

Oral History Interview with Duke Westover

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Location: Recording Studio of the Student Radio Station, 90.9 The Light

Interviewee: Duke Westover

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

Transcriber: Joannah Johnson

Interview Length: 02:00:05

Notes:

Miller: (0:00) Welcome to this interview in the oral history project of the Liberty University Archives. This interview is being conducted on August 3, 2009. Today we are interviewing Duke Westover. My name is Randy Miller; I will be conducting the interview today along with Dr. Cline Hall.

Hall: (0:18) Well good morning.

Miller: (0:20) And greetings to Duke Westover.

Westover: (0:22) Thank you for inviting me, I'm honored.

Miller: (0:24) Well as we begin today why don't you tell us just a little about yourself personally. When you were born, where you were born and a little bit about your family history.

Westover: (0:34) Well it's a, it's kind of a, it's kind of a convoluted family history but I will try to give it to you in as short of time as all. I was born the fourteenth day of January, 1936. If you do your calculations right, that makes me 73 years old to date. Now I was born in Houston, Texas, my mother had just turned 17 whenever I was born, my father was 19. They had a very, very stormy relationship and they were always involved in a lot of things: drinking, infidelity, lying, so on and so forth. So it was very stormy. One of the earliest real vivid recollections that I have is standing in a court room, I had just turned six years old, standing looking up at a judge and a great big desk and him saying "Son, your mother and daddy don't want to live together

anymore, and I know you're an only child and we've solved all the problems. I've given them what we call a divorce. The only issue that has not been settled is who you are going to live with and in all of the divorce cases that I have ever done, somebody has petitioned to me for custody of the child, neither one of your parents have done that, so they have left the decision up to me who you should live with, and I don't know them very well, don't know you at all, but you look like a big boy, so I am going to let you make that decision. So if you want to live with your mother you walk over there to her and if you want to live with your father you walk over there to him." Well I was smarter than the average six year old, I didn't do either. I sat down in the middle of the floor and wept, and so finally he said "Ok, tell you what I am going to do, I am going to give you to your grandmother, your father's mother and so she's going to have, she's going to have the custody of you." So I went home with her. She loved me without a doubt and I was an only child and my father, my father got married again immediately and got a divorce from her in less than a year and the actual custody of me was still up in the air. My father's lawyer and my mother's lawyer, they got together every now and then and finally one of them said "Hey, this case is driving us both crazy, neither one of us is making any money out of it and the only people who can solve our problem are the mother and father, so let's make sure that they decide amongst themselves who the kid's going to live with." So the two lawyers tricked my mother and daddy into meeting and they locked them in an office and said "Ya'll work this out because we are sick of it and you are the only ones who can solve it." So they were in there for about four hours and finally knocked on the door and said "We are ready to come out now." And they said "Good, have you made a decision?" and they said "We have." He says "Great, what is it?" they said, "We decided to get married again." So they got married again, by now I was about eight, that solved a little bit of the problem, the problem of who I was going to live with, but it didn't solve the overall problem because they still didn't like each other and in the next five years, they filed for divorce twice, they were separated innumerable times. Many times my mother would disappear for months at a time. They still drank a lot – they were not called alcoholics then but I don't think the word had been coined yet, they were just drunks, you know. But anyway, my dad was in business for himself, in the sheet metal business and business started going fairly well, things settled down a little bit, but they, not much. And when I was thirteen we had just moved in a new home and there was some people living next door to us by the name of Mr. and Mrs. [Pavlok], they were nice people and they were Christians, and they were absolutely

the worst kind of Christians you can have living next door to you. They were witnessing Christians, every time we would see them they would invite us to church, “Man we’ve got the greatest church, the preaching is wonderful, the music is great, we’ve got a lot of young people. Duke would enjoy it so Duke, let me tell you something, they’ve got some good looking girls over there too.” And I was a healthy hormoned thirteen year old boy, you know and so this attracted me a little bit, but we really had no intentions of ever going to church with them. One Sunday, right after I had turned fourteen, one Sunday afternoon, my father was reading the newspaper and saw a movie there that he wanted to see so he and my mother got in the car to drive across town Sunday afternoon, late Sunday afternoon. And the movie was forty-five minutes from starting and so they decided that they would wait for forty five minutes now to go in there, they looked around and there was a drugstore a couple of blocks away that they could see that had a soda fountain so they said, “Why don’t we go down there and get us some malt while we are waiting?” And so ok, and so they go down there, the drugstore was in the middle of the block, next to the drugstore was a church and there was no parking places in front of the drugstore, nor the church, they had to park on the other side of the church to go back to the drugstore and as they were walking back in front of the church, my dad stopped and looked up at the sign and said “Berean Baptist Church, isn’t that that where the Pavlok’s go to church?” And before my mother could answer a lady walked up behind them, put her arm around both of them and said “It sure is and we are glad to have ya’ll tonight.” And walked them right into church just as the evening service was starting, they were trapped. So they had to go, but they enjoyed it, they enjoyed it so they looked around and the people were nice to them, I mean they were welcomed and they were loved on so they came back the next Sunday morning and Sunday night I came back with them and sure enough, a lot of young people around and sure enough some good looking girls, like I say, I was healthy hormoned at the time, and then when the choir came in, I looked up on the top row of the choir, the second from the end there was a dark haired green eyed girl, that had a smile that would melt the chrome off of a forty-nine Cadillac. And I leaned over to my mother and I said, “Who is that?” She said, “I don’t know her name but this morning after services in the lobby I saw a man giving her some money and that man is sitting right in front of you, that’s her daddy right in front you.” So I was all so shy at fourteen, I tapped him on the shoulder, I said, “Sir, what’s your daughter’s name?” He said “Carlene.” So I looked at her again and I tapped him again and said “ Carlene what?” he is the only person I have ever met that

