Oral History Interview with J. Gordon Henry

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Name of Interviewee: Dr. J. Gordon Henry

Name of Interviewers: Randy Miller and Dr. Cline Hall

Transcriber: Kaitlynne Showalter

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Miller: (00:00) Welcome to this interview in the Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives. This interview is being conducted on July 8, 2009. Today we're interviewing Dr. J. Gordon Henry. My name is Randy Miller and I'll be conducting the interview today along with Dr. Cline Hall.

Hall: (00:19) Good afternoon.

Miller: (00:21) And greetings Dr. Henry.

Henry: (00:22) Hello.

Miller: (00:24) Well, as we start today, could you just tell us a little bit about yourself? Where you were born and a little bit about your history growing up?

Henry: (00:32) Alright, I surely can. I grew up in east Tennessee in the Smokey Mountain area. My family was...if President Johnson had been the president at that particular time, we would have been in the poverty level. But he wasn't, so we didn't know that. So we just work, had a very small farm. And my family was highly respected in that community but they were not church people. They did what a lot of the mountain people do on Sunday and that is to have company to come. That's when the big platters of fried chicken get put on the table and big bowls of banana pudding and I lived like that until I was almost 13 years old. My interest was baseball and because of a confrontation with a dad over baseball, I decided to go listen to our preacher preach. And I heard things I'd never heard before. And on a Saturday night in 1948, I trusted Jesus as my Savior. Now my life changed. I don't think my feet touched the ground when I walked home. Now as far as education, I have the distinction of going to the grades 1-12 in the same building. There were actually 21 people in our graduating class. Now when I got ready to graduate, I wanted to follow the steps of a master teacher. She had gone to Berea College in

Kentucky. And I felt, if I could go to Berea that I would just have it made. And surely enough, I was accepted into Berea. Berea College is one of the leading Liberal Arts colleges in the nation and to have access to Berea gives you really good standing. For example, here at Liberty when we had the first visit from the state of Virginia, the chairperson was the uh, a dean at Radford University, Dr. Young. And when the decision was made in the exit interview as to what they were going to do related to Liberty, he said, "You have problems, but because you're a graduate of Berea, we're going to give you an opportunity to build a college at Lynchburg." And that really helped. Then, I went to Eastern Kentucky University and got a master's degree and the University of Kentucky and got a doctorate degree. Now my master teacher, who is still living by the way and one of the finest persons I know, she had gone to Duke University. And I thought, "If I could go to Duke, then that would really be wonderful." Well I had the privilege to go to Duke and have a course in Sensation and Perception. And so that's sort of my background.

Hall: (4:01) Well why did you...

Henry: (4:03) I became interested in scholarship very early in life.

Hall: (4:07) While you were the, did a lot of students...

Henry: (4:10) Not a lot of them, all of them.

Hall: (4:13) Ok.

Henry: (4:15) No one could go to Berea, who didn't need to go to Berea. And it was for 240 mountain counties plus 10% of the students were out of territory. No tuition at Berea but everybody worked and that was wonderful. My first summer at Berea was working in the, on the dairy farm and then I got promoted to the office of guidance and testing, which I stayed in and things I learned there, by the way, I used here. For example, I knew that our students at Liberty needed to learn to take tests. And so we actually had a testing program, although placement, that was sort of just a dream because we couldn't place. But the education at Berea, non-academic, served me very well. Then when I became a senior, I was invited to become teacher in charge of dormitory at their foundation school. So the...Berea College is a good preparation.

Hall: (5:29) It prepares you for the future.

Henry: (5:30) And we wanted Liberty to be like that. You will be interested in this. I pretty well did the first student handbook and I wanted a name for it. And the Berea handbook was the Berea Way. That always impressed me. One of the things that impressed me about Berea College is that they had the Westminster Chimes in Phelps Stokes Chapel and it you know Westminster Chimes, it says, "Father in this hour." That's the first 15 minutes. "Be thou our guide," that's the next. "That through thy power, no foot may slide." And that was just really a terrific thing. So what shall we call our um, student handbook. And we actually said the LBC Way, not Liberty

Way. And I think Eddy Dobson who came here to be the soccer coach, later might have just said the Liberty Way. But that's all connected to Berea College.

Hall: (6:39) Were there any similarities between the Berean Way and the Liberty Way?

Henry: (6:43) I had a foolish idea in the very beginning here at Liberty. When we talked about...we were surrounded by Bob Jones (University) people. It was even to the point that I made a rule that "if we're in a meeting and Bob Jones is mentioned ten times, the next person who mentions it has to leave the room. Just pick up your material and leave." But I said, "Why do you need rules? Why can't we be a Christian lady & gentleman?" And would you believe, Dr. Hall, we went for a number of years; I don't remember exactly when you came, without any discipline problems. And there was a pioneer spirit and I would have been shocked if I had to bring someone in disciplinary purposes back in those days because our students really, were committed.

Hall: (7:44) Well between the time that you graduated from, I believe, the University of Kentucky...

Henry: (7:49) Right.

Hall: (7:50) and you came here. I believe that you were in the pastorate or what was you doing in those intervening years?

Henry: (7:57) Uh, no.

Hall: (7:59) Ok.

Henry: (8:00) I was the principle of the Berea City Schools.

Hall: (8:02) Ok.

Henry: (8:03) And then from there, I was invited to go to Eastern Kentucky University and teach human development because I had decided when I went to the University of Kentucky, I would like to have a program that would enable me to go back and teach at Berea College. For example, well if you did that, you need to be able to teach everything, Sociology and Psychology. My emphasis was Human Development. But I was invited to just go teach Human Development. And it was quite an interesting invitation that if you come, we will actually give you a full time secretary over the Christmas vacation period to help on your doctorate degree. My dissertation was child rearing in Appalachia and that was just really wonderful. But because of my connection at Berea which is a tremendous public school, the Berea City Schools, then one of the departments got in trouble at Eastern Kentucky University and the president said, "Dr. Henry, if you go over there and get this straightened out," he said, "you can have any position that you want you know in the administration of the College of Education." So I taught human development. I also taught some graduate courses in Human Development at Eastern Kentucky

University, which I consider one of the finest Regional University in the nation, and that's what I was doing when I...I was pastor of a church too from 17 years old until that particular time. And we were seeing a lot of people come to Christ in our church. And it was just really a good connection. But the University said, "Well, we want you to be our representative first to the Regional Planning Council for Kentucky and the State," well first it was regional, and then it was state. And then there's a national teacher education group and it meets in Chicago every year in February. They said, "We want you to be our representative." I was elected to the faculty senate and then the faculty members elected me to the Committee on Committees which means, meant that we named all the committees. And that was wonderful because things I learned doing that, help me when we came here to begin a college and to get it, not just a college but one that would be accredited. So I was an educator but I was a pastor at the same time.

Hall: (11:11) So that actually was preparing you I guess for your position here at Liberty. How did you first learn about Jerry Falwell and Liberty?

