hundred Thousand Club, and one of the founders in the days of the Cooperative Program; but Frank Tripp--he was vice-president once--was never elected president. We ought to honor men for service they have rendered. It is unthinkable that a young upstart, 44 years old like I was, should be elected. Why, I had not even been president of the Pastors' Conference, and that has been a springboard, you know, to the presidency.

M: I wanted to ask you about the relationship of the Pastors' Conference to the election of president. It does seem, indeed, to have been a springboard for a number of people.

G: Well now, the purpose of this interview is oral history, and history has not been made yet as to the future of that connection; but I will put into the record this observation. It is physiologically reasonable and expected that if a man who has had exposure before all these preachers a day and one night before the Convention proper opens, and if he sounds a good sound and they "Amen" him, he can go right into the Convention the next day or two and be elected. When his name is put up, they may never have heard of him, but they have had exposure to him at that Pastors' Conference, as president of it, well, "he'd be the very one."

I think your department might do well to give a report sometime on how many men have served as president of the Pastors' Conference then go on to be president of the Convention. Well, M. E. Dodd, of course, started the Pastors' Conference and ran it for years, then he passed the ball on to Herschel Hobbs. Herschel Hobbs was not elected immediately after his retirement as president of the Pastors' Conference, but he did come up a

little bit later. Then, Ramsey Pollard was president of the Pastors' Conference once, and he made the Convention. I don't recall about Dr. Wayne Dehoney, and I don't think Criswell was. Paschall and I were talking about this in Nashville this week when we were together on Sunday, Franklin Paschall. He was never president of the Pastors' Conference.

I have a feeling, and I hope this can get to the ears and the eyes of the leaders of the Pastors' Conference that one day we could sort of de-emphasize it. It is always a great, howling success, and I mean howling, because some of us howl a lot when we preach. Preachers come in there, and they are hungry for good preaching. They haven't been together in fellowship, and they are always excited; and in that conference you don't have anything of a burden or an argument or a discussion. They just get up and preach, preach, preach; and the fellows are just about sated by the time the Convention opens. They have pre-empted the field and taken the wind out of the sails of any great, high inspirational moments at the sessions of the Convention. The churches send the pastors to the Convention to find out what the denomination is doing. Well, the Pastors' Conference is not the denomination; it is just a bunch of pastors doing their thing there, while the singers are over in one place, the educational directors are in another, and all others going to these meetings. If I might say this, not in a bad spirit but in a realistic sense, they have become the sideshows; and the people walk off and leave the main event, the circus. That's a bad term to use, I know, but you get what I mean.

M: I think a survey was made just a few years ago to inquire of the messengers if they might want to change the order, have the Convention first and then, have what are now pre-meetings as post-meetings; but I believe the pastors reacted very highly against it.

G: No, they would never go for that. The Woman's Missionary Union has to have their gathering, you know; but I don't knock it because it stands to reason everybody is going to a Convention, denominational leaders and all, to meet with the people and attend to all these other matters.

The Annuity Board always has a breakfast for all us "annuitants." That's what I am now, I am not a retiree. But this is one of the strangest things about Southern Baptists without any ecclesiastical overlordship, without any valid modus operandi, we just keep moving along, winning souls, sending out missionaries, and growing by leaps and bounds. It is the most fantastic thing you ever heard of.

M: This growth is something, and from your long perspective as pastor will you share with us some of your insights into how it

is that Baptists are growing when others are not? Perhaps right now would be just as good a time as any. Why is it that Baptists, Southern Baptists in particular, are still growing at such a pace?

G: I think we can take, in the spirit of malice toward none and charity toward all, the contrast between the American Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. Now, when we had our divorce, our separation, in 1845, some say it was over slavery. It was not over slavery per se; it was over the independence of a local church and its autonomy. There were some churches in the South where the pastors were slave owners. They didn't beat and abuse the slaves; they treated them well. But, they felt it was not right for the big denominational body to read out of fellowship in the Convention a church because it tolerated slaveholders in its membership. I am sure--your being an eminent historian if I am wrong on this correct me--that even Thomas Jefferson owned slaves. Yet, he wrote the Declaration of Independence, "That all men are created equal."

M: Yes.

G: Well, to bring that into focus the difference there came about for different concepts and ideologies of mission work. The American Convention--they called it the Northern Convention for years--and the Southern Convention had just about as many members and churches when we had the separation in 1845; but the years passed by and their concept was more of the society effort. All of their boards were independent agencies that were put out to gather money for themselves, their schools, their seminaries. Each one was independent of the other. They were not owned, supported by, and controlled by the denomination. But they came on into the 1920's, and then this controversy over modernism came up: inspiration of the Scriptures, virgin birth, and all that.

I have been reading recently an article in a historical publication about the scrap that was made back there by "Bible-believing," as they called themselves, conservatives led by men like E. B. Pierce and William B. Riley. They fought as hard as they could at the Convention for a Statement of Faith, believing in the New Hampshire Confession of Faith and all, but the other crowd rooked them when they came in with the substitute, "We believe in the New Testament." They substituted those words for the "New Hampshire Confession of Faith," and they won out.

Now, over the years, their membership has continued to dwindle. I have spoken in the American Baptist Convention, and I have known their executives. I served on the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance for twenty years, 1950-1970; and the executive secretary of the American Baptist Convention and other heads of their boards were always there. Theirs is mainly a hierarchical thing in that the executives, in the

main, and board employees make up the sessions of the Convention. They are the ones that set the tone and pace.

Not so with Southern Baptists. The executives may propose, but the Baptist constituency will dispose. They sometimes go against the recommendation as shown in New Orleans in the 1969 Convention over the naming of one of our training agencies at the Sunday School Board and in the matter of the commentary. When Southern Baptists get stirred up they tell the big shots--Board heads, denominational "serpents," as I jokingly call them, but I mean servants, of course--what they think. We still have democracy, and it is something that makes me get pretty hot when people intimate that there is not a democratic spirit in the Southern Baptist Convention, that the big shots are running the show and we are just little puppets going along. I don't believe that one bit.

I notice at the Convention, and anybody who watches it will, that the most illiterate, humblest backwoods brother can get to a microphone, if he physically can get over there before somebody else, and get the attention of the Convention. That, of course, sometimes is one of our undoings because there are a lot of us brethren who just love to hear our voices rumble through those cavernous halls, you know, as shown by all the resolutions that are introduced from year to year. But let's have it. You know, democracy moves slowly, but it moves permanently. It happened in our government of the United States, and it happens in the movements of the Southern Baptist Convention. When one Southern Baptist gets a notion somebody is trying to, I use the word "fugaboo," you know, hoodwink them, bamboozle them, they just rise up in arms. They'll "kick the shaves off the buggy and run away with the harness," if you know what I mean.

Now, you are talking about the philosophy of the position of the president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and I wouldn't in anywise mark it down. I am glad I had the honor. I rejoice in it, but I am sure glad it is not going to come to me ever again. You have had it once, that's enough.

My dear friend, college mate, and fraternity brother, John Hurt, editor of the Texas Baptist Standard, has often rebuked me and has taken Hobbs, me, and one or two other former presidents to task for not being more vocal in the discussions of the Southern Baptist Convention. I said, "Now, John, I walked off that platform when I turned that gavel over to Dr. Storer; and I go back only when I am invited back, or when I feel that there is something that just ought to be said but nobody has said it. I am not volunteering to get up there and get other people's chestnuts out of the fire."

