

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS MOTIVATING EARLY  
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY MINISTERIAL GRADUATES TO ENVISION AND  
PURSUE AMBITIOUS MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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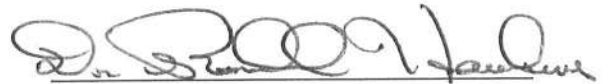
And especially to my children, Tim and Ashlie, and Jen; thank you for being my cheerleaders.

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## ABSTRACT

### AN EXAMINATION OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS MOTIVATING EARLY LIBERTY UNIVERSITY MINISTERIAL GRADUATES TO ENVISION AND PURSUE AMBITIOUS MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010

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From its inception, Liberty University has produced ministerial graduates that have envisioned and pursued ambitious ministry opportunities. Whether planting new churches, establishing new mission agencies in foreign nations, or launching a worldwide network of Christian schools, the manner in which early Liberty University ministerial graduates envisioned and pursued ministry opportunities is the direct result of the influences present during the early years of the school. This process of influence included factors that combined to create a climate of confidence and expectation among ministerial graduates, prompting many to envision and pursue ambitious ministry opportunities that endured to become thriving and lasting ministries. In this project, the writer will seek to discover and examine the factors that were most significant in motivating early Liberty University ministerial graduates in their approach to ministry.

Abstract Length: 130 Words

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The history of Liberty University is an account of faith combined with action, lived out through the lives of its founder Dr. Jerry Falwell, the university leadership and faculty, and transferred to students through academics, church and chapel services, Christian service ministries, and the experiences of everyday life on a campus and a variety of venues in a small central Virginia city. This faith and action, along with other factors unique to the early years of the university, combined to produce a first generation of Liberty ministerial graduates who were willing to employ what they had witnessed, learned, and experienced personally in the pursuit of their own ministry calling, and is similar to the Apostle Paul's admonition to the Philippians, "The things you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Statement of Importance and Purpose of Research**

Two elements underscore the need for research into the significant factors motivating the ministry pursuits of early Liberty University ministerial graduates. First, this generation of graduates produced tangible results that reflect a common influence, preparation, and heritage that begs for investigation as to the cause. Second, the passing

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Inc. 1982), Philippians 4:9.

of Dr. Jerry Falwell in 2007 highlights the need to capture vital information available only from individuals involved in the early life of Liberty University. Members of the early graduating classes along with faculty and university leaders of that time are advancing in age, and it is important to research and record information related to this period while it is available.

In summary, the purpose of this research is two-fold, comprised of an overall or primary purpose, and including a secondary or resulting purpose. The overall or primary purpose is the identification of the significant factors that motivated early Liberty University ministerial graduates to envision and pursue ambitious ministry opportunities. A secondary purpose of equal importance is that the collection of these elements with their classification may provide a rationale for examining ministry training as it is presently being conducted at Liberty with the attending possibility of affirming or suggesting major or minor changes to the present ministry training program.

### **Statement of the Problem**

More than any other group, early ministerial graduates of Liberty University envisioned, embraced, and pursued ambitious ministry opportunities with a sense of daring confidence that produced churches, mission agencies, educational systems and outreach groups that continue to this day. A noteworthy example is David Earley, who with one of the first church planting teams from Liberty University, established New Life Church in Gahanna, Ohio, reaching a membership that exceeded 2000 during his tenure

as senior pastor, and continues to be a major influence in the state.<sup>2</sup> Other examples include D. Jim O'Neill, Glenn Kurka, and Paul Halsey, who along with their wives, relocated to Bohol, Republic of the Philippines in 1985, and established the Asian Inland Mission rather than affiliating with an existing mission agency; Joe Hale, originally a missionary to South Korea, founded the Network of Christian Schools International, which operates twenty schools in fourteen nations to reach the children "of international residents living in major cities of the world;"<sup>3</sup> and Randy Rebold, who heads Primary Focus, a "not for profit organization, comprised of 5 Teams of 8 college-aged young people who volunteer their services for one year to reach out and positively impact over 1,250,000 children annually."<sup>4</sup>

Common factors resulting in similar, yet unique ministry products lie in the spiritual and educational foundation of the aforementioned individuals and others who comprise the first generation of Liberty graduates. As this generation ages, and with the passing of faculty and leaders associated with the early years of the university, especially Dr. Jerry Falwell, there is an increasing danger of losing the information that is critical to understanding the formative processes that propelled ministerial graduates of that time to envision, embrace, and pursue ambitious ministry opportunities. This information is far

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Daniel Henderson, (LBC, 1985), also pioneered the team approach to church planting at the same time as Dr. David Earley. Each man embraced the team concept and pursued church planting ministries at the same time.

<sup>3</sup> *Network of International Christian Schools*, "About Us," <http://www.nics.org/about.php/> (accessed September 26, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> *Primary Focus*, "View/20/32/," [www.primaryfocus.org/](http://www.primaryfocus.org/) (accessed September 26, 2009).

too valuable to lose and must be researched, identified and preserved to influence future generations of Liberty University ministerial graduates.

### **Special Terminology**

The following special terms are used throughout this thesis:

LU is an abbreviation of Liberty University and applies equally to Liberty Baptist College, the name of the institution prior to 1983.

TRBC is an abbreviation of Thomas Road Baptist Church, the church founded by Dr. Falwell in 1956.

Focus Period is the term applied to the years 1971 to 1985; a period comprising the founding of the university, the construction of the university in both physical and philosophical aspects, and concluding roughly with the full implementation of the affects of accreditation.

First Generation and Early Graduate are terms used interchangeably to describe students attending and graduating from Liberty University between 1971 and 1985.

Church planting is the process of establishing new churches and includes following specific divine direction, the determination of a location, and associated efforts related to starting and achieving a functioning and lasting church.

Soulwinning is the term used by evangelicals to describe the sharing of the Gospel with others, with the intent of bringing the listener into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **Basis for Topic Choice**

Two interests accentuate the selection of this topic, one, an interest with a sense of urgency, and the other, an interest with a sense of gratitude. With the aging of first generation Liberty students, faculty, and leaders, it is imperative to compile a written record of as much information as possible concerning that time, identifying especially the factors that motivated ministerial students in their pursuit of ministry opportunities. Early Liberty University ministerial graduates appear to have approached ministry opportunities with a sense of confidence and determination, producing considerable and lasting fruit. This combination of confidence, determination, and fruit bearing suggests the existence of a unique environment and climate where spiritual, academic, and practical preparation germinated to produce a distinctive manner of thinking and action. This thinking and action regarding opportunities among early Liberty ministerial graduates, with its obvious results, begs for investigation before mortality begins to claim those who were a part of that time.

The author's own experience as a Liberty undergraduate student from 1979 to 1982 is the single most significant factor motivating his own ministry pursuits, and has created a driving interest to discover if there are motivational factors common to the early ministerial graduates, and how those factors influenced our ministry pursuits. The results of this research will contribute to Liberty University by providing an addition to its written history, and a source of information for current faculty and current and future ministerial students and their families where they may realize their heritage and build upon a strong foundation for even greater future ministry pursuits.



### **Statement of Limitations**

While there are a number of interesting aspects that bear an oblique relationship to this topic, investigating such aspects risks diluting the specific intent of the research and producing unclear or non-specific results. Therefore, among the possible divergent avenues of information, this thesis does not consider the following:

First, while referencing certain aspects of the history of Liberty University, this research is not a compilation or presentation of the university's history.

Second, aside from informational references, this research does not include data regarding the particular kind of ministry early graduates pursued. Early ministerial graduates pursued a variety of ministry opportunities, all related by a commitment on behalf of the graduate to use their spiritual gifts and talents in ministry service. Yet, each graduate's ministry is unique to his specific spiritual calling, and as such, does not contribute to the particular intent of the research.

Third, this research does not include data drawn from the particular place of ministry where early graduates located. Early ministerial graduates located across the United States and around the world pursuing a variety of ministries, and while mentioned for information, the graduates' ministry locations are not essential to the research findings.

Fourth, the particular form of ministry early graduates pursued is not included in this research. Form of ministry is seen more readily in church planting endeavors where several models or forms typically characterize the ministry.<sup>5</sup> This information is not essential to this research.

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<sup>5</sup> An example of form may be found in Dr. Elmer Towns expressions of "1 C," "2 C," and "3 C" churches, with "C" standing for Celebration, Congregation and Cells.

Fifth, this research will not include a detailed biographical recap of each early graduate. Like present Liberty University students, early graduates reflect a variety of spiritual, social, economic, and geographical backgrounds. These dissimilar elements were offset by the factors common to the university in the early years and do not contribute to this research.

Sixth, this research will not include an analysis of each early graduate's ministry. While each graduate included in this research has enjoyed a measure of success characterized either by size, length, or unique feature of ministry, it is the motivational factors that effected such ministry that is important, rather than associated evidences of success.

Finally, this research will not include ministerial graduates after 1985. Certainly ministerial graduates from 1986 and following may exhibit characteristics similar in some ways to graduates from the selected years, however, the years from 1971 to 1985 appear to have unique elements in common as opposed to graduates in later years.

### **Major Assumptions**

The writer is beginning with the assumption or bias that a relationship exists between certain key elements unique to the early years of Liberty University and that these elements can be discovered or uncovered through an interview process. The assumption or bias is also in play in that a specific approach to ministry was employed by those graduates, and traceable to the influence of elements unique to the 1971-1985 time frame.

## Statement of Methodology

Finding an answer for why first generation Liberty University ministerial graduates approached ministry as they did is the process of researching the available information concerning that time, including but not limited to influential personalities, campus life information such as faculty, academics, and housing; spiritual life information such as church and chapel services, and ministry serving requirements along with all other identifiable elements, with facilities and campus development as examples. It is hoped that an analysis of this information will reveal some of the key elements that combined to produce an environment and climate where spiritual, academic, and practical preparation rooted to produce a distinctive manner of thinking coupled with a focused desire to impact the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that resulted in action and produced considerable and lasting fruit in a number of ministry forms.

The primary approach employed in this research is that of a phenomenological study and includes personal interviews with twenty early Liberty University ministerial graduates, fifteen early university leaders and faculty, along with two Thomas Road Baptist Church staff pastors, and Dr. Jerry Falwell's sons.<sup>6</sup> The personal interviews will utilize two research instruments; a three-part tool for identifying shared or common characteristics of early or first generation ministerial graduates, and a twelve-question research questionnaire concentrating on eleven distinct areas related to student life, and allowing for additional items highlighted by interviewees in a twelfth general inquiry

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<sup>6</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry And Research Design - Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 57-58. Creswell presents a Phenomenological Study as a research approach that “describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon” (57), “describing what all participants have in common as they [experienced] a phenomenon” (58), and “reducing individual experiences to a description of the universal essence” (58).

question. The characteristics research tool offers terms as suggestions of shared or common characteristics, and asks participants to select those terms distinctive of early ministerial graduates. The eleven distinct areas addressed in the questionnaire are: Decision to attend Liberty University, Spiritual Climate, Leadership, Faculty, Student Body, Chapels, Campus Development, Ministry Teams, Campus Events, Housing, and Curriculum/Courses.

Additional resources related specifically to Liberty University will supplement the research interviews, including books and other written and recorded materials by Dr. Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns, materials written by university leaders and faculty, and publications authored by individuals unrelated to the university. A preliminary investigation of materials identified more than twenty books and publications as potential sources of additional data. A third avenue of information expected to yield valuable results includes professional journal and magazine articles about Liberty University or Dr. Jerry Falwell. Data collected from all sources will be analyzed for areas of similarity, and used to identify specific motivational factors common to ministerial graduates between 1971 and 1985.

### **Review of Related Literature**

A review of literature related to the focus of this thesis reveals numerous articles and publications written about Dr. Jerry Falwell, with the majority of materials referencing Liberty University in some way, but with the university as secondary to the focus of the publication. When the university is mentioned in an article or publication, it is usually as a general or overall reference, focusing primarily on the growth of the student body, the academic programs, or the development of the campus infrastructure, as

opposed to individual students, or particular groups of students and their motivation for pursuing their education through Liberty University. Examples of articles and publications exhibiting this general approach include, “Jerry Falwell's Uncertain Legacy,” “\$27 Million Payment Trims Debt,” and “I'd Do It All Again.”<sup>7</sup>

Of the sources listed in the bibliography, three reflect a partial relationship to the research of this thesis. Dr. Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns co-authored two books that contributed significantly to the formation of a Liberty University ministry mindset; *Church Aflame*<sup>8</sup> and *Capturing a Town for Christ*.<sup>9</sup> *Church Aflame* details the history of Thomas Road Baptist Church and the various stages of its growth along with the ministry means employed in its growth processes. *Capturing a Town for Christ* recounts the evangelistic zeal of Dr. Falwell and Thomas Road Baptist Church, and presents the concept of *saturation evangelism* [emphasis mine], as a method of reaching people with the Gospel.<sup>10</sup> Both of these titles became synonymous with the ministry efforts of Thomas Road Baptist Church, and those of the early years of Liberty University, and these same influences are also evident in the ministry approaches of first generation Liberty ministerial graduates.

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<sup>7</sup> Each of these articles was authored by John W. Kennedy, and appeared in Christianity Today in the order listed, and on the following dates: December, 1996, December, 1997, and July 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns, *Church Aflame* (Nashville: Impact Books, 1971).

<sup>9</sup> Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns, *Capturing a Town for Christ* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Falwell defined Saturation Evangelism as, "preaching the gospel to every available person, at every available time by every available means (*Church Aflame*, 70).

Following the aforementioned titles, Dr. Falwell and Elmer Towns co-authored *Stepping Out in Faith*, a volume highlighting the church planting efforts of ten first generation Liberty University graduates.<sup>11</sup> This publication focused on the role of faith in each of the men featured, and how faith influenced their decisions to plant new churches. The most recently published related source is *A Legacy of Church Planting – Passing Truth from One Generation to the Next*, by Robert Miller.<sup>12</sup> In his book, Miller chronicles the church planting efforts of twelve Liberty University ministerial graduates from a range of graduating classes, highlighting their faith steps, struggles, and victories in the process of establishing and building a new church.

Each of the sources listed contributes significant information to the research of this thesis, yet does not address the central question of motivational factors and their relationship to early Liberty University ministerial graduates and their pursuit of ministry opportunities. This thesis will draw upon pertinent information from the sources listed above and other sources from the bibliography, to highlight the factors that contributed to the formation and function of the graduate's ministry approach, and identify those factors that were significant in motivating early Liberty University ministerial graduates in their ministry pursuits.

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<sup>11</sup> Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns. *Stepping Out in Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Robert D Miller. *A Legacy of Church Planting – Passing Truth from One generation to the Next* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2009).

### **Thesis Construction**

The construction of the thesis is presented in the following order: Chapter 1 introduces the research by identifying the essential rationale for the thesis, and the basis and motivation for the research. Chapter 2 presents the research design and the resulting data from the Research Instrument and Interview Questionnaire addressing the shared or common characteristics of early Liberty University ministerial graduates, and early contributing elements from the research participants' perspective, in order to establish a framework for the motivational factors responsible for the ministry pursuits of these graduates. Chapter 3 provides the research findings; a detailed examination and interpretation of the research data regarding the existing and significant factors motivating early graduates in their ministry pursuits by identifying each factor, and including a corresponding investigation and explanation for its role in the developmental process of early ministerial graduates. Chapter 4 summarizes the research findings by blending the data from chapters 2 and 3, and presenting a cohesive examination and explanation for how these factors combined to influence the ministry pursuits of early LU ministerial graduates.

Chapter 5 concludes the research by addressing three key questions: 1) Are the motivational factors that influenced early or first-generation ministerial students still in existence today? 2) If the significant factors are no longer existent, or there has been a change in the motivational factors that influenced early ministerial graduates, are there identifiable causes responsible for such a change, and if so, what are they, and how did these causes affect the continuation of the original factors? Finally, and 3) If there has been a change in motivational factors influencing LU ministerial graduates, is there a basis to recapture the original factors, and if so, how?

## CHAPTER II

### RESEARCH

The following describes the research design employed in this thesis, and includes the identification and rationale for the selection of participants, the approach to the research and the instruments used in collecting data, along with the interpretive methodology employed in analyzing the data collected.

#### **Research Design**

Using a Phenomenological Study approach to research involves the investigation of the experiences shared by individuals participating in a singular concept or phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Creswell describes the purpose of such a study as an attempt “to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (a grasp of the very nature of the thing).”<sup>2</sup> This method of research endeavors to discover the common experiences of the participants, and produce a description of the phenomenon’s effects upon their lives, whereby the event may be understood, and a reasoned conclusion explaining the results produced in the lives of those affected. Supporting what he terms as a “composite description that presents the essence of the

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<sup>1</sup> A complete explanation of the Phenomenological Study approach to research may be found in Creswell’s *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design - Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), pages 57-62.

<sup>2</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 58.



phenomenon,”<sup>3</sup> Creswell quotes Polkinghorne as stating, “the reader should come away from the phenomenology with the feeling, I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that.”<sup>4</sup>

In the case of this research, the primary targets of this approach are twenty early Liberty University ministerial graduates who were enrolled as students during the focus period, who upon graduation, pursued ministry opportunities in a fashion typical of early or first generation ministerial graduates. In addition to the early graduates, the research draws upon the perceptions of university leaders and faculty, along with those of Thomas Road Baptist Church pastors, and Dr. Falwell’s sons. A more detailed explanation of the research participants follows in the next section.

### **Research Participants**

Three distinct groups of participants were identified as essential to producing reliable data concerning the significant factors germane to the focus period. The first two groups include ministerial graduates and university leaders and faculty from the selected period, and the third group consists of Dr. Jerry Falwell’s sons, and two members of the Thomas Road Baptist Church pastoral staff. As the primary group, the ministerial graduates provided data reflective of those directly affected or influenced by the various factors present during the early and formative years of the university. The second group, university leadership and faculty, provided data from a perceived perspective, not as those directly affected by factors instrumental in forming an approach to ministry, but as

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

those that may have contributed to the influencing factors, and certainly as a part of an overall influencing environment. As such, this group does not produce data as receptors, but as effectors; those contributing to the influencing factors, whose data must be viewed as perceived.

The third group of participants provided data from the most distant position related to the targets of the research; those associated with the university through a relationship with Dr. Falwell. Like the second group, the data provided by this group must also be characterized as perceived data since participants were not directly affected as early students. Data produced by this group provided an important perspective from those with strong ties to the founder of the university, and possessing a unique view regarding the research. Liberty University is an outgrowth of Dr. Falwell's overall vision for Thomas Road Baptist Church, and as a concept, was presented to the members of the church first in 1971. Jim Moon, former Co-pastor of TRBC and David Randlett, Senior Associate Pastor provided data related to the research from the perspective as ministry associates of Dr. Falwell; those familiar with his vision for the church and university, and knowledgeable of Dr. Falwell's role as a pastor, and of the church as contributing factors influencing early ministerial graduates.

The association with Dr. Falwell, characteristic of the third group of participants, is seen most readily through his sons, Jerry Falwell Jr. and Jonathan Falwell, the succeeding Chancellor of Liberty University, and Pastor of TRBC respectively. Data provided by his sons supplied additional and unique insights to the assumed contribution of Dr. Jerry Falwell as one of the significant factors influencing early LU ministerial graduates. Table 1 presents the participants in the research, listed by group.

Table 1. Research Participants

	<b>Group 1: Students</b>	<b>Graduation Year</b>	<b>Group 2: Faculty</b>	<b>Years at LU</b>	<b>Group 3: Dr. Falwell Association</b>
1	Duane Carmody	1985	Dr. David Beck	1978-Present	Dr. Jonathan Falwell
2	Charlie Davidson	1984	Dr. Carl Diemer	1973-Present	Dr. David Randlett
3	Rod Dempsey	1981/85	Dr. Ed Dobson	1972-1985	
4	Dave Earley	1981/85	Dr. James Freerksen	1978-Present	
5	Rod Earls	1975/79	Dr. Ron Hawkins	1978-1995 2000-Present	
6	Eddie Gomes	1974	Dr. Dan Mitchell	1976-1993 1999-Present	
7	Mark Grooms	1974	Dr. Frank Schmitt	1973-Present	
8	Joe Hale	1977	Dr. Elmer Towns	1971-1973 1978-Present	
9	Dan Henderson	1981/85	Dr. Harold Wilmington	1972-Present	
10	Don Hicks	1981			
11	Rod Kidd	1981			
12	Glen Kurka	1979			
13	Danny Lovett	1980			
14	Alan McFarland	1983			
15	Jim O'Neill	1982			
16	Steve Reynolds	1975			
17	Randy Rebold	1976			
18	Ronnie Riggins	1975			
19	David Rhodenhizer	1974			
20	John Sargent	1981			

### Research Approach

The approach to gathering data employed the same process for all groups, and asked participants to complete two separate research instruments; the first, a cataloging of common characteristics evidenced by early graduates, and the second, a research questionnaire focusing on the prominent elements present in the early university environment affecting each participant. Participants received copies of the thesis abstract, along with the research instruments, and were asked to complete both

components of the research before participating in an interview conducted either in person or by telephone.<sup>5</sup>

The majority of the interview process focused on the Research Questionnaire, with interaction related to the Common Characteristics instrument limited to explaining the process underlying the data collection for the instrument, and the differences between terms for participants who defined several terms with similar meanings. During the interview, the participant's answers for each research instrument were recorded, and copies of each research instrument retained, permitting each participant's response to be transferred to a 'combined responses' document for review, interpretation, and final presentation in this thesis.

### **Research Tools**

The following section details the purpose and methodology of both research tools; the Research Instrument employed to determine the common characteristics of early ministerial graduates, and the Research Questionnaire, employed to discover the influencing factors of the focus period.

#### **Research Instrument for Common Characteristics**

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<sup>5</sup> Not all research participants agreed to take part in an interview, although all listed in Table 1 completed the research instruments. Those participating in an interview provided a greater amount of information, the result of follow-up questions from the researcher. Information received from non-interview participants still yielded substantial information.

From a list of suggested terms, participants were asked to identify characteristics they associated with early LU ministerial graduates as distinctive of the group as a whole. The criteria for selecting a term as a common characteristic required that the term apply at least fifty percent of the time to early ministerial graduates, thus making the characteristic an obvious identifying feature. As a part of this method, participants were asked to define each term selected using their own expression, a process revealing the tendency of participants to define certain terms with similar expressions or explanations. Following this, participants were asked to rank each characteristic in order of prominence among the early graduates.

Participants were permitted to add terms if they felt that the supplied terms did not adequately express a characteristic. The results of this instrument were grouped according to the number of responses to each term, producing an adjusted arrangement based upon terms that were defined in similar fashion by participants. This portion of the research produced a list of primary, secondary, and tertiary characteristics common to early or first generation LU ministerial graduates, and the results are presented in table and chart form, followed by an explanation of each characteristic as defined by the interview participants.

#### Research Questionnaire for Influencing Factors

The Research Questionnaire asked participants to respond to eleven questions dealing with prominent aspects of the early Liberty University environment as influencing factors, including their decision to attend Liberty University, and the specific influences of Spiritual Climate, Leadership, Faculty, Student Body, Chapels, Campus Development, Ministry Teams, Campus Events, Housing, and Curriculum/Courses.

Following each section, participants were asked to rank the importance of that topic using a Likert scale, with 1 as unimportant, and progressing in importance through 2, 3, and 4, with 5 as very important. Participants were permitted to add other influences they deemed influential in a general twelfth question: Other Influences.

## **Research Results**

The following sections present the results of both research tools; the Research Instrument for Common Characteristics and Research Questionnaire for Influencing Factors.

### Research Instrument for Common Characteristics

The results of the common characteristics research reveals that early or first generation Liberty ministerial graduates share a number of characteristics in their approach to, and pursuit of ministry opportunities. Viewed as a whole, these characteristics point to common influences or factors that each experienced, and that shaped their thinking and action toward ministry. The common characteristics are important as an initial step toward the identification of the significant factors influencing early LU ministerial graduates. The presence of shared characteristics help to confirm the role of influencing factors in shaping an understanding of, and approach to ministry, and the recognition that first generation ministerial graduates shared common characteristics, provides a profile that is critical to a full understanding of the environment that produced such a generation.

### ***Research Instrument Results – Students***

The following is a table and chart representation of early ministerial graduates' participation in this portion of the research. Table 2 reflects the total number of responses from first generation graduates by individual characteristic. Not every early graduate selected each characteristic; some selected more characteristics, and some selected less.

Table 2. Common Characteristics: Students' Number of Responses

Characteristic	Number of Responses
Adaptable	10
Called	16
Driven	8
Entrepreneurial	2
Evangelistic	14
Faith	20
Hard Working	14
Innovative	7
Long Tenure	8
Persevering	11
Self-Starter	12
Visionary	15
Willing to Risk	12

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of Table 2 and converts the number of responses into a bar graph showing the characteristics in the same order as Table 2, but providing an illustration where greater and lesser responses may be identified more easily.

