

## Oral History Interview with Dr. F. Gerald Kroll

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Interviewee: F. Gerald Kroll

Interviewer(s): Randy Miller, Dr. Cline Hall

Transcriber: Joannah Johnson

Interview Length: 1:14:41

Notes:

**Miller:** (0:00) Alright, welcome to this interview in the Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives. This interview is being conducted on April 2, 2009. Today we are interviewing Dr. Frank Gerald Kroll, commonly known as Jerry Kroll and he was born on January 7, 1943. My name is Randy Miller and I will be conducting the interview today, along with Dr. Cline Hall, good afternoon Dr. Hall.

**Hall:** (00:29) Good afternoon.

**Miller:** (0:30) And greetings Dr. Kroll.

**Kroll:** (0:33) Thank you.

**Miller:** (0:34) And why don't we start our interview today, why don't you tell us, just some biographical information about yourself. Where were you born? Where did you grow up and just a little about your family?

**Kroll:** (0:45) OK, well I was born in [Elwood City], Pennsylvania, about thirty five miles north of Pittsburg and grew up there. My father, excuse me, was a pastor in western Pennsylvania, pastored the same church for 33 years there and grew up in that area of the country. I married [Linda Limley], whom I met as a senior in high school and then dated in college and we got married, we had two children, both of our children are in heaven today, our first child died at birth and our second son, Brian was born with Hemophilia, a bleeding disorder in which his

blood would not clot and from a bad blood transfusion, contracted AIDS and died of AIDS when he was twenty years of age, and that was in 1987, that that happened.

**Miller:** (1:37) And now where you raised as a Christian, you said your father was a pastor, was he an evangelical pastor?

**Kroll:** (1:42) Yes, exactly and I came to know the Lord when I was seven years of age under my dad's preaching and of course just living at home, my parents. I remembered going to my mother one day and asking her about what it meant to be a Christian, what it meant to be saved and she shared the gospel with me, and remember kneeling at my bed and inviting Christ to come into my life and save me from my sin and I realized that I was a lost sinner even though I grew up in a Christian home, I was only seven years of age at the time I realized that and it's interesting when a child accepts the Lord, there was a transformation in my life, even though I hadn't gotten into all kinds of wicked sin at that age and I went out immediately and shared that Gospel with everybody I could find, I was so excited about what had happened in my life that I told the kids down the road. We grew up in the country on a farm and so I went down the road and everywhere I saw someone I shared what the Lord had done for me.

**Miller:** (2:43) Well how did you decide what you wanted to be when you grew up? And how did you decide where you were going to go to college?

**Kroll:** (2:48) OK, well I got heavily involved in Youth for Christ when I was a teenager and then in fact actually began directing our local Youth for Christ rally in the small town in Pennsylvania, when I was, actually it was just before I turned 16 years of age and my assistant director in fact was a guy in his mid to late 20's and he would drive me around because I was too young to drive a car [*laughter*] and, but my wife says I grew up, never had a childhood, just sort of never had a teen time, just sort of grew up and became an adult over night. And as I became involved in Youth for Christ, I in my sophomore year, I went to a local college, Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania because I wanted to direct our Youth for Christ rally there and then Youth for Christ asked me to go overseas when I was a sophomore in college, I went two years to France and began what we called American Youth for Christ in France, worked with the French Director, who was an American missionary, beginning the French program there with the French young people, spent two years, I may have been the first short term missionary. I guess I

should check that historically, but that was back in 1961-63. I was in France and there, it was actually in France that the Lord called me to preach and I came back to the states and went to [Barrintine] College in Rhode Island and went on to Gordon Seminary, just north of Boston and pastored in New England for ten years before I came to teach at Liberty.

**Miller:** (4:21) So what made you make that transition of coming out to pastor and coming to Liberty, tell us a little about your call to Liberty then?

**Kroll:** (4:27) OK, well my brother, Wood, who is the speaker back to the bible broadcast was a professor here, at Liberty at the time, I actually had learned of Liberty before he came to teach here, I remember picking up Dr. Elmer Towns book on the ten largest Sunday schools and I am a young pastor in New England and churches in New England are real tiny churches, you know. If you had a hundred that was really a going church in those days and I remember saying “Lord, I would like to know why some of the churches have been so blessed.” And one of those was Thomas Road and so I came to the first pastor’s conference held here at Thomas Road and that was the year that they were going to start the school and I remember hearing Dr. Falwell talk about it at the pastor’s conference. I was excited about the idea of a college being a part of a local church and everybody being involved in that local church and so we began sending young people here to school, my brother had an opportunity to teach here, he called me up to ask me about this school in Virginia, what do you know about and that was when they were going through 1973 and the SEC problem that they faced and I said, I believe God has his hand on that ministry and I wouldn’t hesitate to go at all. So my brother came, in 73 and then in 78 I came and we had talked back and forth and he had asked me about when I want to come down, remember I was doing my doctorate, Dr. Hindson and Dr. Hawkins, all three of us were at Westminster at the time, the each were inviting me, well actually Dr. Hawkins came that same year and that’s how to get here, I left the church in New England, had been there ten years and came here to teach pastoral ministries.

**Hall:** (6:18) Might do two things at once here, it is not unusual, your brother, two brothers at school at the same time, what was his experience and his calling here at Liberty?

**Kroll:** (6:31) OK well he had taught at a bible institute in New York, called Practical Bible Training School in those days, it’s Davis College today and he had taught there and then he went

to a radio ministry in Texas for a couple of years and it was, when he was there that the opportunity to come to Liberty opened up and that's how he came here to Liberty.

**Hall:** (6:53) Now was he teaching at the seminary, at the time?

**Kroll:** (6:55) At the time he was teaching in the college, right.

**Hall:** (6:57) Right.

**Kroll:** (6:58) In fact the seminary had just formed during those days as well and he was teaching in the college at the time.

**Hall:** (7:05) So when you came, you came as a professor and at seminary?

**Kroll:** (7:08) I came as a professor in the college and I also taught in the seminary and when I ended up and went to Heritage full time, I was only in the seminary at that time, I was teaching full time in the seminary.

**Hall:** (7:21) So how many years have you been actually on the faculty, full-time?

**Kroll:** (7:24) Fifteen years full time on the faculty.

**Hall:** (7:27) From 78...

**Kroll:** (7:28) From 78 to 93.

**Miller:** (7:30) And you still teach in kind of a an adjunct basis, about once a year or so?

**Kroll:** (7:36) About once a year or so.

**Miller:** (7:37) The Doctor of Ministry classes come out for one of the days of their week; they are here for intensives and tell us about that course?

**Kroll:** (7:42) OK. That is a course I actually started years ago, don't know why, I was asked to do it, it was a course on creative use of computers in the local church and I am not a computer person at all, you know, but actually it was one of the computer faculty and myself that initiated that course, back, oh we are talking in the middle ages it seems because I remember at the time

CPM I think was the system that was used, even before DOS came out, that was before Windows and so we are talking ancient.