Henry: (11:18) God gave us a best friend in 1966. He lived in south side Virginia in Ringle in Pittsylvania County. Now his brother was pastor of the Berea Baptist Church. I was pastor of a church there in Lynchburg...in a, in Berea, Kentucky. And...but the decision was when the pastor had been there 25 years, we're going to celebrate him with a "This is Your Life." Now, you know about This is Your Life, a lot of people would not know. But anyway, you brought your guest in and hid them behind curtains and so I was invited to represent the Berea College students this pastor had touched. And I was glad to do that. I never dreamed I was going to meet my best friend. His name was Hugh Brian Mylam. I preached his funeral in 1980 when he died at the age of 85. All he wanted to do was talk about the Word of God. Sometimes we talked for hours. Went to bed once, slept, got up the next morning and resumed the conversation where we left off the night before. Sometimes he would say, "Now your wrong about that." And he'd wet his thumb and turn through the Bible to show me where I was wrong about that. "Well then," he said, "you know there's something unusual happening up in Lynchburg. There's a young preacher up there that I..." he really liked. And he said to me now, "really, they're going to start a college and you ought to be a part of that college." Well I had gotten so busy working for this Common Wealth of Kentucky, I was working seven days a week but I was pasturing a church. And one day sitting in my office on a Saturday, catching up, I thought, "Well, maybe I ought to go look at that, see what's happening in Lynchburg." In the mean time, The Old Time Gospel Hour put out records and these were the most fascinating things I ever heard. The music was excellent. Dr. Falwell's messages were good. And so I became acquainted with him listening to these records. And one of his...that I've used when I was executive director of TRACS so often with colleges, "What happens when the brook dries up?" That was one of his messages that was quite interesting. So I came over and I was doing a Sabbatical and that meant that I had a leave. In this particular case, I could choose the summer if I wanted to and they chose the summer for me because of my administrative position. Well, you get full pay if you do the summer and I decided, "Well I'm going to go over there" and it was a Wednesday and I really enjoyed it and

when I went, I saw Elmer Towns, explained who I was, and he grabbed me and he said, "Well you're the one we've been praying for to come here to help us." And he took me immediately to Dr. Falwell. Dr. Falwell in no time said, "You're the one. You know, your credentials and everything, you're the one." So I, before I left, I had a contract with more money than Dr. Falwell was getting, according to Dr. Falwell and so we were able to come in May, uh move.

Hall: (14:52) May of what year?

Henry: (14:53) That was 1972.

Hall: (14:55) '72.

Henry: (14:56) I presume that the first academic year wasn't over yet. I would have to go back and check which I really intended to do but I didn't do that. But there was one year of classes and of course you may know that we pretty well had to do what we've done with many colleges across the nation. If you're going to be accredited, there are certain things, parameters that you have to meet. So we tore down, we added, and um...Now my title, of course I was working in the academic area, but we decided we're going to have divisions instead of departments because Dr. Falwell said he wanted a university one day. And my thought was, well if we have these divisions, one day that can be a school and a university. There were seven divisions and so we brought in the first year, anyone talked that was available to teach. I know it wasn't what you would call a glorified Sunday school. I think it was beyond that. But it was the getting started. And there is a stage of beginning and a stage of becoming. And so I think that the first summer, that some of the courses were college level. I taught psychology which I'd never taught before. I'd always taught the junior level and I remember Christy Austin, a beautiful young lady from Ohio was, she was desperate to get in this class. And so I told her it was not going to be fun and games, we were going to really work hard. And I remember on the final test that Christy worked and she turned it in and she wrote on her test paper, "Praise the Lord anyway." But she did make a 'B' so she was really...so I would say, beginning at the summer that we were certainly moving to a collegiate level.

Hall: (17:16) Now were you hired as a professor or as the Dean from the beginning?

Henry: (17:18) I, I was in, you know, had the academic responsibility. The title, "academic dean," I'll have to go back and see exactly what. But I was chairman of the Division of Education of Psychology, I was the professor of Education Administration, I was vice-president for the academy, and then Dr. Towns left, maybe by the end of the second year of the institution. Well that was really a difficult time for us. The Securities and Exchange Commission came in and there was a determination, "we're going to close this down." And the reason was that on a brochure, there was an uh, two things wrong. One was that the academy was accredited by Virginia. Well by the time all this happened, we were approved by Virginia. But the second one was, someone had given a gift, which I believe it was 5 million dollars, and the brochure was written as though, "we've got that money in hand," and that wasn't true. So they decided they're

going to...so there was that situation. I started as an office in the Donald Duck building and my first desk was a cardboard box. And I had left an office suite in the university there in Kentucky with three secretaries, carpeting on the floor, and here I had an IBM typewriter and a cardboard box. But we got one of the little houses across Thomas Road, 618. That became the Office of Academic Affairs. It also became the Registrars Office. That's probably where we first talked with you, or you might have come later when we moved up on the hill.

Hall: (19:12) '77.

Henry: (19:13) Alright so we had changed locations by then. And um, so the decision was who's going to be the administrator? And Dr. Falwell said, "You must be the Executive Vice-President." And I said, "No, I'm a pastor." I was pastor of Pleasantview Baptist Church at that point. The first year I was here, we went up to Winchester, Virginia and started Shenandoah Valley Baptist Church. I was the founding pastor of Shenandoah Valley. Well that worked out fine because I could go up there and do my work and come back here and do my work and I knew that the Lord wanted me to minister like that. I never had a doubt about that. And so I had read about Pierre Guillermin in one of Dr. Towns books. And I said to Dr. Falwell, "Why don't you ask Dr. Guillermin to come and be the Executive Vice President?" and he said, "Well, will you call him?" and I said, "Yes, I will call him." So I called Dr. Guillermin and I said, "I want to talk to you pretty frankly. I know what our needs are and we want to be accredited. Now if you can't work within the parameters of what I'm going to say, then I don't want you to even make contact with Dr. Falwell because you'll do us more harm than good." And the parameter was, you've got to say to Dr. Falwell, "I will take the position, provided I have the authority that's commensurate with apposition." And of course they thought that they had worked all that out fine together. And then we knew at a certain point that it wasn't wise for Dr. Falwell to be called president. And he was very good at working with us on meeting the accreditation requirements. And so one day he came into my office where you were up on the hill... I had a beautiful office. There was a story behind that. The decision was that we should move into nicer quarters and I said, "Alright, I get to design the quarters." And there was a financial crunch and George Rodgers became the financial person. And he...and one day I was asking him and he said, "Well I reckon you'll get it. You get everything you want." And so we built this nice facility. We'll he came over and he said Dr Falwell said, "Now I want you to meet with us at a certain time. And he said, "Your new title is 'Vice President of Academic Affairs.' And Dr. Guillermin would then become the President. So that was interesting wasn't it?

Hall: (22:06) Yes, it was. So actually you actually came in as a professor?

Henry: (22:13) Well, in a sense.

Hall: (22:14) In a sense. Ok.

Henry: (22:15) I was the only...I was the academic person.

Hall: (22:17) Ok.

Henry: (22:18) And it wasn't even structured where we would have thought of a Dean you know, like we normally have. That wasn't the structure.

Miller: (22:30) It was very simple beginnings of a...

Henry: (22:32) Very simple

Miller: (22:32) ... of kind of a church run college but it was one that...

Henry: (22:35) Exactly!

Miller: (22:35) ...it was on that bigger dreams than the average church....

Henry: (22:38) Oh, my.

Miller: (22:39) ...basement college did.

Henry: (22:39) Yeah. And working with TRACS as the Executive Director for those 11 years, I worked with dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens just like this. But that was ok because see I had... if you sit down and draw an organizational chart, which, when we did the faculty handbook, of course you need an organizational chart. Then what are the positions that an accredited college would have? And so we drew those and the of course you know, we had executive vice-president I believe. Dr. Falwell would have been up at the top then Dr. Guillermin would have come next and then I would have come next and uh, and then you, you know, begin to put the titles down.

Miller: (23:43) And have the divisions and departments and all.

Henry: (23:44) Yeah we...

Miller: (23:44) Now...

Henry: (23:44) ... we had seven divisions that we laid out on that.

Hall: (23:47) Do you remember what names...what seven divisions...what were they? Can you remember that?

Henry: (23:51) Well surely because I...you know the thing that was so interesting. You know, when I was looking, I didn't have much time this morning, but when I was looking for the '77-'78 catalogue, or the earlier catalogues, then I never did put my hand on those. But the divisions, of course, and it was so nice to have a catalogue. And we did have a person who, here in Lynchburg, Progress Printers, who was willing to work with us to get a catalogue when we didn't really have the money, you know, to do this. But here, there's an academic affair in this

catalogue and then we have the division of business and that was an entry. Communications, education, and by the way, initially it was Education and Psychology.

Hall: (25:50) Ok.

Henry: (24:50) And when I was at the point that we could turn Education over to someone else, we went ahead and dropped the Psychology part.

Hall: (25:00) I think Psychology became a part of the Social Sciences.

Henry: (25:02) It did.

Hall: (25:03) Ok.