could sit and not rotate his shoulders and turn his head all the way around a look at you in the eye. He said, "Wilson." So after church I met Carlene Wilson, two nights later was church wide visitation, and the Wilson family got our families card and came to visit us. And she's an only child and I'm an only child, and that night our parents met for the very first time and instantly became best friends, and so from that moment on it was just understood that Carlene and I were going to grow up and get married. I was fourteen and she was thirteen and sure enough we did, and this year we are celebrating our fifty-fifth wedding anniversary so it worked out pretty good. Now my mother got saved fairly soon thereafter, my father didn't get saved for quite a while. Now I finally had a family that I could spiritually grasp and take hold of. Unfortunately it wasn't the one that I was born in, Carlene's mother and daddy were the finest Christians that I ever met, her daddy was the poster boy for spiritual giants and when God wrote the thirty-first chapter of proverbs he had her mother in mind. So they became my spiritual parents, now obviously I still lived with my parents but, things were better at home, but they weren't great. They stopped drinking, which is good and they both got saved and I don't have any doubt about the fact that they were saved, but, some of the stuff still, still was carried on. Finally, finally in 1962, my dad was killed in a plane crash and in the way that it happened and the timing that it happened made me absolutely know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was saved because God took him home prematurely. But anyway, I got saved later right after Carlene and I got married in 1954, October 1954 and immediately afterwards, and I mean within two months I got drafted and so I had been in the Naval Reserves, I was in the Naval Reserve and so it was just called up for two years, and, and so luckily I was only stationed about only a hundred and eighty miles away from Houston and so I was home a lot, back and forth and so I got out of the Navy, I got out of the Navy one week after my twenty-first birthday, so I got out of the Navy, started a job and started college, the same day and Kim, my daughter was born thirteen months after we got married so Kim was born while I was in the Navy and I was making a total of a hundred and ninety nine dollars a month in the Navy, no insurance, no nothing and so Kim was born with *spina bifida* so she had been in a wheelchair all of her life and when she was born, The doctor called us, excuse me, he came in you know and to explain what spinal bifida was and he explained about the fact that the nerve systems were outside the body now and you know the spinal cord and so on and so forth and he explained all of it and he said now she has a life expectancy, right now of about six months, because with the nerves exposed like they are she will get an infection and die it's just,

that's the way it is, now there is an experimental surgery, it's not experimental but it's a new surgery that we can do that may extend her life longer, it will probably extend it at the most till she is about eighteen, that's the life expectancy of somebody in her situation. And so basically what he was saying was it might, this was a, if you don't do anything, all your problems will be solved, you know, and if you do something, the problems will last for about eighteen years. Well Carlene, my wife, she didn't hesitate, she didn't pray about this she just said "We are going to have the surgery." Knowing that she is going to be caregiver for the rest of Kim's life, you know. She accepted that role, just like that, and I have always thought that that was an attitude of a very spiritually mature woman, which it was. She had just turned 19 years old.

Miller: (13:12) How could you afford the surgery?

Westover: (13:15) We couldn't. But we did. She went to work as soon as the surgery was finished and I was still in the Navy and so, we paid it off. It was a total of around two thousand dollars, but in 1955 two thousand dollars was a fortune. Ok, because in my job after I got out of the Navy I was making three dollars and twenty-five cents an hour, you know so you can understand the, understand the difference.

Hall: (13:46) Now before you, even before you went into the Navy or even after...

Westover: (13:47) Yep.

Hall: (13:48) You returned did you work with your father? You said he was...

Westover: (13:52) Yeah, I did. I did. My father was in the sheet metal business...

Hall: (13:55) Sheet metal, OK.

Westover: (14:56) And I started out as a helper there and I became an apprentice and a journeyman sheet metal worker, I still got the scars on my hands to prove it.

Hall: (14:05) So that is the way you got into construction eventually.

Westover: (14:16) That's the way I got into construction in the first place. My father started making pretty good money about this time, not rich, by any stretch of the imagination, but he was making a pretty decent living then. And the first thing that everybody thinks about now when they hear this story is "Boy, your mother and daddy didn't love you, neither one of them

wanted you.” You know? And I have never felt that way, I never felt unloved, we were just a strange family, from the moment that I took my first step, I was not a child I was an adult and so we were just three adults living in the same household. Now one of us was a lot shorter than the other two, you know, but I mean there were three adults there. My father had a nickname, “skipper”, my mother had a nickname, her name was Eva but everybody called her “Miss. E.”, and I had a nickname of “Duke”. So I never called my dad, “dad”, I never called my mother, “mom”, I called my mother “Miss. E.” my dad “skipper” I mean we were just three adults living in the same household, always were and so some people said, ask, they ask “In your childhood, did you feel unloved?” and the answer is no and the major reason for that is I never had a childhood, see I never was a child. I’ve been an adult since I was nine months old. It is just the way it is, you know, and so during the war, the big war “WW2” as they say, my dad worked in defense plants all over the country and so I was actually raised during those years in the backseat of a forty-one Oldsmobile with a dog, a cat, a rabbit and a bird.

Hall: (16:03) [chuckles]

Miller: (16:04) And so now why wasn’t your father drafted?

Westover: (16:06) He was right on the upper age, at the time the war broke out, he was involved in a, in the construction of a defense plant and so they gave him a deferment, now because of that and after that was over with he was just a few months older than the draft age and as they raised the age he was always just a few months older and so the age caught up with him just before the war the war was over and so he was always on the cusp, but he never did get drafted, but he was always on the, always involved in the defense plants and so on so that made him a deferrable person anyway. So...

Miller: (16:56) Now did all of this happen around the Houston area?

Westover: (16:59) Yes, all of the things that I talked about did, but now during the war we traveled, in fact by the time I was eleven years, excuse me, by the time I was ten years old, we had lived in eleven different states and so, so we traveled, as three adults in a family travelling, you know?

Miller: (17:20) Now you mentioned that all of you had nicknames, what was your given name at first?

Westover: (17:24) My given name at first was William Eugene. Now that's almost frightening for me to say, because I was born in Texas where everybody had a double name, you know "Bobby Joe" and so on and so forth. Until the day she died my grandmother called me "Billy Jean" Now do I look like a Billy Jean to you?

Miller and Hall: (17:44) No [chuckles]

Westover: (17:45) OK, That's the reason why I say it is frightening for me to say and so.

Miller: (17:50) And then did you and your wife have any other children?

Westover: (17:54) No. No, Kim was an only child so, Carlene's and only child, I'm an only child and Kim is an only child and incidentally, after that surgery and everything, she turns this year she turns fifty four years old. So and her health has been good, she just can't walk She's got a good, she's got a good brain, she came to Liberty University incidentally, she was the first female in a wheelchair to live on campus at Liberty University.

Hall: (18:23) Yeah, I remember those years; I think she was on one of my classes.

Westover: (18:26) Yeah I think she was, yeah she said she was, yeah.

Hall: (18:28) So, now how did you get involved, did you start your own construction company, Is that correct?

Westover: (18:36) Yes and no. There are no simple answers in my life...