**Hall:** (8:18) The early days.

**Kroll:** (8:19) The early days, yeah, the early days and we set up a course to help pastors to begin using computers in their local churches.

**Miller:** (8:28) For mailing lists and...

**Kroll:** (8:29) For mailing lists, right, and of course in those days the personal computer was a very primitive, we had very little at all at that time, and what I would do is I would take the course entirely, the computer faculty basically were over the heads of the pastors to try to take that, they need something really very simple, and then so I would take and I would bring experts in and had a lot of adjunct information, people to come in and help me with the course to do that, I say man, you know, to have to do that, teach that course and I am teaching pastoral ministries and but that's how we began and have taught it since then and now what I do, for a long time after I left Heritage, my nephew who was on staff had been involved in computers and here locally and had worked for Radio Shack and Computer Land as one of their technicians, was a computer whiz and he came on our staff as a pastor so we got computer whiz and the benefit then, he would put the course together and he and I would team teach it, I let him teach about 90% of it and I would teach ten percent to a church in Florida, I told the school here, I said "Man, it is too much for me as a pastor, I can't keep up with everything, they still have us, they bring the students over to Heritage for one day out of the five day demon course and we share with them what we do as a local church. And Dr. Schmidt said that their experience just being with us in that local church is one of the highlights of the pastors who come in.

**Miller:** (10:11) I teach in the day on library research and he made the same comment, that they really enjoy going over to the church and seeing all the things that Heritage has and we will talk about that a little bit further in the...Just to kind of go back a moment here, now we mentioned your brother's name is Wood, now it's Woodrow.

**Kroll:** (10:28) It is Woodrow, Woodrow Kroll, he is the General Director of Baptist Bible Broadcast.

**Miller:** (10:35) And did he go right from Liberty to back to the bible or did he have an intervening time?

**Kroll:** (10:41) No, he actually left Liberty about a year and a half after we came down to teach and he went to practical bible training school and they asked him to come as their President, of course that was his alma mater, that was sort of the school that all the kids went to out of my home church, my dad and my mother were graduates of the school, my wife went there, it was kind of, you know how some churches have one school that everybody sort of gravitates to, and that was the school and so he went back, spent ten years then as President, when Back to the Bible invited him to come as their Speaker and General Director.

**Miller:** (11:15) OK so that is the chronology with that, could you just recap then, you had mentioned kind of a list there of all the college you had been to, just tell us what degrees you have and from which colleges you have them.

**Kroll:** (11:24) OK, I have a bachelors degree from [Barrington College], in Rhode Island, which merged with Gordon College a few years after I graduated and then I have a master of Divinity from what was called Gordon Divinity School then, [Gordon-Conwell] today, I have a doctorate from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and I have done other graduate work at Dallas Seminary, Princeton, University of Virginia, now what is called Jerusalem University, what was then called the Institute of Holy Land Studies in the days that I went there and took courses in Israel and University of Paris as well, I spent two years at the [Sorbonne].

**Miller:** (12:02) Fascinating, so let's come here to Lynchburg and tell us about what things were like when you first got onto the campus, a little bit about what your responsibilities where, describe the campus for us.

**Kroll:** (12:16) OK.

**Miller:** (12:18) Just tell us about those early days?

**Kroll:** (12:19) Those early days the campus was very different than it is today, I said when they built the DeMoss building, Liberty really started to look like a university, [*chuckles*]. But that year that I came here, it was the fall of 78, it was interesting, my brother and I and a secretary all shared an office probably about a third the size of this studio room we are in today. My brother

and I sat on either side of the desk and the secretary was on the other end of the desk, over there, if you are talking about crowded positions, those were the pioneer days of Liberty and we had, we had only one academic building here on the mountain, this was the first year on the mountain and we had chapel in a big circus tent, where the DeMoss building is currently located and some of the classes, some of the larger bible classes were held in the circus tent as well to. As I recall there were no paved streets, no paved sidewalks and Dr. Falwell used to say, we watched where the students walk and wear out the grass and that's where we will put the sidewalk then.

**Miller:** (13:27) So what was that first building then that housed classes?

**Kroll:** (13:29) It was, I am not sure what they called it now, but it seemed, it was the end of the academic buildings over here on the opposite, opposite from the studio across the courtyard.

**Hall:** (13:41) Where the government department is and all of that.

**Kroll:** (13:43) OK, is that where it is now, and all we had was that building there and then they were building the next one beside it, and then they built two other buildings across the courtyard, kind of tied them together and then after that built the DeMoss building.

**Miller:** (13:59) It was just a one story building at first.

**Kroll:** (14:01) Just a one story building, right, yes.

**Miller:** (14:03) And so in those first years when you were here, were some of the classes going on at the Thomas Road building and some going on up here or where all of, once they moved up here, were all of the classes up here?

**Kroll:** (14:14) Alright now seminary was all downtown in those days and then what we did was most of the classes were all here on the mountain but as winter came on, we couldn't use the circus tent any longer, we used to have these big space heaters on the poles and if you were within ten feet of the space heater you were roasted, and if you were twenty feet away, you froze. *[laughter]* and of course the dust and everything here, the students used to call it miracle dust and when it rained they called it miracle mud on the mountain, then we went down and had classes down at Thomas Road. So for example, I began my first class on Monday, Wednesday, Friday

was at seven in the morning and my last class began at 5:05 I think that afternoon and it would just spread out and find any place we could to have a class room.

**Miller:** (15:07) About what size was the student body at that time?

**Kroll:** (15:10) Oh, what was the student have been, maybe a thousand, probably around a thousand or so at that time, maybe, probably a little more than that.

**Miller:** (15:19) And so did you notice kind of a different pioneering spirit in that day, both among the faculty and the students?

**Kroll:** (15:26) Yes I believe so, I think there was a real pioneering spirit, everybody sensed that school was different then, in essence it as a Christian college, we were training people going into vocational Christian ministry predominantly in those days, the students that were coming were pastors and missionaries, those who were going to be teachers in Christian schools and things in that area.

**Miller:** (15:49) So when was the transition made so that it went from being kind of a bible college or a Christian college to training primarily full time Christian workers in the ministry to liberal arts?

**Kroll:** (16:01) That happened in the decade where we got SACS accreditation, during that time became an accredited school became an accredited college and university and during that time as we moved to the university status was when of course it just expanded to a university then, of course far more students came who were going through other careers rather than simply church vocational careers.

**Hall:** (16:28) How did you, because you taught at the seminary, were there any who really stood out in your mind that has gone on and done great things.

**Kroll:** (16:37) Well there have been a lot, a lot of students who have gone on from Liberty and pastored churches around the globe, think of, well one is now back as a faculty member here and that is Dave Early, who went out as one of the early church planting teams, in those days that was a team ministry and Dave took one of the first teams out and planted a church there in [Genoa], Ohio and now I think of the ministry he has had and now he is back here teaching.