When we came to that big scrap in San Francisco when Dr. White brought his famous resolution about the "poison porridge in the

pot," bitter porridge and so on, and made his statement which resulted in getting the committee appointed to bring out the new Statement of Baptist Faith and Message, I was standing backstage there listening to the debates going on. Every half a dozen people who came by said, "Dr. Grey, why don't you go in there and save this situation?" I said, "Boy, this Convention has got so many saviors now, jumping in there, that they are going to drown one another and not get anybody out." I said, "No, they will save it." I didn't say a word, but I don't know whether a president is to be expected to continue to try to speak his piece and influence others. Naturally, a lot of people say, "Well, he was president of the Convention, he ought to know about this; so let's hear what he thinks." But I am reluctant, though you would never believe this, I am sure, to volunteer. So I wait until I am conscripted.

A young graduate student, I think at Southwestern Seminary, sent me a crazy questionnaire last year wanting me to answer a lot of questions about a paper he was writing, "THE PRESIDENCY-Is It Power or Prestige?" There were a lot of silly questions like, "Do men aspire to it for the prominence it gives them," and so on. I just threw it in "File 13." I didn't want to take time to encourage a study like that, because, after all, it would be only my personal opinion; and I would be fairly strong in saying, and I think for other men, too, that we didn't seek it. It was not looked upon as a matter of prestige, though that's in it; but it was that we might be able to serve as best we could as others have done.

M: The matter we were also dealing with concerning the office of president brings to mind another matter in relationship to other bodies of the Convention presidents. I am sure you attended the American Baptist Convention meetings, perhaps some of the National Baptist meetings. Do you have any recollections of those meetings, your involvement in, or the relationship that you shared with these groups?

G: Well, I never had the privilege of attending but one such gathering, and that was the American Convention that met in Chicago in about 1952, I think. Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, a great Yale church historian, was president. One of the delights of my life that I'll always cherish was that Dr. Latourette and Dr. Reuben Nelson, then the executive secretary of the American Baptist Convention, took me to lunch and the delight we had in talking. In the conversation Dr. Nelson said to me, "You could very well be presiding now as president of the American Baptist Convention, if you had done what I wanted you to do in 1941." I looked quizzically at him. He at that time was secretary of the Minnesota American Baptist Convention and Dr. William B. Riley had had me to come to his assembly at Medicine Lake, near Minneapolis. I preached for him in First Baptist Church on Sunday, and he was hinting around that he wanted his church to call me as pastor, and Reuben Nelson, I

do recall, urged me to look with favor upon such a call. What he was saying was that I turned away and stayed in New Orleans, and it resulted in my being elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, whereas if I had come to Minneapolis, I very likely would have wound up as president of the American Baptist Convention. I said something that gave Dr. Latourette and all a good laugh, I don't know what, but it was rather farfetched. I felt complimented that Dr. Reuben Nelson would say that. The great honor of being in the presence of Kenneth Scott Latourette, I daresay, you would have welcomed such an opportunity, as a historian.

M: I would.

G: I have always admired him. He was a missionary in Madras, I believe in India first; and then, later, he was a professor there at Yale.

M: He was a very outstanding historian and a great Christian man. You mentioned visiting state conventions while you were Convention president. I believe I recall that one of those conventions that you may have met with was what is now the Northwest Convention, the Oregon-Washington Convention. Do you remember that?

G: Yes, but I think it was for their Evangelism Conference in Portland, rather than for the annual convention. Then, I went on down and spoke at the California State Evangelism Conference, but I had spoken at many of the states in the West, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, at their annual sessions of their conventions at different times.

M: The relationship of churches in the Northwest and in Canada at this time was a matter of concern back in the fifties. Do you recall any conversations with R. E. Milam, for example, about this matter?

G: Oh, yes. I knew R. E. Milam. We call him Ben Milam because of the name for the fighter in Texas in 1836. R. E. Milam and I were fairly good friends, and he urged my election as president. He was for it even before others said anything about it, but he wanted to branch out too far. He wanted to reach into Canada and get all those Canadian conservative Baptist churches in Western Canada, Victoria, British Columbia, and over in there, to come into the Southern Baptist Convention of Washington and Oregon. Of course, we had a final discussion of that. You know the historical implications and the nuances of it better than I do, but there was an agreement worked out. The Home Mission Board very largely backed the work in Washington and Oregon in those early days, and they still give some support; but an amicable settlement I think was made of it where we said, "We cannot take those Canadian churches into our Southern Baptist Convention by virtue of the fact that they

belong to the Washington-Oregon Convention." I think they never did get really lined up, but Milam was a great advocate of inclusivism. He was really more conservative, I think, than I ever was--more hard-nosed in it.

There was a dear old man who was president in the early days down in the California Convention, Lackey, I believe his name was, sharp, baldheaded fellow. When California came in, I was at the San Antonio Convention in 1942, and we had a terrific scrap on it there. I know M. E. Dodd got all upset. Dr. Lackey and some of them in California were saying that where there are Southern Baptists we need to minister to them. Dr. Dodd retorted by saying, "Well, that's what Hitler said, 'That where there are Germans that is a part of Germany, so he went into the Sudetenland and invaded the Polish corridor and all that'"; and he accused us of being Hitlerites. Well, you can imagine what happens if you hit a man with that kind of argument. (Laughter) Yes, it was a pretty tense situation, but that was the attitude.

In those days some Baptist pastors back this way were discredited for one reason or another--this man had left his wife and taken a girl as his wife and gone out there, or some had run from debts back here in some cases. They would go out there and get anonymity about them and wind up as pastor of a church. But the California Convention and churches began to get more stabilized and more settled, and a more solid type of work began to emerge. What later became the Golden Gate Seminary when B. O. Herring was there--started in a store building, didn't it, down in San Francisco and then later was taken on by the Southern Baptist Convention--helped the situation as they began to train preachers and to solidify the work a little better.

M: Why do you think Dr. Dodd reacted to these churches being brought into the Convention?

G: Oh, I think I know. He went in 1927 for about seven months from First Church, Shreveport, Louisiana, to the Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles, and he had a lot of friends out there in the American Baptist Convention. Dr. Dodd wanted to maintain the channels of communication with the Yankee brethren. I think his loyalty to his friends in the American Convention of California made him want to disavow any fellowship with those radical Southern Baptists who were coming out there and doing a lot of wild things. He just felt that California Baptists should not be affiliated with the Convention yet. I don't know whether anybody has researched that controversy or not. I don't know how much of it is revealed in the minutes of that Convention, but certainly the reports of the Executive Committee would show a lot of it.