Hall: (18:40) [*laughing*]

Westover: (18:41) You have got to understand that, after my dad died, the company, his partner, he and his partner had a buy and sell agreement and so they, and there was an insurance policy that funded it and so, so his partner bought my mother out. He was a Jewish man there in Houston, his name was [Zanefield] and that's as Jewish as it gets and he was very, very kind to my mother he paid her far more than the company was actually worth, and then so he shut the company down after he bought it and so I was out of a job and so, and so they by then I was

training, I was basically a mechanical engineer and worked for a couple of companies in the sheet metal, in the mechanical engineering and went in business for myself in the roofing business and the engineering business and so on. And business was not great, I made a living but I didn't make any money and I had met a man who used to work for a guy in [Clevern], Texas, just outside of Fort Worth, who built churches, that is what he did he built churches. And so this guy explained to me the process that they used when building churches and I was doing the air-conditioning on a big church there in Houston and it was chaotic, I mean the architect hated the builder, the builder hated the architect, the owner hated both of them. I mean it was a chaotic situation and the process that this guy explained to me that they used up in Clevern, I said "man that works in churches" and I think, one day I just decided I want to be in the church building business so I call this man in Clevern, Texas and his name was G. V Paden, "P-A-D-E-N" and so I find out some information, Paden Construction Company and I called them and got right through to him and I said " Mr. Paden, my name is Duke Westover and I want to go to work for you." And he said "What can you do?" and I said, "I don't mean to sound insolent, but I can do anything you can do and three weeks later I will be better at it than you are." And I said, "I am an engineer by training and I am pilot, I can fly airplanes and I am a salesman and I think those three would help you out greatly." And he said "Well sounds good, but I just hired somebody and I really don't need anybody right now so, so if you're ever up this way, stop and we'll talk about it." And he said, "Incidentally, where do you go to church?" I said "I am a Baptist and he said that is three strikes against you right there."

Hall: (21:30) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (21:31) And I said "Why is that?" and he said, "Well we are all Church of Christ up here, that is all we build is Churches of Christ, I have got sixty buildings underway right now and all of them are Churches of Christ." And he said, "You just wouldn't fit in." and I says "well if I was working for you I could get you some Baptist work because I know a lot of Baptist people." He said "Well that's interesting, if you are ever up this way, stop by and we will talk about it." And I said "OK." And so I hung up the phone and packed a suitcase and got in my car and drove to Clevern, Texas. Eight O'clock the next morning I was sitting on his doorstep, at three in the afternoon he had hired me. And that was in 1965, it was an interesting situation because Mr. Paden was a real, real made from scratch guy if you know what I am talking about, he operated

out of his hip pocket, he had a big operation, a lot of church buildings, but it was a proprietorship, he never would incorporate it and I kept saying, "Mr. Paden, you need to incorporate this thing because there is so much possibility of liability out there that could come back and wipe you out almost overnight", he said "I don't want to answer to any board of directors." I said "If you want all the stock you don't have to answer to anybody." That's alright just the way I want to do it. Well sure enough, he got involved in, it was in the early days of church bonds and, and he was building a big church in New Orleans that was being built with church bonds and the bond people were scamming everybody, and now Mr. Paden wasn't a part of the scam, but he, but he was taking all of his fees in bonds and then all of the sudden when it was found out that it was a scam, man, I mean it virtually wiped him out overnight, and so six months after I went to work for him he had to declare bankruptcy. And there were sixty buildings underway, there was still fees and money left in about thirty of them and so me and four other guys formed the corporation called GSA and that corporation I got on, I got on an airplane, flew from place to place and I ended up signing thirty of those people for brand new contracts for us to take over so we started the company GSA the first day of January 1966.

Miller: (24:04) Now what does GSA stand for?

Westover: (24:07) Oh, hang on a minute; I used to know, [*laughing*] oh, I will think of it in a second.

Miller: (24:16) Alright, OK, now one thing that we didn't touch on is after the Navy, you went into college, tell us a little bit, you said you were trained as a mechanical engineer, tell us a little bit about that.

Westover: (24:26) Well that was kind of self training because my father was a sheet metal shop and a mechanic, and a mechanical contractor and so I wanted to find out the process that you use in bidding a job and so I, so I got him to explain it to me, he would never spend the time needed because he would always say "Duke, one of these days this will all be yours, don't get into a big hurry, but I did get into to a big hurry and luckily I did and so finally what I would do I would listen and watch and I was also working in the field, doing mechanical contracting and sheet metal work and in the evenings I would take home some of the plans of jobs that had been done in the past, and I would go through and I would estimate those jobs myself and then do the

calculations and the BTU's that were needed and so on and so forth, just like I was starting from scratch, and then after I would put it all together on a piece of paper, I would go back and find the file on that job and find out exactly what it cost to build it and so I learned, estimating and stuff like that basically on my own and, and so whenever he died I still had that knowledge and I, and I put it to work with other companies so I was not a, I did not have a degree in mechanical engineering, but I did work as a mechanical engineer.

Miller: (26:10) You were self-taught.

Westover: (26:11) I was self-taught. OK. I never finished college, I got probably two years into college and I felt that the world was not going to wait for me to get out there and make a living, I was going to have to go out there and make one myself. There were times that I wish that I had finished college, but I don't think that it would have made any difference in my life.

Hall: (26:42) So, so your involved now with the GSA.

Westover: (26:46) GSA. Yeah.

Hall: (26:48) And how many building church buildings, how many total where you involved with?

Westover: (26:53) OK. This is not easy to answer either but...