**Hall:** (17:09) How do, have the students changed do you think?

**Kroll:** (17:12) How have the students changed do you think?

**Hall:** (17:14) From then till now, I know you're not on this campus as much now as you were then but?

**Kroll:** (17:17) Because I am not on the campus hardly at all now so I don't know all the students here, I think there was certainly a pioneer spirit among the students then, because everybody was, this is the pioneer school, Liberty was not well known in those days as it is today and in fact, probably a lot of other schools look down on us in those days, because "Oh, what's this little upstart school there in Virginia and I know experienced that being taking a group of students to Israel, what is now Jerusalem University and we did a course there in the summer with a number of our students on the historical geography of the land of the bible and I remember one student who was there, or a faculty member from another Christian college had some other students there too and told me, she said, when you first came I didn't like you because you were from Liberty, I had never met her before in my life but she just had a negative opinion of well what is this kind of backwards, backwoods school that is coming up there and she said, by, we were there for a three week course and gave great accolades to the students of Liberty and how her opinion had changed entirely in those three weeks.

**Miller:** (18:37) Mentioning the Holy Land, wasn't that kind of an enticement for that first class, that everyone got to go on it, to the holy land, did you know anything?

**Kroll:** (18:47) Yes, yes, exactly, now I was not here as a professor then I was a pastor in New England and I came here as I said for that first pastors conference, I left here really excited about what the potential was at Liberty and what is interesting, I went back to my hometown and began sharing that with my brother in law who was a teenager in high school, senior in high school that year, had the privilege of leading him to the Lord. He came to Liberty during the second year and they took, I think the first year, they took all the students to the holy land, whole entire student body, of course there are only a couple hundred in that first year, and then the second year they took them all to England, so in those, and after about the third or fourth year, I don't know exactly when, maybe around the fifth year the student body had gotten so large it was financially impossible to do that.

**Miller:** (19:38) And they didn't need to entice them to come.

**Kroll:** (19:40) And they didn't need to, you're right, to have that enticement, your right.

**Miller:** (19:44) And now you were in France when you were in college then, so...

**Kroll:** (19:54) Yes, Correct.

**Miller:** (19:54) So that kind of started you, I imagine, on your interest in international things.

**Kroll:** (19:59) Yes, correct. I had the opportunity of spending two years there, really a life transforming experience and a broadening experience for me, and not only studying abroad and also being involved in the youth for Christ program, that I was involved there and God gave me a heart and a passion for the world.

**Miller:** (20:19) Now were there a lot of born again youth there or was it, today we think of France as being, very much of a mission field that there isn't much of an evangelical presence there, was there more in the early sixties?

**Kroll:** (20:31) No, not at all, in fact it is interesting that there hasn't, not much has changed in France during this time, because in that day, there were 3500 cities that there was not even any known believers in them, in France and I think the statistics are still about the same today. I went there because the man who had a gone a year before me went to start a program among the French young people, reaching out to the French young people, he also saw the American military bases those days, he had a heart and passion reach out to the American military, came back looking for a single guy who could raise his support and get to France very quickly and a pastor told him about me and he was to speak at my dad's church then for weekend meetings and ended up at a Bible conference near our town and because I was the Youth for Christ director at, what? 18, I was on the board of directors of this Bible conference because of the ministry with Youth for Christ that I had and he came and when he first saw me he said "God wants you in France." Well at that point I didn't know where France was [*laughter*] I think, and, but anyway, he asked me to pray about it and I felt the Lord had called me to go help do that for a couple years and within two months I had my entire support raised and was in France within two months.

**Hall:** (21:56) What is the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, I think you had a part in that.

**Kroll:** (22:01) Yes, OK, I serve on the board of directors for the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism and that is a missions agency, it is one of the larger independent mission agencies here in America and it facilitates sending missionaries literally around the world and I first became involved with them, oh a dozen or so years ago and we have, we have had a number of our missionaries that are sent out under ABWE – Association of Baptists for World Evangelism.

**Miller:** (22:32) What is your title with them today and how involved are you?

**Kroll:** (22:35) OK, I chair, well the association actually has a couple of three boards, they have kind of like a mother board, is over the entire organization and then I chaired the international board which all the missionaries are under, on that and the reason it is separated from the others is a large missionary agency, we have a aviation ministry and for legal purposes and security, if something where to happen it helps protect the agency from you know if a plane went down in a major metropolitan area or something like that, that is why they kind of divided it up and it is not all under one, but the missionaries are on the international board and I happen to be the chairman of that board right now.

**Miller:** (23:21) Well now from your time here at Liberty, it as though the Lord was preparing you or the ministries that you have eventually gone into that you have had an active teaching ministry, you have travelled a lot as a pastor, you have a lot of pastors supporting missionaries, while you were here there was something SMITE, what...

**Kroll:** (23:43) Oh yes, right, SMITE was a missions organization here at Liberty, now I was not actually personally involved in SMITE, in fact Roscoe Brewer was the director of the SMITE ministries, I even forget now what SMITE stood for but if something, missions, student missions something or other there, but they had music teams and they would go out into churches, they would take students abroad there, but what was interesting was I directed the pastoral training program here at Liberty, actually began that program and directed it and how I got involved in missions, being in France gave me a heart and a passion for lost people around the world, but I brought in Dr. Bob Alderman who was the pastor at Shenandoah Baptist at Roanoke to speak at

one of our at what we called, “Pastor’s Chapels” in those days or what we now call “Ministry Chapels” well we changed them later to “Ministry Chapels” and I brought him into speak on missions from a local church prospective, took him out to lunch after the chapel that day and talked to him about strategy in missions and he is the one God used to burden my heart about a strategy and I was the interim pastor at Heritage in those days, just filling in for them and that was twenty three years ago and I have been filling in ever since, but that is how I got involved in missions, actually being a part of the pastoral training program here at Liberty.

**Hall:** (25:11) We have a good many international students on campus today, do you know when the first one arrived, or is that, how is that in relationship with them?

**Kroll:** (25:21) I don’t know if I could say when the first one arrived because there were international students here when I came, what was interesting was that in those days Dr. Falwell would sometimes might, he might go abroad for something and when he did, he would give scholarships, I, the ones, the first ones I remember were several Romanian students. He had been to Romania to speak in one of the churches there and, and then gave a scholarship to several students who came, and that’s how I remember the first major thrust of international students, prior to that there might have been one or two here and there and if my memory serves me correct that may have been just after the fall of communism and Romania opened up there in the late, the late 80’s, it might have been before that, I forget right now, but anyhow I do remember a significant number of Romanian students coming here.

**Hall:** (26:23) Now Dr. Kim has of course been instrumental in the Korean students, now do you remember when Dr. Kim came or, and?

**Kroll:** (26:31) He came teaching in the seminary about the same time I came teaching in the college and then when the seminary moved to the mountain, he and I shared an office together so we were office partners for a few years on the mountain and he then was very active in going to Korea each summer and would recruit students and since that time, I mean he has been the number one person, maybe the best, I don’t know if he is the best recruiter but anyhow he has brought many, many students from Korea here, particularly pastors. I know there, as I have taught that course or have been the adjunct in that course and the D-min program we, we would have maybe a third of the class would be Korean pastors from South Korea.