Henry: (25:03) And one reason is, I was...I wanted it under my purview because that was my academic background. And when Boyd Rist came, then I felt like I could trust him with Psychology without any trouble at all. And I held onto this until our students were certified to teach in Virginia. And that was so interesting. The first one...and Division Music, that was a big thing for us, and Phys-Ed was under Education, Phys-Ed, and Natural Science and Mathematics, Religion, and then of course the other would be...no there's the Social Science...Television, Radio Film would be the...and the this particular time, it had come into eight divisions because initially..Let's see, which one didn't we have? One of these we didn't have in the beginning.

Miller: (26:06) Just for the record, can you tell us...

Henry: (26:07) Business!!

Miller: (26:08) ... what year, uh what year is that catalogue that your thumbing through there?

Henry: (26:11) '76? '78-'70!

Miller: (26:14) '78-'79. Ok.

Henry: (26:17) And we did ok with the catalogues. Of course remember, we had nothing like this. And how did we generate this with an IBM Typewriter?

Hall: (26:27) Did you do most of writing and putting together?

Henry: (26:28) Uh, yeah. Yes I did. Even course descriptions but we brought them to the Council on Academic Affairs which was these chairpersons in the seven divisions and it is, I knew from Eastern Kentucky University, you have to have a paper trail if your going to be accredited. You've got to show, how did these things come to pass? I never realized how intelligent this was until we had a Virginia team come in, committee to give us the right to grant degrees, and then later the Southern Association. And the Virginia people said, "You've got trouble. You've got problems." But they said, "We haven't found one problem that you're not already working on." Well, how did they know that? Because we kept good minutes of the

Council of Academic Affairs, and I taught concept minutes. A concept minute is not only where you say what is it you dealt with but you give the key points of discussion and we actually developed a code. CAA was Council of Academic Affairs, one, that would be the first item that year and then there was the subject and we indexed these and all the committees that, when the Southern Association came for the candidacy, "You've got problems."

Hall: (28:08) What was the things that they were really interested in about the problems?

Henry: (28:11) Well, a library...

Hall: (28:14) Ok.

Henry: (28:15) ...faculty credentials, those were the kinds of things. But their point was, "You're working on everything." And so that was a very important thing for us.

Hall: (28:28) Where was the first library at?

Henry: (28:30) In the LCA building. And you'll be interested in this, I'm pretty sure you know, if a professor stays in his office at a major university, and my area was...I don't know how many people were teaching in you know, my field there in Eastern, but I did work in the office. And so when the book people came, with new books in Human Development, for example, they always said, "Oh, you must have this." And so here I had a huge number of books given to me and when we came over here, I went through my library and I gave many, many, many books to, for the college. And we had a lady named Mrs. Horton. She came as the librarian at LCA and she also was librarian for the college too. But see one of the things that we did, by the way, to address this problem was we bought the Finch College Library of New York City. President Nixon's daughters went to Finch College. And we added 90,000 excellent volumes. And of course, we also got a building downtown, you know, to have the library

Hall: (30:02) Yes, do you know when that occurred, when did the move downtown/

Henry: (30:06) Oh my, '76 or so.

Hall: (30:07) Ok.

Miller: (30:08) And now was that...

Henry: (30:08) Should have been there by the time that you were here.

Hall: (30:10) Yeah.

Miller: (30:11) Was there a separate seminary library and rest of the departments main campus library?

Henry: (30:17) No, probably not. There was an interest in a seminary immediately and Dr. Hughes was named the dean and he's a very godly man, a good academic person. John R. Rice

raised him. I don't know all the details. But he uh, I remember two things vividly about the seminary beginning. One is that he had asked Dr. Falwell, "Don't make their announcement," until he told his church. Well Dr. Falwell got up the next Sunday on television and said, "Robert Hughes is coming to head our seminary." And so he had to get out of there, he was down in Pensacola, pretty fast. And of course, Robert Sumner, your good friend would have known Dr. Hughes quite well. And so...but in moving, he hurt his back and he was really incapacitated. So I ended up being the Dean of the Seminary in the sense of, you know, working on your policies and procedures, your faculty handbook, your catalogue, and we kept the catalogue, their catalogue and our catalogue for a while. It wasn't separate but the library probably had a separate section but not really because you know the nature of the Division of Religion here would have, there didn't have to be...

Miller: (31:53) I guess that I just thought that I had heard at one time that they had split the collections and maybe that was even after you had left...

Henry: (32:00) Well it was definitely after I had left

Miller: (32:01) You know that the seminary library stayed separate for a while at the downtown building when they had moved some up here...

Henry: (32:08) They very well may have done that.

Miller: (32:08) And so...

Henry: (32:10) Because see the...we started here on this campus. One time Dr. Falwell said, Dr. Jim, I want us to go on a little trip and you never knew what to expect. One day I was sitting in my office, in 1972 there was a flood in this area, and of course Treasure Island was where the dorms were and uh...but anyway, I was sitting at my desk after I first came and I got this telephone call from Dr. Falwell, he said, "Would you go over to Duguid Funeral Home and preach a funeral for me?" He said, "I'm on Treasure Island and I can't get off." And so I, you never know. So he came by one day and he said, "I want to show you something." And we came up here on the mountain and he said, "Now this is going to be our campus. It's going to really rival the architecture at the University of Virginia. That's the kind of architecture we're going to do." And we kneeled down and prayed of course there wasn't anything up here. So we did get a building here. I'm almost sure its right here that it may be this building we're in. But that's the first building that we had up here. So I'm pretty sure pretty soon that we wanted to get a library up here. My concern by the way in transporting...we rented buildings to have classes in. The Southern Association guy told me, he said, "Now I'm not going to be surprised, the next time I come, that you don't have classes in the rest rooms." My Human Development class was in the Thomas Road Church building up, you walk up and out there on those steps in the hallway and it was a wonderful place to teach. We just had the best time right out there. But anyway, I'm pretty sure we would have wanted a library over here and that's probably what you're talking about.

Miller: (34:17) Well, now as you've been talking, my mind is just going in a number of different directions in order to ask you about things. Let me ask you about one thing here, do you recall which came first, the State of Virginia approval to grant degrees or accreditation?

Henry: (34:31) Oh my, you have to have state approval to grant degrees and this was interesting because, if you're not careful when you're doing the Lord's work, the ends justify the means in your mind and that becomes a problem. Well anyway, the idea was, we want to have a graduation. You know a commencement program. And the seminary wanted, you know, to do this. Well you were fined back in my day, for one degree a day, was \$1,000. If you give a degree and you're not authorized to do so. So we wanted this. Well, I had to fight a lot of battles, really fight, because, for example, the seminary said, "We don't care what you say, we're going to give this degree," You know, before they were ready to do this. So my point was, "alright, you go ahead and give it, then I suppose you've got \$365,000 for the next year, to pay for the degree" and uh, but you have to. And see, the accrediting agency, especially regional's would not even look at you.

Miller: (36:05) If you weren't approved by the state?

Henry: (36:07) That's right. But you didn't have the approval to grant degrees

Miller: (36:11) And I know that...

Henry: (36:12) By the way, it was a major, major effort. It wasn't a walk through. I've had colleges tell me down through the years, working with TRACS, at one time we had 200 institutions we were working with, "Oh, it will just be a walk through." And I said, "Well I'll tell you what, it won't be a walk through."

Miller: (36:31) I know for my Alma mater it was a more difficult process to get that state approval. They went through and for years had been giving degrees and when they said, "By the power invested in my by the state," they didn't really have that power,

Henry: (36:43) Right

Miller: (36:43) And so finally somebody checked and the numbers were low enough that they hadn't ever gotten caught or whatever but someone was saying, "you aren't on a certain directory here," and so they went and did some checking, "well you've never been approved by the Sate Higher Education Coordinating Board. And so I'm glad that they didn't have that problem here. Some states are more stringent than the others.

Henry: (37:10) Absolutely.