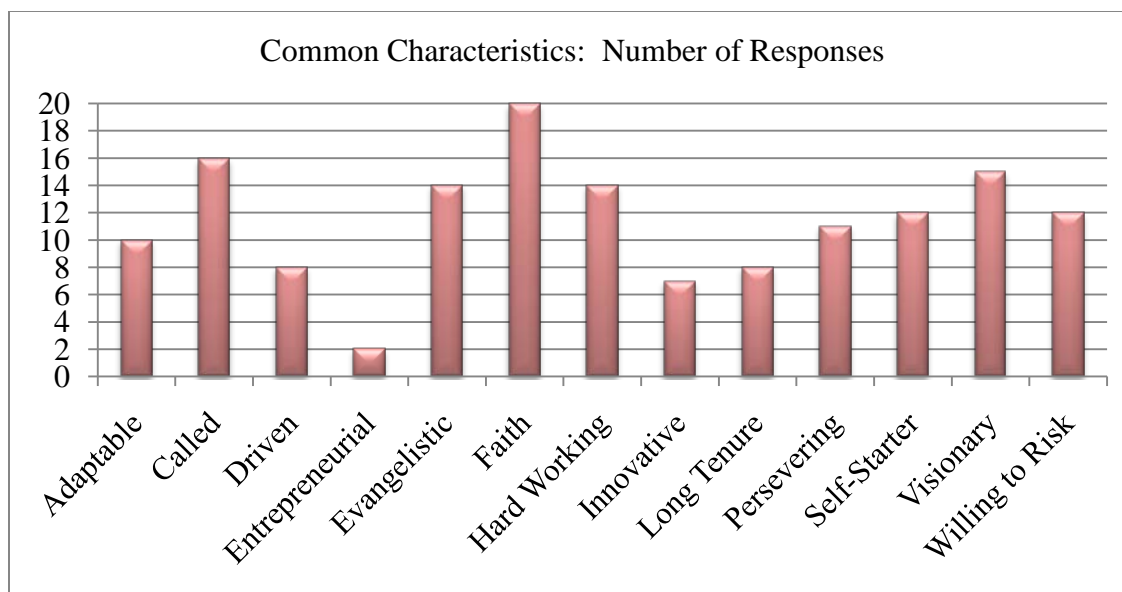


Fig. 1. Common Characteristics: Students' Number of Responses

Figure 2 presents the research data from interview participants in order of greatest to smallest number of responses, providing a clearer identification of most to least prominent characteristic shared by early ministerial graduates.

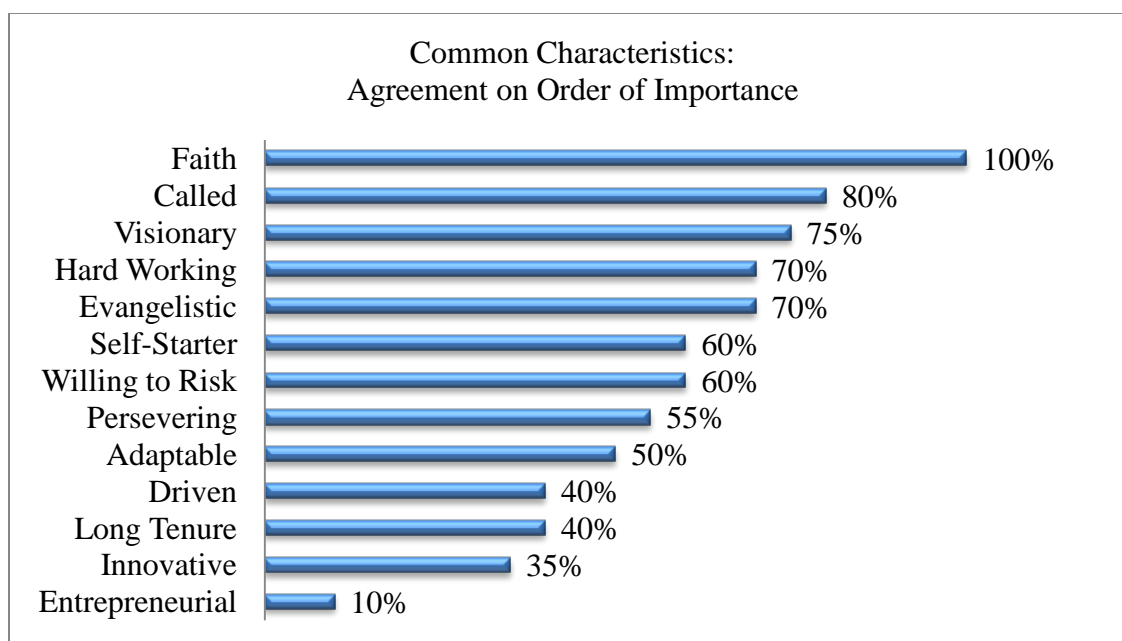


Fig. 2. Common Characteristics: Students' Order of Importance



Figure 3 portrays a modified view of the research data presented in Figure 2 based upon participants' interpretation of terms in the research instrument where more than one term was defined by like or similar definitions. Participants in the research defined called and visionary similarly, with called receiving 16 responses and visionary receiving 15 responses. The same interpretation is evident with the terms driven, self-starter, and hard working, with self-starter and hard working receiving similar numbers of responses (14 and 12 respectively), and driven receiving 8 responses, yet all three terms have a degree of interrelatedness to a number of interview participants. Not all participants defined the referenced terms with similar definitions; however, the tendency became apparent during the interview process as participants questioned the use of terms they viewed as synonymous or representative of the same characteristic. Figure 3 presents the research data with terms participants interpreted as similar, combined to reflect this understanding.

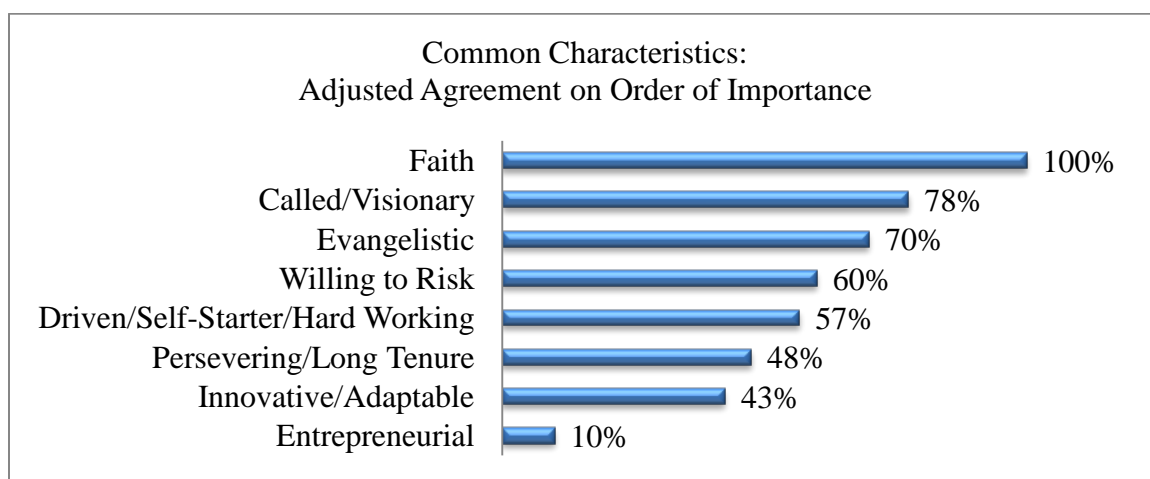


Fig. 3. Common Characteristics: Students' Adjusted Order of Importance

Finally, using the research data as expressed in Figure 3, Figure 4 presents a combined profile of the primary, secondary, and tertiary characteristics representative of early LU ministerial graduates in their approach to ministry. This expression of the data combines the three characteristics with the highest number of responses, the next two characteristics according to number of responses, and the remaining two characteristics according to number of responses. The remaining characteristic (entrepreneurial), received too few responses (2), to warrant inclusion in the combined profile.<sup>6</sup>

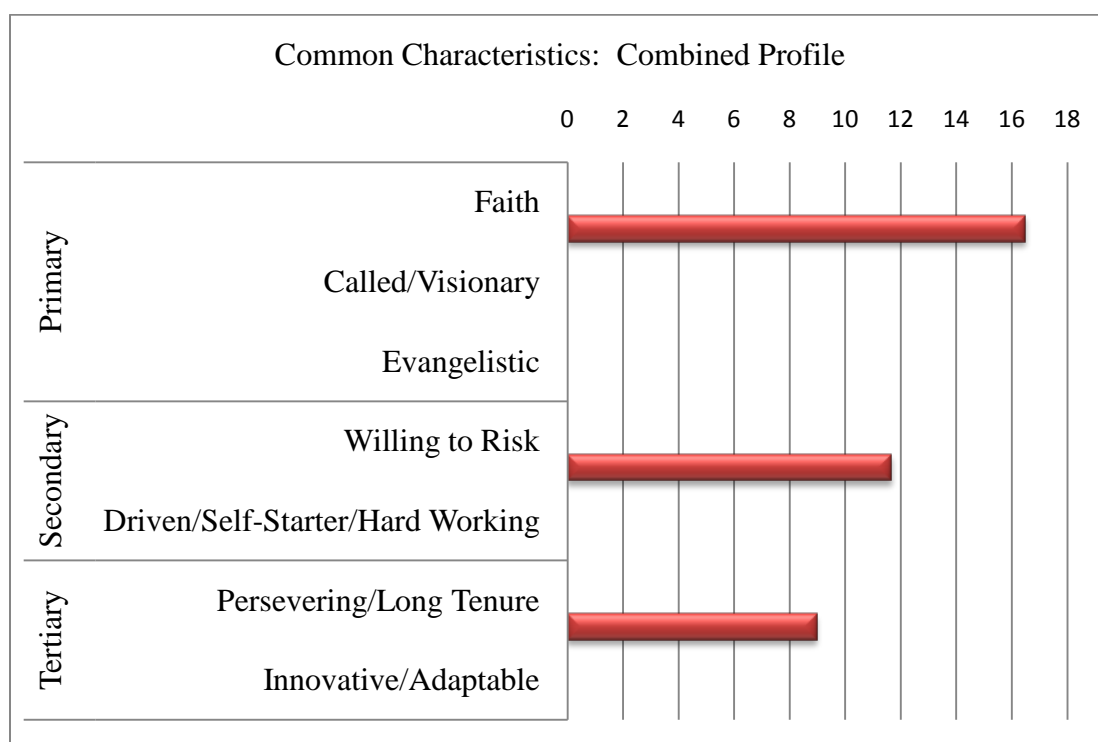


Fig. 4. Common Characteristics: Students' Combined Profile

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that participants selecting entrepreneurial as a characteristic of early ministerial graduates had in mind Dr. David Earley, and Dr. Daniel Henderson as examples. No other early ministerial graduates were identified as entrepreneurial examples.

### ***Research Instrument Results – University Leadership and Faculty***

Interviews conducted with university leaders and faculty did not produce anticipated results, rather, the data collected in the process was inconclusive. Many of the university leaders and faculty were able to identify several characteristics, but the majority expressed an inability to identify a substantive list based on inadequate knowledge. Although unexpected, interviews with leaders and faculty did produce valuable information supplementing the research of this thesis; however, their hesitation to identify more than a limited number of common characteristics prohibits the presentation of substantive data from a leadership and faculty perspective.

### ***Common Characteristics - Interpreted/Defined***

The following description of each characteristic is compiled from interviews with early Liberty University ministerial graduates, and relies on this data supplemented with research support from bibliographic sources. Data collected from university leadership/faculty resulted in vague conclusions and is not included in the interpretations and definitions.

#### **Faith**

Faith is the most common characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates identified in the research process, and selected as a characteristic by 100% of the participants. Addressing the spiritual gift of faith, Dr. Falwell and Elmer Towns define it with three distinct views; instrumental faith, as an instrument for use in serving God; insight or vision faith, as an ability to understand the direction/plan of God, and interventional faith, where faith can move God to intervene in a particular work or

process.<sup>7</sup> The majority of first generation ministerial graduates did not believe that they possessed the gift of faith, rather describing their faith as simply trusting God in the various aspects of their lives and ministries. An examination of the ministry avenues pursued by the research participants revealed instances of all three views of faith described by Dr. Falwell and Elmer Towns; however, the interpretation of faith by early graduates appears to match the description supplied by Dr. Falwell in 1984: “I have never tried to give a complete systematic explanation of faith to the ministry students at Liberty. I believe in what has been called the “hot poker” method of communicating faith. I believe these young ministers learn to have faith in God as they trust God with us for the buildings in which they study and the sidewalks on which they walk. They learn faith by exercising faith.”<sup>8</sup>

The faith of early LU ministerial graduates is primarily interventional faith, and appears to be a product of early stages of university growth as characterized by Dr. Falwell’s statement in 1978: “We are asking God to enable us to build hundreds of buildings on the 2,800 acres called Liberty Mountain. We foresee the day when 50,000 students will be in residence in our four Liberty Baptist schools.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Stepping Out On Faith*, 145-146.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 20-21. “Hot-poker” is a term used by both Dr. Falwell and Dr. Towns to describe the influence of experienced and effective preachers upon students preparing for the ministry. This concept was employed in chapel services during the early years of Liberty University, and designed to provide examples for students to follow as well as catalysts for spiritual growth.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *A Call to Prayer* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month), 2, OTGH, January 1978.

## Called

Eighty percent of the research participants identified called as a characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates. The term call as applied to ministry refers to a divine apprehending of a child of God for special ministry service, and used in this way, generally refers to those in pastoral or missionary service.<sup>10</sup> James M. George describes this term as God's "call to the vocational ministry of leadership," and that this call "involves gifted men given to the church by the Lord of the Church (Eph. 4:12)."<sup>11</sup> Warren Wiersbe defines call as "an inner conviction that will not permit you to invest your life in any other vocation,"<sup>12</sup> while Sumner Wemp offers a more precise definition, explaining call as "a hunger, a yearning, a longing, an urge, a desire born of the Holy Spirit within to enter this great business of preaching."<sup>13</sup>

First generation ministerial graduates exhibited a high sense of call in their ministry pursuits, which a number of respondents attribute to the early culture of the university (the combined influence of Dr. Falwell and Wemp), especially as emphasized by Dr. Falwell in his efforts to return the United States to its historic spiritual foundation. Two statements reflecting his emphasis during that time are, 1) "I believe America is in the midst of a spiritual depression. This nation has strayed far from the principles that have made her great... Our Republic is in grave danger, but I believe there is hope. I

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<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 6, and Jesus' statement in John 20:21 are examples of this type of call.

<sup>11</sup> John MacArthur, ed, *Pastoral Ministry: How to Shepherd Biblically*, by The Master's Seminary Faculty (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), 82.

<sup>12</sup> Warren W. Weirsbe and Howard R. Sugden, *Confident Pastoral Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 13.

<sup>13</sup> C. Sumner Wemp, *The Guide to Practical Pastoring* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 21.

believe America can be saved,”<sup>14</sup> and 2) “We have been praying for revival in our country. I believe that one of our needs to bring about the revival is the need for prophets of God. Real prophets of God. There are not many on the horizon today. There are many preachers, Bible teachers and missionary speakers. There are many pastors and evangelists, but there are not many prophets on the scene today.”<sup>15</sup>

During the 1980’s, Dr. Falwell frequently referred to the passage from the Book of Esther where Mordecai instructs Esther stating, “and who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”<sup>16</sup> It is likely that students challenged by a “hot-poker” environment, and internalizing statements such as the examples presented, saw themselves as participants in this effort, and developed a strong sense of divine call to ministry.

### Visionary

George Barna presents a clear definition of “vision” stating, “Vision is a picture held in your mind’s eye of the way things could or should be in the days ahead. Vision connotes a visual reality, a portrait of conditions that do not exist currently. This picture is internalized and personal. It is not somebody else’s view of the future, but one that uniquely belongs to you.”<sup>17</sup> Elmer Towns refers to vision as the dream “of what you

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<sup>14</sup> Jerry Falwell, *America Can Be Saved* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1979), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Prophets of God* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month, September 29, 1975), 3, OTGH.

<sup>16</sup> Esther 4:14, NKJV.

<sup>17</sup> George Barna, *The Power of Vision: How You Can Capture and Apply God's Vision for Your Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 29.

want to do with your life,”<sup>18</sup> and early LU graduates were exposed to the powerful example of Dr. Falwell’s vision for their lives as he remarked on what he believed they would accomplish following their graduation. Writing in the conclusion to *Church Aflame*, Towns includes an expression of Dr. Falwell’s vision for early LU graduates: “The graduates of Lynchburg Baptist College will start churches, many as dynamic as the Thomas Road Baptist Church. Within the next ten years, Falwell believes students from the college will begin many churches across America.”<sup>19</sup>

In emphasizing the importance of vision with LU students, Dr. Falwell referred to Habakkuk 2:2 frequently. Early LU ministerial students often heard, “Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it,”<sup>20</sup> and were encouraged by Dr. Falwell to seek God’s vision for their lives and future ministries. As with call, early Liberty University ministerial graduates developed a strong sense of the importance of vision and its relationship to their future ministry. Seventy-five percent of the research participants identified visionary as characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates.

### Evangelistic

Aside from Dr. Falwell, two individuals influenced students most in their understanding and embrace of an evangelistic focus: J. O. Grooms, and C. Sumner Wemp. Both of these men worked directly with students; Dr. Grooms as the Associate

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<sup>18</sup> Elmer Towns, *The 8 Laws of Leadership: Making Extraordinary Leaders out of Ordinary Believers* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1992), 24.

<sup>19</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Church Aflame*, 191.

<sup>20</sup> Habakkuk 2:2, NKJV.

Pastor for Evangelism for Thomas Road Baptist Church,<sup>21</sup> and Wemp as Vice President for Spiritual Affairs of the university,<sup>22</sup> each helping to shape not only students' thinking, but also their practice of evangelism methods. Using tools such as the *Treasure Path to Soulwinning*<sup>23</sup> and *Fishing for Men*,<sup>24</sup> first generation ministerial students received instruction in effective methods of evangelism, and were challenged to employ these methods even before their graduation.

Students were encouraged to participate in Sunday afternoon evangelism classes taught by Grooms, and to work in the weekend telephone evangelism sessions, where callers would select a page of the Lynchburg telephone directory and call as many people as possible, looking for opportunities to present a gospel message. Under Grooms' instruction, students memorized simple gospel presentations as tools for sharing the gospel, such as "Life is brief – James 4:14, Life is uncertain – Proverbs 27:1, Death is sure – Hebrews 9:27, Christ may appear at any moment – Matthew 24:44, and [there is] No escape for procrastinators – Hebrews 2:3."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Mark Grooms, Mark. 2009. Interview by author. Concord, VA. December 17. Mark Grooms' father, J. O. Grooms, worked for Thomas Road Baptist Church as the Evangelism Pastor from 1970 to 1989.

<sup>22</sup> C. Sumner Wemp is listed as the "Vice President of Spiritual Affairs at Liberty Baptist College in Lynchburg, VA" on the inside cover of his book, *The Guide to Practical Pastoring*, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers in 1982.

<sup>23</sup> Along with *Treasure Path to Soulwinning*, J. O. Grooms self-published *Soulwinner's Paradise*, and *Soulwinner's Fast*, scripture memory booklets of 60 pages each to aid and equip Christians in their soulwinning efforts. Each booklet was published by Treasure Path to Soulwinning, Incorporated in 1969, 1978, and 1979 respectively.

<sup>24</sup> C. Sumner Wemp, *Fishing for Men: Studies on Soulwinning* (Lynchburg, VA: New Life Tract Society, Undated).

<sup>25</sup> J. O. Grooms, *Treasure Path to Soulwinning* (Lynchburg, VA: Treasure Path to Soulwinning, Inc, 1969), 9.



Students under Wemp's instruction would regularly hear an emphasis on tract distribution and the importance of local church evangelism stressed in statements such as "Today, many pastors are not fishers of men, but keepers of aquariums," and "Nothing excites a home like a new baby. Nothing stirs up a church like new babies being born of God week after week."<sup>26</sup> Many early LU ministerial graduates developed a passion for evangelism that would be characteristic of their approach to ministry before and following graduation. Seventy percent of research participants identified evangelistic as characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates.

### Hard Working

Seventy percent of research participants identified hard working as a typical characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates. Glenn Kurka relates the account of planning for the 1976 observance of Fourth of July on Liberty Mountain. Kurka was associated with LU in a dual capacity; first as a student, but also as the Assistant Director of the Christian Service office. In planning for the July 4 event, Kurka relates Dr. Falwell's expectation of as many as 25,000 people traveling to Lynchburg for the observance, and the need for workers to assist with the day's activities. In his Christian Service capacity, Kurka organized every available student to participate in a variety of functions. Early LU ministerial students were expected and taught to work.<sup>27</sup> Aside from special events, LU required every student to participate in Christian Service or on a ministry team. For many students, Christian Service related to one of a number of

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<sup>26</sup> Wemp, *Guide to Practical Pastoring*, 150, (both quotes).

<sup>27</sup> Glenn Kurka. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. August 21.

ministries at Thomas Road Baptist Church. Students assisted on Bus Ministry routes, participating in Saturday visitation and picking up and returning children to their homes on Sunday. Others worked in Sunday School or related ministry such as Nursery or Youth Ministry. In this process, students learned the organizational structure of a ministering church, experienced the need for workers in the church, and contributed their own talents in serving. This approach to service prepared many early ministerial graduates for the work ahead of them following graduation that would require the commitment of their lives and energy.

### Self-Starters

Nearly two thirds of the interview participants identified self-starter as a characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates. The desire to start and accomplish something new is evident primarily in those who pursued church planting efforts, although not limited exclusively to this avenue of ministry.<sup>28</sup> A necessary element in starting something new is the quality of being a self-starter, more than likely picked up by early graduates from their association with Dr. Falwell and his accounts of starting the Thomas Road Baptist Church in 1956, and later efforts in establishing Liberty University itself. Dr. Falwell clearly demonstrated the self-starter characteristic in his approach to starting Thomas Road, and describing his approach, Gerald Strober and Ruth Tomczak

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<sup>28</sup> Of the twenty early graduates included in this research, fifteen pursued a church planting calling, three, a call to missionary service, and two, a call to existing church ministry. The three pursuing missionary service all began new ministries, thus resulting in 18 out of 20 or 90% of the targets of this research that pursued new ministry. Following a multi-year ministry with David Jeremiah and John MacArthur, Randy Rebold exhibited the self-starter characteristic when he established Primary Focus Ministries in 1991. See footnote 4 for information regarding the Primary Focus Ministry.

write, “These were exciting days for the young pastor. He obtained a map of the city and made a large dot at the [church] site. He then drew several circles: the first covered a ten-block radius. The second extended twenty blocks, and the third and largest circle took in a three-mile area. That week he personally visited every home within the first circle.”<sup>29</sup>

Robert Miller provides additional information on the self-starting character of Dr. Falwell writing, “Jerry would visit every house in his strategy plan. Every day, six days a week, he would knock on doors in his community: 100 doors a day, 600 doors a week. With every house, he would leave his business card and phone number.”<sup>30</sup>

Closely related to Dr. Falwell’s efforts with TRBC, Rod Dempsey relates a quote from Dr. Falwell illustrating his desire to steer students toward church planting by stating, “It is easier to give birth than to raise the dead.”<sup>31</sup> This emphasis on starting something new rather than assuming the pastorate of an existing church compelled a number of early ministerial graduates to pursue church planting and establish new churches following graduation. The rigors of beginning a new ministry required those involved in such attempts to possess a high degree of self-motivation necessary to plan, organize, pursue, and accomplish the many aspects associated with church planting.

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<sup>29</sup> Gerald Strober and Ruth Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell, Aflame for God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), 32-33.

<sup>30</sup> Robert D. Miller, *A Legacy of Church Planting: Passing Truth from One Generation to the Next* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2009), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Rod Dempsey. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

## Willing to Risk

As with “self-starter,” nearly two-thirds of the interview participants identified “willing to risk as a characteristic typical of early ministerial graduates, and again, the identification was strong among graduates who became church planters. An interesting concept emerged from the interview discussions, that of recognizing the possibility of failure, but relying on an underlying confidence, that if the risk was God-lead, success was assured, so much so that the idea of risk was outweighed by the need to pursue God’s plan. Regarding the risk involved in starting a new mission agency in the Philippines in 1985, D. Jim O’Neill states, “I think the drive and the faith in God is what we took from Liberty and the skills and the creativity. [It was] pioneer entrepreneurial; yeah, get the job done, whatever it takes.”<sup>32</sup> O’Neill’s “whatever-it-takes” statement is an admission that risk is a part of following God’s plan, but also that God was at work drawing many of the early ministerial graduates to ministry opportunities with high degrees of opportunity and risk.

## Persevering

This characteristic was selected by more than half of the research interview participants, and reflects a common perception of early ministerial graduates who entered pastoral ministry, the overwhelming majority of which are still pastoring the church they planted following graduation. A number of interview participants related the example of Dr. Falwell in never leaving Thomas Road Baptist Church, and linking the term perseverance to a sense of being called to a particular area, having a vision for the

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<sup>32</sup> D. Jim O’Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 5.

ministry they helped to establish, and the term long-tenure, also listed in the selection list of possible characteristics. This is an example of how research participants noted the interrelationship of certain terms and how their concept and definition of those terms affected their selection of characteristics.