Hall and Miller: (26:55) [*Laughing*]

Westover: (26:55) I will do my best. I was the major business developer for that and it was a magic time in the church building business, the church bond industry had cleaned itself up and there were bonds available for churches to do building programs and I, so I knew a lot of preachers in the Bible Baptist Fellowship because the church that I was member of was a BBF church and so I just, started, started, started working with them and through, just through, through tenacity I developed a process that would build a church for twenty percent less money and about a third less time now it had nothing to do with magic dust, I wasn't stealing the materials, it just the construction industry has always been the most backward industry in the world, they start at everything backwards and the wrong people get in charge of a project right up front, and once those wrong people get involved in it there is no way to straighten the

program out and so my process starts from the beginning whenever a church says “Hey, we are thinking about a building program.” I walk them through, put all of the slots, all of the pegs in the right slots and make them follow the process down through the, and if you follow the process down through the, you will build your building better. And I have proven that, I have built over two hundred church buildings proving that. Now the question you asked though was with that company, as a salesman I have always believed that a salesman is the only person alive who’s paid exactly what he is worth and so I never wanted to work on a salary, I wanted to work on a commission and so, so when we started the company, we really didn’t know how to pay everybody, I mean, you know, this just kind of dropped on us and , I said, “I don’t want a salary, I want you to pay me a commission for what I develop, they said “OK, fine.” So we would set a commission and like I said, it was a magic time, things were falling together really good and so everybody, all of us, everybody said, “You know Duke, we hope that you make a million dollars a year, because if you make a lot of money, we make a lot of money, because you bring in the projects, projects and we do them.” Well that’s a lot easier to say before you write the checks, you know so like I say it was a good time and I was making more money than anybody else in the company and for a couple of years everybody was kind of thrilled with that and then they looked at the amount of money I was making and it was tough to write that check every Friday, but anyway so, he said let’s, let’s maybe we’ve got everything out of kilter a little bit here, let’s do this a little differently, so we reduced the commission and I went along with it I mean I was a good company man, you know and so I was a part of the family, but like I say it was a magic time and it was during that period of time that I met Jerry Falwell, and I will get back to that in a second, Jerry Falwell increased what I was doing greatly, so after a couple of years of the new commission set up I was still making more money than anybody they just couldn’t stand it and so they said, “We are going to have to redo this again.” and I said, “No we are not going to redo this again.” and they said “Duke don’t give us any ultimatums now.” And I said “That wasn’t an ultimatum that was a quit, I quit.” A firm in Nashville that was doing basically the same thing we were doing, they had a great operation going, the man who owned the company was a pilot himself and killed himself in an airplane crash and so there was a company there that, that, that was kind of rudderless; they had great architects, great engineers, great builders. Everything was perfect there they just didn’t have anybody to sell their product and so I went to see the lady who owned it now, the owner’s wife and so we made a deal, straight commission and like I say it was

a magic time again, things were just going so well and she said the same thing “Duke, man I hope you make a million dollars, it’s going to do us fine.” Well that worked for about four years until she got arthritis in her right hand also and just hated to do those checks, you know?

Miller: (31:54) About what years are we talking about here?

Westover: (31:57) OK. By then we are talking about...I said it was GSA, it was DSA, Design Service and Accounting, Design Supervision and Accounting is what it stood for. DSA from 66 to 70, OK and then I started with Continental 71 and worked through about 73 there with her and like I say, most of my projects were coming, at that point, because of Jerry Falwell. Let me stop at this place and go back now to how I met Jerry Falwell, that is going to be your next question. I was building a church in Greensboro, North Carolina, the Brightwood Baptist Church right there on highway 29 if you’ve gone up and down there on the North side it is called the United Church now. But that building, I started building that one in about 1967, 1968 – 1968, the pastor’s name was Ellis Adams. Ellis and I were talking one day while we were building his church, he said “Duke you ought to go up there and see Jerry Falwell, he is fixing to build a new building.” I said, “Who’s Jerry Falwell?” I had never heard of him. He said “Who’s Jerry Falwell? Have you been living under a rock?”

Miller: (33:21) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (33:21) and I said “Well I live in Texas, there’s a bunch of rocks in Texas and you know?” and he said “Jerry Falwell is the biggest noise around here, he’s got the fastest growing church anyplace in the world as far as I know and it’s in a tiny, little, old town as far as I know there is no way in the world he can do what he is doing but he is doing it anyway, and he is fixing to build a 3000 seat sanctuary, and so you need to go see him.” So I said “OK, I will.” So that afternoon I got on the phone and got information and found out the Thomas Road Baptist Church phone number, called – secretary answered the phone and I said “My name is Duke Westover and I need to speak with Dr. Jerry Falwell”, she said “Just a minute.” She put me right through and Jerry came on “Hello?” you know that voice of his? And I said “Dr. Falwell, my name is Duke Westover and I am in the church building business, I am building a building for a friend of yours down in Greensboro, Ellis Adams. He said “You’re the one that’s building that building!” he said “I drive by that very building at least twice a week.” He said “Man that’s a

magnificent project you're doing." And I said, "I understand that you're thinking about a building program too." He said "I certainly am." And I said "Any way we can get together?" He said "Can you have lunch with me tomorrow?", "Be glad to." So I drove to Lynchburg, Jerry and I had lunch, first time I ever met him and so I went through my process, explained to him how I do the projects and he said "My Co-pastor Jim Soward, is the one who generally handles things like this, Jim is out of town but he will be back next week, any chance that, that you could come back next Wednesday?" And I said "I'll be here." So the following Wednesday I was there and Jim Soward and Jerry and I had lunch again and I walked through the whole thing again. After it was over with Jerry said "Jim what do you think?" And Jim said "I think he's right, we can save at least twenty percent on this building." And Jerry said "That's what I thought, so let's do it." So they both turned and looked at me and I said "Do I need to meet with the committee?" He said "You just did."

Hall: (35:32) [chuckles]

Westover: (35:34) and I said "OK. Who is..." I said "who in the organization is authorized to sign a contract?" and Jerry said "I'm authorized." So I reached in my briefcase and I got out a blank contract and I filled in the blanks and Jerry signed it. Easiest project I ever did in my life and it was the smoothest because my process works best when the leadership is the best. And there was no leader anywhere in the world any better than Jerry. Some people might say "Well that's just arrogant for a pastor to be able to do things like that." But you see, but you see Jerry earned the right to do that and so they already had plans, the design for the building Jerry had already met with an architect locally here and he had plans that were probably 70 percent finished, there were no structural plans it was the architectural and the foundation and all, but the structural plans weren't done...

Hall: (36:38) Yes, somewhere along the line they decided on the octagon...

Westover: (36:41) That was already done...

Hall: (36:42) That was already done...

Westover: (36:43) That was already done by the time I got here, those plans were already, already done. There was a local architect that already drew the, the plans for the footprint and all

and so my engineer finished the structural part and we broke ground on Mother's Day 1969 and the building was built in fourteen months.

Miller: (37:12) Now, and looking broader at Dr. Falwell's life, it seemed like he would just have a vision for something so he had in his mind what he wanted to have that he kind of copied the Thomas Jefferson type of idea...

Westover: (37:27) That's right.

Miller: (37:28) Not too far here down the road is Poplar Forest which was an octagon and so...

Westover: (37:32) That's right.

Miller: (37:33) He wanted some Jeffersonian, so did you see him do that in other cases...