**Miller:** (27:21) And someone wanting to be pastors and some wanting to go back in higher education.

**Kroll:** (27:25) Yes, exactly, exactly.

**Miller:** (27:26) And before we leave the missions emphasis there, tell us a little about the curriculum you developed for world mission churches?

**Kroll:** (27:37) Oh OK, we have developed what we call Leading the World Missions Church seminar and I speak on that several times a year where I will go into pastors conferences and speak on leading or pastoring a world missions church and that basically came out of the development of our strategy at Heritage which really transformed our church and turned the church around and some of the things that we do are a little different than the typical independent faith missions church would do, especially our emphasis on the two calls, the call to go and the call to send and then significant support versus token support and significant involvement and the whole idea that the church is the sending agency rather than a denomination or a mission agency or individuals and I shared that, in fact, last week, I was in North Carolina at a local church missions conference and they had pastors come in for a day and we shared some of that strategy with them. And we have seen churches, I have sat with pastors and said that if they would simply adopt half a dozen of the eight or nine principles I will share with you, you could double your missions giving and your missions involvement and what's neat is to and just so thankful, pastors will email me and share that their program has just been completely revolutionized and doubled, they will say "What you said was really true, I didn't think it could happen but God has used those principles to help us reach far more people.

**Miller:** (29:07) So that at Heritage, for instance, instead of having eighty missionaries at fifty dollars a month, you substantially support fewer missionaries so that you really can be involved, have sending teams and all, talk about that and tell us what the missions budget is at Heritage?

**Kroll:** (29:22) OK, well our missions budget is just over a million dollars a year and we have 50, 51, 52 missionaries that we support. Half of those are out of our church and our kind of basic strategy we look at, very significant support for those out of our church, so many of those are around 50 percent of their support, and we build a model of sending church would take on 50 percent of the support and five others churches in the geographic region were to take on ten

percent so the missionary could get to the field quickly and could have a far different ministry when they come home on their furlough and then with that, we also take on those who, we partner with another church to help them send theirs, which we call a supported missionary, those are taken on usually ten to twenty percent support, so we are talking about support levels of a thousand, two thousand, three thousand a month for a missionary.

**Miller:** (30:22) And one thing, I am a member of Heritage so pastor Kroll is my pastor and one thing that I was impressed with, other churches that I had been in the past really struggled to have a goal of ten percent of the church budget going to missions.

**Kroll:** (30:35) Oh yes. Yes.

**Miller:** (30:36) So when I came to Heritage that was just very impressive to me. It is about one third of the overall budget.

**Kroll:** (30:41) Yes, correct, correct. Yes.

**Miller:** (30:42) Very missions oriented.

**Kroll:** (30:44) And the whole thing goes together to make that possible so our moldable services and everything we else have in our strategy puts all that together.

**Hall:** (30:52) Let's shift gears just a little bit. Dr. Falwell was the leader of the Baptist Fundamentalism I guess you might say; there was this convention in 84 in Washington...

**Kroll:** (31:01) Yes, correct.

**Hall:** (31:03) Where you a part of that?

**Kroll:** (31:04) Yes that was called Baptist Fundamentalism 84 and we took the entire student body. Dr. Falwell cancelled classes here, took the entire student body to Washington D. C. and there were independent Baptists churches that came to Washington from all around the country and joined them, I don't know the exact numbers but there were thousands of people who joined for that, a very large arena there, President Reagan addressed the congress then, there were several other speakers who gave challenging messages and that was particularly geared to the needs of America, the crisis of America and how to save America,

**Miller:** (31:46) So it was right in the middle of the Reagan era there.

**Kroll:** (31:49) Yes.

**Miller:** (31:51) Early 1980's.

**Kroll:** (31:51) Correct

**Miller:** (31:53) In 1984, now one thing about that, as I read the history of that is that some of the people who were there would have been people like Jack Hyles and some of the more the *Sword of the Lord* type Baptists, it seemed as though in later years, Dr. Falwell moved from more of that independent Baptist fundamentalism circles, the Tennessee Temple's and that to more of the Conservative Evangelical circles. Could you talk about that for just a moment?

**Kroll:** (32:23) OK. Yes, in fact when I first came to Liberty, it was interesting, he would even make comments about how fundamentalist Baptist our school was, and then I saw a broadening in him over the next several years reaching out to others, I remember the first time Francis Schaeffer came here to speak and it was kind of like, Francis who? You know for him. *[laughter]* Then and for some of us who knew who Francis Schaeffer was, and as also the faculty broadened here, many of us came from, I came from a more evangelical background, than a, although I am an independent Baptist other than a fundamentalist background and a number of the faculty were that way and I think that helped broaden him and the neat thing that I saw, even as a pastor in New England, was looking to someone who would have a strong conservative stand and yet not be narrow minded and anti everything which tended to be the tendency of some of our independent Baptist circles but a loving spirit but God had just gifted him with the ability to take an enemy and in a few minutes, turn that enemy around to be his friend, and I will watch that happen. I remember when Senator Kennedy was here to speak, I mean you are having Ted Kennedy speak at Liberty University, it was an amazing thing, but Dr. Falwell had this ability to be complimentary without just being flattering to people.

**Miller:** (34:08) And so he seemed truly friendly to the person...

**Kroll:** (34:11) Oh yeah.

**Miller:** (34:13) Your personal interest in them.

**Kroll:** (34:13) And what he did, he, there was a new segment of evangelicals at that time who didn't want to go toward the left wing of evangelical circles but also didn't want to kind of become the real right wing, negative, anti everyone, secondary separationist type thing, but who wanted to stand with biblical separation from liberalism, there were evangelical circles who were compromising that, on that side, and then on the other side, there was the real reaction to it by real rightwing fundamentalists and that segment in the middle between those two groups, he was really the leader of that segment and almost founded that.

**Hall:** (34:55) How did that effect his relationship with those who are on the extreme ends, as you might say?

**Kroll:** (35:00) Well, eventually those on the extremes, moved away and as a result during those days we used to get a lot of criticism, particularly from the extreme right and to this day.

**Miller:** (35:12) So the Bob Jones University's and some of the ones on the right hand side and also the liberals on the left, I imagine in that time, in the southern Baptist convention there was a errantists and a in-errantists.

**Kroll:** (35:26) And those were big battles in the Southern Baptist Convention, in fact I used to say, my personal opinion was that the Southern Baptists were like 50 years behind the Northern Baptists, which went really quite liberal and it really has amazed me to see the conservatives and the Southern Baptists turn that denomination around.

**Miller:** (35:47) So now Thomas Road actually is a part of the Conservative Southern Baptists of Virginia, how come Heritage has never participated with that?