### Adaptable

Half of all research participants selected adaptable as characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates, reflecting an understanding of the need to respond to different situations and circumstances within the framework of ministry. Jim O'Neill relates an occasion requiring adaptability during his ministry as a missionary to the Philippines in the early 1990's: "With the beginning of the Gulf War they wanted Jim to start Bible studies. God thrust us into [the] middle upper class, [and] we had to figure out avenues to create understanding with them and that's when we created the taste tester Bible studies."<sup>33</sup> The O'Neill's ability to adapt to a changing environment helped to open additional doors of ministry during their ministry to the Philippines.

Perhaps the most identifiable example of being adaptable is David Rhodenhizer, Senior Pastor of Calvary Road Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. Rhodenhizer and his wife planted New Life Baptist Church in 1977, and experienced strong growth during the first year of the church, evidenced by "sixty-four recorded professions of faith, fifty-one baptisms, and one hundred and eight members."<sup>34</sup> By the end of New Life's first year, David Rhodenhizer was actively seeking a permanent home for the church. During

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> David Rhodenhizer, *One Like Spirit... One great Vision: A Journey of Faith* (Alexandria, VA: Calvary Road Baptist Church, 1994), 19.

this time, another church in the area was seeking a new pastor. Rhodenhizer relates the events:

To make a long story short, Calvary Road Baptist Church had what we needed and New Life Baptist Church had what Calvary Road needed. I was asked to meet with the pulpit committee. As the prospect of a merger developed, I presented it to New Life Baptist Church and our congregation was in favor of pursuing the possibilities. Soon I preached at Calvary Road as a candidate for senior pastor. After the message the congregation voted... to extend a call to me as pastor. The following Sunday, New Life Baptist Church merged with Calvary Road Baptist Church.<sup>35</sup>

The willingness to accept an alternate avenue to accomplish what was needed for New Life Baptist Church demonstrates the adaptable characteristic in the life of David Rhodenhizer, and became the occasion that led to the development of Calvary Road Baptist Church as a major influence in Northern Virginia. Robert D. Miller notes, “Calvary Road Baptist Church is one of the most progressive traditional, independent Baptist churches in the Northern Virginia area. With multiple ministries, Calvary Road supports a large Christian school, graded programs, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic ministries, and a Bible Institute.”<sup>36</sup>

## Driven

Driven was selected as a characteristic of early LU ministerial graduates by forty percent of the research participants, but was also one of the terms participants viewed as interrelated with other terms, in this case with self-starter, and hard working. This cross interpretation and defining indicates a stronger characteristic than the forty percent may show, and when viewed as part of the Combined Profile (Figure 8), reveal driven to be a

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>36</sup> Miller, *A Legacy of Church Planting*, 34.

part of a significant portion of the overall characteristics. As both an individual and combined characteristic, research participants understood driven as “compelled to go and do,”<sup>37</sup> and “we were all going somewhere.”<sup>38</sup> As a characteristic, driven played a role in early ministerial graduates’ decision to pursue ministry following their graduation from the undergraduate program, rather than continue to seminary. Still other early ministerial graduates chose to attend seminary for graduate degrees before pursuing ministry and demonstrated an equal amount of drive following graduation.

### Long Tenure

Selected by less than half of the research participants (40%), long tenure received the second lowest selection responses of all characteristics; yet, it is a conspicuous factor for ten of the twenty early graduates included in the research.<sup>39</sup> Like persevering, the concept of staying in one location is more than likely the result of Dr. Falwell’s example at Thomas Road Baptist Church, as well as the result of the called and visionary factors at work. Although in the third group of the combined profile, long tenure appears to be a noticeable characteristic of early graduates.

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<sup>37</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

<sup>38</sup> Duane Carmody. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. November 27.

<sup>39</sup> Al Henson, Alan McFarland, Ronnie Riggins, Steve Reynolds, and David Rhodenhizer all remain at the churches they originally planted. Joe Hale remains at the Network of International Christian Schools, an outgrowth of his missionary activity in Korea since 1983. Rod Kidd remains at the two churches he planted in Mannheim, Germany in 1984. Mark Grooms has remained at Thomas Terrace Baptist Church since 1991, and Rod Dempsey and Dave Earley ministered at the church they planted for twenty years.

## Innovative

Innovative was the least identified characteristic selected by the research participants (35%), and while each interview participant admitted to thinking imaginatively regarding ministry,<sup>40</sup> most did not consider themselves innovative. Like the entrepreneurial characteristic, interview participants associated the innovative characteristic with David Early and Daniel Henderson, for their use of the team approach to church planting, a method previously unused at Liberty University.

## Summary

Certainly not all early LU ministerial graduates possessed all of the characteristics compiled from this research; however, the process of identifying common characteristics of early ministerial graduates from a list of suggested terms, produced wide agreement among the interview participants, with all participants identifying with a majority of the characteristics, whether or not they believed they shared one or more of the characteristics listed. When considering the significant factors that motivated early Liberty University ministerial graduates to envision and pursue ministry opportunities, the characteristics shared by those graduates strongly suggest a common influence or preparation for ministry contributed to by underlying factors. It is those factors that are the subject of the next section.

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<sup>40</sup> The majority of early LU ministerial graduates interviewed defined innovative in terms of special days on the church calendar where different or imaginative methods may have been used in the observance.



### Research Questionnaire – Influencing Factors

During the interviews for the Research Questionnaire, extreme care was exercised to avoid biasing participants toward a specific response. Creswell cites the importance of avoiding this practice as a method of evaluating the quality of phenomenological research, asking, “Did the interviewer influence the contents of the participants’ descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the participants’ actual experience.”<sup>41</sup> To avoid biasing participants in the answers, questions were asked in a consistent manner from participant to participant, and only when a participant requested clarification, was additional information provided; however, with a minimum of explanation, and using generic terms that would not bias the participant toward a particular answer.

At times, participants misinterpreted questions on the Research Questionnaire, necessitating further explanation. In keeping with the intent of the questionnaire, additional explanations carefully avoided biasing the participant toward a specific response. The interview process revealed an area of the questionnaire that did not apply to every participant in the research. Married students lived off-campus, and thus were unable to respond to the question on housing. However, several students responded to the question in the context of off-campus housing as opposed to dorm, or university housing.

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<sup>41</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 215.

### Questionnaire Results – Students

The results of the Research Questionnaire dealing with influencing factors are presented in the order determined by the number of responses in which early graduates ranked the questionnaire topic according to importance; from 1-unimportant to 5-very important. Each participant's responses were catalogued according to topic using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and according to the numeric value assigned to the topic. This procedure produced a table depicting the number of responses per importance value for each topic addressed in the Research Questionnaire. From this spreadsheet, a mathematical formula computed a weighted average of responses for each topic. Table 3 – Research Questionnaire Ranking Results presents the outcome of this process.

Table 3. Research Questionnaire Ranking Results

	< Unimportant										Important>										
Influencing Factors	1		2		3		4		5		Weighted Average										
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%											
Spiritual Climate	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	15%	17	85%	75%										
Leadership	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	25%	15	75%	63%										
Chapels	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%	4	20%	15	75%	61%										
Curriculum	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%	4	20%	15	75%	61%										
Faculty	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%	5	25%	13	65%	50%										
Ministry Teams/CS	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%	7	35%	12	60%	49%										
Campus Development	0	0%	0	0%	3	15%	5	25%	12	60%	45%										
Student Body	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%	7	35%	11	55%	44%										
Housing	4	20%	0	0%	0	0%	6	30%	10	50%	38%										
Campus Events	2	10%	1	5%	3	15%	6	30%	8	40%	29%										

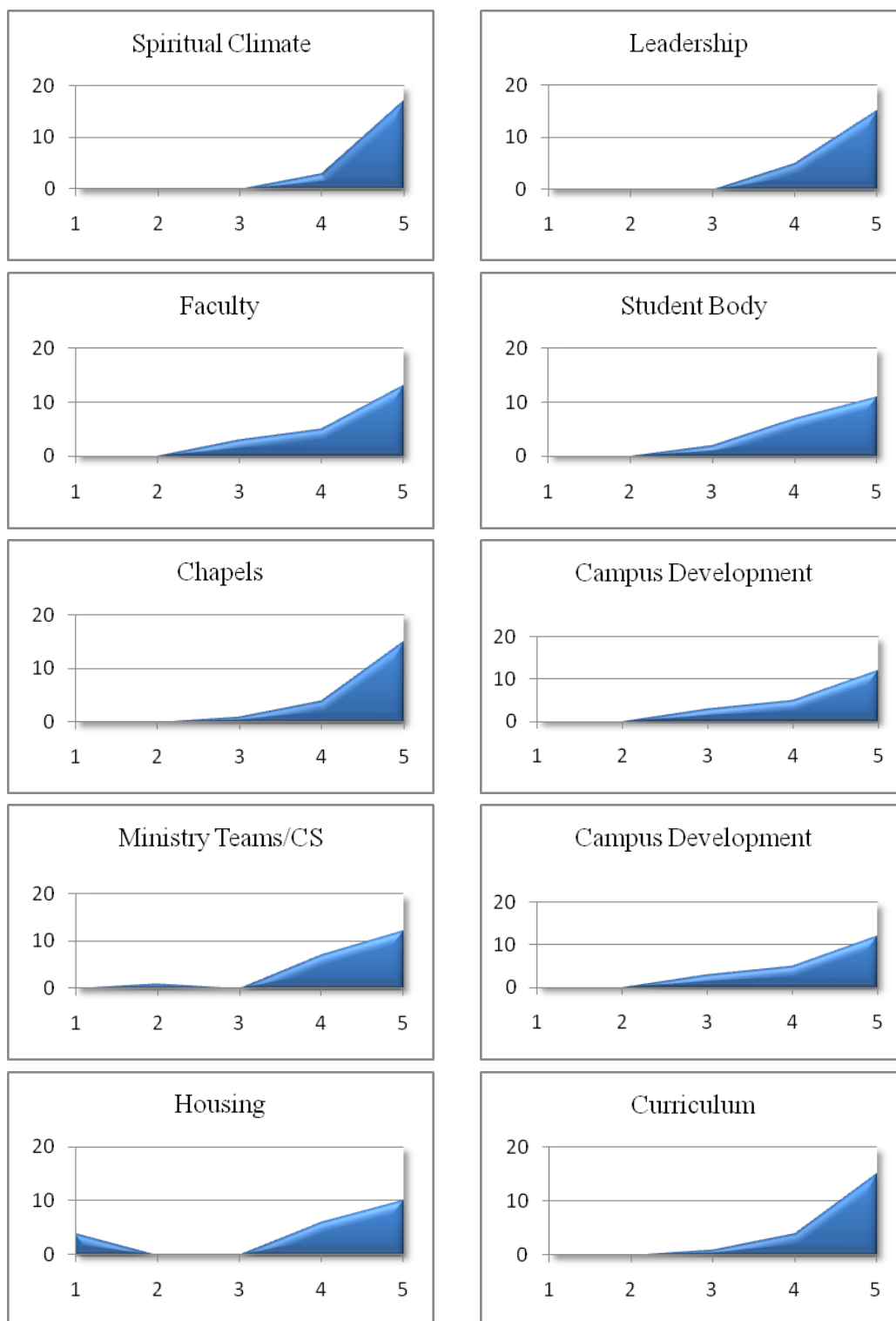


Fig. 5. Research Responses by Question

The data gleaned from the Research Questionnaire is presented in a final form in Figure 6 – Research Questionnaire Ranking Results, providing a graphic representation of the importance of each topic as ranked by the early LU ministerial graduates participating in the research.

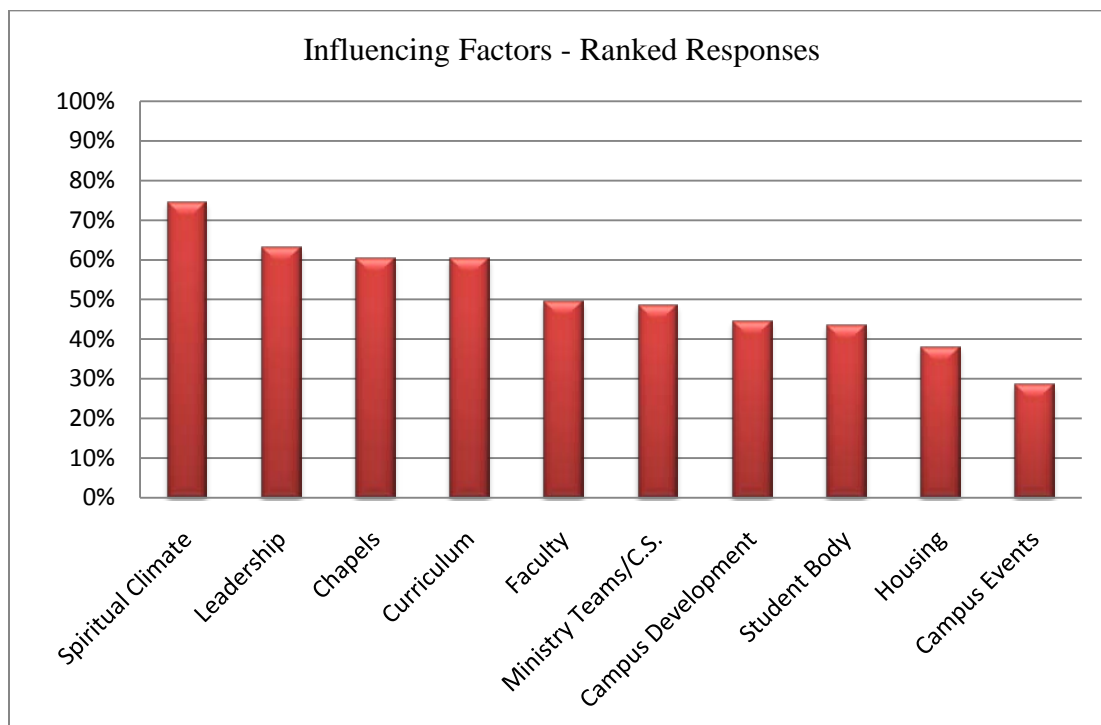


Fig. 6. Research Questionnaire Ranking Results

### ***Questionnaire Results – Leadership/Faculty***

As with the Research Instrument, interviews conducted with university leaders and faculty utilizing the Research Questionnaire, again produced inconclusive results, and although the Leadership/Faculty version of the questionnaire employed the phrase “appears to have influenced,” to allow for a perceived result among leaders and faculty, a number of participants in this group were unable to complete the research instrument

sufficiently to provide conclusive data. As an example, William Matheny expressed the following thoughts in declining to participate in the research process after reviewing the two research instruments: “After looking over your project carefully, I have decided I cannot participate. I am not able to answer any of the questions with certainty. It is an attempt to quantify things that are unknowable. Sorry, wmatheny”<sup>42</sup>. However, this is not to say that the research from this group was unprofitable; rather, the questionnaire elicited personal insights and perspectives that appear to reflect a general agreement among leaders and faculty regarding the students of the focus period and factors that contributed significant motivational influences upon early graduates.

### ***Influencing Factors – Interpreted/Defined***

The results of the Research Questionnaire for Influencing Factors are listed below in the order indicated by the research participants’ responses regarding importance, and are interpreted and defined using the data collected during the research interviews. Statistical data is presented first, followed by data compiled from participants’ responses to the individual questions of the research questionnaire.

Two areas (Leadership and Spiritual Climate) produced similar results in determining the most influential factor for the participants, and required an adjustment of the Leadership question during interviews with participants, and follow-up interviews for four participants in the initial phase of the research interviews. Data for the Leadership question must be presented in two different aspects; the first, with data reflecting Dr. Falwell included as a part of the university leadership, and the second, with data

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<sup>42</sup> Received in an email message dated December 9, 2009, 11:19 AM.

excluding his leadership involvement. With Dr. Falwell included in the data, participants' responded with 100%, 5-Very Important selections; however, with the data excluding Dr. Falwell, participants' responses reflect different results, with seventeen participants selecting 5-Very Important and three participants selecting 4-Important. Using the data including Dr. Falwell as a part of the university leadership results in Leadership as the most influential factor for research participants; however, excluding Dr. Falwell as a part of the university leadership, results in Spiritual Climate as the most influential factor for the participants.

Participants in the research found it challenging to exclude Dr. Falwell from many aspects of the topics included in the questionnaire, admitting that he was a significant part of the Spiritual Climate, Chapels, Campus Development, and Special Events. In light of this perception, the results for the Research Questionnaire for Influencing Factors, recognize the influence of Dr. Jerry Falwell in many of the aspects of the early life of Liberty University and present the data for the Leadership question excluding his role as a university leader.

### Spiritual Climate

As an influencing factor for early LU ministerial graduates, Spiritual Climate received the greatest number of 5-Very Important responses; seventeen participants, selected 5-Very Important, and three participants selected 4-Important. Eighty-five percent of responses to this question believed that the spiritual climate was a very important influence for early ministerial graduates, and fifteen percent believed it was important as an influence. No participant selected less than 4-Important in classifying the influence of the spiritual climate during their time as a student at Liberty University.

In describing the spiritual climate of the university, one participant stated, “It was high energy, faith was proclaimed everywhere. The atmosphere was charged with spiritual energy and we were constantly challenged to go do something big for God.”<sup>43</sup> Another participant stated, “It was a constant state of revival, people were getting saved, there were prayer meetings and obedience characterized the student body.”<sup>44</sup> This topic proved to be one of the more thought-provoking, response-eliciting questions of the questionnaire, with most of the participants responding in definite terms. One of the more encompassing responses stated, “It had EVERYTHING [sic] to do with my calling, my vision and my ministry approach.”<sup>45</sup>

### Leadership

Research participants ranked Leadership as the second most influential factor during their time as a student. Participants answered with fifteen 5-Very Important responses, and five 4-Important responses, equaling seventy-five percent of respondents that believed Leadership was a very important influence and twenty-five percent that believed it was important. No participant responded with less than a 4-Important selection in classifying the influence of the university leadership during their time as a student at Liberty University.

Like the responses to Spiritual Climate, participants offered their thoughts on the influence of the university leadership during their time as students. A selection of

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Davidson. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>44</sup> Rod Dempsey. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>45</sup> Joe Hale. 2009. Written response to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 3.

responses follows; “Dr. Falwell taught me faith and vision; Dr. Towns taught me Church Growth, and facts and principles; Dr. Sumner Wemp and Dr. Hindson taught me evangelism, and Dr. Eddie Dobson taught me word-centered ministry.”<sup>46</sup> “Dr. Falwell challenged me with big vision, personal prayer, and to have a passion to reach the world.”<sup>47</sup> “Dr. Falwell taught me vision; I can still hear him challenge us to capture our towns for Christ. Dr. Towns gave us the practical application of academics, and Dr. Hawkins taught me how to counsel.”<sup>48</sup> Not all of the participants’ responses were completely positive. One response stated,

One thing that had both positive and negative aspects was the tendency to push church growth and success stories on all of us students. Those of us who had a church ministry would often be asked three questions on Monday morning by Dr. Towns: (1) what was your attendance, (2) what was your offering, and (3) how many people did you have to get saved? This put us under a kind of external pressure to perform and be successful in areas where really only the Lord can give the fruit. Some of us really had to work to get beyond this performance trap to get on to a real spiritual ministry depending on the Lord and not always pushing for results.<sup>49</sup>

Generally, responses to questions were positive; however, the previous example demonstrates that participants contributed to the research forthrightly by including unfavorable responses rather than only positive responses, or by failing to provide an answer to a question.

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<sup>46</sup> Rod Dempsey. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>47</sup> Dave Earley. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 21.

<sup>48</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

<sup>49</sup> Participant's name withheld by request.



## Chapels

Research participants selected Chapels as the third most influential factor during their time as a student at LU. Like Leadership, fifteen participants or seventy-five percent selected 5-Very Important for Chapels; however, this was the first category to receive a response less than 4-Important. Four participants selected 4-Important, and one participant selected 3-Somewhat Important, equaling twenty and five percent respectively.

As a part of the four most influential factors, this question also elicited many positive responses from research participants. The one participant responding to the question with a 3-Somewhat Important ranking, did not include an explanation for his classification of the question. The typical response to this question was the phrase “hot-poker,” a term coined by Elmer Towns, describing the practice of using proven and powerful speakers in the weekly chapels. Chapel speakers mentioned by name during research interviews include university leaders such as Dr. Jerry Falwell, Elmer Towns,. Eddie Dobson, and Ed Hindson, along with speakers unrelated to the university, such as James Robison, Bob Harrington, S. M. Lockridge, John R. Rice and B. R. Lakin. Responses to this question include, “There was a dynamic atmosphere in the chapel services, and a call to giving your life for the cause of Christ that made a real impact on me.”<sup>50</sup> “Chapels were done well; there was good music and excellent preaching. They

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<sup>50</sup> Rodney Kidd. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 5.

made me dream of future ministry.”<sup>51</sup> “This is where I learned to preach and gained the fundamentals of evangelism, along with a heart for evangelism, missions and ministry.”<sup>52</sup>

## Curriculum

The combined responses of participants in this portion of the research resulted in the selection of Curriculum as the fourth most influential factor. Identical to the responses for Chapels, Curriculum received fifteen, 5-Very Important responses, four, 4-Important responses, and one, 3-Somewhat Important response. These correspond to seventy-five, twenty, and five percent for each response category.

Responses to this question were primarily positive although somewhat shorter in length, and participants continued to provide frank responses as exhibited by the following answer, “I feel that we were fairly weak regarding theology, but strong regarding practical ministry (soulwinning and organizing programs, budgets, etc.) and in Bible courses. We were given tools to develop our theology later and were given the basics in the biblical languages, for which I am very thankful. I can remember Dr. Diemer taking his Greek NT to chapel services!”<sup>53</sup> Other responses to this question demonstrate the value participants place on their courses, such as, “Our course work was mostly very practical in regard to our major, plus all the regular academic stuff. It was very important;”<sup>54</sup> “Our courses gave us the foundation for what we believe and why we

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<sup>51</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

<sup>52</sup> Dave Early. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 21.

<sup>53</sup> Rodney Kidd. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 5.

<sup>54</sup> Joe Hale. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 3.

believe it;”<sup>55</sup> “I wish I had done better in Greek, would have helped me with Russian; nonetheless, it was a good and rigorous program that prepared me well,”<sup>56</sup> and “The curriculum was great. I am still using notes and the instructions that I received at LU in the ministry today. It taught me how to study and to be effective in sharing the love of Christ with the scriptures.”<sup>57</sup>

### Faculty

As an influencing factor, responses to the Faculty question indicate a further diversification of opinion as to importance; however, the majority of responses continued to select 5-Very Important, and 4-Important. Thirteen participants or sixty-five percent selected 5-Very Important; five participants or twenty-five percent selected 4-Important, and two participants or ten percent selected 3-Somewhat Important.

Responses to the question revealed a great amount of appreciation for faculty, with nearly every participant responding to the question by citing specific faculty members who helped the participant understand a subject, or who played a significant role in the participant’s spiritual development. Responses were generally short, referencing a particular faculty member, and including an explanation for the faculty’s selection, although some participants did not include an explanation with their selection.

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<sup>55</sup> Danny Lovett. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Chattanooga, TN. December 6.

<sup>56</sup> John Sargent. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 10.

<sup>57</sup> R. Allen McFarland. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 9.

Table 4 lists faculty cited in responses to the question and includes short explanations for their selection if mentioned by the participant.

Table 4. Faculty Cited in Research Questionnaire<sup>58</sup>

Carl Diemer, James Freerksen, Jerry Kroll	Created a thirst for knowledge
Wayne Sterling, Dan Mitchell	Mentor
Dan Mitchell	Friend and mentor
Elmer Towns, Frank Schmitt, Dan Mitchell, Woodrow and Jerry Kroll	Equipping for ministry
C. Sumner Wemp	How to stay in love with your wife
Frank Schmitt	Importance of leadership
Ed Dobson	Professor by day, co-laborer by night
Dan Gillette	Counseling
Dan Mitchell	Bible and Theology
Roscoe Brewer	Passion

Responses to this question continued to reflect candor as participants expressed both appreciation and disapproval for specific faculty. One participant responded, “Some of the faculty of the seminary in those days were super (Diemer, Kim, Towns), while others were poor (McNabb). They each left their mark, whether good or bad.”<sup>59</sup>

#### Ministry Teams/Christian Service

Responses to this question reflect a lessening in perceived importance among the research participants, although more than half of the responses (12) selected 5-Very Important as an answer, and seven participants selected 4-Important. The remaining responses selected 2-Somewhat Unimportant. The percentages for this question are sixty

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<sup>58</sup> Table 4 reflects the collective responses of participants to question 3 of the Research Questionnaire (Faculty) without identifying each participant as the source for each response.

<sup>59</sup> Participant's name withheld.

percent for 5-Very Important, thirty-five percent for 4-Important, and five percent for 2-Somewhat Unimportant.