- M: It was a real matter of controversy for a while. Did Dr. Milam, regarding the Canadian churches, in any way seek your counsel, or did he just try to persuade you to his views on receiving these churches?
- G: Well, it was more that. But really the big fight on that did not come while I was president of the Convention, it preceded that. I went out there and spoke at evangelism conferences in Washington and Oregon before I was president of the Convention, and then he would see me back at conventions and begin twisting my arm to take a certain stand on it. I sort of avoided it as much as I could. I went out there as an encourager of the brethren. I spoke at the International Kiwanis Convention in Seattle in June, 1952; and Baptists there, knowing I was coming, lined me up for dates in several churches. I spoke in a theater right down near the shipyards, and in that movie theater that they had acquired at least temporary use of, I preached on Sunday morning. Then I went out to another church on Sunday night in between my engagements at the Kiwanis International Convention. I was president of the Convention at that time. They wanted me to encourage these brethren by being there, and I was glad to do it. But that was encouraging a local church starting in a mission situation because Southern Baptists were few and far between there at that time.
- M: We were talking earlier about Southern Baptist growth, and now Southern Baptist churches are in all fifty states. The work in some of the western states was just beginning, I guess, as you were serving as president, back in the early fifties. How do you feel that Baptists came to grow as they have in these western states where American Baptists were already there?
- G: The migration of our people is one thing. Here's a situation: Here's a good old loyal, rock-ribbed, Bible believing, hymn singing family from a Baptist Church down in Alabama, Georgia, or somewhere in Louisiana or Mississippi, and they are transported to the middle of Minnesota or any of those states. They go down to the Baptist church and it is a rather high church, liturgical; the preacher wears a robe, and he preaches rather high-sounding, polished sermons, but it hasn't got that hell-fire and brimstone they have been used to. The hymns they sing are the stately hymns of the church which are great but it doesn't "send" them. So, they start going over to the First Assembly of God Church or the Nazarene Church, and they march to a different drummer there. They like what they hear; it is more like what they had back home.

We were losing people in scads and droves who migrated to those areas and didn't feel welcome or happy in those churches. They couldn't move in and change them, the American Baptist churches, so they began to join those churches. Then, some began to say, "Look here, "us" is all Baptists, why don't we meet together over at Deacon Jones' house and talk about organizing a

Sunday School and a church?" Or they would meet and they would say, "Well, I know some who work at the shop down there with me, came right out of Birmingham, and he'll get with us." So, the first thing you know you have got a bunch of good old solid, rock-ribbed Southern Baptists, saying, "Let's get a church where we can have a fellowship of kindred minds, rather than try to convert the Yankee church or join the Pentecostal groups; let's start our own church up here." "All right, but how are we going to get a preacher?" "Well, maybe the Home Mission Board could help us find one, or a church down in Texas could support us and undergird us."

It's just as reasonable as that daylight follows dark, the things that have happened. American Baptists will never believe anything else but that we charted the course and designed on the drawing boards in Atlanta and Nashville to take over the whole United States; but if they will look at the record and study the statistics they will know it is different from that. It just came about because there were people there. A lot of our men, I know, have gone into some sections looking for Southern Baptists who have migrated there and who are living there. And the work became strong and vital, growing by leaps and bounds. There are a lot of people there who are hungry for that kind of program and that kind of services.

I think, you keep asking me why we have grown. I have given a long dissertation on ecclesiology and methodology and all that. I think in our belief in the fundamentals of the faith and in our belief that preachers ought to preach the book, and I believe that that is where you will find churches that are growing. I could name you a dozen of them without batting an eye that would be well known to all of us. The preachers of those churches are coming down strong on biblical preaching.

I am serving now on this Missions Challenge Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. We will report to the Executive Committee in Nashville in February of this year and then, in June, to the Convention. We are repeating over and over again phrases like "on the biblical basis for stewardship and missions." Our Southern Baptists have traditionally been a people of the Book; and where you see fellows today who are departing from it, preaching everything but the Book, their churches are dwindling up, drying up, except in a few cases where a man has such a great personality like Norman Vincent Peale. He can go off on psychology and all that and mesmerize the people for a while, but it won't last.

The preachers who have stayed in the pulpits longer have been preaching the Book. How could W. A. Criswell stay in the First Baptist Church of Dallas as long as he has, if he had just preached on topics of the day? Or Hobbs in Oklahoma City, how could he have stayed unless he was an expositor preacher? R. G. Lee, for 33 years in Memphis? M. E. Dodd, 38 years in

Shreveport? The Bible-centered ministry is what we are talking about needing, and there needs to be a revival of that type of preaching. I think our churches are hungry for it, because I hear these laymen talk. They shake their heads sadly and say, "Our preacher is a nice fellow, but he sure doesn't preach the Bible."

M: Preaching of the Bible has always been basic for Southern Baptists.

G: You better believe it. I think the men in our Baptist colleges and seminaries should come in a rededication and a recrudescence, a new breaking out of emphasis on biblical preaching and biblically-based teaching for the preachers and for their teachers in Bible schools and all other activities, emphasizing their responsibility to win the lost. Now some call it evangelism. Whatever you call it, it means simply a concern for others, the salvation of their souls.

You know a cliché is going around now, Lynn, about "Share His Love." A lot of people are saying that, and they don't have the remotest or foggiest idea of what is meant by "Sharing His Love." They think it means only to give a man a coat, a pair of shoes, and a cup of coffee. Well, that's included in it; but if you don't tell that fellow after you give him that coat, shoes, and coffee about Jesus Christ dying on the cross for him, you have stopped short. So the Salvation Army gave us a good pattern, the S.S.S., soup, soap, and salvation. You clean them up, fill them up, and give them the message; but we stop short in many places.

M: Well, you mentioned evangelism and the fact that you have participated in many evangelism conferences and other meetings. Evangelism has been certainly at the hard core of Baptist life and growth.

G: Right.

M: What do you see in terms of the role of evangelism, well, let's say, in your own ministry while you were a pastor? The role of yourself as pastor and the role of your people in evangelism?

G: We saw, everybody of a contemporary mind, a transition from the two-week long protracted meetings, revival, when we put all our emphasis on evangelism for the whole year in that one big push. We would get the biggest name preacher we could get, the biggest singer; we would put out the greatest amount of advertising and all that kind of stuff for a given period, and that was it. Now, we are not depending so much on those long, protracted revivals. We are having shorter periods, more a time of inspiration for the Christians, "souping" them up, and making it truly a revival, which is, reviving the Christians. But the personal work must be done, the witnessing, every day in the year. If I go into a

church and they are expecting all that they are going to do in evangelism to happen the week I am there, I feel very nervous and very uncomfortable. But if I look at their record and see that the pastor has been baptizing people right on through every week, nearly, and every month, certainly a number of them, I know that we are going to have a good meeting with results, because they are not waiting for just that one emphasis.

We have come to a new emphasis on sharing the faith and witnessing to others, a one-on-one basis. The great churches are baptizing three hundred, eight and nine hundred a year, like First Church, Jacksonville, Florida, and Bellevue, Memphis. I was in a church here in Nashville Sunday night where Bob Mowrey baptizes over two hundred every year because he is sending his people out and witnessing. They are on fire. Their bus ministry is going out, and every bus minister is a soul-winner. That's where it is. If I had my ministry to live over, I'd give more time to this matter of cultivating a bunch of hand-picked personal soul-winners, training them, and putting them in the field regularly; and we would have more people walk the aisles for Christ.

M: Do you think their methodology in evangelism as well as their very strong belief in evangelism has been, certainly, a part of the answer to Baptist growth?

G: I would say that, it is my conviction. I was in London, in 1954, during Billy Graham's Crusade there, and F. Townley Lord was then president of the Baptist World Alliance. I had known Dr. Lord on a very personal, first-name basis for a long time; and one day we were eating with Billy Graham, and he said, "J. D., I want you to come over to my church, Bloomsbury Central...."

M: I worshiped there last summer when we went....

G: Yes. Well, I've been there since Dr. Lord died. He was right close to the University of London, as you know. He said, "I want you to come over to my place next Sunday night and preach to my people, and I want you to tell them what makes Southern Baptists tick." I said, "Well, Townley, I will do it under one condition, and that is that you tell them you asked me to do it, because asking a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention to brag on Southern Baptists is like asking a grandfather about his grandchildren."