**Kroll:** (35:56) We have just been a independent church and you know, not that we are a opposed to it or whatever there have just been an independent church and have just stayed with that.

**Hall:** (36:08) Is there any particular thing or time, or do you think there is a shift in Dr. Falwell's feeling about of what you might say, the extreme right?

**Miller:** (36:21) The fundamentalism v. the evangelicalism?

**Kroll:** (36:25) When that was may have changed his thinking in my days I saw that happening over a period of years, as you, as he would invite different ones in, as his circles changed a little

over those, you know, over those years and so I saw that moving from, really having, at one time he was in those circles, you know, the right wing fundamentalist circle and then part of that was they abandoning him, they sort of left him rather than him leaving them and as he would sort reach out to others, those were the really extreme separatists and then they would influence others and then they would start criticizing, and the real extreme ones would begin to move away.

**Miller:** (37:18) And yet there were some I remember, I came to Liberty in 2004 and was at one of the pastors conferences and he spoke very admiringly of Dr. John R. Rice for instance.

**Kroll:** (37:27) Oh, oh yes.

**Miller:** (37:28) That John R. Rice never really left although he was probably, certainly at the end more conservative in who he associated with. Dr. Falwell would have been but Dr. Rice never really broke from Jerry Falwell and Dr. Falwell remained loyal and a friend to John R. Rice.

**Kroll:** (37:47) Yes exactly, and I mean even some of the well known fundamentalists of the day where his members, Dr. Lakin and Dr. John Rowlings when he was here, after he retired he came here and served here and it was sort of those who became really quite separatistic that abandoned and moved on away.

**Hall:** (38:13) Well we are talking about somewhat theological issues here. There was a question, at least a dispute in the seminary with Dr. Hughes when he was dean. Could you describe what that was all about?

**Kroll:** (38:25) OK, there are, there was a somewhat of a battle between Arminianism and Calvinism that came during those days and Dr. Hughes was very leaning toward the Armenian side and it was interesting, and my brother at that point, was the chairman of the School of Religion and he and Dr. Hindson were very strongly Calvinistic on the opposite side and, when I say Calvinistic they weren't to the point of ultra-Calvinists, or hyper-Calvinists I should say at all, but we sometimes said, Dr. Hughes might have been a one in a half point, *[laughter]* Calvinist there, we think of a five point Calvinism. But he was, he was very strongly leaning that direction and it just was sort of all of a sudden he came up and resigned and did an interview on the local T. V. stations as to why he resigned and his reason for resigning is the school was going

Calvinistic, we that really is not true, it was not true at all, I think it was more his, he was a dear man, I looked up to Dr. Hughes, when we did the Liberty Commentary, he did the reading of, I did Jeremiah and Lamentations and he did my reading on Lamentations and complimented me highly on what we did there. He was a very gentle man and a very Godly man but his theology had moved more to the Armenian side and as a result, he left the school.

**Miller:** (40:09) Now before we leave that point, it seems as though today if you had to pick between Calvinism and Arminianism, they would be more Calvinistic than Armenian but they really don't believe in unconditional election, so they are kind of four point Calvinists is how I would describe it, is that your position as well.

**Kroll:** (40:28) Sure, that is the typical position among most Baptists, in fact I would say it, it is an antinomy, it is two truths that are exactly opposites of one another, when you boil down ultimately it is the sovereignty of God v. free will of man and I said they are like two railroad ties and when you are walking down the railroad track, rails I should say, and when the two rails come together in the distance, but the farther you walk they will go on either side of you and if someone one time said, when you get to heaven the outside of the gate of heaven says "Whosoever may come." And when you walk through and look at the back it says "Ye have I chosen." And so I say, God will handle his side, we don't have to worry about that, ours is the responsibility to share the gospel with people everywhere.

**Hall:** (41:18) You mentioned the Liberty Bible Commentary, when did all that get started and who participated in the writing?

**Kroll:** (41:25) OK, well Dr. Falwell had charged the faculty to put together the commentary, though I don't know the exact year it would have been back about 79 or 80 that we did the commentary and each of the faculty had different books we did it on it, and then it was all put together, it originally came out as two volumes and it was put together in a single volume set, it had a great impact, I mean, I have met pastors everywhere that have used that, Sunday school teachers because of Liberty in those days and the appeal then to the center of the evangelical fundamental spectrum, that commentary had a great impact.

**Hall:** (42:10) So it was written from the middle road?

**Kroll:** (42:16) Right, right, right, right.

**Hall:** (42:17) Is it still in print?

**Kroll:** (42:18) Yes, well I don't know if you can still get it or not, I know that there are hobbies still available, whether there are a lot of them available I don't know about that.

**Miller:** (42:30) And so you do, wrote, everybody takes a few chapters and one read his work? How did that work?

**Kroll:** (42:35) Actually my brother Wood and Ed Hindson were the editors of the commentary and they assigned then various books to various faculty members and then we each took those, we did that and then, a lot of that and from sort of an ulterior motive for it too is the commentary was used and sold widely and helped fund the school in those early days as well too.

**Miller:** (43:06) Well here in Lynchburg, it is kind of a city of Churches and I have heard the statistic, as a result of Jerry Falwell, Thomas Road, The Liberty Ministry, over 60 churches in the immediate surrounding area have been formed, there was a time here in Lynchburg, and that was before you were here we were talking with Dr. Moon on another program that there weren't as many evangelical Baptist churches were the gospel was preached, but talk to us a little bit about the church scene here in Lynchburg and how that has changed over the years since you have arrived.

**Kroll:** (43:43) It is interesting, in the early days, Dr. Falwell would talk about, he would say, we have helped start, I don't remember the exact number but, it was a lot less than that, but it would say that we started so many churches here in Lynchburg, some of them not on purpose [*laughter*] and this is a church town, and a lot of good churches in this town. Comparing here to my experience in pastoring in New England, there is a lot more movement around from one church to another, definitely called church hopping; people do have a tendency of bouncing around one church to another and I think that is because there are so many good churches, I don't know how many actually have been started, Heritage was not started by people from Thomas Road, it's the connection with Thomas Road and Liberty was that there was a group of people that started a church here, actually a small handful of people would come out of a southern Baptist church in town and they were meeting as a Bible study and hey contacted Dr. Hughes and Dr. Hughes

came and met with them and helped them organize the church and convince them that they ought to be an independent church rather than a Southern Baptist Church and that is how it actually came about and then one of the seminary students, at that time, [Rodney Kidd] came and served the first five years as the pastor of the church and he knew he was going to Germany as a missionary, had been a translator in the military and he knew God had called him, and he said, I will give five years, but then he said, I need some experience in the local church here, but God wants me to go to Germany and so that is how it came about there.

**Miller:** (45:25) And so is there much cooperation between Heritage and Thomas Road and the other churches here, do they cooperate on certain things like the Liberty Godparent Home and that?