Responses to this question revealed appreciation for the topic, or participants chose not to respond other than to rank its importance. All of the responses received were complimentary, indicating either a positive or a neutral position on the topic. A sampling of responses includes, “Being involved in ministry outside of the classroom was the best way for us to put into practice what we had learned in the classroom;”<sup>60</sup> “Ministry teams were where I learned how to do the work of the ministry;”<sup>61</sup> and “This is where I was taught to serve and how to do evangelism.”<sup>62</sup> At times, responses reflected a ‘crossing-over’ of topics where the response could apply to two questions equally, as illustrated by the following: “Professors were also leaders, and jumped in to lead us and work WITH [sic] us, and this impact was huge.”<sup>63</sup>

#### Campus Development

All responses to this question fell within the 3-Somewhat Important to 5-Very Important range, however, Campus Development is ranked less than Ministry Team/Christian Service, having received less responses for the 4-Important ranking, than the Ministry Teams/Christian Service question. In responding to this question, twelve

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<sup>60</sup> R. Randy Rebold. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Knoxville, TN. December 1.

<sup>61</sup> Danny Lovett. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Chattanooga, TN. December 6.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Davidson. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>63</sup> Joe Hale. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 3.

participants or sixty percent selected 5-Very Important, five or twenty-five percent selected 4-Important, and three or fifteen percent selected 3-Somewhat Important.

As with the responses to the Ministry Teams/Christian Service question, responses to this question reflect primarily a positive to neutral position among participants, with at least one response considered somewhat humorous. Responses to this question include, “When I first went to LBS in 1977, there were 2 classroom buildings on the mountain, and that was it. Our seminary classes were held in an old furniture warehouse in downtown Lynchburg. So the development of campus was important to see faith come to reality,”<sup>64</sup> and “We were more challenged by the pioneer spirit of the early days at Liberty – not by the development of the campus that came later.”<sup>65</sup> Other responses reveal a spiritual connection or perception on behalf of participants, with responses such as, “It gave me confidence to do the same;”<sup>66</sup> “There was a sense of expectancy, of seeing the vision come true,”<sup>67</sup> and “It taught me that there is no limit to what God can do.”<sup>68</sup>

Again illustrative of the ‘cross-over’ effect of some responses is the following response to this question that can also apply to question 10, Housing: “For most of us the campus was somewhat of a joke to begin with; that’s not why we were there, so improvements became projects for us to develop work ethics, etc., and items of faith as

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<sup>64</sup> John Sargent. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 10.

<sup>65</sup> Rodney Kidd. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 5.

<sup>66</sup> Rod Dempsey. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>67</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

<sup>68</sup> Mark Grooms. 2009. Interview by author. Concord, VA. December 17.

LU was growing and expanding and having greater needs. We even thought something like an old rundown hotel was great.”<sup>69</sup>

### Student Body

Similar to Campus Development, all responses to this question fell within the 3-Somewhat Important to 5-Very Important range. Eleven participants selected 5-Very Important, seven selected 4-Important, and two participants selected 3-Somewhat Important, equating to fifty-five, thirty-five, and ten percent respectively.

Participants’ responses to this question were short and non-descriptive, although each participant interviewed reflected on friendships with other students during their personal time as a student, and agreed that the student body was an important part of their student experience. Several responses to this question are, “I am still good and close friends with some of my seminary classmates, so those relationships were and are still important to me;”<sup>70</sup> “Students were excited about changing the world for Christ,”<sup>71</sup> and “We were all going somewhere, although not all of us knew where; there was a place out there that God was going to use us, and we were praying for that place.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Joe Hale. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 3. The Virginian Hotel in downtown Lynchburg was used as a dormitory for students from 1972 to 1977.

<sup>70</sup> John Sargent. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 10.

<sup>71</sup> Allen McFarland. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 9.

<sup>72</sup> Danny Lovett. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Chattanooga, TN. December 6.

## Housing

This question received the greatest number of 1-Unimportant responses of questions in the research questionnaire, with four participants or twenty percent of responses indicating that housing was an unimportant influencing factor. The remaining responses were ten or fifty percent for 5-Very Important, and six or thirty percent for 4—Important.

This question reflects the responses of participants who were married students during their time at LU more than any other question in the research questionnaire. Married students were not permitted to live in campus housing, and as a result, did not perceive housing as an influencing factor; however, the remaining eighty percent of responses indicate that housing was a 4-Important to 5-Very Important influencing factor for campus students during their time at Liberty University. One response recounts the importance of the housing experience, living in a makeshift dormitory:

College was so young it did not even have dorms. I found myself living with a few dozen other young men, crammed into a forsaken hospital in the ghetto of a small city four hundred miles from home. Four of us shared a room, and eight of us shared a bathroom. There were no closets and little privacy. However, the best thing I remember about that hospital/makeshift dorm was the operating room. The only furniture was a cold, grey, metal desk and stiff metal chair – which was fine by me.<sup>73</sup>

Other responses include: “I loved it, it taught us to endure hardships,”<sup>74</sup> and “It taught us to handle obstacles, persevere through problems, and overcome trouble.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Dave Earley, *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders* (Chattanooga, TN: Living Ink Books, 2008), 28.

<sup>74</sup> Steve Reynolds. 2009. Interview by the author. Lynchburg, VA. December 17.

<sup>75</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.



## Campus Events

This question received the least amount of 5-Very Important responses of all the questions in the Research Questionnaire; however, seventy percent of responses indicate that campus events were at least important to very important. This question also received the greatest spread of responses, with every ranking category selected. The responses for Campus Events are eight or forty percent of participants selecting 5-Very Important; six or thirty percent selecting 4-Important; three or fifteen percent selecting 3-Somewhat Important; one or five percent selecting 2-Somewhat Unimportant, and two participants or ten percent selecting 1-Unimportant.

As with response to the Student Body question, responses to this question were short and produced the least amount of detail for all questions in the questionnaire. Although the question received a higher percentage of 3-Somewhat Important to 1-Unimportant ranking selections, there were no negative responses to the question. Participants who ranked this question less than 4-Important, chose not to respond to the question other than the ranking portion. Responses to this question were general and tended to recall the Super Conferences and the special speakers involved in that annual event. One participant responded with, “More than anything else, these events helped us to see how well something could be done and that alone was huge for a student who came from a rather small church setting. They made impressions more than having a direct influence.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Joe Hale. 2009. Written answers to questionnaire. Lynchburg, VA. December 3.

### Additional Suggested Influences

The final question offered participants the opportunity to include additional items that influenced their life as a student, and contributed to their concept and approach to ministry. The majority of participants in the research did not include additional items; however, some referenced individuals that contributed to their spiritual development, and several participants used the final question to include their closing thoughts. A selection of their comments is included: “I am known as a father, teacher, and a pastor largely because of attending Liberty University. I am thankful for the exceptional principles, values and instructions for [sic] my short stay at LU.”<sup>77</sup> “When I think of my time at LBC, the one word that comes to mind is influence. LBC influenced me in so many areas of my life!”<sup>78</sup> “There was always an outward look, and a push to go beyond your limitations. Dr. Falwell taught us that there is nothing that God cannot do.”<sup>79</sup>

### Summary

Participants in the research chose several questions as overwhelmingly influential in the development of their ministry concepts and approach, while the remaining questions reflect a diversity of opinion on how influential these items may have been. Among the topics referred to in the questionnaire, the spiritual climate, leadership of the university, weekly chapels, curriculum, and faculty held the greatest degree of influence for those participating in the research. Doubtless, all of the areas referred to in the

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<sup>77</sup> Allen McFarland. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 9.

<sup>78</sup> Randy Rebold. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Knoxville, TN. December 1.

<sup>79</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

research questionnaire held a degree of significance for most of the participants; for some, the importance was greater, and for others, the importance was less. Still, the resulting data from the research questionnaire helps to bring definition to the student world of an early or first generation LU ministerial graduate.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The contribution of the research participants provided invaluable data with which to understand the heart, mind, aspirations, and expectations of early Liberty University ministerial graduates. The participants' contribution to the first research tool helped to describe the common characteristics of early LU ministerial graduates, and lead to the construction of a unique profile, descriptive of many early LU ministerial graduates. In addition, the research questionnaire proved to be a valuable tool in prompting participants to reflect upon experiences related to their time as students in the early days of the university. Each question caused participants to recall experiences, and prompted additional discussion typically begun as, "I remember when..." and "I haven't thought about that for years." Many times the reflection caused participants' eyes to fill with tears as they remembered obviously precious memories.

The majority of recalled experiences focused on Dr. Jerry Falwell and his involvement in the life of the new college, and in the lives of the research participants. One participant offered his perspective of the influence of Dr. Falwell in a closing paragraph attached to his questionnaire. He states,

Some of the things were things that cannot really be duplicated or imitated by later developments in the school. They were just part of the early life of the pioneer school under the leadership of a great, visionary man who had close contact with his students and was constantly challenging them to do their best for the Lord. He was an encourager and motivator whom God greatly used to start some great

institutions of higher learning. He was able to gather many men around him to carry out that vision and the Lord blessed him. I am glad to have been a part of the early time at the seminary.<sup>80</sup>

The data points to Dr. Jerry Falwell and his influence as the underlying significant factor of the focus period, and thus forms the basis for Chapter III, Findings.

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<sup>80</sup> Rodney Kidd. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 5.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS

The interview process with research participants produced substantial collateral information derived from extended comments and conversations following their initial responses to the research questions. An example of this supplemental information can be found in a transcript of a participant's interview included in Appendix B. This additional information is significantly valuable in that it provides background, illustrations, and examples to support the participants' responses, and most importantly, the participants' interpretation of not only the research questions, but of the contributing elements associated with each question. Collected, categorized, and combined with the data presented in Chapter II, this collective information reveals the 'DNA' of the focus period, and the significant factors that influenced early ministerial graduates' concept and approach to ministry, and motivated their pursuit of ministry opportunities.

Elaborating on the data collection process related to phenomenological studies, Creswell writes, "The process of collecting information involves primarily in-depth interviews with as many as 10 individuals... Often multiple interviews are conducted with each of the research participants."<sup>1</sup> The additional information gained from the interview participants are a form of the information gained from multiple interviews as described by Creswell.

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<sup>1</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Design*, 131.

### **The General Influencing Factors**

In the course of the research interviews, participants referred to a variety of factors that contributed in a general or broad sense as motivational influences to early students of the university. However, these generally influential factors were nearly always related to the influence of Dr. Jerry Falwell. For example, the university grew at a rapid pace throughout the focus period, contributing to the vitality of the overall environment, but this growth is directly traceable to the influence of Dr. Falwell as he promoted the university on the Old Time Gospel Hour<sup>2</sup> program and encouraged students to pursue their education through LU. This is only one example of the inter-relationship of influential factors to Dr. Falwell. The following items with their corresponding explanations are those factors mentioned most frequently by interview participants.

#### Newness, Excitement and Adventure

Students arriving in Lynchburg for the inaugural class of Lynchburg Baptist College,<sup>3</sup> found a school with limited physical resources; limited faculty,<sup>4</sup> without buildings of its own after the traditional academic sense, and a variety of other limitations offset by temporary measures as answers to the various needs of a new academic

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<sup>2</sup> Old Time Gospel Hour is the name Dr. Falwell gave to his radio broadcast begun in 1956 and expanded to television shortly thereafter. Dirk Smillie, *Falwell Inc. Inside a Religious, Political, Educational, and Business Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 61.

<sup>3</sup> Liberty University was named Lynchburg Baptist College when first opened in 1971. This name was changed to Liberty Baptist College in 1975, and changed again to Liberty University in 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Elmer Towns has often remarked that he was the only full-time member of the faculty in the first year of the university, although there were several part-time faculty employed as well.

institution. However, for all that was missing, they found an environment of newness combined with excitement and a sense of adventure, wrapped in the vision of a man whose energy and enthusiasm was infectious. This approach to education and the accompanying positive reception by students continued throughout the seventies and early eighties, as one early graduate noted,

It was fun, being at college was fun; relationships, you wanted to be here. It was great, I just loved it. When we got up on the mountain, it was all probably connected together. There were a lot of godly students too, it was just fun hanging with them. Yeah, we had never experienced that kind of life that had purpose and ongoing passion. I think it's complimentary with a rugged pioneer, it was just fascinating having a tent, and walking around in mud; to me it was just so invigorating. You saw faith in a man and saw God work in his life and then you saw all these other people from around the world come, and thinking, oh we see it in Dr. Falwell, we see it in all these people, why can't he do it with me?<sup>5</sup>

Classrooms for the new college borrowed any available space at Thomas Road Baptist Church, and dormitories were in various locations around the city of Lynchburg. Some students were housed on Treasure Island, a summer camp operated by the church on an island in the James River; others were downtown at the Virginian Hotel, as well as an old hospital on Grace Street, and still others in World War II era homes on Thomas Road, purchased as interim dormitories by the church.<sup>6</sup> Although challenging, the majority of students did not mind the experience, describing it as a “hothouse for spiritual development,”<sup>7</sup> and an environment that “produced friends that will never be forgotten.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> D. Jim O'Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

<sup>6</sup> Elmer Towns, *Big Bold Extraordinary Faith* (Lynchburg, VA: by the author, 2009), 16.

<sup>7</sup> Dave Earley. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 21.

<sup>8</sup> Danny Lovett. 2009. Telephone interview by author. Chattanooga, TN. December 6.

Recounting the experience as an early student, one student remarked, “When I first arrived at LBC and saw the lack of facilities, I was sure I’d never make it. I just couldn’t figure out why God had led me away from a college with gorgeous facilities to LBC. It didn’t take me long to find out that facilities mean nothing in the light of God’s Spirit at work in a place.”<sup>9</sup> Another student writes of that time, “We had classes in the corridors of Thomas Road. I remember Jerry saying we’d have them in the bathrooms if they were bigger.”<sup>10</sup>

As a ministry of Thomas Road Baptist Church, the university, then college, used the facilities of the church as any other church ministry would. In an early publication, the college is described as, “One of the most unique Christian colleges in America [and] is found in the Thomas Road Baptist Church – The Lynchburg Baptist College. The Lynchburg Baptist College is the educational arm of the church, with the expressed purpose of equipping Christian young people for service in the local church.”<sup>11</sup> However, the use of the church facilities was a short-term solution to the needs of the school. Even at this early stage, Dr. Falwell was already thinking in larger terms and looking for a home for the institution that fit the size of his vision. Returning to Lynchburg by air in 1972, and noticing a large tract of land belonging to a deceased United States senator, Dr. Falwell immediately initiated efforts and was successful in acquiring several thousand acres as the permanent home for the university.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 46.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>11</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Church Aflame*, 153.

<sup>12</sup> Elmer Towns includes a detailed description of Dr. Falwell's purchase of the university campus on pages vi-viii of *Big Bold Extraordinary Faith*.



This newness, excitement, and sense of adventure, fueled by Dr. Falwell's seemingly limitless faith, set the stage for an approach to education that blended local church emphasis and academic excellence, producing a first generation of ministerial graduates passionate and motivated for ministry.

### Student Body Growth

Contributing to the excitement was the ongoing growth of the student body. The initial 110 students<sup>13</sup> that arrived in August 1971, saw their number increase to 305 students by the end of the first year, and 484 by the beginning of the second year in 1972.<sup>14</sup> One research participant stated, "Each year as new students came to the school, there was a sense of excitement that the dream of LBC was actually happening. Every time I met a new student I felt like the family was just getting bigger, and as such, we would be able to accomplish the goal of changing our world for Christ. A winning team attracts winners and that is exactly what was happening in those early days."<sup>15</sup> This early graduate's response references the excitement caused by the growth, and is an example of the inter-relationship of the early factors as student body growth also contributed to the general sense of excitement detailed in the section: Newness, Excitement, and Adventure. One interview participant's response regarding the student body reflects the dual

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<sup>13</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 45. This number is reported as 153 in *Stepping Out On Faith* (19), 154 in *Falwell: An Autobiography* (482), and as high as 241 on album covers of LP albums distributed to early financial supporters of the university. Strober and Tomczak's number is used here since it predates *Stepping Out On Faith* by six years, and *Falwell: An Autobiography* by eighteen years.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>15</sup> Randy Rebold. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 1.

application of growth and excitement. “There was the growth that generated enthusiasm. There was a sense it was small enough to be intimate but growing enough to have this energy that was pretty dynamic. So it was a unique place I think, small enough for intimacy, large enough and growing that you thought you were part of something that was a movement of God.”<sup>16</sup>

Table 5. Student Body Growth 1971-1985<sup>17</sup>

1971	154
1972	536
1973	1174
1974	1428
1975	1584
1976	1871
1977	2120
1978	2519
1979	2855
1980	3098
1981	3528
1982	3633
1983	4207
1984	4566
1985	5019

#### TRBC

Few, if any early students came from home churches as large as Thomas Road Baptist Church, therefore, for nearly 100 percent of the student body, TRBC was the largest ministry they had ever seen. This perception is seen in the interview participant’s response in footnote 76. This exposure to large ministry was instrumental in forming

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<sup>16</sup> D. Jim O’Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

<sup>17</sup> Enrollment numbers as supplied by the Registrar’s Office of the University. The size of the student body does not match data research from other sources and presented in this section. See footnote 13 of this chapter for additional information.

early ministerial graduates' concept regarding their own future ministry, especially when coupled with Dr. Falwell's oft-repeated challenge to "go and do something big for God."<sup>18</sup>

TRBC was ministry on a large scale and an important influence upon early students; as such, it became a laboratory for ministry training. Students were expected to take an active role in the church, and required to give ten hours a week in Christian Service as a part of their scholastic experience. Falwell and Towns stated, "The Lynchburg Baptist College was founded upon the theological foundation that the best place to train young people to minister in a local church is in a local church... Each student is required to be a member of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, to tithe to the church, and to serve in some capacity,"<sup>19</sup> therefore, every TRBC ministry was an opportunity for service and training for early students. Many students worked in the Bus Ministry by visiting children on the various bus routes in and around Lynchburg on Saturdays, and returning on Sunday morning to pick-up children for Sunday School and Children's Church, and returning them home by mid-afternoon. Other students served by working in the Youth Ministry, and nurseries. The influence of TRBC on early students is unmistakable, and an early description states, "The students find themselves in one of the following Christian Service assignments: visitation, Sunday School teaching, children's church work, song leading, Sunday School bus ministry, office work, printing ministry, singing in the choir, mission work, preaching in the prisons or chain gangs, or

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<sup>18</sup> Charles Davidson. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>19</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Church Aflame*, 153.

conducting Bible memorization classes with adults and children.”<sup>20</sup> As the university grew, Christian Service expanded to include ministry teams such as the Sounds of Liberty, a co-ed singing group that traveled with Dr. Falwell, representing the university.

Conferences were another aspect of the TRBC influence, with the annual Super Conference affording students an opportunity to see large ministry in a different dimension. Focusing on a specific theme, these conferences invited nationally known speakers, and drew crowds of thousands of pastors and Christian workers for three to four days of spiritual equipping and challenge. Early students were excused from classes, and involved in many aspects of the conferences, gaining valuable experience that influenced their own approach to ministry following graduation.

Two additional examples are noteworthy regarding TRBC as an influence upon early students. The first is the Living Christmas Tree, which was another annual event that illustrated large ministry for students. Although many students would have returned home for the Christmas holiday, local students and those living off-campus had the opportunity to work in the production, and gain insights in how seasonal outreach programs could be an effective ministry tool. The second example is illustrative of the spiritual intensity surrounding the church and the early days of the university. In 1973, Dr. Falwell invited Life Action, a revival ministry from St. Petersburg, Florida<sup>21</sup> to hold a revival crusade at Thomas Road Baptist Church. Since LU students were considered as a part of the church, this invitation automatically included all students.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>21</sup> Several years following the Lynchburg crusade, Life Action Ministries relocated to Buchanan, Michigan, from which they currently operate.

Led by Life Action Director, Del Fehsenfeld, Jr. and Ed Hindson, his associate at the time, this crusade lasted for “thirteen continuous days of services”<sup>22</sup> and resulted in nearly seven hundred salvation decisions. Dr. Falwell writes, “That was not to be our last touch from heaven, for our revival never ended even when the Life Action team went on its way. Time and time again, we were to see outbursts of revival in our church services and college chapels.”<sup>23</sup> Dr. Falwell’s reference to church services and college chapels in the same sentence demonstrates the close relationship of the university to the church and reveals the intentional influence of the church to the school and obviously, the students.

### Difficulties

Another general factor influencing early LU students was the presence of difficulty experienced in several ways. Early students found an academic institution with little resources but great creativity. This creativity answered the challenges of where to house students, how to transport the students to various locations, and how to occupy an undeveloped campus, yet included a number of difficulties with which students had to cope. Three areas posed difficulties for early students.

### *Dormitories*

First, dormitories were located in several areas around the city; Treasure Island (an island in the middle of the James River), the Virginian Hotel<sup>24</sup> and the Kennedy

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<sup>22</sup> Edward E. Hindson, *Glory in the Church*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1975). 122.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>24</sup> Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography - The Inside Story* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House Publishers, 1997), 330.

House (an abandoned hospital), both in downtown Lynchburg<sup>25</sup>, and the World War II era houses across from TRBC. Students living on the island occupied cabins designed for a summer camp. Strober and Tomczak record: “Students began to be housed in camping shacks on Treasure Island. More than once during that school year students were flooded out of their living quarters.”<sup>26</sup> Living on the island required an additional sacrifice not experienced by students living elsewhere. The only access to the island was by a well-worn suspension bridge, and the weight of vehicles crossing the bridge was a concern. As a safety precaution, buses stopped before crossing the bridge, and emptied the students before continuing across the bridge empty. Students had to walk across the bridge to board the waiting buses before continuing on to their destinations. For students, this practice occurred at least twice a day; leaving and returning to the island.

The other dormitories did not offer the same degree of difficulty; building age was the most pronounced factor for students living in the former hotel and hospital, although students in the Kennedy house had to walk to the hotel for their morning and evening meals, and occasionally had to miss meals to catch buses to TRBC for classes.<sup>27</sup> Students residing in the houses across from TRBC had different challenges still. Describing this setting, Dr. Falwell writes, “We bought little four room houses near the church and turned them into dormitories for twenty-five students each.”<sup>28</sup> A resident of one of the houses recalls the challenges: “There were nine guys in my room, and we had

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<sup>25</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 47.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>27</sup> Don Hicks. 2009. Interview by the author. Lynchburg, VA. October 29.

<sup>28</sup> Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography*, 329.

one bathroom. We had weekly shifts of times to use the shower. Some weeks my turn was at four A.M. That was bad enough, but the guy on that shift had to be the first to turn on the light and scatter what seemed like one hundred cockroaches.”<sup>29</sup>

### ***Travel***

With students located in different parts of the city, and classrooms also located in different areas, transportation to and from dorms and classrooms was accomplished by school buses.<sup>30</sup> Students frequently grew tired of long bus rides, and it was not unusual for students to spend a combined two hours each day riding a bus.<sup>31</sup> This time did not include the bus rides to TRBC for church services on Sunday morning and evening, and for the Wednesday night prayer meeting.

### ***Mud and Mess***

Before permanent buildings were constructed on the Liberty Mountain campus, students met there in a large tent, and construction of buildings made traversing the site challenging, especially during rain and winter. Recounting the experience of teaching on the mountain during the winter, a professor states, “I went to my car to drive to the church for another lecture and found it stuck in the mud.”<sup>32</sup> Students would frequently have to walk in mud leaving or returning to their buses.

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<sup>29</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 45.

<sup>30</sup> With the continuing growth in the student body, the need for space increased as well. Strober and Tomczak point out that multiple locations were rented by the university to provide classroom space. See page 47.

<sup>31</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 47.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Speaking to early students about the developmental process of becoming a champion for Christ, Falwell declared, “You must learn to endure hardness,”<sup>33</sup> and recalling the early difficulties of LU life, a student stated, “I wouldn’t trade those days for anything in the world. We learned to value what was important in life and establish priorities. A lot of us learned how spoiled we were. We learned not to be quitters or complainers.”<sup>34</sup> Recapping the early difficulties, Strober and Tomczak write, “The hardships of those early days were planned by God, and it was He who called each of those early pioneers – young men and women who caught the vision and forgot the hardships and are today changing our world.”<sup>35</sup> Though unpopular, difficulties were a part of the general influencing factors for early LU students.

#### A World Where Anything Was Possible

The final general influence is no less important than those previously listed, but is included last since it is so closely connected to Dr. Falwell, and helps to transition to the significant motivational factors. Early LU students lived in an environment that refused to acknowledge the word impossible. By his words and actions, Dr. Falwell believed that with God, all things are possible.<sup>36</sup> This is no more clearly seen than in two incidents where Dr. Falwell’s faith moved students to pray, and the lives of two individuals were spared and returned to health and strength.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>36</sup> This is a restatement of Mark 10:27.