Miller: (37:11) I know of some states that if you're going to give an honorary doctorate, there's a certain procedure, you can't just give that to anybody and

Henry: (37:18) That's true. And that was a battle here even with Dr. Falwell. They kept talking about honorary degrees and I said, "An honorary degree? You've got to be joking! You know, what would it mean to start with?" so I refused to let them give honorary degrees. But as soon as I moved, the next graduation, they gave an honorary degree. And I certainly understand that that things have to mean something and that's very, very interesting. I became a member of the licensure board for higher education in New Jersey when I was president of the college up there and that was amazing. They invited me to be a board member for the New Jersey Association of Colleges and Universities, which I was amazed. You know, what would a little old Bible college president...well anyway, they asked me, would I sever on the licensure board? And I said, "well yes I will." And we got degrees, to grant...we got permission from New York to have courses over in New York City, you know, we were New Jersey. Well New Jersey was so mean that they would not give anybody approval. And I tried to be very quiet most of the time and finally, well the chair person said, "Dr. Henry, what do you think about this?" I said, "Well I do have some thoughts. Well, my first thought is 'I'm glad we never applied to you to have courses because New York is rough.' But some of them are just ridiculous. And then, the story came out. New Brunswick Seminary and everything approved to grant degrees. One of the leading seminaries and I just thought that was the craziest thing I ever heard of because they were so particular about, "You've got to get your permission." Well anyway, I'll tell you, Virginia was one of those references. Georgia's unbelievable. There's no difference in Georgia than becoming accredited...

Miller: (39:37) In order to achieve, for a new college to achieve that status of being able to grant degrees.

Henry: (39:43) Right.

Miller: (39:43) So when did Liberty achieve that permission from the state of Virginia?

Henry: (39:51) Well, it must have been the first year. I'd have to again, look back because I believe that the commencement...

Miller: (40:03) Did they have one in the summer of '72?

Henry: (40:05) Oh no, no.

Miller: (40:07) No.

Henry: (40:07) They were not ready for that.

Miller: (40:10) So...

Henry: (40:11) It might have been...we might have had a commencement in '93.

Miller: (40:14) You mean '73.

Henry: (40:14) I mean '73. One of the things I was thinking about was the commencement bulletins which I think I...they ought to be in the archives. You know...I just can't...but it wasn't long but it was put your nose to the grind stone and work. I was at a banquet at one of the institutions that got T.R.A.C.S. accreditation and in fact their president now is the chairman of the T.R.A.C.S. accreditation committee down at Trinity Baptist down in Jacksonville. And Dr. Shoemaker told his board, he said, "When Dr. Henry first came here, he said, 'you're going to have to work eight days a week to become accredited'." And he said, "I thought he was just saying that." But," he said, "I'll tell you, you have to work eight days a week." And the thing that here at Liberty, I worked seven days a week. Now I was a pastor but even on Sunday there were things that I did related to Liberty. Well God had His hand on us. So we were able to bring in a faculty that could work with us and just...God blessed us and the favor of someone simply saying that "because you're a Brea College person, we're going to give you the benefit of the doubt." See little things like that that "well that was just sort of accidentally, wasn't. God was working, see?" and then uh, but its going very well. Now I'm going to look at your list here...

Miller: (42:08) Did...

Henry: (42:08) ...because time is our enemy.

Miller: (42:13) Well, did Liberty ever consider that Berea Model where students would just

work and it was tuition free?

Henry: (42:17) No.

Miller: (42:18) Never did.

Henry: (42:18) Liberty had an unusual, and of course when I say Liberty, it's Dr. Falwell. He wanted open access so that was an open admissions policy. Now you talk about something that became a challenge, how...because of integrity, how can you accept people for post-graduate, I mean post secondary education, if every indication is, they're not capable of doing this? You know, that was a real matter of ethics and integrity. So the way we responded, of course we had a good advisor system. We did this advisor system that was one of the very first things I did. And uh, because I had, when I was teaching, just teaching, I had a hundred students at Eastern as advisees. So I really worked on this and I was completely ready to have a good advisor system. But Eastern developed this service that if you needed to speed up your reading comprehension, you know, a learning center, and I told Dr. Falwell, "You got to have this. There's no way that Liberty could ever be accredited, especially with the open admission policy unless we're able to help the students." And I didn't say, you ought to consider this." I simply said, "This is essential." And I was down at the University of Alabama at a dean's meeting and this dean from the University of South Carolina came up to me, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and he said, "I don't like you at all." And I said, "Oh?" He said, "Yes, you steal." And I didn't know what he was headed for. He said, "We had the best person in the nation heading our learning center, Dr. Bruckner," and he said, "You stole her." And we did.

Hall: (44:55) This is Lila Bruckner.

Henry: (44:57) Lila, yes.

Miller: (44:59) And so to this day we have the Bruckner Learning Center.

Henry: (45:01) Of course! Of course! And she developed and uh I shook bushes and the money feel out where we could buy this and that and the other. And another little battle that we had, I have no idea where we were when you came, Dr. Hall, but I also told Dr. Falwell that there has to be a salary schedule that reflects higher education. And I'm going to develop one every year and I'm going to model after Sweet Briar College and I had become great friends with the Randolph Macon people. Harriet Hudson, by the way, was on the Commission on College Executive Committee Southern Association. So you talk about help, she gave it. She was my good friend. So the...you know, we were able to see things happen that were amazing. And I said, "You've got have a...," I turned it in, turned down. Turned it in, turned down. And one board meeting...

Miller: (46:20) By Dr. Falwell was it turned down?

Henry: (46:24) It was the board, supposedly the board.

Miller: (46:25) Ok.

Henry: (46:26) But back in those days, you know, there just wasn't funds there and I knew that.

Miller: (46:31) It was primarily financial issues.

Henry: (46:34) And then also the board would have done what he said, pretty well at that point. And that was another thing to be accredited, the governing board had to be a governing board, that it can't just be a...

Miller: (46:46) Had to have some level of independence.

Henry: (46:47) Right. So here Dr. Falwell gets up in chapel and normally I would sit on the platform in chapel but this day I was up in the balcony. I have no idea why I was up there and he said, "We're different from other Christian colleges. We believe that a labor is worthy of his hire." And the salary schedule was upgraded significantly. That was an interesting point.

Hall: (47:20) Let's go back to the Society of the Council of Academic Affairs. Was that your idea and you put that together?

Henry: (47:26) Yes, it was my idea.

Hall: (47:27) And what did that say, officially do?

Henry: (47:28) There would have been a description, by the way, and you can go back in the Archives and see what their...Uh, my view was, that we had so many needs that we've got to get everybody working toward getting these needs. And remember there was a court case against Thomas Road and us and I think the initial reason that I got us together was that we've got to lean on each other and I can't do this by myself. So we decided, I don't even know where the model came from, that if we have the Council of Academic Affairs, they're going to be the one that, you know, builds the program. For example, say graduation requirements. If you look in the catalogue, you'll see graduation requirements. Then that's the kind of thing that I wanted them to work on. And not have it, for example, I was sitting down on 618 Thomas Road and Dr. Guillermin called me and he said, "The speech faculty is coming down to see you." And I said, "Well, that's fine. Let 'em come down." And they were so angry. I'm not even sure...that's righteous indignation. That's what it was. Not anger, righteous indignation. And they said, "How dare you! Don't you know that any educated person needs six hours of speech?" and I said, "No, I didn't know that." And they said, "We've prayed and we've just come down here to tell you now that you can't..." You know we had to, to get a degree when I first set foot on this campus it was like 160 semester hours. We can't do that.

Miller: (49:49) Because they can't finish that in a four year program.

Henry: (49:51) Oh, absolutely! And so I remember the chair person of that speech department said, now "the Lord told her." And I said, "Well you know what? That is so interesting because I prayed about this too and the Lord didn't tell me that," you see. So this council was very very important. And back in those days, we were developing a good baseball team. Al Worthington came to be our coach. And on the day that the baseball games came and we happened to have a council, I had to fight them because they wanted to go to the baseball game. And I remember one day, one of my friends told me not long ago, he said, "Do you remember the day that you told us, 'Get out of here! I don't even want to see you because,' he said, 'your mind is out here on this baseball and your not...'." But anyway, I had the most wonderful helpers in the council of academic affairs. And we had a student group too and they kept good minutes. They had to have concept minutes because we wanted a paper trail. You can have...find a paper trail for everything that happened, almost from the day that I came, until the day that I left.