**Kroll:** (45:40) Yes, and like we have one of our local partners is the Liberty Godparent Home and we assist in that and we have a number of people at Heritage who volunteer in that as well and I would say, there is not a lot of organized cooperation among the churches here in Lynchburg but, in New England for example, we had a fellowship of pastors, that has never seemed to click real well here, pastors have come together more for project things, we have come together for evangelistic meetings, we have come together for other things, we have come together for the kind of March for Life things, we've done here and other things like that, we have come together for specific purposes rather than having a juts a regular pastors fellowship.

**Hall:** (46:27) So they are actually a pastors association in Lynchburg?

**Kroll:** (46:31) No, not in particular here, now there is Association for the Conservative Baptist Pastors in the state and there is a state independent Baptist kind of association called kind of the Virginia Assembly of Independent Baptists and they meet basically once a year and they pass policy resolutions that relate to legislation that will come for the Virginia Legislature and the president of the organization is a lobbyist who meets with our senators and delegates and says "I have X number of independent churches here in Virginia and we have voted in our annual meeting for this resolution." And then attempting to persuade our delegates to vote the way the churches have.

**Miller:** (47:21) So that group is mainly for political interest, you don't get together and have common youth rallies or anything like that?

**Kroll:** (47:26) No right that is basically for one purpose and that is to have a political impact in the state.

**Miller:** (47:32) Now when you first came were all of the faculty required to go to Thomas Road?

**Kroll:** (47:36) Yes, that's true, everyone had to go to Thomas Road, the students and faculty alike, so all were members there and I remember I broke the mold for that because, now you could serve in another church if you were there, so we had some of our faculty, especially our seminary faculty who would fill in as interim pastors in churches locally but a person could not just go to another local church and just be a member there and serve as a volunteer, you had to be there in some official capacity at a church and I was, I had filled in, in a couple of three different churches here locally, as I taught at Liberty and then I, I was filling in at Heritage and I was there about six months as the interim pastor and Dr. Ron Hawkins, he and I were the co-interim pastors for the six months of the church and to make a long story short, the church asked if I would be willing to stay on, first if I would come full time and I didn't see that God wanted me to be a full time pastor then and I felt that I had a mission in my teaching, but I have as a pastor at heart and teaching pastoral ministry, and so they asked would I be willing to stay on part time, the church was quite small in those days and I said "Well, three things really have to happen if that were to be the case, number one, I would want all the deacons to be completely behind that, so I asked them to pray for two weeks and if they had any doubts I put an anonymous survey vote out to them and the vote was a hundred percent that I should, that we should proceed with me coming as the part time pastor, then secondly I said "Dr. Falwell would have to agree to this" Because I said, "My heart is to train students, pastors majors." And I really was coming to the church to provide some internship for the students so I, so I had more of a Liberty ulterior motive than going to Heritage those days because I saw the need, those were the days of the moral majority and Dr. Falwell was flying here, there and everywhere and students to be able to get to him, it would have been impossible to sit in a deacons meeting at Thomas Road and, they would never have had that opportunity, so I was looking to that as Heritage and so I shared with him that and I said, "I would only go if I had your blessing to do it and I see that this is an opportunity of helping to train our pastors majors here at Liberty." Well he gave me his blessing and the third thing was that the church would overwhelmingly vote for me to come and that is how it happened and I continued to be a professor here for about nine more years, it was during

that time that we got accreditation and were seeking accreditation and of course one of the criticisms was “Well they require all faculty to go to Thomas Road” and I was usually the one he used as the illustration but we don’t require all the faculty to go, from that they changed the policy to open it up and allow faculty to go and become...

Miller: (50:43) So did that create a floodgate of people coming or was it more of a gradual thing?

Kroll: (50:47) It was more of a gradual thing, yeah I don’t think a lot of people left immediately to go, I think it was over the years was a, was a gradual thing, I know when I went to Heritage, I was teaching a class at Thomas Road at that time and I told the class, I said “I am going to be going here and of course I will be leaving the class because I am going there.” I said “I don’t want to see any of you, don’t come just because I have been your teacher here, you need.” I had none, no one did, so, so I think it was sort of a gradual thing over the years, more faculty had moved to others and I think it has ultimately been a good thing, Liberty has had enormous impact into the area churches, and you know? We don’t try to get anybody to come, or even students to come, but those who do come, we say, we want to have an impact in their lives and so I think that the other churches in the area have an opportunity of having an impact in students lives and I think Liberty in general has had a great impact, I think all of the churches in town need to be indebted to Liberty for their growth, none of the churches here would have all the growth they would have if it had not been for the opening up of that students coming, becoming a part of it, faculty coming and serving, we have several, like Randy in our church who are just wonderful faculty, I mean faculty members or staff here that serve faithfully in a local church and are an enormous asset to a local church, when it think of the things we are able to offer for Wednesday night electives, we would not be able to offer those electives if we didn’t have those enormous resource and not even those at Heritage, but also others that we will bring in from Liberty and have teach, you know they volunteer teach, we don’t pay them anything for doing it, but they also have an opportunity of then ministering that way as well and I think that has been beneficial for the faculty, because when I first came here, I mean there were no opportunities for faculty to preach anywhere, there is still very limited. The demand is very small and the supply is very great here but this provides opportunity in other local churches for people to be able to use their gifts and their talents, but they might not have had an opportunity otherwise.

Miller: (53:12) Well let's shift then to the seminary and a little bit about the history of the seminary and how it progressed from when you first started, it seems as though at first it was almost kind of a school of the profits kind of thing with Dr. Falwell, OK, catch his vision and Dr. Towns was very heavily involved in that, there are some seminaries that are very academic, they are teaching seminarians to go teach other seminarians and that. Did you always, have you sensed a difference in the years in the ministry versus the academic aspect, just talk a little about the difference over the years or maybe there hasn't been as much as a difference as I am perceiving?

Kroll: (53:57) Yeah, alright, I don't know it here is really that much difference, I think in the earlier days, there was a greater emphasis on the practical aspect of it because as you say it was, the school began as, from a visionary and a vision of capturing a world for Christ and what could we do to do that and planting churches was another major emphasis and the early days, one of the key thing was planting churches, if you can't plant a church then go accept a pastoral call to a church, but it was kind of like the church planting was the key thing, it was set before the students, both in the college as well as in the seminary, now I believe that the academic aspect grew over the years as well and as the school grew and as the faculty grew and more people came in with academic degrees, it just naturally grew that way.

**Hall:** (54:57) There has been a couple of name changes in the seminary.

**Kroll:** (55:01) Yes.

**Hall:** (55:02) What do you see as the significance of that?

**Kroll:** (55:03) Well, all of that happened since I left there so I don't have any inside information on that, I personally am glad to see I think the last thing is back to Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and I am glad to see that because I believe that we have some distinctive Baptist distinctives that need to be adhered to, so I am, personally happy to see it back to that.

**Hall:** (55:30) Do you know why they dropped the Baptist?

**Kroll:** (55:33) I don't know on my own it would be a guess that would simply be to broaden the school and to reach out more...