In March 1978, four LU ministerial students were returning from a weekend of ministry in New York, when their van skidded on ice and was hit head-on by a tractor-trailer. All of the students were injured, but Charles Hughes was injured most severely and not expected to live. Dr. Falwell immediately called the church and the LU student body to prayer on Charles' behalf. During the ensuing weeks when it seemed doubtful that Charles would live, Dr. Falwell announced that Charles Hughes would be the 1978 Commencement speaker, a decision many found hard to believe. However, Dr. Falwell's faith was sure, and by July 1978, Charles Hughes had recovered and returned to Lynchburg. From this experience, many students were emboldened in their faith and became convinced that nothing was impossible with God.<sup>37</sup>

In 1985, a second and similar event occurred when it was announced in chapel that Vernon Brewer, one of the vice presidents of the university had been diagnosed with cancer and given six months to live. Dr. Falwell immediately called the LU student body to prayer, and in similar fashion to Charles Hughes, Vernon Brewer survived.<sup>38</sup> These two incidents along with other faith steps by Dr. Falwell, demonstrate how impossible situations were overcome, and point to Dr. Jerry Falwell as the overwhelming significant factor influencing early LU ministerial students directly, and all LU students overall.

### **The Significant Motivational Factors**

Early in the interview process, it became apparent that Dr. Jerry Falwell was a common reference point for research participants as they answered the various topics

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<sup>37</sup> Towns, *Big Bold Extraordinary Faith*, 143.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

addressed in the research questionnaire. Each question in the questionnaire provided participants with an opportunity not only to address each topic specifically, but also an occasion to engage additional related information contributing to the answer. This additional related information consistently referenced Dr. Falwell, and included either his statements or actions; information that contributed to a fuller, more complete answer to the questions. This accumulated data from all research participants clearly establishes Dr. Falwell as one of, if not the most significant motivational factor for early ministerial graduates.

In addition, this accumulated data also points to other significant factors cited by participants in the research. Grouped into common categories, these factors are: A Pioneer Setting, A Working Model, Equipping Leadership and Faculty, A Climate of Spiritual Intensity, Revival, and Expectation, and The Blessing of God. The following section addresses each of the significant factors gleaned from the accumulated research data, detailing each factor individually and its role in influencing the ministry approach of early LU ministerial graduates.

### The Influence of Dr. Jerry Falwell

Dr. Falwell's influence is conspicuous throughout the data produced by the research questionnaire and ensuing conversations with the participants. In the course of the participant interviews and conversations, various aspects of Dr. Falwell's influence became apparent, and the following sections present these areas of influence in subcategories as identified by the research participants.

### *His Faith and Vision*

Among the research participants, the most recognizable aspect of Dr. Falwell's influence was his faith and vision, overwhelmingly evident in his approach to ministry, beginning with Thomas Road Baptist Church, and continuing with various ministries growing out of the TRBC ministry, and culminating with Liberty University. Examining faith and vision, Elmer Towns defines them as "believing the unreasonable, the impossible, and the unexplainable, because someone else, in whom we have absolute confidence, has said it was so, and upon his word we believe it, without asking any further proof."<sup>39</sup> First generation Liberty graduates wholeheartedly apply this definition to Dr. Falwell as a man they view as an embodiment of faith and vision; a man who exercised faith by taking God at his word and trusting him to achieve what needed to be accomplished in leading a multi-faceted church, confronting the local and national culture, and in building a new academic institution. Elmer Towns further describes Dr. Falwell's faith by stating,

Of all the people I've met in my Christian pilgrimage, I think Jerry Falwell had more faith than anyone else. Who else could build the world's largest evangelical Christian university of 11,000 students on campus and over 40,000 students in distance programs around the world? By faith, Jerry announced a goal of 50,000 students in 1973, approximately 35 years before it happened. More than Falwell's ability to preach, administer, counsel—more than any other ability—Falwell's faith was his greatest ability.<sup>40</sup>

For early LU ministerial graduates, this aspect of Dr. Falwell's influence became the inspiration and example for how to pursue ministry. One early graduate expressed the impact of this influence as, "The spirit of God wanted to do something fresh through

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<sup>39</sup> Towns, *Big Bold Extraordinary Faith*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

a man named Jerry Falwell, who brings a team around [him] who then wind up in these classrooms with you on this piece of real estate where he has to keep asking God for big things, and you're watching faith grow in yourself and with all of these students.”<sup>41</sup>

Another early student stated that in a conversation with Dr. Falwell shortly before his passing, he expressed this influence [Dr. Falwell's faith] as the factor that most influenced his own faith in choosing to become a church planter,<sup>42</sup> and still another early graduate expressed the influence of Dr. Falwell's faith as, “He made us believe we could do anything. There was no doubt that he believed God and exercised faith in everything he did, and this way of living became our example, so much so that we also wanted to live that way and looked for ways to exercise faith in our own lives. If he taught me anything, he taught me to live by faith and I love him for it.”<sup>43</sup>

Three distinct areas of ministry provide examples of Dr. Falwell's faith. The first, his local ministry; that dealing with Thomas Road Baptist Church and the greater Lynchburg, Virginia area; the second, his national ministry dealing with individual states around the country and the United States as a whole, and third, his global ministry; developing a Christian university to train students to impact every aspect of societies and cultures around the world. Combined, these examples provided early LU ministerial graduates with a living illustration of faith in action that they embraced as their own and endeavored to exercise in their personal approach to ministry opportunities.

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<sup>41</sup> D. Jim O'Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

<sup>42</sup> This is the author's personal experience.

<sup>43</sup> Glenn Kurka. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. August 22.

## Thomas Road Baptist Church

Having established Thomas Road Baptist Church, Dr. Falwell pursued a variety of ministry opportunities that required faith, either in funding, or in believing that God would use the particular opportunity to reach people with the gospel and transform lives. Prominent examples of faith steps attempted by Dr. Falwell are: a radio and television outreach to the Lynchburg, Virginia area, a step that eventually grew to a national market reaching millions of listeners each week;<sup>44</sup> the Elim Home for Alcoholics, an early version of recovery ministry for alcohol addicted men,<sup>45</sup> and Treasure Island Camp, a summer ministry designed to reach boys and girls in the greater Lynchburg area.<sup>46</sup>

## In reaching the United States

Writing to supporters of the Old Time Gospel Hour ministry, Dr. Falwell stated, “I am criticized often when I say that I believe America can have a spiritual awakening. There are those spiritual pessimists today who believe that because we have apostasy, it is a hopeless age. ...I believe that although we have apostasy, this is the greatest day for evangelism the world has ever known. ...I believe we can see a spiritual awakening.”<sup>47</sup> Motivated by this conviction, Dr. Falwell pursued three avenues of ministry that received

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<sup>44</sup> Dr. Falwell began a half-hour daily radio broadcast the second week following the founding of Thomas Road Baptist Church; *Jerry Falwell, Aflame for God*, (39).

<sup>45</sup> The Elim Home for Alcoholics was begun in January 1959; *Capturing a Town for Christ*, (43).

<sup>46</sup> The Treasure Island ministry was referred to as camp evangelism, and at the height of its ministry, ministered to two thousand children each summer; *Capturing a Town for Christ*, (87).

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *The Golden Age of Opportunity* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month, Undated), 4, OTGH.

national attention, and influenced early LU ministerial graduates to consider ministry as an avenue to address local and national issues.<sup>48</sup> During this time, Dr. Falwell frequently repeated the phrase, “The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”<sup>49</sup>

With this in mind, Dr. Falwell began traveling in 1976 “with a team of eighty-three LBC students to present “I Love America” rallies across the United States,”<sup>50</sup> speaking on the steps of many state capitals in an effort to draw attention to the nation’s Christian heritage. Moral Majority was the second step in reaching the United States and involved challenging Christians to become involved in the political process to elect pro-life and conservative candidates to public office. The Liberty Godparent Home was Dr. Falwell’s alternative to abortion, and provides help for those facing an unwanted pregnancy.

#### In building Liberty University

Perhaps Dr. Falwell’s greatest faith step can be seen in his plan to build Liberty University. In 1971, Dr. Falwell shared his vision with the congregation of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

I have something very special to share with you tonight, Jerry told his congregation. It was a Wednesday evening in January, 1971, and the people gathered at Thomas Road wondered what their excited pastor had come up with now. They had learned that when God gave Jerry Falwell a vision, things happen... Jerry looked at his congregation... Young people are the hope of our nation and our

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<sup>48</sup> The abortion debate was Dr. Falwell's initial foray into addressing national political related issues.

<sup>49</sup> Not found in any research source, rather recalled from the author's experience.

<sup>50</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell, Aflame for God*, 67.

world. There are many good Christian colleges in existence today, but I do not think there are enough. I believe we have a sacred obligation to provide thousands of young people with a solid Christian education. Let us dedicate ourselves tonight to starting a college with the goal of seeing thousands of young men and women, deeply in love with the Lord Jesus Christ, who will go out in all walks of life to shake this world for God.<sup>51</sup>

Although motivated by a variety of interests, Liberty University became the driving passion of Dr. Falwell. He was convinced of the need to train students as “Champions for Christ,”<sup>52</sup> capable of engaging the culture of the United States and the world through a variety of occupations and callings. Writing after forty-four years of ministry, Dr. Falwell stated, “My burning obsession is to cooperate with God in building the greatest Christian University in the world, in history. I truly believe the only way I can evangelize the world in my generation is to train “Young Champions for Christ” at Liberty University.”<sup>53</sup> Early LU ministerial graduates identified with Dr. Falwell’s vision, and his relentless pursuit of building a first-class university demonstrated a commitment to walking by faith that influenced them to embrace the same approach to ministry.

### ***His Inspiration***

Closely related to the influence of Dr. Falwell’s faith and vision is his inspiring influence upon early ministerial graduates. Where his faith and vision influenced students to believe God for the impossible with absolute confidence, his inspiration influenced them to see and embrace their full potential in God’s plan for their lives as he

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>53</sup> Falwell, *Falwell, An Autobiography*, 481.

personally demonstrated this same embrace and commitment. A student participating in one of the early seventies ministry teams recounts the influence of Dr. Falwell as the team traveled with him. He writes, “The education I got on the road that year from watching a man whose life is synonymous with total commitment to God is beyond compare. Jerry believed God supremely. He taught us to believe God and never question the way he works.”<sup>54</sup> Dr. Falwell’s statements also tended to inspire students as he described the ideals he wanted to exemplify LU graduates. Writing to ministry supporters, he expressed his desire for LU students to “be holy, educated, and practical; but my greatest prayer is that they be soul-winners... The soul-winner is a personification of all that God expects in a Christian.”<sup>55</sup>

Finally, students were influenced by Dr. Falwell’s consistent encouragement in the form of inspirational statements. Students heard statements such as “Don’t quit,”<sup>56</sup> and “Nothing of eternal importance is ever accomplished apart from prayer”<sup>57</sup> so frequently that they became second nature to their thinking. Other statements frequently used by Dr. Falwell to inspire students include, “I have often said that you do not determine a person’s greatness by his talent or by his wealth as the world does, but rather

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<sup>54</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell: Aflame for God*, 65.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Gathering Light and Wisdom* (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon-of-the-Month, 12/1979), 3, OTGH.

<sup>56</sup> The quote “Don’t Quit” is from Dr. Falwell’s annual first convocation message to students, and became his hallmark statement.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Let’s Reach the World Together* (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon-of-the-Month, Undated), 3, OTGH.



by what it takes to discourage him;”<sup>58</sup> “If it’s Christian, it ought to be better,” and “The man of God is indestructible until God is finished with him.”<sup>59</sup> One interview participant described Dr. Falwell’s statements as, “Those little sayings that ring in your head; he said them over and over and over, not overtly profound, but they spoke to the steeling of the will; simple but very strong.”<sup>60</sup>

### ***His Endurance***

Early LU ministerial graduates were influenced not only by Dr. Falwell’s faith, vision, and inspiration, but by his endurance as well, illustrated by his commitment to Thomas Road Baptist Church and its related ministries. This commitment to staying in one place and pursuing ministry opportunities became the standard by which graduates framed their own commitment to pastoral ministry. One interview participant stated, “I determined to stay at the church God lead me to plant for the rest of my life. Certainly God can move me if he wants, but I believe I can accomplish much more if I stay where he placed me.”<sup>61</sup> Of the twelve research participants who planted churches, three remained with their church for ten years, two remained with their church for more than twenty years, and six remain at their original church plant, thirty years past the church’s founding.

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<sup>58</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *The Author of Our Troubles* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month, May 1981), 2, OTGH.

<sup>59</sup> These statements were not located in the source materials, but recalled by many interview participants.

<sup>60</sup> D. Jim O’Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

<sup>61</sup> Steve Reynolds. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 17.

Dr. Falwell's endurance was also observable through his work ethic. His weekly schedule included not only his responsibilities to the church but also to the university and other related ministry tasks. This was especially evident during the I Love America rallies and the involvement of the Moral Majority in national politics where Dr. Falwell's schedule left him little time at home. An early student traveling with Dr. Falwell during this time described his schedule; "Jerry was away from his family for days at a time, and got very little sleep; yet he never complained. He would fly back to Lynchburg for Sundays and Wednesday night prayer meetings, then would immediately rejoin us."<sup>62</sup>

This endurance was evident to early students as they would hear Dr. Falwell relate his weekly activities during chapel meetings, and often asked them to pray for a significant approaching item. Ministerial students, who already viewed Dr. Falwell as their example, internalized his approach as a model to emulate. Dr. Falwell would consistently challenge students to get up early and make wise use of each day, and described his own approach to work stating, "I get up earlier than anybody who works for me, and I go to bed later," Falwell said. "I do it seven days a week, and I've done it for 40 years. Most pastors I know don't work very hard. I lead by trying to be omnipresent."<sup>63</sup> This example of endurance helped prepare many early LU ministerial graduates to face the difficulties of future ministry successfully. Key leaders acted as extensions of Dr. Falwell's presence by being available to students to answer questions and provide answers and guidance. Instrumental in this process were Drs. Eddie Dobson, Ron

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<sup>62</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell: Aflame for God*, 65.

<sup>63</sup> John W. Kennedy, "Jerry Falwell: Jerry Falwell's Uncertain Legacy," *Christianity Today*, December, 1996, Online Archive Document [http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article\\_print.html?id=570](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article_print.html?id=570), (accessed September 14, 2009).

Hawkins, Ed Hindson, Elmer Towns, and C. Sumner Wemp, all of whom joined the university within the first seven years of its existence.

Although Dr. Jerry Falwell's influence is the overwhelming and predominate significant motivational factor for early LU ministerial graduates, this does not preclude or negate the presence of other influencing factors. In the course of the research interviews, a majority of participants cited the following factors as having a significant influence on their concept and approach to ministry following graduation.

### A Pioneer Setting

At some point in each interview, participants used the word *pioneer* to describe some aspect of their student experience or their interpretation of elements that comprised the early environment of the university. Their recollections and observations identified three areas where the pioneer influence existed.

### *A Pioneering Leader*

All interview participants considered Dr. Falwell a pioneer leader. One early graduate stated, "Everything about him was pioneer, from planting a church, to starting ministries, including LBC, Jerry was unafraid to go after what he was convinced God wanted him to do."<sup>64</sup> Another early graduate described Dr. Falwell as a "pioneer who had close contact with his students and was constantly challenging them to do their best for the Lord. He was an encourager and motivator whom God greatly used to start a

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<sup>64</sup> Glenn Kurka. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. August 22.

great institution of higher learning.”<sup>65</sup> An early volume chronicling the ministry of Jerry Falwell also identified this pioneer characteristic of his life regarding the beginning of Thomas Road Baptist Church, stating, “They wanted him to start a new church in their community. The idea appealed to Jerry, who even in those days saw himself as a pioneer, as someone who wanted to accomplish great things for God. During those three weeks in Lynchburg, Jerry prayed much about God’s will for his life. He asked the Lord to show him where He would have him pioneer a church, and God spoke clearly about the need for another church in Lynchburg.”<sup>66</sup>

Starting TRBC was only Dr. Falwell’s first step in a series of pioneer steps that would characterize his life. Additional steps include beginning a radio/television ministry in the mid-1950’s, establishing an alcohol recovery ministry decades before such ministries became commonplace, opening a free summer camp for children in central Virginia, and other ministry related ventures, not the least of which is Liberty University.

### ***A Pioneering Purpose***

Dr. Falwell’s efforts in founding and building Liberty University are characteristic of a pioneer as he envisioned an evangelical equivalent to Notre Dame University when no such academic institution existed. LU co-founder Elmer Towns relates his conversation with Dr. Falwell as a critical element in defining the purpose of the college as they talked together early in 1971. “Jerry saw the university, then college as an extension of the local church; in this case Thomas Road, and whose purpose was to

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<sup>65</sup> Rodney Kidd. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 5.

<sup>66</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell, Aflame for God*, 30-31.

prepare students not only academically, but also to invade the culture with the truth of God's Word."<sup>67</sup> Continuing, he stated that Dr. Falwell's desire was "to start a "world-class university, not a Bible College; a liberal arts university training young people in all walks of life; better than a Wheaton, better than a Bob Jones."<sup>68</sup> Ten years following the inaugural class, A. Pierre Guillermin, president of Liberty Baptist College in 1981 wrote reemphasizing the original purpose of the institution stating, "Our goal at LBC is to produce champions – men and women equipped to make an impact on their world, whether they enter the ministry, business, education, the media, or any other profession. We think we can do that best by offering a program of academic excellence in a Christian environment."<sup>69</sup>

Dr. Falwell believed in evangelizing the world in his generation, and foresaw Liberty University as a tool for producing men and women prepared in a variety of educational disciplines who could impact their world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>70</sup> This purpose can be seen in an early ministry publication where Dr. Falwell stated, "I want Liberty Baptist students to be holy, educated, and practical; but my greatest prayer is that they be soul-winners... The soul-winner is a personification of all that God expects in a Christian."<sup>71</sup> Thus, Dr. Falwell's underlying purpose for Liberty University was to

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<sup>67</sup> Elmer Towns. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> A. Pierre Guillermin, "LBC Receives Accreditation," *Faith Aflame*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (Spring 1981), 7.

<sup>70</sup> See footnote 53 of this chapter for Dr. Falwell's quote regarding world evangelization and Liberty University.

<sup>71</sup> Falwell, *Gathering Light and Wisdom*, 3.

‘marry together’ the best in academic preparation with an evangelical Christian emphasis with which to produce graduates who could assume positions of leadership in any venue and influence the world for Christ.

### ***Pioneer Students***

The combination of a pioneering leader with a pioneering vision attracted pioneering students as Lynchburg Baptist College accepted its first applicants in the fall of 1971. Promoting the new school primarily through the Old Time Gospel Hour television and radio broadcast, Dr. Falwell encouraged potential students to “make plans to come to Lynchburg in the fall,”<sup>72</sup> and over one hundred students entered the first class.<sup>73</sup> These students were pioneering in that they were willing to risk enrolling in a new school with no assurance that the school would survive. This aspect is no more visible than in Towns’ account of new students arriving in Lynchburg while dormitories were unfinished. As students arrived, male students were handed tools with which to help build, and female students were given paintbrushes and paint to help finish the new projects. He added, “For the most part everyone stayed; a few left, but most stayed to help get the college started.”<sup>74</sup>

Illustrative of another type of risk, Ed Gomes arrived as a student in 1972, and remarked, “As one of only a very few minority students in the school, I was unsure if I was in the right spot; this being a small southern town, but I quickly found that Dr.

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<sup>72</sup> Elmer Towns. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>73</sup> See footnote 13 of this chapter for information on the discrepancy in this number.

<sup>74</sup> Elmer Towns. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

Falwell and the other students were about something bigger. God was bringing all different kinds of students together for a special purpose.<sup>75</sup> This special purpose was the founding and development of the university Dr. Falwell envisioned, which required a unique group of students to compliment the unique leader and purpose already in place. These students were unique in that they were pioneers.

Each semester, more and more pioneer students arrived to become a part of the LU student body, and their pioneering characteristic is seen best in the difficulties they were willing to endure. They were willing to endure old and unusual dormitories along with the challenging living arrangements necessitated by such arrangements; long periods of travel to and from classroom sites on school buses; un-boarding and boarding busses to avoid overloading the bridge as they traveled to Treasure Island, as well as using church facilities for classrooms and traversing through mud and mess as construction on the mountain progressed.

The pioneering aspect of the early LU environment is a factor that exerted significant influence on early ministerial graduates; an influence that nearly all interview participants recalled with a sense of privilege and thankfulness.

#### A Working Model

Much of the environment surrounding the university from 1971 to 1985 became an example and reference point for early ministerial graduates, and influenced their subsequent approach to ministry. Interview participants identified the environment of that time as a working model where students were exposed, not only to areas of ministry,

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<sup>75</sup> Ed Gomes. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 18.

but also to an approach to ministry. Three distinct areas emerged in the course of the research: Thomas Road Baptist Church as a model for ministry organization and service, the development of the mountain campus as a model for faith and action, and the ministry teams as a model for evangelism outreach.

### ***TRBC***

Research participants recalled Dr. Falwell referring to Thomas Road Baptist Church as a laboratory for ministry where students could be involved in a variety of different ministries, discovering and using their spiritual gifts in preparation for future full-time ministries of their own. Writing in the first year of the Lynchburg Baptist College, Drs. Falwell and Towns stated, “The Lynchburg Baptist College was founded upon the theological foundation that the best place to train young people to minister in a local church is in a local church. Therefore, the Lynchburg Baptist College is uniquely the educational arm of the Thomas road Baptist Church... Each student is required to be a member of the Thomas Road Baptist Church, to tithe to the church, and to serve in some capacity in the church.”<sup>76</sup> Filling roles as Sunday School teachers and helpers, bus captains and workers, choir members and other areas of service, students learned essential aspects of local church ministry, along with the importance of faithfulness and dependability.

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<sup>76</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Church Aflame*, 154.



### *Campus Development*

The development of the campus was more significant in influencing the faith of some early LU ministerial graduates than the church was in influencing their understanding of ministry organization and service. Research participants recalled the sense of wonder and at times skepticism they experienced as they rehearsed Dr. Falwell's declarations of what buildings would be built, where these buildings would be located on the new campus, and the purpose they would serve for the university at a time when the mountain campus was very much undeveloped.<sup>77</sup> The following statements are illustrative of Dr. Falwell's declarations: "We will have the best facilities available on Liberty Mountain. God's people should not be satisfied with second-rate effort or sub-standard equipment. On Liberty Mountain we are pledged to the spirit of our forefathers and to 20<sup>th</sup> century facilities,"<sup>78</sup> and "Just as the poker is heated in the fire, I believe these young ministers learn to have faith in God as they trust God with us for the buildings in which they study and the sidewalks on which they walk. They learn faith by exercising faith."<sup>79</sup> Year after year proved Dr. Falwell's faith to be real as steel was erected and buildings were built, and it was out of this experience that many early ministerial

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<sup>77</sup> Strober and Tomczak refer to this skepticism when they describe the reaction of students, faculty, and others as they participated in the celebration of completed buildings six months following the prayer meeting in the snow, writing, "On September 2, 1977, more than thirty-five hundred faculty, students, and friends sat in the hot sunshine atop beautiful Liberty Mountain. They looked at buildings many predicted could never be built." Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell: Aflame for God*, 77.

<sup>78</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *The 80's: A Decade for Christian Education* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month, Undated (early 1980)), 2, OTGH.

<sup>79</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Stepping Out on Faith*, 20.

graduates embraced the belief that, “God can do anything, anywhere, anyway, anytime, through anyone who will simply trust him.”<sup>80</sup>

Students were not only spectators to the campus development, but were involved in the process as well by praying and fasting for the needed facilities. The most striking example of student involvement is the prayer meeting on the mountain on January 21 1977.<sup>81</sup> Dr. Falwell, university leaders, faculty and students gathered in the snow to ask God to provide the resources needed to build the campus. Dr. Falwell led the students in prayer while they joined him by praying in groups. Robbie Hiner<sup>82</sup> sang “I Want That Mountain,” a gospel hymn that became the theme song for campus development during that time, and emphasized the faith of the Liberty community in asking God for the Liberty Mountain campus.

### I Want That Mountain<sup>83</sup>

I saw the Giant of Prayerlessness upon the mountain high;  
He laughed so hard at my unbended knee.  
No longer in the Wilderness I'll stay, and so I cry:  
I want that mountain, it belongs to me!

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<sup>80</sup> This is the author's personal expression of the concept that many early ministerial graduates came to believe.

<sup>81</sup> Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell - Aflame for God*, 76.

<sup>82</sup> Robbie Hiner is an early LU graduate who was featured on the Old Time Gospel Hour television broadcast on many Sundays, and became an example of LU graduates involved in ministry.

<sup>83</sup> John R. Rice and Joy Rice Martin, ed., *I Want That Mountain*, by Bill Harvey, lyrics and Music by Bill Harvey, in *Soul-Stirring Songs and Hymns* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1972), 347. This hymn is based upon Joshua 14:12 “Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spoke in that day.” There are four stanzas in the lyrics, only the first stanza is included for illustrative purposes.

### Chorus

I want that mountain! I want that mountain!  
Where the milk and honey flow, where the grapes of Eshcol grow,  
I want that mountain! I want that mountain!  
The mountain that my Lord has given me.