So he put me up and introduced me for that subject. I told them among other things that we had Sunday School for everybody, including adults, not just graduate the children at sixteen. Over there they have never learned that Sunday School is for anybody except children. I told them how we used the Sunday School as an outreach agency, evangelism, stewardship, everything. Then I said, "Another emphasis has been our

emphasis on evangelism, our great crusades as well as our week-by-week soul-winning. Another thing is on the Cooperative Program as the means of financing our churches, a systematic way." I asked a Baptist preacher in London once, "How often do you all preach on stewardship in your church?" "Oh," he said, "we never mention money in the pulpit. It is considered poor taste to mention money, you know." I wanted to say and I was proud of myself for not saying it, "Yeah, and that's the reason you're in the bad shape you're in today, financially, because you don't preach on it." Then, I said, "There is our unified giving and our organized mission program, Foreign Mission and Home Mission program." I said, "That, I think, is what we rest upon," and I still believe it.

I see in many cases here today, in 1976, that we are coming back to many of the old methods. When I first started out as a preacher in 1925, and on up, J. N. Barnette and W. P. Phillips enunciated in Sunday School work and others, to take a census, send people out and go out after them, build a class, get the teacher, train the workers, give them a place to meet, and turn them loose. We are getting back to some of those basics. A lot of the modern methods that we have tried were slick, and all that, but they fell on their faces or some other parts of their anatomy. They didn't work. We ought to have sense enough to go back to the old true and tried ways. I am not a bit averse to going back to try something that used to work for us. If it worked then, it will work again now. In our mission challenge committee I wrote in one section of the report that we want to publicize this and articulate it through every means throughout our Southern Baptist Zion, and they laughed at me. "Why if you say that, a lot of the young people in our church won't know what you are talking about." I said, "Maybe they won't, but let's give them an education, an old-fashioned idea, 'Zion.'" So, I agreed, and we changed it to "our Southern Baptist Fellowship"--big deal, big deal. (Laughter)

M: We want to get to the years that you served as president of the Convention, Dr. Grey, and you will be thinking along with us here on some of the particular issues that came before the Convention in 1952-1953, the two years that you presided. We are getting close to the end of this tape, so we might stand up and take a stretch break while I turn this tape over.

Dr. Grey, when you came to the Convention meeting in 1952, you were presiding over a large body of Southern Baptists. What were some of the issues that came before the Convention, perhaps already well along the way, before the Convention meeting itself? The press oftentimes brings these matters to everyone's attention.

G: Well, about two years before that, there had been a gathering of a cloud over the Convention, calculated because of a lot of static and a lot of hurt feelings over doctrinal issues,

specifically on the relationship to the National Council of Churches, which I believe they called the Federal Council of Churches at that time. In 1949, in Oklahoma City, R. G. Lee was president. E. P. Alldredge, who headed the Statistical and Survey Department of the Sunday School Board at that time, introduced a resolution, a motion, to amend the constitution that they would not seat messengers from any church that was in anywise affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches, and that we would not elect to any of our boards, anybody who had anything to do with the Federal Council of Churches.

Dr. Lee did one of the greatest and most heroic things I have ever heard of a president doing. He turned the gavel over to the vice-president, and said, "Would you please preside?" The vice-president presided, and Dr. Lee made an impassioned plea for them not to accept that motion, to vote it down, because it violated every principle of our belief in the autonomy of the local church. He said that the Convention had no right dictating to the churches as to who could and couldn't be their members. Dr. Lee's suggestion prevailed, and Dr. Alldredge was defeated in it. We had pretty harmonious Conventions in 1950 and 1951, with minor things coming up, but nothing exciting.

We had a committee appointed some years before that chaired by W. R. White called the Committee to Discuss "Common Problems" with Northern Baptists. It wound up being the Committee on Southern Baptist Relations with Other Religious Bodies, the purpose of which was to see just how far we could go in having exchange of fellowship with other Baptist bodies in this country, not a union with them or anything like that.

Dr. White resigned from it, and Dr. Lee appointed T. C. Gardner of Texas as chairman in Dr. White's place. T. C. Gardner was director of the Training Union work in Texas at that time, a wonderful fellow, strong, rock-ribbed West Tennessee Baptist, and a man of whom I was very fond and whom I loved very much. He would come every year with a report to the Convention that just virtually clobbered everybody who didn't agree with us. They were liberal and would take a swipe at churches and conventions that accepted alien immersion.

But I came in a peculiar way. I was known as a rock-ribbed, West Tennessee, J. R. Graves, I. N. Pennick type Baptist, in other words, I was very ultraconservative; yet, they knew I was fair and I didn't believe that any convention had a right to issue creedal statements, edicts to the churches, about what they could practice and what they couldn't. When I was first vice-president in 1950, I preached a sermon up in Virginia in a series of regional conferences in which I said, "Now you brethren up here accept a Campbellite on his immersion, but in New Orleans I wouldn't take one on his immersion if he had been dipped in every mud puddle between Richmond and New Orleans. But I am not going to say you can't fellowship with me in the

Convention because you do accept him, and I don't think that should be made a test of our fellowship. I am not going to do it, but I am not going to read you out of the Convention because you do."

Well, Wesley Shrader, I forget how you spell his name, but you remember who he was. He went later to one of those divinity schools up east, and he wrote that article in Look or Life on "Sunday School, the Most Wasted Hour of the Week." He went down the drain soon; he didn't amount to a row of pins. But he wrote an article in the Virginia Religious Herald criticizing me and said, "If that's the type of leadership Southern Baptists have, we advise them to keep them out of Virginia." Well, I made my point and the brethren agreed with me. He ought to have known what I was saying, "That I am a rock-ribbed Baptist, but I am not going to impose my beliefs on everybody else."

So, that's the long background for this thing. We came to the Convention, and I was determined that my presidential address should set the tone for the meeting. I think that every president should make it that. So, I took the first part of the constitution adopted in 1845, in Augusta, Georgia, that says "the purpose of this Convention is for the eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the Gospel." I said, "Our sole purpose is for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the Gospel." I said, "It is not to write doctrinal creeds; it is not to issue edicts. We are not in the creed-making business as a denomination." Well, they were saying "Amen," all over the place. Now we were off and running. Gardner's committee reported, and they received it rather blandly; and somebody moved to continue the committee to report the next year at Houston in 1953. It carried without any opposition.

On the last day of the Convention, Brother Jesse Yelvington, an evangelist in Texas whom I had known in San Antonio as a pastor, a wonderful fellow and a sweet spirit, but pretty hard on this thing of alien immersion, came up. He said, "Mr. President, I move that we amend the constitution that no church messengers will be seated from any church that receives people by alien immersion or practices open communion." I very promptly ruled the motion out of order because the constitution said, "It cannot be introduced past the second day," and this was the last day. It says it cannot be considered past the second day.

He mumbled something to me, and I said, "Does the brother object to my ruling?" He said, "Yes. I think if we just introduce it now, it is not violating that rule." I said, "I ruled that to even introduce it is to consider it, so I ruled it out of order." He said something else, and I said, "Brother

Yelvington, do you want to appeal the president's ruling?" He said, "Yes, yes I appeal the president's ruling." So I said, "Ask for an appeal to the Convention."

So I asked those in favor of sustaining the president in the ruling out of order so say, yea, and there was a great chorus of them; and then, those who are opposed to it, no, and there was a little sprinkling of it, so it was overwhelming.

Every appeal to the Convention that was ever made on any ruling of mine, and I guess Dr. Lee and most other presidents of recent years, too, was sustained by the Convention. So, he withdrew and sat down.