**Miller:** (55:40) I think they wanted to have a little good thing because there are schools out there that have this broad appeal, but there are few that have a Baptist distinctive, with the distinctives of Liberty, that has this, you know this spirit of reaching a world, a more open spirit as opposed to really right wing separatists' spirit.

**Miller:** (56:16) Now, we have already talked a little about computers and you said that you weren't a particular computer whiz, but one thing I notice there at Heritage, if you could just talk about for a second, is technology and ministry, and so back in the day, I am sure you used overhead projectors with transparencies on it, talk a little how technology has changed how you do ministry both in the classroom and now in your local church.

**Kroll:** (56:45) OK, well yes, I began using an overhead projector as part of preaching even, not just a teaching tool but preaching and I would have someone rear project of an overheard transparency while I was preaching and they would move it down the thing point by point, and you look back now, it is kind of amusing and I think of the times that the cover sheet fell off and, you know or the transparency blew away, we used to project it out of the baptistery on to a screen there and then we were the first to use power point here in this area, I had heard about graphic computer presentations and the only church that I knew of that did it was the chapel in Akron, Ohio and that was before Windows came out with power point, it was just coming out that time and they were using an Apple computer to project theirs and I went to the chapel in Akron to see what they were doing, to visit them and particularly came back and we began to use that there in the first the first generation of power point and that Microsoft came out and we have just grown and we have the internet and we have a very active and I think one of the nicest local church internet sites around and just basically everything is time for that, I use power point to preach from on a regular basis, we use it in teaching, now what is interesting is that Tony Mitchell, our children's pastor was telling me that now after, a decade or two of power point some of the kids are loving flannel graph again [*laughter*] because it is a change, they don't know, because the ones today haven't seen flannel graph before so he will bring that in and they will think it's a new innovation and [*laughing*] to do that and so it is interesting to be able to use a wide variety of technology that we have today and of course just all the various things we are able to do with it.

**Miller:** (58:58) It has only been recently that streaming the messages on the video.

**Kroll:** (59:01) Yes, right, exactly. Right we stream those, all the servers are streamed on the web and what is interesting is we have last Sunday, or last week I was speaking to this church in North Carolina and Sunday a man came up to me and said, I really like your message on “Even a Caveman Can do it” and the one on “I Love Lucy”, that is what I had the previous week because I am doing a bible and evolution series right now and he had watched them on the video then and so God has given us some amazing tools, we have an exchange student who came here from Germany last year, went back to Germany and was really saddened when she had to leave Heritage because she knew she would not have a church like that back in her area in Germany and she watches every Sunday, she goes to church, but she doesn’t really have an active church there, but she watches every Sunday, the streaming video.

**Hall:** (59:59) Now were you here in the eighties during the accreditation?

**Kroll:** (1:00:03) Yes.

**Hall:** (1:00:05) Did you have any part in the reports or?

**Kroll:** (1:00:07) I was a part of the teams that did, that I did not myself personally write into their reports but it was some of the committees going on in the School of Religion.

**Miller:** (1:00:18) And just this week now the seminary is working with SACS as far as having their new Ph. D. program, they have had a Ph. D. for sometime in the counseling department but now they are getting their Ph. D. in theology and apologetics that is being approved, now with the whole era, more than just the seminary that you were involved in and the bible college, as far as the whole move towards accreditation and some of the requirements that were imposed on the school, do you remember anything about that controversy in those days.

**Kroll:** (1:00:56) I was trying to think what the particular requirements were.

**Miller:** (1:00:59) Wasn’t it something that they renamed chapel the convocation. I think there were some things as far as requiring salvation testimonies and that?

**Kroll:** (1:01:08) Up until that point when it became accredited, no longer, I mean once it became accredited, forced students to go to church, because previously they were all going to Thomas Road, but they couldn’t force them to go to any church, it was totally a free will type thing, then

secondly the chapel services, the names had all to be changed to convocations and do that. Christian Service had to be changed I think to community service in that process of doing that, those were controversial things at the time because everyone was saying, even though they were nomenclature changes, the question was, would the nomenclature really change the heart of the ministry then and would we lose that heart of preparing people to change the world and just become another academic institution.

**Miller:** (1:02:02) So you were here a few years after that happened, did you sense any of that loss?

**Kroll:** (1:02:07) Not in the years that I was here, after it, I don't think that there was any, it seemed to me, any sense in the loss, change of names.

**Miller:** (1:02:15) It was just to accommodate for the process.

**Hall:** (1:02:20) Ok, during 1985 I believe it was, there was a big flood on the James River, and...

**Kroll:** (1:02:26) Oh yes, yes.

**Hall:** (1:02:27) Treasure Island got flooded, what are your memories of that?

**Kroll:** (1:02:31) My, what comes to my mind is the seeing on the local channel 13 the chapel floating down the river and you know, that is the first impression I have of Treasure Island and the great flood there and now prior to that, students were on the Island, in fact when the school first started, Gordon Luff, who was the youth pastor at Thomas Road, took the teenagers of Thomas Road, they went down to Treasure Island and turned the summer cabins into boys dormitories there and did that all in that summer, so treasure island became the first dormitories for the school and that is in the days when all the classes were held in Thomas Road then, of course later on things moved here to the mountain here to the mountain when I came and of course the dormitories where on the mountain and also downtown on sixth street was it? There in downtown, we had what we call, the hotel, it was a big, old hotel down town and Treasure Island then went back to becoming a summer youth camp, although I think the sports teams and so forth still practiced down in Treasure Island as well too in those early days. But yeah, I remember seeing it and that was a horrendous flood that year and just the picture I have still in my mind is

watching the roof of the chapel floating down the river, that is all you can see, just this big roof of the chapel.

**Miller:** (1:04:01) Well we have been talking for around an hour now, so let's kind of wrap things up a little bit, as you look back and think, how would you interpret and what would you think is Dr. Falwell's vision for his ministry and University and as you knew the man, tell us a little about what you felt was his heartbeat, his passion?

**Kroll:** OK, well I think his, his main heartbeat and passion was to reach a world for Christ and to train, as he often talks about, champions for Christ, and his desire was that we would really have champions. I believe that vision, the vision I think at first started with building champions for the local church and then broadened to champions in every field of endeavor, and that's, as his vision broadened that way then Liberty broadened not just to be a bible institute but a bible college at that point.

**Hall:** (1:04:58) What are some of the things you feel the greatest contribution you made to that goal that Dr. Falwell had.

**Kroll:** (1:05:06) OK, I would say for me the greatest contribution I had for that was the involvement in training pastors and that was my heartbeat and passion, and to assist in one phase of his heartbeat and passion and my being able to assist in doing that, plus all the other faculty in the School of Religion and the seminary but then what I did to when I was here, I was involved in the practical training of pastors, we had one called the pastoral training program and it was, we did retreats with the pastors majors, we had a whole team of basically like interns that we used in that training program, some of those guys, for example Jeff Scott was one of those who worked for me in the pastoral training program as a student here at Liberty and now is one of our pastors at Heritage, one of the pastors on our staff there at Heritage.