Westover: (37:37) Everyday, everyday, that was a part of Jerry's life. Jerry was a dreamer if you remember what I said at the funeral? I thank God for dreams and the dreamer, you know? Jerry was a dreamer and he was. There are a lot of dreamers in this world, but there are a lot fewer doers than there are dreamers. And Jerry was a dreamer who put his dreams in the forefront and his greatest attribute was his prayer life. Time and time again and I could tell you stories from now and you wouldn't have enough tape or audio or whatever...

Miller: (38:22) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (38:25) OK, of situations where, I mean, it looked hopeless and Jerry said "OK, we need to pray about it." And we would pray about it and after we pray about Jerry would get up and dust of his hands and say "Ok that problem is solved now, God's going to take care of that so go on to something bigger now." And he was always right, I can tell you a story where he had to have a hundred thousand dollars by next Friday and this was on Monday morning, and Jerry said "Do you know where I can borrow a hundred thousand dollars?" I said "Jerry you're out of my league now this isn't a part of the thing that God gave me." He said "OK" well over lunch that day I got to thinking John Rollins, you know John Rollins up in Cincinnati. I had been with John the week before, Dr. John the week before. I had known Dr. John since I was sixteen years old incidentally and...

Miller: (39:27) Where did you meet him?

Westover: (39:29) In Houston, he came to our church there and, there in Houston to speak and he stayed in our home and so I have just known him since I was a teenager. And so I was up there doing a little work for him, nothing big, and he was telling me about a guy that had got saved in his church three or four weeks before who had sold an insurance company for twenty-five million dollars and his name was Harvey Huddle and I will never forget it and so, so I told Jerry about the Dr. John saying, saying this guy Harvey Huddle got saved, you know? And he said “I wonder what Harvey Huddle would loan us some money?”

Miller and Hall: (40:11) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (40:12) I have no idea you know because I never met Harvey Huddle, so Jerry said “Why don’t you call Dr. John?” So I called Dr. John and I asked Dr. John about Harvey Huddle, he said “Oh yeah, Harvey is a good old guy, oh yes I know him well.” And I said any chance that you and Jerry and I and Harvey could have lunch tomorrow?” He said “Absolutely!” he said “I’ll call Harvey and drag him if he needs to.” So Jerry and I flew to Cincinnati, had lunch with Harvey Huddle and Harvey gave him a hundred thousand dollars, and by Friday we had a hundred thousand dollars. So...

Miller: (40:49) Gave him or loaned him?

Westover: (40:51) Loaned him probably, but he probably ended up giving it to him.

Miller: (40:54) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (40:56) OK. And so that was the way that God used me to think about something that happened, you know? And Jerry went up there and made it happen. You know that was just the way that Jerry was and I could tell you stories like that all day long. So, so Jerry’s prayer life and his faith, greater than any man alive.

Miller: (41:18) Now before we leave that building of the Thomas Road, now the old Thomas Road building...

Westover: (41:25) Yeah...

Miller: (41:25) was in a residential area, was there any opposition of the local community or from the church or anything like that or did it just go smoothly and, and there were no problems?

Westover: (41:38) The problems began whenever Jerry started that church, and you can't blame the people, because I mean, like you say it was a residential area and all of the sudden some clown comes in and starts a church, a little bitty church was no big deal, but Jerry started buying houses, building buildings and all of the sudden there as more parking, there were more cars than there was parking places and people just parked everywhere and Jerry tried to challenge all of those people to park someplace else, we will get us a parking lot down the way and we will shuttle you back and forth and they did, but it just kept on growing, it was a phenomenon that there was no way to stop and some of the people just got so angry on Sunday morning, you know because there was no place to drive, no place to park, people were parking in front of their house and all, not a thing Jerry could do about it. And he tried his best and he tried apologizing to the people, Jerry was a guy who was a people person above all things, but there are just some things you cannot overcome. The city did not help at all, but you can understand their point also, you see they've got rules and regulations that are a part of the city code, for instance, at the time that we built that 3000 seat sanctuary, actually it was 3300 seats, they were averaging every Sunday morning well over four thousand people on the campus at the same time just in various locations on the campus, you know? And so the 3000 seat sanctuary was built to house the people that were already there, not another 3000 people so when we go down to, to get the building permit on this, now I am not sure that everybody ought to hear what I am fixing to say but I am going to say it anyway, when we go down there they turned it down. And Jerry said "Why?" and he said "Cause you don't have enough parking." He said "Man I got enough parking for four thousand people now I am just trying to find a place to put these three thousand people." It doesn't make any difference our rules say you got to have so many off, off street parking places, and you don't have them." Jerry said "Well there is no way I'm going to get them either, you know? And I all I am trying to do is accommodate the crowd that I got, not get another crowd." And they said "I am sorry, we are going to turn it down." So Jerry looked at me and said "Duke build it anyway." So we did. They screamed and hollered and shouted and so on and so forth but we built it and so when it came time now to move into it they said "We can't give you an occupancy permit, because you never had a building permit." And Jerry said "OK, we are opening next Sunday, what are we supposed to do with those people?" he said "Well we are going to make sure they don't come to your church." He said "Just try." And so the city never said another word about it,

so we never had an occupancy, an occupancy permit on the building because we never had a building permit on the building.

Miller: (44:56) Well that's a story that's not often told.

Westover: (44:59) That's the reason why I said "Maybe I shouldn't tell it now either."

Miller: (45:00) [*laughing*]

Hall: (45:02) Of course he was involved in television at this point was the building built for television?

Westover: (45:07) Yes it was, it was.

Hall: (45:08) designed for that?

Westover: (45:09) Yes it was designed for that, the old building they were on television also, the old building, which is the Pate Chapel now, I am sure you've been in there, it seats almost as many posts as it does people, I mean it was, it was not designed for people, it was designed as a beautiful auditorium which it was, but it would seat about 1100 people if you packed it out and so Jerry was doing a couple of services and so on, every building that Jerry ever built was full the first Sunday.

Miller: (45:51) Hmmm.

Hall: (45:51) Now later on of course the auditorium was modified...

Westover: (45:55) Yep.

Hall: (45:56) The balcony, did you have a part in that?

Westover: (46:58) Not really, there were just trying to find a place to put people, design wise it was it was a lousy design because you couldn't see from any of those places up there I mean it was a, it was just a parking place for people and he needed that so bad because the people were trying to get in and there just wasn't a place for them.

Hall: (46:22) Hmmm.