Hall: (51:16) Now lets talk about the students a little bit. I thought I skipped over that. Any particular students stand out in your mind in those early days?

Henry: (51:24) Oh absolutely! Absolutely! I didn't want the students to be 'yes' people. I wanted them to think. In fact, when we were...I wrote the first statement of purpose and objectives and I knew what the criticism was, "That you're not really a college." And so one of the points in the initial statement which the Southern Association lauded, they said, "this is one of the best statements we've ever seen." And you can measure it. You know, it was...you have to be able to measure the verse and uh, but we put in critical thinking. We're going to, you know, I actually said to the faculty, you could actually have a pseudo-curriculum and achieve what I

want to see happen. I want the students to be able to think critically. You know, to gather the evidence and come...well we had this one fellow named Mike Korbi. Is that name familiar to you?

Hall: (52:33) Yes it is.

Henry: (52:35) And I remember Mike was a thinker. And we had a special emphasis on uh...I don't even know what the name of it was. I'd have to go back and look. I do have the book. But some of the most bizarre statements related to Psychology I've ever heard in my life. You know, this was a part of the Seminar. And everybody would say, "Oh this is the most wonderful thing that we've ever had on this campus." And there sat Mike. And I said, "Mike, you remember that you can think for yourself." Well, he graduated in Television Radio Film and he applied to the University of Iowa for a graduate program and they misunderstood. They thought he was a graduate of Lynchburg College, not Lynchburg Baptist College, so they accepted him. And he excelled. And then it was when he was finishing his Ph.D. program that they found out that his college was not an accredited college to start with. Well anyway, he went ahead and then he became the chair person at Baylor University in Television Radio Film. But many, many, many...remember I mentioned the first one to get her teacher's certification in Virginia was a little dark-haired lady named Barbra and she transferred. And that's what amazed me. How many who were excelling in their programs at other institutions were willing to transfer based on the belief that we would become an accredited institution. One other one was Buddy Fox. Buddy was the organist at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky. All A's at the University of Kentucky and he transferred over here. So sure, we had...but the thing that was so interesting, for example, in Teacher Education, I had an introductory course if you're going to be a teacher. And we brought in a person to teach history and that's your teaching field. And I really believe because of the Brea College model, that we ought to have six hours of Western Civilization. Now that's rough. You know, that's not easy. Well we brought a fellow in to teach it and he was flunking every one of them. I actually brought the Teacher Education, these students together, to teach them how to take a history test. Because, he said to me over and over, I'm not going to prostitute myself academically for these students. And of course, they didn't enjoy his classes. But they may not have all been scholars. Many of them may not have had the best background. When you become a Christian by the way, you could have messed up your life in the past and come here and do well. We knew that and we believed that. We had, Tom Diggs for example, excelled, and of course now he's the Associate Dean of the Law School at Regents. And when he got ready to graduate, I said, "Tom you can't leave. You've got to stay here. We need you." One of the things that interested me when we had registration, we kept getting numbers. Then Tom was so helpful because, see, we didn't have computers. We did it all, you know, manually. But the students were, they were well behaved. They didn't throw their caps in the air at graduation. The only serious problem was one fellow who was, has been sort of a distinguished graduate. He and Dr. Falwell were good buddies to the point that Dr. Falwell was Jerry to him, and when he graduated, he walked across the stage and he left his hand with Dr.

Falwell and everybody thought that was funny but I didn't think it was funny. And that was interesting that...Robbie Hiner would tell you that I had to work awfully hard to get him through. So you know, the students were special, there's not doubt about it. And my heart was concerned for them, to have a good academic education where they could get into grad school. The dynamics, we had one chapel speaker who said, I don't care what anybody says, the Holy Spirit is leading me to continue to speak. And of course when that time came, I wanted them back in their classrooms. And we had to fight over that.

Hall: (57:59) Now the first year of course, there were about four faculty members I think and when you came, or how many new faculty members were there that came that second year?

Henry: (58:09) I hired myself, the first one-hundred forty-four faculty members other than those that were here.

Hall: (58:17) Who are some of the ones that stand out in your mind, especially in that second or third year, those early years?

Henry: (58:23) Boyd Rist was excellent. Ed Hindson was excellent. He was very, very good. Uh, Woodrow Kroll.

Hall: (58:32) Yes.

Henry: (58:33) Dr. Kroll was maybe my favorite because he was committed to excellence. He and I became good friends. I spoke at his inauguration at Practical Bible Training School Presidency and he's back to the Bible now. But he was certainly...but the thing that I had to be so careful of Dr. Hall, you get the credentials and something looks tremendously good and then when you get to examining, it isn't that at all. And so you have to be very, very careful. So I was able to be lenient for some years and finally I simply said to a few people who had taught here, "Now I want to give you warning in advance, I'm not going to be able to use you next year and I want to tell you why. Because we've got to have people with the academic credentials because we're right at the point of the accreditation." And some of them were hurt, but they weren't mad, you know because they understood.

Miller: (59:51) So they had had non-accredited degrees. Is that what...?

Henry: (59:53) Oh, absolutely.

Miller: (59:55) Ok.

Henry: (59:57) One of the things that was a question is what about courses in the institute? Could they be counted as college transfer? And my answer was no because there's more than one reason. One is that your faculty has to be qualified and then the nature of your course has to be qualified. Now there are some programs that would have been like that, that we had no trouble accepting. For example, Word of Life at Scroon Lake. We did send, I don't remember who was

sent, but to examine them. And we were able to say for Word of Life, "For every thirty hours that you're up there, we can give you, say, twenty hours, you know, here." But the faculty credentials, that's um...Dr. Wemp came in one day and he said he just had to have a certain person and I said, "no, you can't because I know the credentials that are required for that position." And he just felt like the Lord had, you know if He's going to bless us, we had to have this person. We didn't get him because I just...well there again, it wasn't more than two years after I left, that he did come. But by that time he had earned a degree and he's been rather distinguished I think here, but initially I would not let him teach because of that.

Miller: (1:01:53) And um, so was there some resentment towards the accreditation process for that reason or for other ones?

Henry: (1:01:58) I don't think so.

Miller: (1:01:59) No. Ok.

Henry: (1:02:01) I don't really think so. One day...well of course, see this is a pretty high bar that you're having to get over and it's very demanding. And one day, Harold Wilmington came in and he had been, and I'm sure he would remember this quite vividly. He had traveled with Dr. Falwell to Penducca, Kentucky and Dr. Falwell, you know, would go with his, "I Love America" and the different singers and Dr. Wilmington came over and said to me, "Well, Jerry's decided to forget this accreditation. I just wanted you to know." I said, "Listen, you go tell Jerry Falwell, we're going to be accredited." You know that was my response. And one day Dr. Guillermin intimated something and I said, "Is your recorder on?" If its not, you put it on. And this one had to do with the "We're not going to have our teachers certified because they have to compromise." you know that was the story. And I said, "We're going to have our teachers certified."

Hall: (1:03:24) And that was a big struggle wasn't it?

Henry: (1:03:25) Oh, it was a big struggle.

Hall: (1:03:26) Do you remember when they began to be certified or accepted?

Henry: (1:03:31) Yes, again I'd have to look. Barbra, the beautiful young lady I told you about, she was excelling in the Teacher Education program. And she came down on...we were still down on Thomas Road 618, and she said, "Look at this. I'm certified." And I though, "Uh, oh. We got us a mistake, you know. So I kept quiet. I decided, I knew if I told Dr. Falwell, this is one of the best news that you ever had. If I told him, he would get up and talk about it and then if it is a mistake, then it would be bad. But it wasn't long until we had ten people certified. But the way all of this happened, the first summer, I had two beautiful little girls, Mona and Melody and I had a handsome young son, but he stayed in Kentucky with his grandparents and his horse Jitter. But Mona and Melody said, "Daddy, there's not one in this community our age and the first day

Mark was back with his horse and he rode through the community, our yard was full of people their age and it stayed like that. But anyway, it just, for diversion I said, "Now you two could go to Richmond with me to the Teacher Education place. And we went, early, went to Southern Association early. Well anyway, there was a little lady in that office named Miss Gee. She, 'Gee,' she ran the office and somehow she like Mona and Melody and she was a Southern Baptist. Of course I'm Southern Baptist and somehow she liked them and she said "Dr. Henry, let me show you something." She said, "Now this is what is says, but this is what it means." And she took those standards and she told me what it meant. I didn't fool with what it said, I fooled with what it meant and we made progress, rapid progress, to get our graduate's certified.