### ***Beyond Lynchburg***

The concept of a working model included student participation in evangelism outreach trips that extended to areas beyond Lynchburg. In the early years of the university, evangelism teams of up to sixty participants consisting of faculty, student leaders, and students assembled for trips to New York City and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During these trips, students experienced evangelism first-hand, participated in witnessing, tract distribution, singing, and ministry to children. Later efforts included trips outside of the United States for ministry to foreign cultures. Activities such as these encouraged a burden and desire for local and world evangelization.

The concept of a working model was a significant influence among early ministerial graduates. It afforded an opportunity for students to apply what they were learning in the classroom in preparation for their own future ministry. Several participants in the research referred to the early LU environment as an “incubator for ministry preparation.”<sup>84</sup>

### Equipping Leadership and Faculty

Describing the university’s leaders and faculty in a 1981 ministry publication, then college president, A. Pierre Guillermin wrote the following: “The LBC faculty

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<sup>84</sup> Rod Dempsey. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

consists of 130 professors, 35 percent of whom hold earned doctorates. They come from throughout the United States and hold degrees from the nation's top colleges and universities. Many are well known in their individual disciplines for their research and writing.”<sup>85</sup> While this description is important in an academic context, it was not what early students viewed as important. For these early students, the strength and influence of the university's leaders and faculty was found in their willingness to blend academic instruction with practical application, and invest themselves in that process through their personal involvement with students in the classroom and in ministry opportunities.

### ***In the Classroom***

Many of the early LU ministerial graduates participating in the research cited leaders and faculty of the university who influenced their concept and approach to ministry. Most often, this influence occurred in the classroom where leaders and faculty taught students using not only their areas of academic training, but also out of their personal ministry experience and passion. Participants, some with tears in their eyes, recalled the influence of particular leaders and faculty. Various phrases described those who made a significant influence in the participants' lives, such as “he created a thirst for knowledge in me,” “he was a friend and mentor,” and “he taught me importance of leadership”<sup>86</sup> The following is typical of early graduates in their recollection of this combination of academics, experience, and passion in the classroom.

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<sup>85</sup> Guillermin, "LBC Receives Accreditation!" 7.

<sup>86</sup> See Table 4 (49) for descriptions linked to specific university leaders and faculty.

I had the book of Romans with Woody Kroll; took my breath away; Roscoe coming back from his missions trips crying and just watching this, all of those folks; you just saw passion for God everywhere. I liked to watch each of them bring a particular nuance to the teaching gift. Their excitement to handle the word like they did. Kroll, Dobson and Hindson and then Hawkins comes onto the scene; just sharing their hearts... Sumner Wemp would cry as he taught. Roscoe as he poured this passion on us. J.O. as he was this memory machine. They were good days. You sensed that they really wanted to invest in our lives and they loved the Lord.<sup>87</sup>

### *In Ministry*

This influence transcended the classroom to impact early ministerial graduates in ministry contexts. One interview participant referring to a faculty member's ministry involvement stated, "he was a professor by day, but a co-laborer by night."<sup>88</sup> Original seminary faculty Carl Diemer and Frank Schmitt continued to help seminary students following their graduation from the undergraduate program as they planted churches and developed ministries. Schmitt maintained a ministry/mentor relationship with Gary Byers,<sup>89</sup> a member of the inaugural class at Lynchburg Baptist College, and an early LU ministerial graduate who planted Fredericktowne Baptist Church in Frederick, Maryland in 1974,<sup>90</sup> and Dr. Ron Hawkins maintained a ministry/mentor relationship with D. Jim O'Neill following O'Neill's return from missionary ministry in the Philippians.

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<sup>87</sup> D. Jim O'Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

<sup>88</sup> Charles Davidson. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>89</sup> Frank Schmitt. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 17.

<sup>90</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Stepping Out On Faith*, 106.

### ***In Their Homes***

University Leaders and faculty frequently invited students to their homes to provide somewhat of a home-away-from-home environment for students, especially for students who were unable to travel home over holidays and breaks. At other times, faculty would invite entire classes to their homes at the conclusion of a semester. The author personally experienced the hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Amos Wipf following a challenging mathematics course in the spring semester of 1980. Actions such as these endeared students to their professors and helped many students through the difficulties of college life.

### **An Environment of Spiritual Intensity and Expectation**

Among the influences identified by research participants, the presence of a spiritual intensity and a sense of expectation were common to all. Participants referred to this influence as *something* present in the school's environment connected to Dr. Falwell's faith and vision, and including an intentional emphasis of relying on the supernatural power of God. Participants in the research identified three specific areas related to, and contributing to this environment: needs, spiritual focus, and revival.

### ***Needs***

The university and the students shared a common need in the early years of the school: money. Although the cost of education was far less in the early years of the institution, the total cost represented a significant sum for most students who had to pray constantly for God's provision to pay school related expenses. Table 5 presents the cost of education for the inaugural class of Lynchburg Baptist College. Encouraged by Dr.

Falwell's faith and the environment of spiritual intensity, students prayed and believed that God would supernaturally provide for their needs. "Many students received checks from unknown sources, and school bills were paid in answer to prayer. We believed Jerry that God would provide, and he did."<sup>91</sup> Dr. Falwell's consistent reminder that "nothing of eternal importance is ever accomplished apart from prayer,"<sup>92</sup> along with his example and encouragement, drove an expectation among students regarding the power of God.

Table 6 - Education Costs for Lynchburg Baptist College - 1971

Tuition	\$150.00
Room	\$150.00
Board	\$225.00
Books	\$ 35.00
Lab Fees	\$ 10.00
Spending Money	\$ 50.00
Total (semester)	\$620.00

The university's financial needs included operating funds and funds for ongoing development. During this time, Dr. Falwell and Elmer Towns traveled to area churches seeking help in supporting the university financially. Towns would present information regarding the school and Dr. Falwell would preach a message related to Christian Education. Following the message, interested church members received envelopes and were asked to commit to weekly and monthly financial support for the school. This source of support was important to the survival of LU in its early years, but more importantly, it was a demonstration of the spiritual intensity and sense of expectation that

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<sup>91</sup> Glenn Kurka. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. August 21.

<sup>92</sup> See footnote 55 (77).

characterized the early days of LU. Writing of needs and expectations, Dr. Falwell wrote, “As I write this chapter, I have challenged our people to pray for \$10 million (June 1983). We have continued to build new buildings on Liberty Mountain for the college, and we have continued to broadcast the gospel on over 500 radio and 300 television stations. Since we have done what God has commanded, I *expect* [emphasis mine] God to provide \$10 million to take care of the bills.”<sup>93</sup>

### ***Spiritual Focus***

The spiritual intensity of the early years of the university also grew out of an intentional spiritual focus, where students’ lives were strictly controlled. Writing to Faith Partner supporters of the Old Time Gospel Hour, Dr. Falwell stated,

Athletes with bad training habits do not win races. At Liberty Baptist College, the students are taught this by example and precept. We teach them respect for authority. We tell them what time to go to bed. We control their dating habits. They are not allowed to use alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or tobacco. The girls must dress like young ladies and the boys are allowed only one head of hair. The Hollywood theater is forbidden. Dancing is taboo.<sup>94</sup>

Much of this approach is due to the Independent Baptist influence of Thomas Road Baptist Church. TRBC was aligned with the Baptist Bible Fellowship, headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, the parent organization of the Baptist Bible College from which Dr. Falwell graduated. BBF churches were known for their stand on separation, and this stand naturally flowed into the ministries of TRBC, including early LU. The effect of this stance produced an environment with little distraction, where

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<sup>93</sup> Falwell and Towns, *Stepping Out On Faith*, 19.

<sup>94</sup> Dr. Jerry Falwell, *Winning the Race* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour, Faith Partners: Sermon of the Month, Undated (Prior to 1980)), 3, OTGH.



students focused on academics and ministry involvement through the local church (TRBC). With a small student body and the constant influence of Dr. Falwell and university leaders and faculty, the result was a heightened spiritual focus.

Two sources fed this spiritual focus; Sunday and Wednesday services at Thomas Road and the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday university chapel services. Elmer Towns coined the phrase, “the Hot Poker,”<sup>95</sup> which he used to describe the university’s commitment to exposing students to the best chapel speakers; pastors and ministry leaders who were involved in successful and growing ministries around the country, who challenged students to prepare and give their lives in service to Jesus Christ. This combination of local church services and consistently challenging chapel services helped to fuel an ongoing spiritual focus that left little time for anything else.

### ***Revival***

A significant event occurred in 1973 that influenced the spiritually intense environment and sense of expectation of the school for years following. Del Fehsenfeld Jr. and Ed Hindson of Life Action Ministries were in Lynchburg for evangelistic meetings with Thomas Road Baptist Church and the students of Liberty University. Dr. Falwell wrote of his desire in anticipation of the meetings; “Like many of you, I had read the account of the Asbury Revival, One Divine Movement. My heart cried that God might give “another divine movement” for our students.”<sup>96</sup> As Fehsenfeld and Hindson preached, revival among the students began. Dr. Falwell described the results of the

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<sup>95</sup> Elmer Towns. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. October 30.

<sup>96</sup> Hindson, *Glory in the Church*, 118.

revival stating, “The nightly services continued throughout a second week with people being saved every night. After thirteen continuous days of services, 683 had been saved, and nearly everyone baptized.”<sup>97</sup>

The environment of spiritual intensity and the sense of expectation continued through the early years of the university, encouraged by ongoing needs among the students and the university, and a desire see God move in dramatic fashion as he had in 1973. Following-up on what he called the Lynchburg Revival, Dr. Falwell wrote, “Time and time again, we were to see outbursts of revival in our church services and college chapels.”<sup>98</sup>

### The Blessing of God

The final significant influencing factor was identified by all interview participants and is closely related to the previous influence in that it is overtly spiritual in nature. Although much of the credit for the founding and growth of Liberty University can be traced to the faith of Dr. Jerry Falwell, the size and scope of this endeavor, and the manner in which opportunities were opened and needs supplied, point to a larger and more powerful source of influence; God. In discussions with interview participants, all agreed that beyond human ability and effort, it appears that God had determined to bless the faith and efforts of Dr. Jerry Falwell in founding and building Liberty University. A number of interview participants recalled Mordecai’s statement to Esther, “For such a

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 124.

time as this,”<sup>99</sup> relating it to Dr. Falwell, and believing that God had raised up a man whom he could trust for a specific time and purpose, to accomplish God’s plan for a school of Champions for Christ.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

Perhaps unknown to everyone except possibly Dr. Falwell, a “Perfect Storm”<sup>100</sup>, was gathering in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1971 to produce an evangelical academic institution that would someday rival the large and well-known schools around the country. The various elements or factors in play at that time each exerted an influence upon early ministerial students that contributed to the formation of their understanding and approach to ministry opportunities following graduation. An early graduate summarized his understanding and appreciation of the time and its influence upon his ministry stating, “I think unbeknownst to us, we were saved out of a time period when God created a movement; we were at a unique moment in the history of God’s movement. A movement was afoot; we were a part of it”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Esther 4:14, NKJV.

<sup>100</sup> Taken from the movie by the same name, released by Warner Brothers, Inc. in 2000, this phrase has developed as a description of an unusual combination of events that produces previously unforeseen and dramatic results.

<sup>101</sup> Jim O’Neill. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. September 17.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY

#### **Early Graduate Participation**

As a group, early graduate participants in the research recalled their time as LU students as a positive experience, considering it one of the more formative or transformative experiences of their lives, and an experience that prepared and encouraged them for ministry. Their answers to the Research Instrument and Research Questionnaire prompted the recollection of numerous personal accounts supporting or framing their answers to questions, and supplied valuable data for the construction of this thesis. It is interesting to note two items that surfaced numerous times throughout the interviews with early graduates. While not a part of the research, these items provide insight into some early graduates' perception of the university at present, and more importantly, reveal their sensitivity to the elements that influenced them in a significant fashion.

First, the majority of participants in this group view LU as a great Christian university,<sup>1</sup> but draw a distinction regarding greatness between the university (college) of their time as students, and the university of today. Many remarked that the present university, while supplying a greatly expanded academic program with a variety of extracurricular opportunities, appears to have lost elements that played an essential role

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<sup>1</sup> This was a part of Dr. Falwell's vision; see footnote 53 (76) for more information.

in their own experience as early LU students. Participants voicing such observations admitted to viewing the university as somewhat diminished spiritually, perhaps at the expense of the continued growth in student body size, academic programs and non-academic or non-ministry opportunities. Second, some early graduates who perceive the university as diminished spiritually relate such a perception to the change in student dress requirements, where present student dress bears no similarity to the dress codes of early students. While admitting that dress is not overtly a spiritual issue, participants voicing this concern cite the rules and requirements of the university during the focus period as important to the development of character in early students. Third, still others link their perception of diminished spirituality to the lessened role of TRBC in the lives of present students as compared to early students, and the dropped requirement of membership in the church.

Discussions with participants generally lead to the acknowledgment that Dr. Falwell's vision included the growth of the university, necessitating the addition of academic programs and supplementary activities for an expanding student body. Additionally, participants acknowledged the change in culture from their own generation to that of present students, of which dress is a visible example and not necessarily a determiner of spirituality, as well as the role of the campus church in supplementing the role of TRBC in students' lives. These acknowledgments prompted many to conclude that the focus period of this research was indeed a unique time in the life of the university, one that more than likely will not be repeated. The accumulated data from early LU ministerial graduates reveals a reverence and passion for their history as first

generation graduates, a love for Dr. Falwell, and a deep appreciation for their experience as students during the early years of the university.

### **University Leaders and Faculty Participation**

The somewhat common responses of university leaders and faculty raised an unexpected element unforeseen at the beginning of this research. Interviews with members of this group produced valuable information supplementing the research of this thesis; however, many participants expressed apprehension in their attempts to respond to the research questionnaire clearly, citing incomplete knowledge outside of their roles as leaders and faculty.<sup>2</sup> Drawing attention to the intentional rephrasing of research questions helped to allay leadership and faculty hesitation to some degree; however, while providing interesting information, data accumulated from the participants from this group tended to be general in nature, and not easily combined with the data provided by the early ministerial graduate participants.<sup>3</sup>

One exception to this is Elmer Towns, Co-Founder of Liberty University with Dr. Jerry Falwell, who has maintained contact with a number of early graduates, including David Earley, a participant in this research, enabling him to respond to the research

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 43 for an example of this hesitation by leaders and faculty, (42).

<sup>3</sup> See the Leaders and Faculty version of the Research Questionnaire in Appendix A where questions were rephrased slightly to include the words “appear to have influenced,” allowing for participants in this group to formulate responses to questions based on their perception rather than direct knowledge.

instruments with a greater degree of certainty.<sup>4</sup> The exception is also true of Dr. Ron Hawkins who maintained a close relationship with D. Jim O'Neill, and Danny Lovett, also participants in this research.<sup>5</sup> Aside from these students, most early ministerial graduates did not maintain a close or ongoing connection with university leaders and faculty, making it difficult for this group to respond to the research instruments with confidence. The accumulated data supplied from this group of participants revealed similar results to that of early graduate participants, and included a fondness for the experiences related to the early years of the university, and the acknowledgment of God's hand upon a man and his vision.

### **Understanding Dr. Falwell's Role**

Any process of researching, compiling, and presenting the significant factors motivating early LU ministerial graduates in their concept and approach to ministry requires the admission of the overwhelming influence of Dr. Jerry Falwell upon the academic, ministry, and social aspects of students' lives, and his leadership of the church and university overall. Regardless of the question's focus, his presence in the research data is unmistakable, resulting in nearly every participant's answers to the research

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<sup>4</sup> From the founding of New Life Church in Gahanna, Ohio in 1985 to his departure as Senior Pastor in 2005, David Earley maintained a close relationship with Elmer Towns, resulting in the latter's intimate familiarity with Earley's ministry and personal characteristics.

<sup>5</sup> Jim O'Neill was a guest at the Hawkins' home while pursuing doctoral studies at Western Conservative Theological Seminary where Dr. Hawkins was President from 1995-2000. Danny Lovett maintained a relationship with Dr. Hawkins while he was Senior Pastor of Open Door Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and latter as Dean of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

questionnaire including at least some reference to Dr. Falwell, whether slight or in considerable detail. The following examples illustrate this underlying presence.

Dr. Falwell's influence is obvious where expected to be so, including the influences of TRBC and the weekly LU chapels where students regularly sat under his preaching and teaching, hearing messages of challenge and encouragement to not quit, but to remain true to God's call and to become a champion for Christ. However, Dr. Falwell's influence was not restricted only to the obvious areas, but early graduates identified his influence in unexpected areas as well. When recalling the difficulty of living in old and less-than-desirable dorms, the hardship of travel associated with multiple locations, or the disruption caused by construction on the Liberty Mountain campus, early graduates referenced Dr. Falwell's statements, such as "The measure of a man is what it takes to discourage him,"<sup>6</sup> and his own example of enduring the many difficulties and challenges associated with leading the church and university as their inspiration to continue through their own hardships. A letter to ministry supporters acknowledged this seldom-mentioned aspect of Dr. Falwell's life stating, "His efforts have sapped his strength, often left him discouraged and frustrated, but we believe America is headed toward self destruction – and we must do something while we still can."<sup>7</sup> This unwavering commitment to continue through hardship and difficulty became an example that many early students embraced as their own.

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<sup>6</sup> See the section on Dr. Falwell's ability to inspire students (76) for additional encouraging quotes.

<sup>7</sup> The Old Time Gospel Hour, "Ministry Update," *For Faith Partners Only*, November 1984.



Dr. Falwell's ability to influence not only students, but also churches and people across the United States is evidence of his strongest characteristic, leadership skill. In the inaugural year of the university and several years thereafter, Dr. Falwell successfully led and encouraged churches other than TRBC to support the new academic institution with monthly financial giving<sup>8</sup>. With the I Love America rallies in the mid 1970's, Dr. Falwell's leadership was influential in highlighting the drift of America's moral compass, and calling the country back to God.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps his greatest demonstration of leadership aside from more than fifty years as pastor of one of America's largest churches and as LU Chancellor is Dr. Falwell's role in establishing the Moral Majority, a movement of conservative Americans, many of them evangelical Christians, to influence the 1980 elections. Dr. Falwell is credited with mobilizing the conservative vote to elect Ronald Reagan as the fortieth President of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Falwell's leadership ability appears to be the combination of natural aptitude and the supernatural endowment of God as opposed to the product of academic preparation, perhaps in preparation for a life of rigorous ministry and moral leadership. Dr. Falwell's academic training consisted of the Graduate of Theology degree from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, in addition to several honorary doctorates

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<sup>8</sup> These efforts are referenced in footnote 93 (93).

<sup>9</sup> This volume contains Dr. Falwell's vision along with challenging messages for national revival. Jerry Falwell, *America Can Be Saved* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1979).

<sup>10</sup> Jerry Falwell, *Strength for the Journey: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 357-381.

received throughout his ministry.<sup>11</sup> With comparatively limited academic training, Dr. Falwell was able to employ his leadership ability to accomplish items of spiritual and strategic importance.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, the subject of church leadership, increased in prominence in the United States with a number of authors contributing sources that have become standard references for the subject. Well-known authors contributing to this topic from a ministry background include Henry and Richard Blackaby, John C. Maxwell, and Elmer Towns. Sources from these authors along with corporate leadership contributions authored by John R. Noe<sup>12</sup> and Jack Welch<sup>13</sup> provide a reference with which to interpret Dr. Falwell's leadership characteristics. Table 7 presents the key elements of each authors' model as a foundation for constructing a form for referencing and comparing the leadership qualities of Dr. Falwell.

The process of identifying Dr. Falwell's leadership strengths included a review of each authors' expression or concept of key leadership characteristics, identifying the elements shared by each author, and then interpreting those elements in light of Dr.

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Falwell received the following honorary degrees: Doctor of Divinity from Tennessee Temple Theological Seminary, Doctor of Letters from California Graduate School of Theology, and Doctor of Laws from Central University, Seoul, Korea. Liberty University, Undated, "Liberty University Executive Biographies," <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=6921/> (accessed February 13, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> John R. Noe is a motivational speaker who uses his mountain climbing experiences to "inspire non-mountain climbers to reach great heights in their own lives." John R. Noe, *Peak Performance Principles for High Achievers* (New York: Berkley Books, 1986), Inside Cover.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Jack Welch has written numerous articles and publications on leadership and is a recognized leader in corporate leadership. He served as CEO of General Electric Inc. from 1981 to 2001. Jack Welch, "Biography," *The Welch Way*, Undated, 2008, <http://www.welchway.com/About-Us/Jack-Welch/Biography.aspx/> (accessed February 13, 2010).

Falwell's life and ministry. The authors' tendency to use different terms to describe similar characteristics, or to cite characteristics that have relevance to a rather broad range of applications required a comprehensive comparison of each authors' material and at times, a somewhat subjective interpretation of the material in an attempt to produce a collective list of leadership distinctives. The purpose of this process is not to introduce a discussion of the various authors' material, rather to simply and clearly identify leadership characteristics common to each for use as a tool in identifying Dr. Falwell's leadership strengths. Table 8 presents a combined view of each author's characteristics as presented in Table 7, identifying areas of similarity or complimentary interpretation.

Table 7. Leadership Models<sup>14</sup>

<b>Blackaby</b>	<b>Maxwell</b>	<b>Noe</b>	<b>Towns</b>	<b>Welch</b>
<i>“Influence”</i>	<i>“21 Laws”</i>	<i>“6 Attitudes”</i>	<i>“8 Laws”</i>	<i>“5 Essential Traits”</i>
God’s Authentication	The Lid	No small plans	Dreams	Positive Energy
Encounters with God	Influence	Willing to do what they fear	Rewards	Energize Others
Character/ Integrity	Process	Willing to prepare	Credibility	Edge (Tough Calls)
Successful Track Record	Navigation	Willing to risk failure	Communication	Talent to Execute
Preparation	E. F. Hutton	Teachable	Accountability	Passion
	Solid Ground	Heart	Motivation	
	Respect		Problem Solving	
	Intuition		Decision-Making	
	Magnetism			
	Connection			
	Inner Circle			
	Empowerment			
	Reproduction			
	Buy-In			
	Victory			
	Big Mo			
	Priorities			
	Sacrifice			
	Timing			
	Explosive Growth			
	Legacy			

<sup>14</sup> The following sources were used to compile this table: Henry Blackaby and Richard, *Spiritual Leadership - Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001); John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998); John R. Noe, *Peak Performance Principles for High Achievers* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Co, 1986), 49; Elmer Towns, *The 8 Laws of Leadership* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1992), and Jack Welch, “Are Leaders Born or Made,” [www.thewelchway.com](http://www.thewelchway.com), December 19, 2005, <http://www.welchway.com/Management/Leadership/What-Makes-a-Leader/Are-Leaders-Born-or-Made.aspx/> (accessed February 9, 2009).

Table 8. Combined Leadership Characteristics

	Description	Blackaby Influences	Maxwell “21 Laws”	Noe “6 Attitudes”	Towns “8 Laws”	Welch “Essential Traits”
Blackaby	God’s Authentication		Influence			
	Encounters with God		The Lid			Passion
	Character/Integrity		Respect		Credibility	
	Preparation		Process	Willing to Prepare		
	Successful Track Record		Victory		Rewards	
Maxwell	The Lid	Encounters with God				
	Influence	God’s Authentication				
	Process	Preparation				
	Navigation				Problem Solving	Edge (Tough Calls)
	E. F. Hutton				Communication	Energize Others
	Solid Ground					
	Respect	Character/Integrity			Credibility	
	Intuition				Dreams	
	Magnetism					
	Connection					
	Inner Circle					
	Empowerment					
	Reproduction					
	Buy-In					
	Victory	Successful Track Record				
	Big Mo					
	Priorities					
	Sacrifice			Heart		Passion
	Timing					
	Explosive Growth					
	Legacy					
Noe	No Small Plans				Dreams	
	Willing to do what they fear					
	Willing to Prepare	Preparation				
	Willing to risk failure	Encounters with God				
	Teachable					
	Heart		Sacrifice			Passion
Towns	Dreams		Intuition	No Small Plans		Passion
	Rewards	Successful Track Record				
	Credibility	Character/Integrity	Respect			
	Communication		E. F. Hutton			Energize Others
	Motivation		Influence			Positive Energy
	Problem Solving		Navigation			Edge (Tough Calls)
	Decision-Making					Talent to Execute
	Accountability					
Welch	Positive Energy		Influence		Motivation	
	Energize Others		E. F. Hutton		Communication	
	Edge (Tough Calls)		Navigation		Problem Solving	
	Talent to Execute				Decision-Making	
	Passion	Encounters with God		Heart		

The combined information in Table 8 was further reduced by using terms selected from the authors' lists that described similar items in a collective fashion, thus producing a modified list of leadership characteristics. Table 9 presents this reduced list of characteristics.