Westover: (46:22) So...

Hall: (46:25) What do you say is the future of the old church building?

Westover: (46:30) Obviously I don't know, there is no church in town going to buy it, you know? And so I would say that sooner or later Jonathan will, well there is already a couple of churches meeting over there, our Spanish church I think is meeting over there, the Korean church is meeting over there so its, so some of it is being used, so obviously I don't know. I went from being the consummate insider to a guy that had no idea what is going on now. It's not that anybody is being ugly to me, it's just whenever Jerry died my job died.

Hall: (47:10) Yeah, now once you moved out of that building to the present church, did you have anything to do with the plans for the new building now?

Westover: (47:18) I did, did work with an architect to actually lay out the plans to do the footprint. OK now my architect drew the plans on it, my builder that I used to build, actually built the building, but I had absolutely nothing to do with it. I learned long time ago that if a man is involved with the building of his own church building, he needs to have his head examined.

Hall: (47:48) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (47:48) And so I stayed out of it, so I didn't have anything to do with it other than they used my process, my builder, and the architect, but I, I just introduced them, that's it.

Miller: (48:01) So your, your building this church down by Greensboro, you come up and have a job for Jerry Falwell, but all of the sudden know we are sitting here decades later and you have that. Where did you get rid of that construction company or move over to start to work for Jerry more full time? Tell us a little bit about that process?

Westover: (48:22) OK, OK to answer it specifically I have never stopped building churches; I just finished a building in Florence, Kentucky, about a thirteen million dollar project and I don't have anything going right now. What I do is to manage the process from the time a church needs to start thinking about a building program and I lay out the process all the way through but basically my job is finished when the construction starts, if you are going to mess up a building project for a church you do it in the first three of four weeks of the process and so guiding them

through that I can get them to a place where the amount of money that they are going to spend is within their budget and is guaranteed not to cost anymore than that, and that's when the construction starts and that's the time when I am out of it. To say that I build buildings is stretching a point, but I get the buildings started and like I said I have done over two hundred of those, now to answer your question though from the very first day that Jerry and I met we became best friends and I am a project oriented person and I do things in the projects methodically and they just get done better, it's just what God gave me and so Jerry was a mover and a shaker to say the least in 1968 and 1969 and what helped me in the church building business was the fact that I built Jerry's building and about that time he started having pastors conferences once or twice a year and I was always at the pastor's conference and I, I would set up a little booth and I would pass out some brochures and so on but the main thing that I came for was what happened the last night, the last night of the pastor's conference after the big night was over Jerry would say, Jerry would make all the announcements and the admonitions and everything and he said "Duke, I want you to come up and pray for us, and as he coming I want all you guys to look around at this gorgeous building, he's the man that built it for me, and if you're thinking about building, you're planning on building, or your just praying about building, you need to see Duke tonight and talk to him before you leave here." So I would go up there and pray and say, "Amen." And go down and open my pad and just start taking names and that's the way I got most all of my business after that, but that wasn't your question, your question was how did Jerry and I get involved? Again we were just best friends and he was always doing projects and, uh, and so, and so I would volunteer to do something for him, you know? And he said "If you're going to do that, why don't I do this, that and the other thing?" You know? And we would work it out and I was always involved with projects with Jerry still doing my church building, it, uh, I am a multitasking guy, you know? It's just, that, that, that is the way that God made me and I work at least twenty-four hours a day, always have and, and so it worked well with Jerry because he worked twenty-four hours a day and, so he would things outside of Lynchburg that I would be involved in and so if I was involved in something that he did outside of Lynchburg, I basically managed his out of town schedule, you know? I would meet him and I would have already gone through everything he was supposed to do, and it was like an advance guy, I worked it out and I was just doing things for him, it's hard to explain what all I was doing,

because I don't remember it all, but it was always doing something for Jerry and during the 70's I was doing a lot of churches and he was doing a lot of travelling and we just did it together...

Miller: (52:27) Now were you on the TRBC payroll, or just doing...

Westover: (52:30) No...

Miller: (52:30) this as a friend?

Westover: (52:31) I was doing this as friend, OK, now in 1979 he started the Moral Majority and I could see that that was something that was going to need to be a lot of stuff for Jerry to do and so I was invited to the first Moral Majority meeting, uh and I was not in on all of the sessions and all of the planning you know that laid it out, but I know exactly what caused Jerry to do this, this, this, this and this, you know? And so, and so I was somewhat involved from the very beginning at Moral Majority. I wasn't on the payroll, still wasn't on the payroll, but the Moral Majority, the Moral Majority really didn't start in 1979, the Moral Majority started in 1976, the embryo of the Moral Majority, Jerry started doing the "I Love America" crusades and it was just something to get out among the people and so uh, and so he did the "I Love America" on the Capitol's steps of forty seven of the fifty states.

Miller: (53:46) Do you remember which one he didn't make it to?

Westover: (53:50) I want to guess Wyoming and North Dakota, you know those that didn't have any people in them, uh, but no I don't, OK, and that's when Jerry started thinking that this idea that he had been thinking all of his life is that religion on politics don't mix, and the fact that Christian people had developed that theory themselves because that is what there preacher's were saying, also staying away from the polls, they were also staying away from the voting booth and so therefore the people on the political side started doing things that affected the moral side and there was nobody to say anything about it and so Jerry was just thinking about that and, and uh, so the bicentennial comes along in 76 and he's saying "this is something we ought to do." Now I don't remember whose idea that was, It wasn't my idea and I am not even sure if that was Jerry's idea, but somebody came up with the idea of doing this and it became a big thing, seventy people travelling and so that was the kind of thing that I, that I was, was used to dealing with, you know? Now I was not involved in every one of the things, but I was

involved in a few of them. I would do the advance and setting up the platforms and the sound systems and so on and so forth, you know? Laying things out in preparation for Jerry's appearance, that's, that's all I was there for, I wasn't one of the major players, my role was to take care of Jerry Falwell.

Miller: (55:38) For the historical record can you tell...

Westover: (55:40) Yep.

Miller: (55:40)...us a little bit. OK we are in a particular state, let's say its North Carolina. We are going to be on the steps of the capital there, how did a typical program go?

Westover: (55:52) Typical program went with about, there, uh, there were seventy Liberty kids on the thing and lot of them grunt workers, a lot of them just set up the PA set and so on and so forth. So we would get there to get the platform set up to get the PA set up and the Sounds of Liberty, they weren't called Sounds of Liberty then, but the LBC singers would start the program and it's a [cough] it was special, special musical written by Don Marsh incidentally, who is on our staff today and it was magnificent music, this wasn't the ordinary church music back in those days you know, uh, I mean this was cutting edge stuff.