**Miller:** (1:06:01) Do you still have some of your former students who contact you if they are considering a pastoral change if they are, want some advice in the ministry?

**Kroll:** (1:06:10) Yes, oh yes. It is interesting, I have different students who will call me at different times, in fact an interesting thing, I just had an email from a student asking advice yesterday, from one, one of the students, oh twenty years ago.

**Miller:** (1:06:30) When you think back, what is the most unusual, if it a thing or an event, what just really sticks out in your memory, something strange or unusual.

**Kroll:** (1:06:39) Strange or unusual, wow that is kind of difficult to narrow down to one particular thing, I was trying to think in terms of what would be the most strange. I guess to me, one of the most unusual, one of the most impacting things that I saw out of Dr. Falwell, now I had been a pastor for ten years before I came here and I remember going to Thomas Road on a Wednesday night and the students had left, they had gone then, it was kind of a bad night, weather wise and it was a real small crowd there for the service that night and I know how pastors are, that really discourages most pastors and I am sitting there and I am kind of excited with the fact that the crowd was really that small and I was thinking “What’s he going to do?” You know? He comes out and sees this small crowd here at night and he had such a positive of attitude, he came out, I remember his comment was “Well you don’t have to fight to find a seat tonight, do you?” [*laughter*] and he took what typically would have been a negative thing for most pastors and turned it around to be a very positive thing.

**Miller:** (1:07:47) I remember one time he came into a faculty meeting and somebody was complaining about the weather “Oh, don’t you just hate this weather?” And he said well the farmers don’t [*laughter*]

**Kroll:** (1:7:58) And kind of one of the unique things he used to always do, he would, he would, of course, he is a practical jokester and would do all kinds of practical jokes and but he would constantly come up to scare somebody, hit them on the shoulder with his Bible, do things like that and say “Hey how are ya?” [*laughter*]

**Hall:** (1:08:12) What was your favorite memory of Dr. Falwell?

**Kroll:** (1:08:15) Favorite memory of Dr. Falwell, of him, I think probably my favorite memory was the day I met with him to ask about doing pastoral training with students at Heritage and I was with him in his, what he called a truck, but kind of like a suburban and just to watch him as he shared that with me and that heartbeat to do that, because that was a personal thing, it just was he and I together at that time.

**Miller:** (1:08:45) Were you close with him as friend or just a faculty member with a relationship there?

**Kroll:** (1:08:50) OK, I would have been a little closer than a faculty member, but not, I wouldn't have considered myself one his number one best friends. I was close to him in the sense that I directed the pastoral training ministry and that was close to his heart so I would be, and as a result I was considered sort of, one of the staff of Thomas Road then as well, now I wasn't paid, I was there, so I would meet, he would have me on the platform, I would serve for the eight o'clock service, then on somewhat of a regular basis so I would meet with him prior to the service and got to have that relationship with him, and because pastoral training was on his heart I would have a little more than that, although I didn't have his direct ear, you know, I would have never thought of just calling him up, as let's say, Dr. Towns would, you know, and call him up personally.

**Hall:** (1:09:42) What is your favorite quote, Falwell quote?

**Kroll:** (1:09:45) Oh, favorite quote, "Don't quit." He always, every fall he would have a sermon, those of us who had been on the faculty for a number for a number could almost repeat it again and preach it for him, but he, he always had a message on "don't quit" and you know God used him to keep a lot of guys who were on the verge of quitting to keep them from quitting.

**Miller:** (1:10:11) Now but pastoral training, that just triggered a thought in my mind here, when you were in charge of this pastoral ministry training, did that happen mainly in the classroom form Monday to Friday or were they going out to churches on the weekends, what was the organization of the program?

**Kroll:** (1:10:27) It was an extra-curricular thing, right it was not the, it was separate from the classroom and we had students we would lined up to go out doing ministry in local churches, teams that would go out into churches sometimes take a group of the pastors out and visit and interview some of our graduates who were doing, [David Rhodenheiser], I remember going to his church and visiting him and we would spend some time with him and the guys would be in that church on Sunday, we would get involved with helping with Sunday school, teaching Sunday school classes and things like that and it was to provide experience for the pastoral majors. We also had retreats, where we, particularly in the fall where we would have a retreat

and we would take them out to a place like, well I remember going to Holy Land USA and it was pretty roughing it with the guys, but it was a time of getting them together and building some esprit de corps with them and then it was, kind of practical ministry and we would have faculty that had been involved as pastors and as practical ministry, just kind of come and share their heart and various aspects of ministry.

**Miller:** (1:11:37) How far is the farthest church that some of our students would serve in that they would drive eighty miles, a hundred miles, more on weekends, do you recall that at all?

**Kroll:** (1:11:47) I don't remember exactly what would have been the furthest, there were some students that might have driven a good hundred miles or more to minister.

**Miller:** (1:11:56) So in your opinion, what was the greatest contribution of Dr. Falwell to the spread of the gospel, both locally, in the nation, the culture in the United States?

**Kroll:** (1:12:08) I would see him and saw him as a prophet to the nation. I really think that was the greatest role God gave him; it was really as a prophet to the nation. He had an unusual ability to think on his feet and interact with people who would be very critical, you know, news commentators and others like that, and so he really could be the spokesperson, the spokesperson for evangelical and fundamental Christianity in the market place and I really think that is the greatest contribution he has made, you know, and we think in terms of Liberty and all that is here at Liberty today, yet personally I think beyond all of that was his ability to basically address a nation.

**Miller:** (1:13:00) And I remember seeing him on a program like Donahugh or Larry King or something like that and now where there ever any repercussions back here in Lynchburg? Were there picketers, protestors?

**Kroll:** (1:13:10) Yes, we had that at times, sometimes there would be the protestors who had come and picket that and sometimes there would even be a little disgruntledness on local people as well too there and he used to always say, in Lynchburg, if you told people you were a member of Thomas Road either pucker up or duck, one or the other [*laughter*] they were ready to give you a kiss or poke you in the nose.

**Hall:** (1:13:34) OK, in conclusion, what do you foresee in the future of Liberty University and Falwell ministries in general?

**Kroll:** (1:13:40) Well you know of course I see a great future for Liberty, I think that what Dr. Falwell did in passing the school over to Jerry Jr. and the church to Jonathan was an extremely wise decision on his part and for those of us who taught back in those early days, we remember those kids as the ones who ran around getting in trouble all of the time and to see how they have matured and how God has used both of them, I personally see some great maturity in both of them and their abilities to lead both aspects of the ministry to greater things in the future.

**Miller:** (1:14:26) Well thank you so much for spending this time together, the time had just really flown...

**Kroll:** (1:14:30) You're welcome.

**Miller:** (1:14:30) With that we will conclude today's interview with Dr. Jerry Kroll. This interview has been conducted as part of the Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives.

*[End of Interview]*