We had another controversial matter to come up; it popped up rather quickly. A brother from South Carolina wanted to get the Boy Scout movement recognized more by Southern Baptists, not as a substitute for the Royal Ambassador program but as an adjunct to it. We had quite a bit of controversy there. At that time the RA's were under the "Mother Hubbard," Woman's Missionary Union. The women had them instead of the men. Eller, I believe, was that brother's name. Now I forget whether he was a pro or a con on the Boy Scout movement, but it was voted that we not give any credence to it or recognition to it at all. Some of us were interested in getting in on this "God and Country Award," so Owen Cooper and several others organized what later came to be called, and is now called, "The Southern Baptist Association for Scouting." Always the president of the Convention writes a letter of congratulation to every boy who gets the "God and Country Award." But we moved through that one.

Then they moved to Houston next year, and I knew it was coming. Dr. Gardner's committee on relations with other religions came and made the report, and he lowered the boom but for good on various and sundry. Ed Solomon, who was editor of the Florida Baptist Witness, 1931-1949, got up and said, "I move, Brother Chairman, we accept the report of the committee and continue the committee." It was seconded and then the debates started. Several said, "We have heard this study year after year, and we are tired of it. All we do is just get in here and call everybody names. It accomplishes nothing, and we don't believe the committee ought to be continued." Well, it was time to adjourn the Wednesday session; the afternoon, you know, is recess so they can go to the seminary luncheons, and it was running late. I said, "May the president be indulged this suggestion. We are all hungry, we are all hot in this old colosseum--it was not air-conditioned--and we are all kind of uptight. Why don't we agree to adjourn now, then after tonight's session has ended, and it looks like it is not going to be a long program, let's take up this motion, discuss it calmly, and take time to do it." It was promptly accepted and they were glad to do it.

So I sought out Brother Solomon in the afternoon. I have known Brother Ed Solomon for years; I had been his mother's pastor and the pastor of three of his brothers and a sister in Texas. I buried his mother and one of his brothers. I told him, "Brother Ed, I'd give anything in the world if you would consider just withdrawing your motion tonight, because the brethren have gotten tired of that Gardner's committee report. They call it the Gardner Committee." I said, "It's thrashing that old straw over and over, and I don't think there is anything to be gained from it. You know I am a Southern Baptist, conservative, fundamental; but I don't believe the Convention is happy with what this committee is trying to make it do." He said, "Well, would you be willing for me to withdraw the motion?" I said, "Certainly, if you get the consent of the seconder, or if you will have a vote of the Convention to withdraw it."

So, when we came to that time I said, "I want to recognize Brother Ed Solomon who made the motion." Brother Solomon made a very sweet appeal, "That I be allowed to withdraw it. I had no idea until the president told me what was happening that there was any problem. I never was one to hurt the fellowship of Baptists, and I want permission to withdraw my motion, if the seconder will give his consent." I didn't know who seconded it, so I just stepped in and said, "Would the Convention vote to give him permission to withdraw his motion?" They voted unanimously, so that was settled.

In the afternoon, just before that, the Houston papers had big headlines, "Baptists Face Their First Split Tonight." So I thought it was a good time to say this. I said, "Well, I am sorry to disappoint you fine people of the press, predicting we are going to have a split tonight," but I said, "There is a story. If you just listen, you can tell them in the Dallas News, the Times Picayune in New Orleans, the Washington Star, the Los Angeles Times, and all of them that the Southern Baptist Convention is one of the most democratic bodies on the face of God's green earth." Boy, they started cheering, laughing, and applauding; and then that egged me on, and I said more. Finally, it turned into a thing where it looked like I was just skinning the men of the "fourth estate"; and I had no notion of that whatever. I just felt relieved, and the Convention felt relieved.

Many people have asked me if I regret making that speech. I said, "Not one time." I remember when I finished it, Hermond Westmoreland, bless his heart, who is retired as the pastor of the South Main Baptist Church of Houston, came up and said, "Brother President, I move that this second presidential address be printed in the minutes, along with the first one." I said, "Well, no, I doubt that it could be printed, because I doubt that anybody remembers what has been said." He said, "We've got a tape recorder back here with every word on it." Well, when we dismissed I asked the fellow who got the tape

recording to give me a copy of it, and he did. It was never printed until 1969, when Jim Cole, editor of our paper, and Robert Lee, our state secretary of Louisiana, wrote a biography of my life called saint J. D.; and Jim Cole put every word of that thing in there. He gave all the circumstances that brought it about.

M: How did the press itself, the secular press in particular, react to your response?

G: As soon as we got through, Albert McClellan, who had more to do with the press then--I think he did much of the work that W. C. Fields does now--said, "J. D., we ought to come back here and talk to these men of the press, they misunderstood you." I said, "All right. All right." In my address I had mentioned something about some newspapers that called us the "problem child of Southern Baptists." When I said, "We are not ready to join the National Council of Churches," they had said, "A chair is waiting for Southern Baptists at the family of churches." I said, "That chair will be an antique before this lovely gal of the Southern Baptist Convention comes in to sit down." I was talking about Paul Hutchinson [1949-1953], editor of The Christian Century, because he had called us the "problem child of Protestantism," and also Bishop William C. Martin [1953], I believe, president of the National Council about that time.* I may have my names crossed up a little there, but it is immaterial. The record can be checked.

I said to Albert as we went down, "Is Dr. Harold Fey in that meeting?" He said, "No, he's not there." I said, "I wasn't talking about the Houston papers or our Baptist papers. I was talking about the yellow sheets and the rags of the independents who have criticized us, Frank Norris' paper, and other things that belittle us. They don't know a thing about what we are doing, but they are always jumping on us about something." So I just said, "Gentlemen, you know I wasn't talking about the hard-working men of the press here. I was just talking about those that had been rapping us through the years, belittling us and so on." But we came out all right; I think a few had bruised shins, but in the main I am glad it came up. Many a man has told me, "I wouldn't take anything in the world for hearing you give that speech."

M: The general secular press, do you think they have generally given Baptists a fair shake in evaluating their Convention meetings and so on?

G: I am not antipress, but generally speaking newspapers want to print stories and sell papers. When two men meet, embrace, and shake hands, they are good friends and go off to do a big something or other, there is not a word in the paper about it. But

*Source 1953 Edition of the Yearbook of American Church

if they meet and start a brawl on the street, that's news. I can't blame them for it. Generally, we had to have a scrap going on before we would get much coverage. We could have a Convention when we would vote a budget of fifty-million dollars to send out a million missionaries, and then some brother would get up and introduce a resolution that we condemn smoking, or some silly thing like that; and they would give that the headlines and forget this other grand step we are going to take in progress. Well, I guess they are just looking for the dogfights and the scraps.

M: Sensationalism.

G: In New Orleans I was president of the Metropolitan Crime Commission for two years. I am still on the Board. We have had Aaron Kohn, our managing director, go to jail twice. He was put there for contempt of court because he wouldn't reveal the names of his confidential informants. When Mr. Kohn was in jail, they ran his picture with headlines in the papers. But when we would have a great effort to support the penal reform system, or have a conference on kidnapping--how to tell possible prospective victims of kidnapping and extortion how to behave and what to do in the most sophisticated way--not a word about that appeared. But if it is sensational, they write it up. I guess we can't blame them; but generally speaking, I suppose, they do what they feel they have to do.