Miller: (56:39) Fresh contemporary...

Westover: (56:40) Oh yeah. And the kids were bright and the greatest thing about everything that Jerry ever with a travelling team is that the kids were the brightest, they loved people, they weren't prima donnas, I mean they were workers and they would love on the little old ladies and you know it was just magic to see those kids work, those kids were great and I travelled with a number of those teams, so I know them and I know a lot of the teams that are in there forties and fifties now, you know and they are still great kids, you know? And so the program would go along this way and Jerry would be the moderator of the program.

Miller: (57:29) So you'd have a concert where they are singing these numbers and...

Westover: (57:32) That's right...

Miller: (57:34) a program that's done...

Westover: (57:35) Yep.

Miller: (57:36) spoken pieces in between?

Westover: (57:37) Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Miller: (57:38) And then there as a sermon by Jerry Falwell?

Westover: (57:41) There was a sermon by Jerry Falwell, you say “Where did you get the people to sing to and to speak to?” Well a lot of times that’s where I would come in, I would go in early and call preachers, call preachers, you’ve got to, you and your church got to turn out for this thing, you know? And here is the reason why and I would give them all of the reasons, and so, and so a bunch of churches would turn out with a lot of people, and if you get a lot of people out you are going to get a lot of media and the media was the reason for doing it. Think of this, public relations transfers to public opinion, public opinion transfers to public policy. You can make a politician do and say, and believe anything you want him to as long as the public is forcing him to do it, and that was the reason behind this whole thing, public relations transfers to public opinion transfers to public policy which changes the mind of politicians.

Hall: (58:45) Any particular Governors or officials that you, stand out in your mind to you, during these campaigns?

Westover: (58:53) Well a lot of times a governor would come out and wave to the people and say “Oh thank ya’ll for coming.” You know? And “It’s great to have ya’ll in ‘South Hushbucket’ and so on and so forth.” The one that really come to mind though, we were in Arkansas and Bill Clinton was Governor...

Hall: (59:10) Mhmm.

Westover: (59:11) He was a young Governor there and, uh, he was pro-Abortion and I mean Bill Clinton, even then was on the wrong side of every issue, but he saw a crowd down there and so he decided to come down there and so he stood on the stage with Jerry and we’ve got a picture of him and Bill Clinton together incidentally.

Westover: (59:32) [*laughing*] And so Bill Clinton stood up and said “Well I want to welcome all ya’ll to, to Little Rock, Arkansas today.” And the people “Booed” him.

Hall: (59:42) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (59:44) And he, and so he turned around to Jerry and said, “They are rude, aren’t they?” and Jerry said “ Well they are not rude, it’s just that they are on the right side of the issues and they know that you’re on the wrong side.” “What do you mean the wrong side?” and so Jerry tried to explain it to him up there on the platform...

Hall: (1:00:01) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (1:00:02) and he lasted another ten minutes or so and he went back to his office and so to the best of my knowledge, that is the only time that Jerry Falwell and Bill Clinton ever met. So...

Miller: (1:00:17) And how many people would tend to be at these rallies?

Westover: (1:00:20) Oh, two thousand and uh, to get, to get two thousand people at a rally on the steps of a Capital, that brings the media out, the media want to find out what’s going on with this and that’s the reason why Jerry was doing it, to bring the media out and let the media know that there is a positive force here that they hadn’t thought about. So that lasted for a couple of years and, and so I said that was the beginning of the Moral Majority, it is the beginning of Jerry’s thinking that maybe we can turn this nation around, see? By 76 of course, Jimmy Carter was the president and he ran on the fact that he was a born again Christian, which he was I mean as far as I can tell he was, I met Jimmy Carter one time, nice guy, you know? But his presidency was an absolute disaster, uh, by the time that he was half-way through his presidency, the employment rate was over ten percent, you think things are bad now? During Jimmy Carter the unemployment was over ten percent, inflation was at eighteen percent and, and the, the loans, the prime rate was over twenty percent, that’s while Jimmy Carter was president and so that’s the time that Jerry said “ Hey man, we’ve got to do something.” And so it is about this time that Jerry started thinking about the moral issues and the, the social issues like abortion and prayer in schools and so on and putting all those down together and he said “ Something has got to be done that would change, that would change things in Washington.” And getting back once again, you know? Public relations changes public opinion which changes public policy which changes politicians I mean it’s, it’s just like that and , and Jerry knew Tim LaHaye from, from just being a pastor of a big church [cough] in San Diego and Tim LaHaye put together and organization in

California some time, 76, 77, 78 somewhere along in there called Californians for Morality and so and so Tim was talking to Pastors, trying to get them motivated to talk to their people about the moral issues in the political process, and so Jerry went out there to see Tim, to find out exactly what he was doing, and when he got through he said “Man, this needs to be done a national scene.” And Tim said “I agree with you, and Jerry you’re the guy that can do it because you’ve got the platform that nobody else had, you’ve got television,” And it, at this time Jerry was big on television, I mean it was the Old Time Gospel Hour, as they say it was cooking at this time, people were watching, people were giving, people were volunteering I mean it was a good time for Jerry Falwell, Thomas Road Baptist Church, and the Old Time Gospel Hour. And so Tim and Jerry talked to some other people, Charles Stanley and D. James Kennedy and they decided to put together an organization like Tim had except make it national and they laid out some of the parameters for doing this, I was not involved in any of this, except I was on the peripheries of it knowing what was going on, OK because I wasn’t on the payroll and I was still building churches, that was the only way that I could feed myself.

Miller: (1:04:31) Now when you were building the church in Greensboro you come and do the project in Lynchburg, where were you living at the time?

Westover: (1:04:37) Houston, Texas.

Miller: (1:04:38) OK so you were still in Houston, Texas...

Westover: (1:04:39) Right.

Miller: (1:04:40) When did you actually come to Lynchburg then?