Miller: (1:05:58) And so with SACS accreditation, we achieved that. TRACS then came after SACS is that correct?

Henry: (1:06:10) Yes, TRACS is interesting. Our college in New Jersey that I was president of was accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the American Association of Bible Colleges. It was a Bible college. Now the AABC said, "You can't have graduate programs, only undergraduate." So Dallas, Criswell Bible College, wanted to have graduate degrees. So, they couldn't have them with the AABC. Now Christian Heritage in California had developed one of the finest academic programs in the nation and they wanted to be accredited with the Western Association of Colleges and Schools. Western said, "You've got a problem. You've got a good program, but you don't understand higher education. Higher education is seeking the truth. You're whole position is you found the truth." See, that's what we believe, we've got the truth. So you can be accredited. So they had to go to court to get accredited. And then, Luther Rice Seminary said, and they were the pioneer in distant learning, "We want to be accredited." Well the Southern Association said, "Sorry, we don't have anything in place to accredit distant learning, you know, like that." So the idea was, in 1977-78, we'll start an accrediting agency that will be equal to any accrediting agency in the nation, and it will take care of all of these." And the interesting thing was, I was invited to be in their initial planning session in Washington D.C. I didn't even give TRACS a thought because I knew we were well credentialed in our college. And then one day I got this interesting communication, "We've got funds for a full time Executive Director and we would like for you to be that." And so I had the privilege of being the first full time Executive Director of TRACS and develop all of the standards and evaluative criteria.

Miller: (1:08:45) Now did you leave Liberty in order to take that position?

Henry: (1:08:47) No, I was at North Eastern Bible College.

Miller: (1:08:49) Ok.

Henry: (1:08:52) Yeah. And then from North Eastern, then I became the...

Miller: (1:08:54) Ok, so go over the chronology here just to clarify that you came here to Liberty in May, after that first year had happened, May of '72.

Henry: (1:09:05) Right.

Miller: (1:09:05) And then how long were you at Liberty?

Henry: (1:09:09) I was at Liberty the next six years and then two years as a consultant with Liberty.

Miller: (1:09:17) Ok, and so during those two years you were a consultant, that's when you'd gone to North Eastern Bible College.

Henry: (1:09:22) North Eastern, right.

Miller: (1:09:23) And then from North Eastern is when you were called down to TRACS

Henry: (1:09:28) Right.

Miller: (1:09:29) And do you have any idea when Liberty said, we should become associated with TRACS in addition

Henry: (1:09:35) In the beginning, before I was.

Miller: (1:09:37) Ok so, they were before you?

Henry: (1:09:39) Dr. Earl Mills was one of the key persons in uh...and Dr. Falwell was so interested TRACS because see we believed in the Historicity, the first eleven chapters of Genesis, not evolution and so therefore, to be a TRACS school, you had to have a doctrinal position that was true to the Word of God. And so Dr. Falwell's point was, among the last things he and I talked about, he was so pleased that TRACS was approved of the U.S. Department. And he said, "because there may come a day when we're going to need TRACS because..."

Miller: (1:10:29) That's kind of a fail-safe...

Henry: (1:10:30) Oh, absolutely!

Miller: (1:10:31) If you were to loose, and it could be on a variety of issues.

Henry: (1:10:35) Yes.

Miller: (1:10:35) If they increased homosexuality...

Henry: (1:10:37) Absolutely!

Miller: (1:10:37) You are protected status or something.

Henry: (1:10:39) Which they could very well do.

Miller: (1:10:40) Um, and so it was kind of kept there as a fail-safe type of establishment.

Henry: (1:10:47) Absolutely!

Miller: (1:10:47) But recently then they've dropped it.

Henry: (1:10:50) Now I'm working with this situation. I think the decision, now of course if you look at Liberty today they have 18 agencies accrediting different programs.

Miller: (1:11:09) National Council of Teacher's of Education

Henry: (1:11:10) Right, of course, and all those.

Miller: (1:11:12) The nursing and various things.

Henry: (1:11:14) So if...now our viewpoint, Dr. Henry Morris and I, we felt that if your regionally accredited, that the work you do to get ready for the regional would be, would apply to many of the areas. You've got to hit the foundational for us as well as the other. So I think that Liberty came to the place that the pressure was very intense to get things done and then all of a sudden, here's TRACS. There's things they're asking and there is no question in my mind I could have been knocked over with a feather when I heard this. They had no idea what the history was in making the decision. Dr. Rist was on the curriculum I involved him early in TRACS but he didn't know what Dr. Falwell's position was and so therefore I think that this is something that needs to be readdressed. And I think that Jerry Jr. is willing to do this and I believe Dr. Rist is willing to do it. Whether it will happen or not, I don't know.

Miller: (1:12:32) Now, I wonder if TRACS needs to change a little bit and uh...?

Henry: (1:12:35) Well I'm working on that.

Miller: (1:12:37) I know with AABC and the North Central that you could kind of do a dual self-study that...

Henry: (12:43) Oh, absolutely!

Miller: (1:12::45)...that worked with both but my understanding was that the criteria were substantially different between SACS and TRACS or um...

Henry: (1:12:51) No...That isn't really true. And what Dr. Rist did was to give me the new standards for Southern. Now I haven't looked at them yet. I haven't had time to do that. See, I developed a prayer seminar ministry that has amazed me, when I was at North Eastern. I got interested in prayer when I was here by the pastor of the Pleasant view Church. I mean intensely. I began to study this. And the um...so my interest is really, you know, on this. And I'm going to give you all a prayer seminar workbook so you'll see what I'm talking about. And I've done 2

million miles, over 2 million miles teaching this. This is translated in many languages. And so this is my interest right at this point. But when I left TRACS, my intention was to leave TRACS. You know, not to try to second guess. But I just have to involve myself at this point because...and if I understand correctly, the former president of Liberty, Dr. Boor, he's working over this also. But now, very frankly, my emphasis is this.

Miller: (1:14:29) Is the prayer ministry. Let's talk about that for just a moment. One question I had, going all the way back when you were the pastor of the church here in Lynchburg, was that with Dr. Falwell's blessing and approval?

Henry: (1:14:40) Yes.

Miller: (1:14:40) I know that at one point everyone had to go to Thomas Road but was that...

Henry: (1:14:44) That was an interesting phenomenon that I said to the faculty, "If this is something that...you know, if the Lord is leading you to some other church and all, you write on your contract and I'll initial it and you'll never lose your job over this." And they even talked about tithing to the...you know, which, just things in an academic setting, you just can't do. So we had to, you know, as long as I was here,

Miller: (1:15:24) They were thinking of requiring tithe to

Henry: (1:15:27) Oh not thinking, they did that.

Miller: (1:15:29) Ok.

Henry: (1:15:30) That was a requirement that you had to tithe. But see when I came here, I was a pastor in Kentucky. And Dr. Falwell knew that I was, in fact we talked about it. You know, would there be churches here that would be available. And he thought, yes, there would be. So there was never any problem at all related to this. He was...when I went to Winchester and said I'll stay with you until you have a hundred members, starting this new church, I baptized 99 in 10 months. Dr. Falwell brought his singers up too, when we organized that church and he was very, very much for what we were doing. And um...

Miller: (1:16:15) Well I know that he had a love for planting churches and there's many churches here in the surrounding counties and all over central Virginia thanks to his input and help and support. So he was supportive of you being a pastor there?

Henry: (1:16:28) Oh, absolutely. Yeah. He always said that he wanted the Liberty students to have a seminar but see that was awfully ambitious because of the number. I've had thousands in seminars, but I have had one prayer seminar for the faculty here.