M: The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention has certainly played a very important role in the life of Southern Baptists, Dr. Grey, and I know you have been interested in and related to in many ways the work of this committee; but what was your relationship with the Executive Committee while you were serving as Convention president?

G: The president by order of things is an ex officio member of a number of boards and agencies, and I went to one meeting, I think, of the Foreign Board, and one of the Home Board. I don't recall going to any meetings of any of the boards of the schools or other agencies, Annuity Board or the "hysterical" Commission, but I did attend the Executive Committee regularly. Then, after I served two years, by George, they elected me to full membership on the Executive Committee. I served for two terms, making a total of six years I served on it, until I was rotated off by terms. I enjoyed the service very much, but I felt I could participate more actively in it after I was president, that is, when I was not president, than I could when I was president. I had the feeling that I would be expected to say certain things as president of the Convention, but now that I was a pastor representing my state, maybe I could say something and get away with it.

I had a lot of fun in there. A lot of them talk about the fun and the scraps between Herschel Hobbs and me and Carr Collins

of Dallas and me; but they were good-natured tilts. I was chairman for a couple of years of the Administrative Committee. The Executive Committee has more and more things delegated to it by the Convention, and because the Convention has gotten so large and boisterous, and not easy to get its mind made up, it is logical that much should be referred for study to smaller bodies. Sometimes through power to act they resolve it, and other times they just report back to the Convention.

I have watched very carefully the men who have had to do with its leadership, the executives, like Porter Routh, for instance. They have been very careful to keep everything in its proper perspective; and many a time he and others have reminded the members of the committee, "Now we are not the Almighty. We don't have this right; we are limited only by instructions of the Convention." It is just like in a local church, a lot of people say, "Well, you ought to take this to the deacons, got to take this to the deacons." Well, if you don't watch out you will have a board-operated church, and if we don't watch out we'll have an Executive Committee-operated Convention. But the Executive Committee is certainly to be praised for the in-depth work it does and with the new structures it has, its program director, its analyst, and all. I think it is doing a wonderful job keeping Southern Baptists, twelve and one-half million of us, on the right track.

M: Do you hear much criticism of this committee across the Convention with the contacts that you have?

G: Really, I don't. I see a diminution of criticism about the "hierarchy." I believe it is less and less. It could be, possibly, that some of that fever and pus of the fever, like a rising or a boil on your body, has been drawn off by some of these brethren leaving us and going into some of these independent movements, where they will do their complaining, you see, rather than staying inside to fuss and complain. I may not be moving around as much as I use to out in the grass roots, but I am still active in Louisiana. I am a member of the Executive Board of our state convention, and I still move around all over the country; but they either are not saying these things or they just don't say them to me.

There are lots of decisions made that are considered by many to be minor. The big gripe they have now is, "Why in the name of heavens do they continue to go to these peripheral, off-centered cities like Norfolk, Virginia, and San Francisco for the Convention?" when not too many people can go that far. Though in Norfolk, there could be a heap of them wanting to go because it is kind of close to our population; but the hotel accommodations are going to be terrible there. There are going to be more of them fussing and mad than were in New Orleans when we had a problem down there with housing, and it was our largest attendance up until that time. Things like that are things that the

brethren get mad about, get steamed about, their being inconvenienced on the selection of the Convention city; yet, the Convention itself votes where to go.

M: The recommendations of the Executive Committee are always, of course, brought to the Convention, and they can accept or reject or refer back to the committee.

G: They frequently revise and frequently completely reject or disallow recommendations of the committee.

M: The Executive Committee in the fifties along with the total Convention structure, was studied by a committee on the total program. Were you involved in this study group?

G: No, I was not. Is that the Committee of Twenty-five? Is that when they got Booz, Allen, and Hamilton? Booz, Allen, and "Budweiser," as I jokingly called them, and got rebuked for it. At Houston?

M: Yes. That's right, I remember it.

G: That was a lot of fun.

M: That Houston Convention, by the way, was the first meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention that I ever attended. I was a seminary student just finishing my B.D. work at New Orleans, and my father-in-law, that you know, gave me a graduation present, a trip to Houston for that meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

G: Yes. I believe you told me that in our last interview.

M: These annual meetings of the Convention represent really only a very small percentage of our people. Do you feel like, at these meetings, we are actually hearing the people, the grass roots? We hear a lot about grass roots these days, what their needs are. Do you feel the agencies are hearing them and responding to them?

G: Well, this would be sort of an educated guess I would give, but I would say by and large I believe they are. Now, you bring up two points here: Your first testimony that your father-in-law sent you as a young preacher to the Convention. Were you a pastor at that time? I believe that churches ought to send their pastors to the Convention.

I can tell you of one strong church of the Southern Baptist Convention where the pastor has had his expenses provided, but he hasn't gone to the Convention. He's gone off on a bus trip way off somewhere with his young people on a "mission tour," and he doesn't even go to the Convention to find out what's going on. Consequently, in that church, last October, which

was Cooperative Program Month, literature was sent there, but not a word was said about it. The literature was not passed around. If we can get the pastors to attend the Convention, don't give me that old stuff that some give, "Well, it is so dry, the same old thing." No, if they'll go in there and sit there and listen to it instead of "galley-hooping" around in the bookstore and the hallways they'll get something. I think some attention ought to be given to reprimanding those brethren. Now, I have done in my time, my part of it, that's true, but I see how foolish it is for a church to spend hundreds of dollars to send a pastor clear across the country and then, sometimes, a fellow gets there after it starts and leaves well before it's over. I think it is immoral and dishonest, honestly I do. I think the pastors should go to the sessions and listen.

The decisions are going to get in the papers as they report it; but the impressions that are gained, the urges that are generated in men and women who attend, ought to be brought back, shared, and reported in the church, not a dull, dry statistical report but the overriding spirit of the thing. I wouldn't care about their telling just how many people spoke and specifically things they said, but they should bring the inspiration of it back. Now it is a great thing, through the courtesy of the Radio and Television Commission, that tapes, cassettes, and reels are also available to all preachers. They get them now and they listen to them, and many pastors that I know let their congregation hear them in Prayer Meeting or in smaller groups. They take the message back.

It is a great time of inspiration. I really believe its greatest value is not in policy making and decision making, though that's the permanent thing of it, isn't it? It is in the inspiration that you get, the excitement of lofting new plans and new programs with bold horizons. But it won't do any good unless it is brought back and shared at every level back home. There are 27,000 plus churches that still have less than 500 membership. These were statistics revealed to us in this Missions Challenge Committee. Well, we have got to devise ways and means of getting the message through to even the smallest of those churches.

- M: Is it a matter of communication between the denomination-at-large and the churches, do you think? A very critical matter?
- G: Yes, it is, and we need to evoke their interest and their assistance in it, to show how we are interdependent, one upon the other. Now we are dealing with this matter in our committee's report, about this "Calling Out the Called." We are going to emphasize that, which came into vogue during the 75 Million Campaign, very largely lofted by Dr. Scarborough, who led that campaign; and that was before the Cooperative Program came. The Cooperative Program was born out of the

spirit generated in the early twenties in the 75 Million Campaign. Every time somebody says the 75 Million Campaign was a failure, I'd give it the lie. We had nearly one hundred million dollars pledged. We had fifty million collected, and we also had a great volunteer program set up, "Calling Out the Called."