Table 9. Reduced Leadership Characteristics<sup>15</sup>

<b>Characteristic/Quality</b>	<b>Description</b>
Influence	God's Authentication, Motivation, Positive energy
Integrity	Respect, Credibility,
Passion	Encounters with God, Heart,
Vision	Dreams, No small plans,
Victories	Successful track record, Rewards
Edge	Navigation, Problem solving, Tough calls,
Communication	Energize others,
Decision-Making	Talent to execute,
Preparation	Willing to prepare, Process,
Timing	Knowing when the time is right
Risk-Taker	Willing to face failure, willing to face fear
Sacrifice	Counting the cost, Willing to do what it takes

In addition to the authors listed in Tables 7 through 9, Neff and Citrin identified ten leadership traits common to business leaders; traits similar to those previously mentioned, and others not included by the previous authors.<sup>16</sup> Neff and Citrin's traits appear to bear some importance to an overall leadership model and are presented in Table 10.

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<sup>15</sup> The information in Table 9 is a restatement of key material from the sources used for Tables 7 and 8, and combines like or related information using at times a variation of the original terms, but endeavoring to maintain each authors' intent.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas H. Tunnickliff uses this source (Neff, T. J. and Citrin, J. N. *Lessons from the Top: The Search for America's Best Business Leaders*. (New York: Random House,) 1994.), in his Ed.D dissertation, "The Early Leadership Development Experiences of Highly Effective Senior Pastors." PhD diss., The Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 2005, 90.

Table 10. Neff and Citrin's Common Leadership Traits<sup>17</sup>

<b>Trait</b>	<b>Description</b>
Passion	Energy, drive, contagious and essential
Intelligence	Clarity of Thinking
Great communication skills	None provided
High energy level	None provided
Ego in check	"We were struck at how small the eyes of our leaders were, many were quite humble" (383)
Inner peace	"The most successful appear to be the least stressed" (no reference given)
Capitalizing on formative early experiences	"positive and negative" (no reference given)
Strong family ties	"Married to their original spouse, the vast majority have children and grandchildren" (366)
Positive attitude	"learn from mistakes and thankful for the opportunity to make a difference" (no reference given)
Focus	"They focus on doing things right

The combined information from Tables 9 and 10 produces a restated and final list of leadership characteristics/qualities/traits presented in Table 11, and provides a model compiled from a variety of ministry and business sources with which to identify the leadership strengths of Dr. Jerry Falwell.

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas H. Tunnickliff, "The Early Leadership Development Experiences of Highly Effective Senior Pastors." PhD diss., The Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, 2005, 90.

Table 11. Restated-Final Leadership Characteristics/Qualities/Traits

<b>Characteristic/Quality</b>	<b>Description</b>
Influence	God's Authentication, Motivation, Positive energy
Integrity	Respect, Credibility,
Passion	Encounters with God, heart, energy, drive, contagious
Vision	Dreams, No small plans,
Victories	Successful track record, Rewards
Edge	Navigation, Problem solving, Tough calls,
Communication	Energize others,
Decision-Making	Talent to execute,
Preparation	Willing to prepare, Process,
Timing	Knowing when the time is right
Risk-Taker	Willing to face failure, willing to face fear
Sacrifice	Counting the cost, Willing to do what it takes
High energy level	Ability to keep going
Ego in check	Small in their own eyes
Inner peace	Lack of or control of stress
Strong family ties	Strong marriages, children and grandchildren

Dr. Falwell's leadership as Senior Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church and Chancellor of Liberty University mirrors many of the characteristics presented in Table 11, and his leadership became the primary source of influence for early ministerial graduates in their understanding and approach to ministry following graduation. For example, Dr. Falwell's influence was that of a God authenticated leader who built one of the largest ministries in the United States, evidencing a successful track record and repeated spiritual victories. As such, he was a highly motivational communicator, a source of positive energy, able to energize students, church members, and tremendous portions of the American public alike. He was a man of great vision and spiritual passion who encouraged students to meet with God early and long every day, an outgrowth of his own practice that led to encounters with God at strategic moments in the history of LU and TRBC.



Among the more prominent of Dr. Falwell's leadership characteristics influencing early LU ministerial graduates was his penchant for taking risks, sensing the timing of God for strategic moves, and his willingness to sacrifice for what he believed was the will of God. His greatest risk-taking attempt may be seen in establishing Liberty University, a tremendous effort without benefit of funding, facilities, personnel, and other necessary resources essential for success. Sensing God's timing for continued growth in the university, Dr. Falwell continued to take risks, frequently the result of extended times of fasting and prayer. These two practices are illustrative of Dr. Falwell's willingness to sacrifice on behalf of the ministry and students. This author and his wife personally experienced Dr. Falwell's sacrificial kindness in 1979 when at a chance meeting at a local grocery store, with little money for food, he left money with the store manager to pay for our purchase and gave an additional \$50.00 to help two young people in financial difficulty.

A focus on several additional areas is necessary to present an accurate description of Dr. Falwell's leadership characteristics or qualities, specifically *High Energy Level*, *Strong Family Ties*, and *Ego in Check*, items mentioned exclusively by Neff and Citrin. Regarding energy level, Dr. Falwell possessed a tremendous energy level and required only momentary amounts of rest to continue throughout a demanding schedule. Several early graduates recalled that while flying with Dr. Falwell, he would typically sleep for fifteen to twenty minutes to rest and recharge in preparation for hours of ministry ahead. Over the years, many of Dr. Falwell's associates have marveled at his seemingly limitless energy and drive enabling him to continue through hours and days of strenuous schedule. Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary professor Carl Diemer recalled receiving a phone

call from Dr. Falwell at 1:00am and conversing for nearly an hour regarding a particular aspect of the seminary program before ending the conversation.<sup>18</sup> However, Dr. Falwell never permitted this energy and drive to interfere with his family. Jonathan Falwell commented, “Dad never missed something important at home. Although he was busy, he purposely made time for us. He demonstrated by his actions his love for mom and us, and his desire to support us in whatever activity was going on in our lives at that time. He would always take one of us with him on trips when he could.”<sup>19</sup>

Another significant characteristic highlighted by Neff and Citrin, but surprisingly absent from other the sources, is what they label *Ego in check*. Although Dr. Falwell was extremely confident and persistent in his pursuit of God’s plan for TRBC and LU, he was never known for conceit or egotism, rather for his gracious nature and lack of self-promotion. When approached by students wishing to thank him for some expression of help, he would quickly diminish the act and change the subject.

Perhaps an appropriate characterization of Dr. Falwell’s leadership is a term Kadence Buchanan employs, *Transformational Leadership*, which Buchanan defines as “leading by motivating.”<sup>20</sup> Buchanan continues, “Transformational leaders provide extraordinary motivation by appealing to followers’ ideals and moral values and inspiring them to think about problems in new ways. These followers have felt trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for them and were motivated to do more than they thought they

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<sup>18</sup> Carl Diemer. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. November 15.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Falwell. 2009. Interview by author. Lynchburg, VA. December 17.

<sup>20</sup> Kadence Buchanan, "Transformational Leadership." Transformational Leadership EzineArticles.com. <http://ezinearticles.com/?Transformational-Leadership&id=314423> (Accessed November 1, 2009).

could, or would do. In essence, transformational leaders make tomorrow's dreams a reality for their followers.<sup>21</sup> This was certainly true of Dr. Falwell as seen in his efforts to restore religious principle to American culture during the I Love America rallies, and through the activities of the Moral Majority and the Presidential election of Ronald Reagan. However, his leadership was particularly transformative in its ability to inspire early LU students in their own concepts of leadership, faith, vision, and approach to ministry. Early graduates were transformed from ignorance and inexperience, to effective visionaries and communicators, frequently modeling Dr. Falwell's example in their evangelism efforts, pastoral styles, and ministry programs.

Dr. Ron Hawkins identifies an important leadership characteristic/quality not included in the previous tables; that of a servant's heart. Hawkins writes, "Character manifests itself in a selflessness that sacrifices personal gain for the enrichment of the church, family, friends, and others."<sup>22</sup> While somewhat related to the leadership characteristic, *sacrifice*, which may occur from time to time in a leader's life, a servant's heart or servant leadership tends to define an underlying approach that flavors or enhances a leadership style. A servant's heart is a contributing factor in Dr. Falwell's approach to leading. Many accounts have been repeated among early students of Dr. Falwell's willingness to listen, encourage, counsel, and assist them as they faced decisions or difficulties. Although always busy, Dr. Falwell would never hesitate to stop for those who needed a few minutes of his time. To his previous expression of servant

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald E. Hawkins. DigitalCommons@Liberty University, [http://digitalcommons.Liberty.edu/ccfs\\_fac\\_pubs/24/](http://digitalcommons.Liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs/24/) (A Servant's Heart: The Key to Spiritual Leadership; accessed December 18, 2009). This article was originally published in the January 1988 edition of the Fundamentalist Journal.

leadership, Hawkins adds, “Ultimately, a leader’s greatest attribute is to possess the heart of Christ, and to minister out of that servant’s heart.”<sup>23</sup> Among all of his leadership characteristics, this quality was one of Dr. Falwell’s greatest strengths.

An inspirational tribute was written to Dr. Falwell more than twenty years before his passing, and speaks of his leadership and inspirational influence to those who came in contact with him. It states,

What some can only dare dream – he has done. Roads many fear to travel, he has not only traveled, but won. What some see as only wishful ideals, he has accomplished. Ezekiel said the Lord sought for a man to “stand in the gap.” Jerry Falwell is such a man. Dr. Lee Roberson has often stated, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” When I think of Jerry Falwell, “leadership” is the acronym. Only history shall reveal your total impact, Jerry. You have been an encouragement to millions. You have said to us all, “It can be done.” But, more than that, you have proven it!<sup>24</sup>

### Summary

The leadership of Dr. Falwell was the most significant influence upon early LU ministerial graduates. His faith, vision, drive, sense of divine calling, commitment to continue (“not quit”), and many other aspects addressed previously, combined to create a powerful and inspiring example for early students, and one which became the ultimate point of reference for their understanding and approach to ministry following their graduation and embarking on their own ministry endeavors. Among the many statements by Christian leaders following his death, two have special meaning when viewed in conjunction with early LU ministerial graduates. Billy Graham stated, “His

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Fletcher A. Brothers, “We’ve come this far by Faith - 25 Years of Miracles” *Faith Aflame*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (Spring 1981).

accomplishments went beyond most clergy of his generation... He leaves a gigantic vacuum in the evangelical world.”<sup>25</sup> Certainly, early LU ministerial graduates sense this vacuum in a way that is unique from later LU students. Somewhat longer, Rick Warren’s statement expressed the following sentiments.

The story was never told about his compassionate heart, his gentle spirit, his enormous sense of humor, and the millions he invested in helping the underprivileged... I believe Jerry Falwell’s primary legacy will not be his political leadership, but the church he pastored for 50 years; the university he founded that has produced two generations of leaders; the millions who heard him preach the Good News; the innovations in ministry he introduced; and the thousands of young pastors, like myself, whom he constantly encouraged, even when we did it differently.<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Falwell consistently encouraged early ministerial students with the words, ‘go out and do it bigger and better than we have done it here.’ These students believed Dr. Falwell, and knew that he believed in them. Following graduation, many students went out from Liberty University to attempt a variety of ministry pursuits. Some were similar to TRBC and others were significantly different, yet behind each were graduates inspired by a pastor and chancellor who made them believe that God could do anything, anywhere, anytime, anyway, and through anyone, if they would simply believe him. This conviction and inspiration continues to live in the memories of many early ministerial graduates.

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<sup>25</sup> Tim Morgan, "Jerry Falwell Dead at 73," *Christianity Today Liveblog*, May 15, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Ted Olsen, "Rick Warren and Jerry Falwell," *Christianity Today Liveblog*, May 16, 2007.

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

### **Contribution of the Research**

Early or first-generation ministerial graduates, LU students from 1971 through 1985, are a unique generation among the university's graduates, whose understanding and approach to ministry developed and seasoned in an incubator-like environment exclusive to their own time, and not experienced by later generation students. This developmental setting included diverse and negative elements that combined to produce a paradoxical outcome, where graduates recalled their academic and spiritual preparation along with their emotional maturation with appreciation, and exhibited positive attitudes toward ministry that included an enthusiastic anticipation of their own future ministry related efforts. This illogical product resulted from one primary source, the influence of Dr. Jerry Falwell, that although supplemented by a cadre of leaders and faculty who encouraged and assisted students, remains as the source that overshadowed, flavored, and overwhelmed these graduates in their experience as early students.

Following graduation, this generation of students pursued ministry in a variety of forms, primarily as church planters, but also as missionaries, worship leaders, and Christian educators. Some have moved on from their original ministries as they continued to develop as individuals, and have begun or assumed new ministries, while others remained at their first place of ministry, continuing to develop as well and serving

their congregations faithfully, growing large and fruitful ministries often through similar circumstances as they experienced as students. Through their understanding and approach to ministry, both of these groups have been examples of the unique nature of early LU ministerial graduates, and have helped to create and contribute to the legacy of a man who inspired them to dream and trust God.

Documenting the significant factors that motivated early LU ministerial graduates in their concept and approach to ministry contributes retrospectively to the historical record of Liberty University from a previously undocumented perspective, and provides for an understanding of the features unique to the university's early environment and their motivational influence upon early ministerial graduates; however, is incomplete without considering other possible contributions. In addition to the previous items, this research may further contribute to the university and other interested parties by addressing the following possible usages.

### **Additional Contributions**

#### **As a Testimony to an Inspirational Leader**

Two entities stand as testaments to the vision and leadership of Dr. Jerry Falwell; Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University. Since 1956, TRBC has achieved the distinction as one of America's largest churches, and Liberty University stands alone as the largest "distinctively Christian" university in the world.<sup>1</sup> Both of these

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase "distinctly Christian" has been a part of the university's description for many years and denotes Dr. Falwell's desire to build a superior academic institution within a Christian context. Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. recently used the phrase in the April 29, 2009 State of the University address - <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=18495&MID=7540>.

accomplishments are directly related to Dr. Falwell's faith and efforts to fulfill God's plan for his life. However, a third and equally important testimony to Dr. Falwell's inspirational leadership are the lives of the students whom he influenced. Dr. Falwell was a man who believed God and walked by faith, and by his example challenged students to walk by faith believing God also, willing to take risks to see God do "great and mighty things."<sup>2</sup> While he was alive, nearly every student of the university benefitted from Dr. Falwell's influence; however, early ministerial students benefitted in ways later students could not. The unique challenges of building a new college/university required unique leaders, faculty, and students willing to exercise faith, and believe God for needed provisions. With Dr. Falwell as their example, early ministerial students began to emulate his ways to such a degree that for many, their experience as students served as a foundation for the continued exercise of their faith in building their own future ministries. This research highlights the lives of early ministerial graduates as a testimony to Dr. Falwell's inspirational leadership.

#### As a Tool to Influence/Inspire New Ministerial Students

While serving as a testimony highlighting lives influenced in the past, this research can also serve to influence and inspire new ministerial students by drawing attention to their spiritual heritage. New ministerial students should be aware of the world of the first-generation ministerial graduates, and the various elements influencing their lives producing a legacy for Dr. Falwell and the early students alike. Many early ministerial graduates embraced the example of Dr. Falwell, internalized the lessons learned through their time as students, and went out into the world to serve God with

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah 33:3, NKJV.



selfless abandon, winning spiritual victories that have not be reproduced in size or volume. By highlighting the world of the first-generation graduates, this research can influence and inspire current and future ministerial students to a similar lifestyle.

#### As an Instructional Guide for Ministerial Students

Current and future undergraduate/graduate students preparing for ministry must be aware of the necessity of not only academic preparation, but of spiritual and practical preparation as well. Early LU ministerial graduates benefitted from an environment that accompanied their academic instruction, where they had to exercise faith consistently, and where spiritual discipline and committed service helped to develop mature men and women able and desiring to serve God in the ministry field of God's choosing. While specific aspects of the LU environment have changed, the need for well-prepared ministerial graduates has not, and current/future ministerial students can learn from the examples of first-generation students, embracing a similar mindset and approach to life and ministry that can reproduce successive generations of champions for Christ. This research can contribute to the educational process of ministerial students as an instructional guide to early university life.

#### **Three Important Questions**

Having identified the significant factors motivating early ministerial graduates in their concept and approach to ministry, three important questions remain to conclude this research effectively. These questions are: Are the significant motivational factors that influenced early or first-generation LU ministerial students still in existence today? If the significant motivational factors no longer exist, what caused them to discontinue? Lastly,

if the significant motivational factors have discontinued, is there reason to believe that they can be recaptured in some form, and if so how?

Are the significant motivational factors that influenced early or first-generation LU ministerial students still in existence today?

The majority of significant motivational factors influencing early LU ministerial graduates no longer exist today. Liberty University has matured to become the embodiment of Dr. Falwell's vision and is well on its way to becoming what he envisioned as a world-class university. In 2009, the university received Level VI accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools,<sup>3</sup> and the total enrollment for the university recently exceeded the goal of reaching 50,000 students, first stated in 1971.<sup>4</sup> These achievements reflect a greatly expanded educational program, and a respected presence in the world of education. In short, the significant motivational factors associated with the early years of LU have given way to a new environment.

If the significant motivational factors no longer exist, what caused them to discontinue?

The majority of significant motivational factors influencing early LU ministerial graduates no longer exist because the environment or conditions of early Liberty and the founding visionary are no longer present. The characteristics of the environment of that

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<sup>3</sup> University Advancement Staff, "Liberty Receives Top Level Of Accreditation," *Liberty University*, December 10, 2009, <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=18495&MID=13808/> (accessed February 27, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> University Advancement Staff, "Liberty University Announces 50,000 Students," *Liberty University*, February, 2010, <http://www.liberty.edu/index.cfm?PID=18495&MID=15663/> (accessed February 27, 2010).

time were in keeping with a new venture where nearly everything was in short supply, except for the faith of the founder in whom the vision of the school resided. Belief in, and commitment to Dr. Falwell's vision were essential if students remained at the young institution, and the majority of early students did stay and continue on to graduate. The significant motivational factors of that time resulted primarily from what the school and the students did not have, and how that lack forced students, university leaders, and faculty to respond, namely, with faith and intentional endurance.

As the elements that were lacking were supplied, the significant motivational influence related to that lack subsided and disappeared, resulting in an absence of the previous influence. For example, students are no longer housed in a variety of dormitories from various eras, in different locations where they had to adapt to varying accommodations without the comforts of home. In addition, travel is no longer difficult; students have a variety of travel options as opposed to the single option where school buses picked up students in the morning from the various housing locations and returned them in the afternoon following classes. For the most part, the difficulties of early LU have been eliminated; however, it was the difficulties that produced the significant motivational influences.

The absence of the constant presence of Dr. Falwell is the most noticeable aspect of missing significant motivational factors. While it is true that all students up to 2007 experienced his influence as he walked and drove through the campus, and interacted in conversations, no students enjoyed his influence more than those of the early years when little to nothing existed other than a man with an incredible sense of the power and

presence of God, and who possessed a vision that many originally believed was impossible, but through faith and sacrifice became a reality.

If the significant motivational factors have discontinued, is there reason to believe that they can be recaptured in some form, and if so how?

The majority of the significant motivational factors associated with early LU ministerial graduates cannot be reclaimed since the environment and conditions contributing to those factors no longer exist. It is important to distinguish that the present LU is not any less than the LU experienced by first generation students, nor is the LU of first generation students better than the present LU. The factors that contributed to the university and its students becoming what it and they are, laid the foundation for present and future growth, and with the same careful attention to essential items, the university can continue to produce ministerial graduates “aflame” for God. Recalling the early days of LU certainly bring to mind precious memories for those who lived through them; however, if given the option, it is almost certain that former students, university leaders, and faculty would not choose to return to the environment that characterized the early days. Now identified, the significant motivational factors should be a part of current and future ministerial student instruction, to emphasize the spiritual heritage of these students, but to recapture those factors would require reverting to the environment of the early years, something that is impossible to accomplish. It is more reasonable to suggest an adaptation of the significant factors, where ministerial students are exposed to the factors’ role in early students’ lives, then challenged, by either instruction or assignment to find ways where the lessons, or the true value of the factors may be reproduced in current and future students’ lives.

### Final Thoughts

In many ways, the existence of the significant motivational factors highlights a larger picture that when comprehended in all of its aspects, colors, shades, and hues, reveals an extraordinary plan, embraced by an exceptional man, driven and empowered by the incomparable God he loved. To many early ministerial graduates, Dr. Jerry Falwell was larger-than-life; a man of limitless faith, seemingly endless energy, and a soldier-like discipline who believed and followed God faithfully. In many ways, he became the living example of how to live, trust, obey, give, love, risk, get-up, continue, believe, push-through, and never give up. There was no one closer or more representative of what a pastor and Christian servant should be, than Dr. Jerry Falwell.

The early years were an incredible time to be an LU student. Life was challenging, but the expectation of what God was going to do was alive and contagious. He was at work in the school and in its students. In many ways, the early years can be expressed as a *time and a place*, and indeed, it was a special time at a special place. It was a time when God did what needed to be done, and in the course of doing, used some significant factors to motivate ministerial students in their concept and approach to ministry. However, it was just that, nothing less, but nothing more; a time to be remembered and, valued, not diminished, but also not to be idolized. There is just as much danger in idolizing a period of time as there is in idolizing a person, and although loved, and even revered by many, Dr. Falwell always pointed students back to Christ; there was no danger of mistaking who was God and who was not. In the same way, the early years served their purpose by preparing a school and its students for ministry ahead.

Those who were a part of the first generation, and experienced the influence of the significant motivational factors should rejoice that they had the opportunity to be a

part of such a special time at such a special place; however, this alone is insufficient.

Those who experienced such a blessing must also pray that God will raise up ensuing generations of ministerial students, armed with the same spiritual heritage, equipped with same spiritual knowledge, and called with the same spiritual calling to go out as Champions for Christ, capturing their towns, cities and world for Christ.

APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH TOOLS

## Research Instrument – Common Characteristics

Characteristics Common to Liberty University Ministerial Graduates from 1971 to 1985,  
as evidenced by their approach to ministry opportunities

### Part 1 – Identification of Common Characteristics

Please indicate your agreement with the following terms as characteristics common to early Liberty University ministerial graduates (1971-1985). Indicate only those terms that you agree were characteristic of ministerial graduates more than 50% of the time. Please include additional terms as appropriate.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Adaptable	
Called	
Driven	
Entrepreneurial	
Evangelistic	
Faith	
Hard Working	
Innovative	
Long Tenure	
Persevering	
Self-Starters	
Visionary	
Willing to take Risks	

### Part 2 – Ranking of Common Characteristics

Of the terms agreed with in Part 1, please rank those terms in order of importance, placing a “1” next to the most important term, and continuing in order (“2,” “3,” “4,” etc), until each term has been ranked. There should be only one term for each ranked position.



Characteristic	Rank
Adaptable	
Called	
Driven	
Entrepreneurial	
Evangelistic	
Faith	
Hard Working	
Innovative	
Long Tenure	
Persevering	
Self-Starters	
Visionary	
Willing to take Risks	

### Part 3 – Other Information

Please include additional information that you consider pertinent to characteristics common to early Liberty University ministerial graduates (1971-1985).

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## 2. Spiritual Climate

During your years at LU, how did the spiritual 'climate' influence your approach to ministry?

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How important was the spiritual 'climate' during your years at LU in influencing your approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 3. Leadership

During your time at LU, how did the university's leaders influence your concept of, and approach to ministry?

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How important were the university's leaders in influencing your concept of, and approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

#### 4. Faculty

How did the faculty influence you during your time at LU?

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How important was the faculty's influence during your time at LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

#### 5. Student Body

a. How did the size of the student body influence your thinking about ministry during your time at LU?

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b. How did other students' future focus influence your concept of ministry while you attended LU?

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c. How did relationships with other students influence your concept of ministry while you attended LU?

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How important was the student body as an influence to your approach to ministry during your time at LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 6. Chapels

How did weekly chapel meetings influence your approach to ministry?

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How important were chapels in influencing your future ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 7. Campus Development

How did the development of the campus influence your approach to ministry?

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How important was the development of the campus in influencing your approach to ministry while attending LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 8. Ministry Teams/Christian Service

How did ministry teams/Christian Service contribute to your approach to ministry?

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How important were the ministry teams/Christian Service in influencing your approach to ministry while attending LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 9. Campus Events

How did campus events influence your approach to ministry?

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During your time at LU, how important were campus events in influencing your approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 10. Housing

How did housing influence your approach to ministry?

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During your time at LU, how important was housing in influencing your approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 11. Curriculum/Courses/Course of Study

How did the curriculum/courses/course of study influence your approach to ministry?

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During your time at LU, how important was the curriculum/courses/course of study in influencing your approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	



## 12. Additional items that influenced your concept and approach to ministry

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## Research Questionnaire – Influencing Factors

### University Leadership/Faculty

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Years at LU: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. What influenced you to associate with Liberty University?

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### 2. Spiritual Climate

During your years at LU, how would you describe the spiritual ‘climate’ and how did it appear to influence students’ approach to ministry?

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How important was the spiritual ‘climate’ during your years at LU as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 3. Leadership

During your time at LU, how would you describe the university's leadership and how did it appear to influence students' concept and approach to ministry?

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How important was the university's leadership during your years at LU, as an apparent influence upon students and their concept and approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 4. Faculty

How would you describe the faculty and how did it appear to influence students' approach to ministry during your time at LU?