Miller: (1:16:45) Tell us a little bit about your prayer seminar ministry. Is this an academic thing or do you spend a lot of time in actual prayer? Are you talking about prayer or doing prayer? Tell us about it.

Henry: (1:16:53) We do engage in prayer. Now remember that this was not something I intended to do. But when I became president of North Eastern, I couldn't be pastor of a church. And I was over in New York City in Waldorf History with the president of Exxon and our pastor was with me from Madison Baptist Church in Madison, New Jersey. And he wanted me to do a prayer conference in our church and so did the president of Exxon. He would like that. So I had materials already pretty well prepared but never dreaming it would become a workbook. It's a six hour seminar and I've had them in 55 nations now. This workbook is translated into many languages. I'm going to be in Peru for 11 seminars starting August the 24th. I've just come from Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and they're six hours of teaching. And God has put His hand on it. The most amazing result is Nigeria. When I went to Nigeria with Sudan Interior Mission in 1988 to do their colleges and seminaries, one man got interested in what I was teaching, decided to resign high positions in ECWA, Evangelical Church of West Africa, and do some seminars. They had 2.2 million members in 1988, now they have, Sue and I were just back and they have 13,000 in their seminars, they've got 4.6 million and it's all because they're building on prayer. Prayer is the work and so it's a systematic teaching. We do spend time praying and there's no two seminars alike by the way, you never know where this is going to head, but before its all over, we're going to teach all of the ideas that's in this workbook.

Miller: (1:19:24) I was just going to mention for those that are listening here, you do have a website: jgordonhenryministries.org, that if they wanted to find more information about your prayer seminars, they could go to that and it also has contact information for you.

Henry: (1:19:38) It does have that. And I've written a number of books. I'll give each of you "The Upper Room Discourse", which is my favorite book. But this is my burden. I'm seventy-three, soon to be seventy-four. I'd like to be doing these seminars eighty-five. Caleb went up on the mountain when he was eighty-five. One of the things that would please me now, having been the executive director of TRACS and also the academic officer here at Liberty is to see these two institutions, these two entities, stay true to the Word of God. And I think you can be a good academic institution and also be true to the Word of God.

Miller: (1:20:34) Going back to our chronology, you were at this North Eastern Bible College then for just a couple of years and then you moved back...

Henry: (1:20:41) No, for four years.

Miller: (1:20:42) For four years and then you came back to our area to work with TRACS?

Henry: (1:20:47) No.

Miller: (1:20:48) No, ok.

Henry: (1:20:48) Our offices with TRACS were in Murfreesboro, Tennessee for nineteen years.

Miller: (1:20:53) Ok.

Henry: (1:20:53) That's where I got acquainted with Dr. Robert Sumner.

Miller: (1:20:59) And uh...

Henry: (1:20:59) And the reason...Dr. Patterson at Criswell wanted us to set up our offices in Dallas when I took the position and I had no interest in moving to Dallas, Texas so their idea was that you can have the office anywhere you want it. Well I'm from east Tennessee and Sue is from Western Kentucky and the ideal place was Nashville because of the airport there and so we were there nineteen years.

Miller: (1:21:30) Ok so that's where TRACS was.

Henry: (1:21:32) And our daughters grew up...and by the way, Dr. Earl Mills and Dr. Fitzgerald became my associate directors but they stayed here in Lynchburg with an office in Dr. Fitzgerald's home. And then when I retired from TRACS, they moved TRACS here completely.

Miller: (1:21:50) And what year would that have been approximately?

Henry: (1:21:52) That was 1995.

Miller: (1:21:54) Ok so that...I guess I was under the impression that its always been here in the Forest, Lynchburg area but not...

Henry: (1:22:01) No.

Miller: (1:22:01) But not since 1995. Ok. One thing, as I'm looking back over the questions and we need to draw things to a close here, we didn't really talk about your involvement with Lynchburg Christian Academy. What was your role there?

Henry: (1:22:15) The idea was that I would sort of oversee the administration of the LCA and especially to get approval in the state of Virginia. And I certainly worked hard along these lines. But there came the point after two or three years that I could no longer give any time to LCA. And so there was an administrator who was brought in who was very competent. He knew that if he needed to come to see me and talk things over, that I was there. But I never went to see, you know, exactly what he was doing. But it was more of an oversight because my time was just to where I couldn't take that on.

Miller: (1:23:18) You couldn't devote a lot of time to that and still...

Henry: (1:23:31) Except oversight.

Miller: (1:23:22) Right.

Hall: (1:23:22) Who was the new person at LCA?

Henry: (1:23:25) It was Hammond. Do you remember him?

Hall: (1:23:27) No I don't.

Henry: (1:23:28) Then Glen Shultz came but Hammond was the one that I worked with a great deal. No of course their enrollment was nothing like it was now. But they did have a commitment to having a very good program.

Miller: (1:23:47) Now, some great leader said, "You can't borrow character, but you can borrow brains," and you've mentioned some of the patterns and some of the schools that were helpful for you. As we modeled either our student handbooks or catalogue, where there some institutions that we were looking at as following kind of extensively those models?

Henry: (1:24:09) Learning from them, but not following as a model at all. At a certain point, the Southern Association, the Lord was good to us because Grover Andrews was the staff member of the Southern Association that was assigned to us and he too was a Baptist. And we brought him here early in 1972 and he told me before he left, he said, "your biggest challenge is going to be to teach Dr. Falwell what a college is." And he didn't say that in a very negative way, but I can tell you that was true. But Dr. Falwell was a fast learner that he learned well. But they said, "Let's talk about your curriculum. There is an innovative curriculum down at Mars Hill College in North Carolina, we want you to go down there and spend a week and look at this. And then Union University in Jackson, Tennessee has a new campus that they're building, so by all means, you need to go there and see how they're..."and that was fine because that was one of my best friends in the world was the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Union, later became President of Union, but he's very helpful. But this is what I found out, by the way, he said, "Now we're not supposed to do this but I think if I were where you are, I would profit a great deal from what a self-study looks like and a team report." And so he just, things I knew from a distance, he was able to show me and that helped, saved a lot of time. And then there was a college down in Florida, that uh...let me see now if I can remember the name of it, Southern, something Southern and it was the Church of God out of Anderson, Indiana. Something Southern, I can't remember the...Warner Southern! And they said, "They're doing certain things that would help you expedite what you're trying to do because they're a church college." And then the fourth one was curious. It was Flagler College down in Florida and Flagler had purchased one of those resort hotels and that was their campus. And so, you know, really, and then another thing that I've told so many college people, go, if you're serious, find you a dozen colleges and ask them, "could we have a copy of your catalogue?" you know, that you really respect. And then, you know, you learn, this is your resource material and then ask about faculty handbooks, other handbooks...

Miller: (1:27:31) Of the documentation that can just be used.

Henry: (1:27:33) Exactly.

Miller: (1:27:34) That can be used as patterns. Not that your copying straight out of them but...

Henry: (1:27:37) I served as a consultant down in Gainesville, Florida probably '73, '74...'72, '73, '74, Might have been even that first year. I wrote the handbook in the back of our van, our station wagon, Sue driving. Now here, years later, I've gone into college, after college, after college, after college and there's our material. And this was not copyrighted and I wanted people to use it. But that's how you...but I had the privilege of being in positions where I had to work these things out. And then when I came here to Liberty, and I've said what I learned here was worth another doctorate degree, no doubt about it. Because, remember, we were just starting from nothing and we were actually accredited...in candidacy for accreditation, is tantamount to accreditation. There's certain things we're working on. We're working on two things primarily. And that was still working on the library and still working on faculty credentials. But anyway, we got this faster than even any state institution ever gained. That's the reason I say that we have, surely the favor of the Lord was upon...having Dr. Harriet Hudson's support was pretty neat too.

Miller: (1:29:15) You mention in an interview that you recently did for the Liberty Journal that when you came to town, "before leaving Lynchburg, Dr. Falwell invited me to join with him, I asked two questions. First, do you intend to develop a real college? And will the college attack other believers?" Can you talk just a moment about the whole fundamentalism type thing?