Now, we are going to say that every Baptist educational institution, college, university, and seminary, ought to emphasize constantly the biblical basis for Christian stewardship and missions; they ought to have regular periods and services for "Calling Out the Called." Then the churches should have these special services for "Calling Out the Called," because we are going to be needing five thousand new missionaries by the year 2,000. Dr. Cauthen tells us that by 1980, we will need 350 new missionaries every year just to replace those who are retiring because of their age. To get all this together and to get everybody in the act, it is going to take all hands on deck, everybody giving his very best to it. That's what we are calling for in this report, putting the responsibility right back where it belongs, back to the local church under the leadership of the pastor. You know it's true: As goes the pastor, so will go the church, or he will go in a little while from the church if he can't get them to do what's right in a little while. Where you see a church that is lagging, sagging, and dragging, you have got a pastor who is sagging, lagging, and dragging. When you see one that's growing, glowing, and going, it is because you have got a pastor that is that way nine times out of ten, I believe. I am tired of "pontificating." (laughter) Now, ask me a factual question.

- M: All right. The independent movement is certainly a movement that is growing among Southern Baptists today. Have you any direct contact with any of these pastors or churches that have pulled away and declared themselves independent?
- G: No, actually I haven't. I know some of the men who have been in those movements. But I am an optimist, I believe it will be short-lived. I believe after a while the people out there will realize that they don't have any independence after all. They are dependent upon the personality of that particular pastor who led them to disassociate themselves from the association and state convention. And many of them are absolutely patently dishonest, and I delight in "lacing it on" these boys in the seminary and in the colleges.

I said it at my alma mater, Union University, back in December when I spoke in chapel, "When you get out of here and go throwing brickbats at this institution and at the denomination, you have a right to do it; but before you do, go by the business office and pay the difference between what your education cost the denomination and what you put in it. The denomination has a lot invested in you, in your training and in giving you an

acceptance with churches, and a position of esteem. The education you got at this school the denomination provided, and honesty demands that you pay your bill to the denomination before you go out there and throw brickbats at us." That is biting the hand that feeds them. It has been reprehensible to me to see any man, a product of our Baptist schools, our Baptist institutions, go out there and become a turncoat.

This comes in waves, and it is very largely by a few strong personalities. The problem arises when you have a polarization of Peter Poe over here, John Doe over here, and Joe Smoo down here, and they all see alike; and they say, "Let's all get together." So they get together in an association, however loosely joined they are, but they have a thing in common. They begin to get other pastors to pull out and come with them, and then, you have got another denomination started. I don't see that on the near horizon for Southern Baptists, but I might be an unwise prophet in it.

Another thing, our churches, I believe, need to exercise care in calling a new pastor; check out whether he will steal that church away from the denomination and turn them from being a loyal supporter of the work into a nonentity of an independent do-nothing, to have a defection, you see, from the denomination. Churches need to check the man's record, listen to the sounds he has made in his former pastorates. I am not saying that we have always got to say "shibboleth" like everybody else in the Southern Baptist Convention says. We don't have to follow everything line upon line, but in the main to be cooperative with the Convention and with our brethren because we are in this together, a sweetness of spirit and cooperation.

I have been quoted by somebody as saying, "I exercise my independence in my right to cooperate with others. I choose that right; it is my election. Nobody made me do it, and I am not wearing anybody's blind bridle or anybody's harness, but I feel that doing it together is the best way to get the biggest job done; and until I am convinced there is another plan better, I will go along with Southern Baptists."

- M: To what extent do you think we as Southern Baptists, Southern Baptist pastors, or lay persons, have a responsibility for being a critic of his denomination as well as a supporter of it?
- G: Well, that's in the whole thing. Stay inside and bring your resolutions for reform, if you feel it strong enough that something needs to change, go to that platform and make that speech and motion that certain things be studied, et cetera, and then go in and talk to the heads of our agencies. If they don't like the way you are running the Historical Commission,

then tell you so. It is always accepted. And write letters. I know all you men get letters from people, and they have the right and it is exercised.

I might have been misunderstood here on this. I don't call for blind cooperation; I say we are equals, and we will slug it out together. I have disagreed with heads of many of our agencies in discussion before the Executive Committee and other places, but it was always in a sweet reasonableness, I thought. That's what burned me up down in Houston when the press said that we were going to split, just because we had a little Baptist debate. "Baptists," I said, "have always debated these issues out." I still believe that.

Oh, yes. I am glad you brought that up, Dr. May, because I wouldn't want it to be in the record that I advocated blind following of leadership. Every man, of course, has a right to dissent. We take a vote, you know, and say, "All in favor say, 'Yea,' and all opposed say, 'I resign.'" That sometimes has been the modus operandi.

M: You mentioned that you served as a member, I believe, and officer of the Executive Committee. What about the people who are elected by the Convention to this committee? Do they generally feel the weight of responsibility placed on them? How do they carry this out?

G: Well, I guess I'm a little proud to say that I felt that I did. I seem to believe that most of them do. But you know, here is a strange thing in the composition of our boards for the agencies and institutions. I believe one day we are going to come to the point where the "giving" record of every man, his record of giving, his church's record of giving to the Cooperative Program, and his cooperation with the Convention, will be scrutinized before he is proposed for membership on any of these boards. There have been men elected to, say the Foreign Mission Board, whose church has never given anything much to foreign missions and who has never been known to emphasize foreign missions. Sometimes I hate to admit it, but there is a little bit of horse trading and jockeying for positions. A man who is on the Committee on Boards, or whatever committee nominates the boards, says, "Well, I want my friend put on a certain board; and if you will put him on that one, I will put you on this other one." I think it is ridiculous that Baptists would stoop to such practices. I couldn't prove it has happened, but there are indications that it has. I wonder how far, too, the agency heads and executives should be allowed to go in naming the people who are going to come on their board.

M: I believe by our Convention procedure they are not to have anything to do with this in terms of naming members or

persuading, you know, the Committee on Boards members to consider some particular candidate.

- G: Well, that's what is stated. I think in some instances we are perpetuating dictatorship and hierarchy by letting those men tell the committees who they would like to have on the board. Naturally they are going to get some fellow who is favorable to them and their plans, so we just perpetuate some "RUBBER STAMP" in office by it. I know it has happened. It may not have happened in the immediate past, but there have been instances where the heads of agencies would boldly come forth, or in a tactful, behind-the-scenes way, and say to a member of the Committee on Boards who they may have known in one of our seminaries or schools, and say, "Now you put so and so from this state on our board, we need him."
- M: You mention that people who serve on boards should be mission-minded, that they should be pastors or leaders of churches that are good stewards in supporting the Convention. To what extent do you think they ought to also have some interest or special concern for the area of work for which the board is responsible? For example, take the Historical Commission: Should some consideration be given by the Committee on Boards members in various states to select people from that state who would have at least some extent of interest in the area?
- G: By all means. That is prima facie, I think. I do not know the composition of your board members of the Historical Commission, but I am sure that they looked well to getting men who have an expertise or a sense of history, whether they are scholars in it or not, not just some hack politician who wants to get his expenses paid to a meeting. If that isn't the condition, it ought to be changed.
- M: I think this was a concern of the Committee of Fifteen, you know, the special committee of the Executive Committee, that perhaps something more needed to be done to encourage the Committee on Boards to keep that factor in mind, along with others, as they selected nominees.
- G: Oh, yes, indeed. I was told about a certain state in the South, a large Baptist state, where a prominent and wealthy man was rejected on the floor of the Convention to serve on a board. By vote he was just put out, rejected from the committee's nomination, because the only reason they put him there was because he had money and influence. He wouldn't attend the Convention, and he wouldn't attend the meetings of the board. He just wanted his name on the letterhead. I applaud that state for it.
- M: The Southern Baptist Convention has had quite a number of issues to come before it in recent years--you mentioned the one

during your service as president--that have not divided the Convention, but seemingly have threatened to divide the Convention.