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During your time at LU, how important was the faculty as an apparent influence upon students and their concept and approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 5. Student Body

a. During your time at LU, did the size of the student body appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so, how?

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b. During your time at LU, did students' future focus appear to influence other students' approach to ministry, and if so, how?

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c. During your time at LU, did relationships with other students appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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How important was the student body as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry during your time at LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 6. Chapels

Did the weekly chapel meetings appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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How important were the weekly chapels as an apparent influence upon students and their concept and approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 7. Campus Development

Did the development of the campus appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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During your time at LU, how important was the development of the campus as an apparent influence upon students and their concept and approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 8. Ministry Teams/Christian Service

Did ministry teams/Christian Service appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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How important were Ministry Teams/Christian Service as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry during your time at LU?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

### 9. Campus Events

Did campus events appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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During your time at LU, how important were campus events as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 10. Housing

Did housing appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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During your time at LU, how important was housing as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 11. Curriculum/Courses/Course of Study

Did the curriculum/courses/courses of study appear to influence students' approach to ministry, and if so how?

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During your time at LU, how important was the curriculum/courses/courses of study as an apparent influence upon students and their approach to ministry?

Unimportant					Very Important
1	2	3	4	5	

## 12. Additional items that appear to have influenced students' concept and approach to ministry

[illegible]



APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INTERVIEW EXAMPLE

Research Interview - Doctor of Ministry Thesis  
An examination of the significant factors motivating Early Liberty University Ministerial  
Graduates to Envision and Pursue Ambitious Ministry Opportunities

Participant: D. Jim O'Neill

Date: September 19, 2009

**DWH:** Thank you for taking the time to assist me with my research. Some of the questions may appear vague as we address various topics in the research questionnaire, and I want to be careful not to bias you in answering the questions. Try to answer each question to the best of your recollection, and if you need clarification, I will endeavor to rephrase the question, but in a manner that the clarification will not result in a biased answer.

- **Regarding the Spiritual Climate of the university, during your years at LU, how did the spiritual 'climate' influence your approach to ministry?**

**O'Neill:** Well it was very activist; I think that's a good word. It was an environment that wedded together maybe the logo in those days was scholarship aflame. I think legitimately a desire for scholarship but not necessarily like some of the other schools. It was more of an activist study in order to do and then that can do spirit was a part of that. It was a pioneer type urgency that was exciting and you were a part of it, and you wanted to make history. It was the sense of venturing into new land literally a new land and constantly needing money for it. Jerry kind of pulled us into being in prayer for those sorts of things. You know as I think back, the schools of that time, Bob Jones, Tennessee Temple, if there was an evangelical ivy league it would have been Wheaton, all of those were established schools and then comes this upstart Liberty Baptist College so I think it really was a pioneer spirit. It was a very pioneer flavor.

God used Liberty in my spiritual life. I was excited about it because I thought I could get away from my family and friends it would change my circumstance in my life but then I realized that my heart had to change and during spiritual life week. I saw that I didn't have the joy of my salvation anymore and I wanted it but I didn't want to be a hypocrite and God just broke my heart. Because God was here and it was through the school that I was able to grow. I wanted to be around Dr. Falwell. He was always positive, he didn't put down anybody and I liked that.

**DWH:** At the bottom of the question you are asked to rank the influence of the spiritual climate during your time at LU, from one being unimportant to five as very important. How would you rank the spiritual climate?

**O'Neill:** Probably six.

**DWH:** Six? We'll stop at five.

**O'Neill:** I dedicated my life to full-time Christian work here. Hawk had just come, Jerry Kroll had just come, Ed Hindson was here, J.O. Grooms, Sumner Wemp, and some of

their spouses and they loved on us, Walt Byrd came in those days, got to know Walt, Eddie Dobson, Woody Kroll. When you think back I liken this to in some ways when NASA launches the space shuttle or satellite or whatever, they are dealing in the present but targeting a future time where all the elements come into a point and they all intersect and when I look back on Liberty the intersection of those personalities, the Dobsons, the Krolls, all of those it's as if God says alright they're all going to intersect here and I see that as just a wonderful movement of the hand of God and how he brought all of that together for that time. You know we're starting to see about five different people intersecting there at Tennessee Temple University right now.

**DWH:** A repeat process?

**O'Neill:** Yes.

- **Regarding the University's Leadership - During your time at LU, how did the university's leaders influence your approach to ministry?**

**O'Neill:** Everything Ed Hindson taught I wanted to be there. I still remember my first time hearing him on Sunday mornings in Sunday school teaching through the great I AMs from the gospel of John and it took my breath away, and I still remember when Eddie Dobson began a Sunday night service teaching through the Pastoral Epistles, you take two verses and milk it. And I had the book of Romans with Woody Kroll, took my breath away. Roscoe coming back from his missions trips crying and just watching this, all of those folks. You just saw passion for God everywhere. And the Christian Service office with Glenn Kurka, Danny Lovett, Dennis Fields and Harold Vaughn; we'd spend hours in there praying. So that fed into it too, it's the school; it attracted activists.

**DWH:** You used the word passion; can you elaborate?

**O'Neill:** Those men really did bring the mind, that's what was inspiring to me, they brought the mind to bear upon the faith so that the passion truly had a nice texture of loving God with your mind and what does that look like. It was so fertile ground. When Maharas came and spoke in 79 the first days of 79 challenging us to come up to New York City, I was in the Christian service office within months of being here and on my own initiative took a team up took about sixty students up for a very long weekend, two buses, and did it again, so I think the atmosphere just was very, very favorable. It wasn't a scholarship divorced from the passion to make a difference in people's lives so it just made sense when a guy like Maharas or Art DeMoss would come and speak about things that are going on in ministry, it just captured your imagination.

**DWH:** Who do you think of in the university leadership that epitomized passion?

**O'Neill:** J.O. Grooms; now there's a man out of the past; and all of those scripture memories that we would do in the soul winning classes with him, all those verses stay with me. I worked in work-study in the religion office so I got to work for him. The thing about J.O. was he would take you with him. He'd travel around and hold his

memorization conferences or his evangelism in churches; amazing. You know, I think sometimes we in organizations have a lot of red tape that you have to go through, well you got to go see this person and that person and by the time that they finish all the red tape and all the questions they've lost their passion and their zeal. Whereas once we got an idea, go do it and we were free to go do it and make our own mistakes. It was messy, but processes were not of a premium in those days. We were probably small enough where we could get away with that. Obviously, there comes a time in the life of an organization if it's too big and too messy it implodes.

**DWH:** Ranking the influence of the university leadership during your time at LU, from one being unimportant to five as very important. How would you rank the university leadership?

**O'Neill:** What's your top number?

**DWH:** five.

**O'Neill:** Put down a six.

**DWH:** Okay let's move to faculty.

- **How did the faculty influence your approach to ministry during your time as a student?**

**O'Neill:** Their teaching gift was quite inspiring. I liked to watch each of them bring a particular nuance to the teaching gift. Their excitement. To handle the word like they did. Kroll, Dobson and Hindson and then Hawkins comes onto the scene. Just sharing their hearts. I didn't have Jerry Kroll for a class but he was more tender as a pastor, just had a nice shepherd's heart that he brought to the equation. Sumner Wemp would cry as he taught. Roscoe as he poured this passion on us. J.O. as he was this memory machine. They were good days. You sensed that they really wanted to invest in our lives and they loved the Lord. Harvey Hartman, I took one class, Harvey had just come in, not as dynamic as the others but a great plodder. I'm trying to think of one other, Dan Mitchell came in those days and Dan was much more quiet, thoughtful and reflective, measured every word it seemed so I think some of the students were accustomed to the speed of the mouth of Hindson but Dan Mitchell measured everything but he drew out of you in your writing of a more deeper theological reflection. Then Bill McPheney had just come in the middle of those days maybe about 80, and Bill was one of my heroes too. Uh just on a side bar McPheney gave me a course, a missions three credit course before we left for one semester as an independent study and I selected 10 books I wanted to read, one book a week, and then I would take him for three hours to one of the area restaurants and feed him, I got him a sundae, an ice cream sundae, and I would have my water and coffee, and we would discuss the book. Most incredible course I'd ever had. The richest semester a reflection on missional themes and to this day I sing Bill's praises. Well I think that they disciplined and mentored us, well at least for me.

**DWH:** Can you describe your mentoring process?

**O'Neill:** We were just small enough; they weren't overwhelmed with a number of students. When you have a class of 300 that becomes challenging to personalize but when you have a class of 25 that's doable.

**DWH:** How would you rank the faculty's influence?

**O'Neill:** We're going to do six.

**DWH:** Let's move to the student body.

- **How did the size of the student body during your time as a student, influence your approach to ministry?**

**O'Neill:** I was just going to say that I don't know that we thought of that kind of thing because it was still, it was bigger than what I had ever seen. I didn't come here with any expectation. It was a college, it was big enough, I mean if I came today it would probably be overwhelming if I came, but at the time it seemed big because I was coming from a smaller thing but it was exciting. It was small enough that you could still feel like a community but big enough that you could get lost. And then there was the growth that generated enthusiasm. There was a sense it was small enough to be intimate but growing enough to have this energy that was pretty dynamic. So it was a unique place I think, small enough for intimacy large enough and growing then you thought you were part of something that was a movement of God. It was intuitive, you didn't articulate it like that, it's only in hindsight that you step back and look at it, but when you factor in Falwell's heart, champions for Christ, week after week after week, watching all of those faculty play with each other and banter back and forth with their dry humor come into the classroom and teach us. I was new in the faith so whatever would have been tattooed on me in those days, we would have exported anything. And it was like everybody wanted to grow.

**DWH:** Let's consider the future focus of the student body. Did the future focus of students influence your approach to ministry and if so how?

**O'Neill:** I'm not sure I'm following the question.

**DWH:** Okay, in the sense of plans following graduation.

**O'Neill:** Right; Yeah I think everybody was full of dreams. Dan Henderson created a neat little organism on the campus called CAN, Change a Nation. And there was this real strong emphasis on church planting and church planting in kingdoms. I think the poster boy for that in those days was Dave Early. Dan went out among others. Roscoe; his shadow was all over the place. There was a mission impulse coming out of this place. Folks were scattering to the four corners of this earth, including the O'Neill's. Kurka, Joe Hale, those were some of those early leaders and many of us were kind of following

in their coat tails. The world was becoming smaller and smaller and we could be a part of it. Rick and Irene Lang took a group, we had already left but when they went to the Sudan that they actually set up shop for a couple years and I've seen the fruit from that. Maharas coming in and inspiring us to the cities of America and I was privileged to help found our inner city work from this school and now seeing so many students who went the you know the Dave Clancy's, Andy Zivonovitch, Bruce Knight, Dave Early, Billy Nelson. But anyway that's some cool stuff. You saw faith in a man and saw God work in his life and then you saw all these other people from around the world come and thinking oh we see it in Dr. Falwell, we see it in all these people, why can't he do it with me?

**DWH:** Finally, on this question; let's go to this, relationships with other students. Did your relationships with other students influence your approach to ministry?

**O'Neill:** Well most of those that went out ended up supporting us so we formed a team of supporters before we even left and we were partnering with each other and we were going to be an extension of their church and so we've stayed friends with them from college days because of that.

**DWH:** So how important was the student body as an influence to your approach to ministry?

**O'Neill:** The spirit of God wanted to do something fresh through a man named Jerry Falwell who brings a team around who then wind up in these classrooms with you on this piece of real estate where he has to keep asking God for big things, and you're watching faith grow in yourself, and with all of these students and then these other folks come in and want a piece of the pie; creates activism where we get to do fresh things. So what would you say, what number? Oh yes, six.

**DWH:** Let's move to chapels.

- **How did weekly chapel meetings influence your approach to ministry?**

**O'Neill:** What was it Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in those days?

**DWH:** It was.

**O'Neill:** And we looked forward to the tent; that was fun. My favorite speakers were Roscoe Brewer and B.R. Lakin.

**DWH:** So how did the weekly chapel meetings influence your approach?

**O'Neill:** I think it kept us focused. I think it was primarily inspirational. Yeah it kept us focused and looking out.

**DWH:** Dr. Elmer Towns talks about the hot poker principle, which he relates to keeping the pulpit hot.

**O'Neill:** Yes, chapels were hot, you looked for to them, it was an important part of our life.

**DWH:** So how would you rate the influence of Chapels?

**O'Neill:** Six, and we looked forward to Dr. Falwell on Wednesdays. No matter how many times you heard him speak on a particular subject, you knew he lived it.

**DWH:** Let's talk about campus development.

- **Did the development of the campus influence your approach to ministry and if so how?**

**O'Neill:** The R.A. system I thought was pretty brilliant in the development of the campus. I didn't become an R.A. but all of our peers did and that was a great training ground for their spiritual maturation so I invested and sank my teeth in inner city outreach they were giving their time and that developed this campus by their own maturity. Becoming an R.A. is one of the most meaningful student assignments I think the campus has developed to grow leaders. One of the otherwise things they did was to keep an intimate relationship with Word of Life students so that Word of Life students coming in really helped to form a bit of a bedrock because they were also inviting in folks like you and me, fairly paganed, with no biblical roots and that helped them. I think for many years that has been a good model.

**DWH:** Behind this question though, I'm thinking more of bricks and mortar.

**O'Neill:** You mean like living down at Treasure Island and then moving up.

**DWH:** No, I'll get to housing in just a moment, but underlying this question is the construction of buildings on the mountain.

**O'Neill:** I guess the buildings were the demonstration, a tangible reminder of a man of faith. It was almost like, for me, it was almost like standing back, and seeing what was going to come next, is it really going to happen? I know we'd come together and pray in the snow but there was a part of me that said is it really going to happen? Yeah because you heard so much controversy out there about Dr. Falwell and yet you saw this and it was like you're right in the middle and you're following this guy but yet you're seeing over there so it was almost like stand back and see what's going to happen, and the more the campus developed the more convinced I was that this man has got an incredible relationship with God. He says it and God does it. It was a living demonstration of the possibilities.

**DWH:** How would you rank the influence of the campus development?

**O'Neill:** I would say that's pretty high up there. I'd circle between a four and a five, a four and a half.

**DWH:** Let's consider Ministry Teams/Christian Service

- **During your time as a student, were Ministry Teams or Christian Service an influencing factor to your approach to ministry, and if so how?**

**O'Neill:** Well we had an evangelistic team. It was marvelous, wow was that so good. I think it was a modeling of the pioneering entrepreneurial creativity. That's pretty huge too. I think so definitely. It built skills and confidence. It was stepping-stones to getting there.

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**DWH:** So how would you rank this area?

**O'Neill:** a five

**DWH:** Let's go to Campus Events.

- **Did campus events influence your approach to ministry, and if so how?**

**O'Neill:** Like what?

**DWH:** Various times when there were large gatherings on campus.

**O'Neill:** Well there were the Super Conferences, and when Dr. Falwell was able to bring Ronald Reagan here before he was elected president. Also Baptist Fundamentalism 84 was a big event. It was certainly part of the Falwell persona. That thing just oozed with faith. You got to be somewhere where nobody else got to be. Dr. Falwell was not hindered to use venues to accomplish what God had put on his heart, to influence young people, to influence the political majority and he used events, and in that sense he was very programmatic. He created a program that would facilitate. Sometimes the program getting to the end used and abused people and wore them out so that it took its toll.

**DWH:** Did you use events in the Philippines? I recall, you had a separate outreach to the professionals, and then there was something here. I don't know whether you guys used events.

**O'Neill:** The first three years, no. We just learned the culture, we tried to either slow Glenn down from establishing a church and just getting to know the people and then the Lord had the Gulf War come and they wanted Jim to start Bible studies. So when God thrust us into that middle upper class we had to figure out avenues to create



understanding with them and that's when we created the taste tester Bible studies. And the whole tennis development association and rock music symposiums.

**DWH:** Can you find the seeds in how you approached ministry in the Philippines in campus events? Were your efforts in the Philippines rooted in how you saw things were done here?

**O'Neill:** I think the drive and the faith in God is what we took from Liberty, and the skills and the creativity. Pioneer entrepreneurial, yeah get the job done, whatever it takes and the fact that, back when we went to school there was he used I remember he wanted us to cultivate all kinds of appreciation for everything and so we were made to go to classical concerts, we were made to go to dramas that were here, the Super Conference. It was exposure that Dr. Falwell wanted us to be a part of and to be, I think.

**DWH:** How would you rank campus events?

**O'Neill:** I would say five again. It definitely influenced us.

**DWH:** Let's go to something that you mentioned before; Housing.

- **Did housing influence your approach to ministry and if so how?**

**O'Neill:** Intimate is that the word? It was fun, being at college was fun. Relationships, fun, you wanted to be here. It was great, I just loved it. When we got up on the mountain, it was all probably connected together. There were a lot of godly students too, it was just fun hanging with them. Yeah we had never experienced that kind of life that had purpose, ongoing passion. I think it's complimentary with a rugged pioneer, it was just fascinating having a tent, and walking around in mud; to me it was just so invigorating. If we were to be fair of that time period, there were probably a fair number of students who hated the buses and being bused around town. The facilities were never a priority and therefore the dream was the driving factor, facilities served the dream. Get anything you can so we can get more students. Jerry the visionary consumed with student numbers. The complaint was you don't go into debt, you don't get more students if you don't have the facilities, and for Dr. Falwell it wasn't that. That fed my imagination.

**DWH:** How would you rank housing as an influencing factor?

**O'Neill:** Pretty high, I'll take the tent over this in convo any day the Vines Center, give me the tent.

**DWH:** **Did the curriculum, courses, and courses of study, influence your approach to ministry, and if so how?**

**O'Neill:** I loved it all. It was a deepening, a wonderful deepening of the scriptures; the scriptures answer the questions of life. We left here with confidence that scripture answered it.

**DWH:** How would you rank the influence of the curriculum, courses and courses of study?

**O'Neill:** Six, Yeah off the charts

**DWH:** Would you add anything in closing?

**O'Neill:** Liberty today casts an incredible shadow over our land so I think unbeknownst to us that we were saved out of a time period when God created a movement, Crusade was birthed out of that time period it's a huge movement, certainly Intervarsity, Wabanna was reinvigorated out of the 70s, thousands university students were getting saved in the secular world, I guess if you parallel it God was also using Jerry in that same breath. I hadn't quite equated the two because I spent a lot of time helping students to see where God was at work and to help them to begin to think missionally. We were at a unique moment in the history of God's movement. A movement was afoot, we were a part of it, and we're reproducing it. I can't tell you as I've traveled around the country the last two years Dave how many alumni have told me how much they miss Dr. Falwell and I echo their sentiments too. We stopped everything we had to come, there had to be a closure, we had to be here. He is the major factor. Don't quit. The measure of a man is what it takes to discourage him. Those little sayings that ring in your head he said them over and over and over; not overtly profound but they spoke to the steeling of the will. Simple but very strong

APPENDIX C  
EARLY COURSE SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH MINISTRIES  
CEDU 111A

Instructor: Rev. Gordon Luff

Introduction:

A. Welcome - We welcome you enthusiastically because you are the fulfillment of our vision - far more than mere students - you are the hope of tomorrow through the local church.

B. Purpose of the class:

1. Clarify the church
2. Clarify your call
3. Clarify the ministry

} 1 Semester

C. Explanation of Church Ministries Curriculum

Year:	I. Introduction to Church Ministries	6 units
	II. Church Ministries Aflame	4 units
	III. Church Ministries Aflame	4 units
	IV. Senior Seminar	2 units
		<u>16 units</u>

*Church Aflame  
Senior Seminar*

D. Course Outline (general)

1. First Semester
  - a. Introduction to the ministries of an aggressive New Testament church.
  - b. Introduction to the various areas of specializations.
  - c. Self study and evaluation in leadership abilities.
2. Second Semester - A general overview of your chosen area of specialization.

E. Course procedure

1. Careful attendance (roll)
2. Punctuality
3. Grading
  - a. 1/3 daily work
  - b. 1/3 unit tests
  - c. 1/3 final exams
4. Makeup - one week - responsibility lies with students.

F. Course Texts:

1. Church Aflame - Towns and Falwell
2. Christian Leadership - Mary Preston

NOTE: Other texts may be suggested by visiting lecturers.

G. Course requirements:

1. Assigned readings
2. Memorization - 1 scripture verse per week, word perfect in King James version with reference and meaning. *Tuesday Matt*
- \*3. Regular quizzes (unannounced)
4. Two sermon or devotional outlines per week due on Mondays.
  - a. One original *Tuesday A week* while paper on what kind of church you want.
  - b. One listened to

NOTE: Daily quizzes will include all reading material assigned from previous class and all notes from previous lecture.

Page 2  
INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH MINISTRIES

LECTURE I - THE CHURCH

I. Definitions -

A. Church - ecclesia - "an assembly or congregation of called out ones."

NOTE: In Greek, the word does not refer just to the church as we know it.

1. The Ephesian craft guilds were called the ecclesia.
2. The gathering of the population of a city to a town meeting was called an ecclesia.
3. The nation of Israel could be considered an ecclesia and is a super picture or type of the New Testament church.
- B. The word could be used to describe all the saints of history called and gathered for a special occasion.
- C. The word was used generally to describe simply, the assembling place of a group of Christians in a particular geographic area.
- D. It was used to describe the "body of Christ" of which HE is the HEAD. Ephesians 1:22-23.

II. Prominence in Scripture

- A. Peter's confession in Matthew 16 and Christ's great response.
- B. Christ in upper room with disciples.
- C. Disciples on day of Pentecost.
- D. Peter's sermon in Acts.
- E. Entire book of Acts is running early history of church.
- F. Paul's letters are written to them.
- G. John's letters in Revelation are written to the churches.

III. Importance

- A. God's way to do His work.
- B. Our neglect has led to its failures.
- C. God wants to revive us.
- D. Thomas Road Baptist Church - part of a great movement - the Church Aflame.

LECTURE TWO - THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

I. Everyone is called to the mission of reaching the world and its needs.

II. But - God, choosing to use man, places His hand in a special way upon some who He desires, be used to specialize vocationally, in meeting the spiritual needs of a lost world.

III. The Call - divine, and should reflect:

- A. The need
- B. Circumstances
- C. Your ability

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CHURCH MINISTRIES

GUEST LECTURER - DR. JERRY FALWELL, SEPT. 8, 1977

Introduction - Personal welcome and testimony.

Text: Acts 17:6, "...these who have turned the world upside down have come hither also..."

- A. Identify for life with a New Testament church.
- B. Commit yourself to capturing your town for Christ.
- C. Facilities do not make an education.
- D. Everything of eternal importance originates with prayer.
- E. The Church began in Upper Room in prayer meeting.
- F. First and primary objectives of any New Testament church is to capture its Jerusalem.
- G. Claim your city - find its sign post, grab on and say like John Knox of old - Give me Scotland or I die.
- H. In 14 years they turned world upside down - it was, its enemies who said, in fear, this fact.
- I. Probably the last generation lives today, "terminal generation." Hal Lindsey.
- J. The local church has always been God's machine for revival.
- K. These are greatest days in Christian History - no such thing as, "good old days" - This is our day.
  - 1. 4 billion souls in world by 2,000 A.D. - 16 billion.
  - 16 x's Paul's day.
  - 2. Great men of past have one thing in common, they are all dead!
  - 3. Christ said we would do greater works than He. Why?
    - a. More People
    - b. Greater means
      - 1. OTGH TV
      - 2. 2,000 per day saved on TV
      - 3. Satellite TV
      - 4. Computers
      - 5. Printing
      - 6. Mass Mailings
      - 7. Microphones
      - 8. Jets
- L. Revolution is in making, it is time for spiritual revolt - Great local churches capturing whole societies for Christ - till the trumpet sounds.

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*Thesis: An Examination of Motivational Factors Prompting Liberty University Ministerial Graduates to Envision and Pursue Ambitious Ministry Opportunities from 1971-1985.*

### **Master of Divinity**

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, 2008

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### **Bachelor of Theology**

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## Higher Education Experience

### **Instructor of Religion, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA, 2008 – Present**

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Assisting Dr. Frank Schmitt

DSMN 505 – Church Administration,

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DSMN 605 – Christian Leadership

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EVAN 980 – Revivals (Intensive format)

*Distance Learning Program*

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Courses taught:

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**Church Ministry Experience**

**Founding/Senior Pastor, Forest Park Baptist Church, Waldorf, MD, 1985-2005**

**Young Marrieds Minister, Riverdale Baptist Church, Upper Marlboro, MD, 1982-1985**

Minister to young couples approaching marriage and in the early years of married life

**Recognition**

**Ordination to the Gospel Ministry**

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**Professional and Research Interests**

**Motivational Factors Related to the Early Development of Liberty University Students**

The communication, demonstration, and formation of a ministry concept and approach in early LU ministerial graduates



## **The Role of House Churches in Post-Christian America**

How churches and small groups may impact American culture

### **Professional Development**

**Liberty University Faculty Senate, 2009-Present**

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Center for Ministry Training, LBTS 2003

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**Transitional Pastor/Pulpit Supply to area churches, 2008-present**

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### **Publications**

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