Henry: (1:29:35) You see, I was offended by ..um.. Christian colleges who say that they're superior inferior and the separation issue. What I had in mind, I guess was two things and I'm so sorry because both of them are very involved in tracts now and I had a part in this. But, one was Bob Jones and the other was Tennessee Temple. And I had the impression that they were teaching their students that we are the only way. And that was one of my questions, that. And Dr. Falwell's answer was "I'll give you as many sermons as you want to listen to and you will not find one sermon where I've criticized other" he said, "I teach the word of God". And I think that's true. Now this was so interesting. And you know you do such foolish things. And so here comes the Roanoke news paper, don't even remember the name of it now. And they said we want to come over and interview you because of the fast growth you are having. In the course of that interview they were wondering how did I come with the credentials that I had to this institution. And I mentioned that and it got put in the paper. A feature the feature story on their Sunday paper and here Bob Jones got that. And Dr. Falwell shared he said "Man, we are under attack, because they are saying well you've got a Southern Baptist dean and all." And Bob Jones came up here to speak in chapel and boy he cleaned our plow. Just...and I was the only one sitting on the platform with Dr. Falwell and he leaned over and he said "Now Dr. Jim we all don't think like that do we?" But, anyway that was. Then also, see I was committed, see I was a member of Phi Kappa Phi when I was a junior in College, and that means you've got to have good grades, you know? And I was committed to high academics. And I have often said this, that if you were weighing me, 51% would have been academic and 49% would have been spiritual. You understand? Now if you were weighing me today I'd have to tell you the 51% would be the

spiritual and the 49% would be the academic. The thing I've learned now after all these years of being in ministry, which is fifty-six years, and also as an educator, it would be better to learn your ABC's in Heaven than to be fluent in many languages in Hell. So, I'm glad that now I am 51%, 49%. Dr. Falwell really realized that I was tilted towards academics and he supported me in this. And if that hadn't of happened there would be no Liberty that would have a commitment to academics. I'm pretty sure. But I couldn't of had that unless he stood behind me. And he did.

Miller: (1:33:17) Well lets close our interview today with that. Talk a little bit about Jerry Falwell the man, your personal relationship with him and perhaps a favorite quote of his.

Henry: (1:33:31) I don't know if I have any favorite quotes but remember I told you that my respect for him started getting these records. I don't even know what you call those records

Miller: (1:33:44) The LP records or something

Henry: (1:33:44) Yeah, that. That's right. And I just knew that his spirit spoke to my spirit. That was the thing about it. Now the thing about Dr. Falwell, he had to, well he was guilty of throwing balls up in the air and wanting everyone to catch them, catch every ball that comes down. And I would often say to him, and he said to me more than once "that he had 'yes men' all around him, and he appreciated the fact that I was not a 'yes person' because I could let him know "and he really respected that and I knew sometimes his decision making was looking down the road a great deal distance and that if he did something for expedience's sake it was because it had to be like this to move.

Miller: (1:34:59) To meet his future goal.

Henry: (1:34:59) Yeah, to meet his future goal and I accepted that. But, I had my position, the things I needed to do, he never one time bothered me. He had said that I would have the freedom to build the academic program. And he never interfered and he was always willing, if you...now sometimes. This is something I asked him one time, "Dr. Falwell I told you about this months ago and I didn't just tell you I explained thoroughly why you can't do this and why you had to do this, now I want to ask you a question, why did you not do it? "and he put his arm on my shoulder and he said "Dr. Jim I intended to do everything that you asked but I was going to do it a little later" and he said "I found out now that was a mistake, we should have gone ahead and done it, you know, what you said, because it was just a hurdle that was almost saying you will never be accredited" But if we would have done the other when I said so, it would have been smoother sailing. I think that often a visionary has to say "well I would have done it all but, not just right now". If you want to know about Dr. Falwell as a person, I can pretty well tell you that he would give you the shirt off of his back without any question because he just really. And then I'll you what I have told so many around the country listening to their discussion of Dr. Falwell and I have said well I'll tell you one thing if Dr. Falwell ever falls he'll fall well.

Miller: (1:37:15) Well good, one last thing that you would like to share? Perhaps something we didn't get to ask you about or maybe you would like to get on the record before we close today.

Henry: (1:37:24) Let me glance at your.. these questions and by the way I've got a paper that I've put out the past fifty-five years called the Reflector. Can you believe that? And I thought you would enjoy copies of the reflector.

Miller: (1:37:44) Alright, thank you sir.

Henry: (1:37:48) There you go and there is for the archivist. I just want to sort of glance. Now one of the things I want to encourage you in there are key people that goes back one is Craig Lampe. Craig is a very dear friend of mine. PHD University of Florida became one of the leading officials of Thomas Nelson publishers in Nashville. Craig would be invaluable, as far as I can tell you...he would be the one that would have pretty well structured the first year before I got here. And then once I got here he was called the registrar for a period of time. But see there are key people that are invaluable. In my opinion in those years that we are talking about the most valuable person on this campus was a person, who did not have a college degree, but she was our Registrar I brought her in as Registrar and I saw at once she doesn't need any academic preparation she is just excellent and that is June McHaney. And by all means her view point would be highly significant and if everybody would listen to June McHaney things would have been a little smoother. I was invited to come back, I don't know what the occasion was, but the Senators were here. It might have been, I don't even know the occasion, and it might have been when they moved the university over to that title. Well anyway the amazing thing to me was on the program they had given one of Senators a new first name. And I sat there in absolute shock when I saw this and I took my bulletin up to Dr. Falwell and said "well" and he was so glad I was there and all and I said "I see you've given the Senator a new name". He said "What?" and what happened was Miss McHaney proofed this and said to her superior "this is wrong" and he reassured her this is not wrong and she said "Well, ok". And so here in this great event, the Senator had a new first name. Now you don't do too much worrying about this. When I was president over at Northeastern, invited to speak over at church over at Delaware Water Gap... and first of all they had my name wrong in their Sunday bulletin. And then when I was introduced I was still introduced wrong. And our daughter who as a nursing student was with me that day and she said "Daddy why didn't you correct them"? And I said "Well Mildy it didn't matter anyway." But see a lot of these things didn't matter anyone. But if they would have listened to June McHaney it would have been smoother. I could not have been effective as Vice President of Academic affairs without June McHaney she was just my right arm. And some of the helpers...a Kathy Hughes was one of our key office girls. She is Charles Hughes' wife and I think she is the pastor's secretary now. But, don't forget the wealth of material of people still living.

Miller: (1:41:50) Sure

Henry: (1:41:51) I've asked Jerry Falwell Jr. to consider at homecoming or some other occasion to give us the privilege to invite these key people back and see I'm invited back to Brea College often and to other institutions but I'm not invited back to Liberty, you know. And that's a mistake. And the reason is because we know things that could help, you know to encourage and all. Now lets just see...

Hall: (1:42:31) Speaking of names, when you and I were here, I knew you as Dr. Jim Henry.

Henry: (1:42:39) Right.

Hall: (1:42:39) But now you go by J. Gordon Henry.

Henry: (1:42:41) And there's a story behind that. When I was sitting with the board of governors at Northeastern Bible College, one of the governors was the wife of the president of Exxon. I told you that, dear people. Another one was a key person from Columbia University. And she looked up to me and she said, "J. G. Henry, nope." She said, "That will never work in the northeast." She said, "What is your name?" and I said, "My name is James Gordon Henry." And she said, "Well, what will work up here is J. Gordon Henry." And I said, "Ok. If that will help this college then that's fine with me." And so in 1980, I became J. Gordon Henry. Isn't that interesting?

Hall: (1:43:39) Yes it is.

Henry: (1:43:41) Yeah.

Hall: (1:43:41) I just wondered about that.

Henry: (1:43:42) And Deloris always called me Gordon. Dr. Falwell always called me Dr. Jim. But I actually signed my name back in those days which was rather traditional southern, the initials, "J.G." Interesting isn't it?

Hall: (1:43:58) Yes it is.

Miller: (1:43:50) Well it looks like we're out of time with that. We'll conclude today's interview with Dr. J. Gordon Henry. This interview has been conducted as part of the Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives.

[End of Interview]