G: Yes, that's true; and we can take one and I can give you my point of view on it.

M: All right. Suppose we take what we now call the "Elliott Controversy." That emerged, was it in the 1962 Convention?

G: Yes. About that time, and then, its successor The Broadman Commentary.

M: I think the two are related.

G: Well, naturally being a conservative I'm glad that our side won out in it, but there are some brethren who feel that we were impinging upon the freedom of expression of people. But yet, I have a feeling that to employ a man in an institution with responsibility, whose views are so patently diametrically opposed to the rank and file of Southern Baptists, is not the wisest thing. That was like the United States Army getting a bunch of Castro people in our C.I.A. to work in our government, and all the time they were undermining it. While it is true we believe in the freedom of thought and academic freedom and all that, I think sometimes that it can go a little bit too far.

I know I am not a brilliant scholar, maybe that's why I talk like this, because you can't be dogmatic and be a scholar, you know. It has simmered down now, and it seems like it is about over. I think it says something to the brethren who would lead us down the primrose path of liberalism, "Buddy, you'd better watch it. Southern Baptists are not as dumb as you think they are, and they are not asleep all the time either; they'll jump up and rap your knuckles."

I thought you were going to talk about the still touchier one, the race question. I have been in those Conventions where the Christian Life Commission, or others, would come in with these glorious, high-sounding resolutions urging that all our churches receive everybody, and so on. Well, then the brethren from the pioneer states would get up and argue for it, and say, "You're not a Christian if you don't vote for this motion that we urge all our churches to take people in regardless of color." When the people of these deep South churches, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, responded, "Well now listen, you are going to drive people out of our constituency. You are going to cut back Cooperative Program dollars if you force this on." They come back and say, "Well, are we just then serving God for the dollars? Right is right whether money is given or not."

They forget one little thing, that those Baptists down there have got as much right to their opinion. If they don't want to

have somebody of another race in their church, it is nobody's business in Kansas trying to force them to do it. Then, also, these people in the pioneer areas are dependent upon the Cooperative Program dollars that are given by these churches of the deep South. Furthermore, no matter what high-sounding resolutions they pass at the Convention, there is nothing on the local church. It has a vote on it when it makes up its budget, and if it doesn't like these things that the Convention is saying and doing, they say, "Well, then, we are just not going to give the money to support that." And that's their second vote on it, when they vote on their budget.

In recent years we have a broadening of the base. There have been some bold stands that have been made. I think we have made progress in the race question, but to keep on bringing it up is like waving a red flag in front of a bull. I think Brother Valentine and his associates have pulled back just a little bit. I mean they feel that they have got it made now, why keep on talking about it? Let's talk about dope for a while, about pornographic literature, and about the reform in the courts and the penal system, things we can get a broader based consensus on. Some of these others are a dead horse that has been whipped to death. I am afraid, by the way you look, I haven't made myself clear to you; and you are a very brilliant man.

M: No. I think you have.

G: I will give you an illustration, and I'm going to call names. There was a young fellow who came through the New Orleans Baptist Seminary, took the chaplain's training at the Southern Baptist Hospital, and he went out. He had heard these professors out there talking about how we are to love all the races, how we are to bring them into our church, and all that. All right, he goes to a small church down in Georgia. His little boy is in the public school with a little black boy his same age. He invites this little black boy over to his church one night for the Wednesday night supper meeting, and some people raised a "rhubarb" about it, and started criticizing the little boy. Of course, he stays, but then the pastor takes it up. He, to defend his son, fights back with, "Well, aren't you a Christian?"

He's been taught this at the New Orleans Seminary and the Southern Baptist Hospital chaplain program in New Orleans, so he stands up for it; and the church fires him. All right, I believe the men who imbued him with this teaching in the New Orleans Seminary and Hospital, the man who got the good salary, ought to go over there and help that guy pay the grocery bill until he gets a job. They are the ones who pushed him out there in the firing line, and now he is standing out there forsaken.

You know, to me, there is a practical "bread and meat side" to this thing of idealisms. It is one thing for me to inspire a lot of fellows to go out and sacrifice their lives, [while] I sit back in comfort and watch them do it. I don't like it, but what can you do about it? I told some of them down there that they were responsible for this boy's being fired down there, because they imbued him with these ideals; they didn't tell him how to soft-pedal it and how to be "as wise as a serpent," as he went along in doing it.

M: Well, there are a lot of "ins and outs" of the whole situation here that cannot be understood except when you are on the firing line right with it, I am sure.

G: That's right. Southern Baptists are just like a raft, you just can't sink a raft. It floats around and you get wet and it doesn't go as fast as a high-speed motor boat, but it gets there, finally. The speed boat will run into rocks and run ashore, but the old raft just keeps going along. That, I think, is the spirit of going forward with Southern Baptists as a democracy.

M: I did a paper a number of years ago at W. C. Fields' request, "Baptist Controversies Are Not New," the idea being that Baptists have been involved in controversies before. I believe this was back in the sixties during the Elliott Controversy and some others, when some seemed to think, "Well, we are getting right near a split here." Southern Baptists have been able to come and debate issues, not always agreeing with one another, but still being able to move together in a common direction.

G: There is an article with my name attached to it in the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists gotten up a few years ago by Dr. Cox.

M: Cox. Yes, and Dr. Woolley.

G: On Southern Baptists and controversy. But I discussed it more from the Campbellite controversy, the Hayden-Crandall controversy in Texas, and the Frank Norris controversy more than by this; yet, I guess I came out at the same conclusion you did, that they have helped us.

M: Yes.

G: As Frank Norris said in a rather crude way one time, "Baptists are just like cats, the more they fight the more they multiply." (Laughter) Now that will be pretty sad in the oral history for me to say it, and if you want to strike it out, okay.

M: Well, well, no.

- G: But it is a fact of life, we can stand it. We don't have a bishop saying, "You stop that fussing, you children." If a man told me that my wife and I couldn't have an argument, I wouldn't want to live with her thirty days, I mean if it was against the law to have an argument with my wife. We argue when we want to, but the thing of it is we don't want to very often. I don't, because she always gets the best of me. Baptists are just the same way. We can argue with one another, but we still go on together in love.
- M: Well, we feel like when we come together in conventions, then, that the brethren ought to have the right to have their say, if they are really speaking to the issue before us?
- G: Yes sir. In 1959 the Convention met in Louisville. I was privileged to bring a principal address there. We had just gone through the controversy about the "old mother seminary," and I served along with other former presidents on the committee to try to "pour oil on troubled water." I still wonder if we did any good at all. I started out by taking Moses' statement when the Lord said to him, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough. Speak to the children of Israel that they turn north." I said, "Brethren, we have just gone around and around in circles on all these controversies, let's move out and go forward." They started saying, "Amen," and I said, "We all say we love the old mother seminary out here, and yet," I said, "Let her get a chance to get well. When Mother is bad off sick you don't run up and down the halls screaming and banging doors, just give Mother time to get well, and she'll get well." I think I helped the cause, and the religious editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Ora Spaid, reported, it was like a political convention where we bury the hatchet and lock arms in love and move forward together. It was a headline article, a very shallow summation and evaluation of what the Convention did.

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