Westover: (1:04:42) Not an easy question [*laughter*] nothing is easy in my life. I worked out of Lynchburg doing things since 1968, in 74-75 I sold, sold my construction company, my management company, whatever you want to call it to a group in Atlanta and I moved to Atlanta then to run the company for a couple years and after that we didn’t want to move back to Houston, and it was a time that things were starting to really click up in Lynchburg and so living in Atlanta, I was only living five minutes from the airport in Atlanta and so it was a time that I was doing, doing some consulting for other ministries and other churches and all and I was technically out of the church building business then because I sold my company, so it was easier

to travel out of Atlanta, to meet Jerry on the road, still I wasn't on the payroll, you know meeting Jerry, doing things for him and I was also doing things for other churches and other ministries in raising money, doing other things for them and Atlanta was just a great place to live and every now and then a church would call me and that was in problems "We hired this architect man and the bids went way out of the budget, why can't you come help us?" So I ended up one day back in the church building business again and I met some people in Charlotte who were really great builders and so we kind of formed a team and, you know? And I didn't want to get big time into church building anymore so I only built and worked with large churches then instead, instead, instead of the small ones because I wanted to have time to do other things and other things is what I have done all my life, I'll explain that a little bit later too. But, uh, but while I was living in Atlanta, the time that the "I Love America" stuff was going big time and the gearing up for the Moral Majority, OK. And then moving forward a little bit, the mid-eighties, probably eighty-five maybe, eighty six, one of the largest general contractors in America, McDivett & Street, in Charlotte, North Carolina hired me to start a division for them to build churches they were the fourth largest company in the United States with revenues somewhere around billion dollars a year, I mean this was major stuff, so, so working for them I started and we, and I was back in the church building business again big time and we were doing sixty to eighty million dollars a year in church building, so things were doing well but I was still working for Jerry...

Miller: (1:08:06) On the periphery...

Westover: (1:08:07) On the periphery, because , I, I could always set my own schedule doing things, because I was a business developer basically in a couple of days a week I had to be in the office there in Charlotte and, then in 91, 91 the owner of the company, Bob Street, died of Lou Gehrig's disease, he was diagnosed in December I think of 80, I mean of 90 and he died in April of 91 and so the company was sold overnight, because he owned the whole thing and it was sold to a large firm in Britain and overnight we went from being one of the largest contractors in America to one of the largest in the world; changed the entire dynamics and the culture of the company and I looked around one day and although I was doing 60-80 million dollars a year in construction, ordinarily that would be huge, but in that culture it was like a gnat and I was working with people who didn't even know how to spell church than wanted to build one though I said "You know one of these days, soon, I am going to be a product of downsizing." So I just

quit and so we were living in Charlotte then and so we moved, moved out of Charlotte a couple of years before, never lived in Lynchburg and so I had gotten in the tour business accidentally, God evidently never trusted me to make decisions on my own, things just happen, I wake up one day and I am doing something, you know? And that's the way it was with Jerry, that's the way it was with everything in my life, anyway we had been in the tour business and we had been doing it almost as a hobby since 1981 and so Carlene and I decided that you know, we are in our fifties now, this might be a good thing for us now to do a fun thing to do the tour business, so we just decided , OK, we are going into the tour business full time, I am no longer in the church building business I though, you know? And so, we said "OK, where are we going to live?" We didn't like Charlotte, Charlotte never, never became home for us, wasn't anything specifically wrong with it , it just never was home, and we hadn't bought a house yet, we were living in an apartment and so, and so Kim, my daughter, she had decided in eighty -five that she had wanted to come to Liberty for school, you know and so, so she was in school from 85-91 and she didn't want us to move up here while she was in school, she said " I need to have a place to go home, you know, sometimes, so, so I was up here a lot though, we were always up here and in fact the Holiday Inn and another couple of hotels here, I should have bought stock instead of paying for a room every night because I lived in hotel rooms here for years [coughs]. One Friday night we decided to come to Lynchburg because you know, we got more friends in Lynchburg that we've got in Atlanta, Charlotte or Houston even left, you know? And so, and so Carlene said, "Maybe God is leading us to move to Lynchburg?" OK so we go up here and with Kim in the wheelchair we got some special needs for a house and so we got here Friday night, got the newspaper, there was a house that fit us. So we saw it the following morning and two weeks later we were living in it, so that was in, that was in 92. And so as soon as I got here Jerry called one day and said "Let's have breakfast. Excuse me, let's have lunch." Which we did and he said, "I need an executive assistant and you're it." And he said, "I've got an office and a secretary telephone ad you start in to work at eight o'clock this morning, you got any problems with that?" [Laughter] "I said, well Doc the only thing is I am in the tour business now." And he said "No Carlene and Kim are in the tour business, you work for me." OK, so that's basically how we got to Lynchburg. And from that day forward I was Jerry's executive assistant and he introduced me a lot as his chief of staff. So the thing about working up here, titles didn't mean a thing, everybody did what needed to be done, you know? But that was the title he gave me so that the title that I have so.

Miller: (1:13:08) Did you, did you have responsibilities both with Liberty and Thomas Road or were you just working for Jerry Falwell...

Westover: (1:13:15) I worked for Jerry Falwell, whatever needed to be done, Old Time Gospel Hour, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Liberty University, anything that needed to be, I was, I managed Jerry's schedule and I managed his office and I travelled with him everywhere from that moment on.

Hall: (1:13:36) Let's just back up a little bit...

Westover: (1:13:37) OK.

Hall: (1:13:38) on the Moral Majority...

Westover: (1:13:39) Yeah.

Hall: (1:13:40) I think you mentioned something about a Nashville meeting?

Westover: (1:13:44) No it was in Indianapolis.

Hall: (1:13:46) Oh Indianapolis...

Westover: (1:13:47) and that was...

Hall: (1:13:47) and who was there and what was that for?

Westover: (1:13:49) OK, that was the basic organizational meeting of the Moral Majority and we invited, I say we, I use the term we a lot, uh, this was Jerry's project, this was Jerry, but I did a lot of things for Jerry. We invited pastors, we invited priests, anybody that pastored or was a part of an organization no matter who they were or no matter what the organization was we invited to that meeting and there were two thousand of them there for the first meeting, and there were all shapes, forms; there were Mormons there, a lot of Roman Catholics...

Hall: (1:14:38) Any Jewish Rabbis?

Westover: (1:14:41) I don't think so, the Jewish Rabbi, uh, the Jewish never really got that much involved in the Moral Majority...

Westover: (1:14:52) Uh, there are psychological reasons for that, nothing bad, I mean that is just the way it was you know? But the amazing thing was the first words that Jerry spoke when he got up in the pulpit he said “Under ordinary circumstances I wouldn’t be caught dead in the same platform as some of you guys and if the truth were known you would feel exactly the same way about me.” He said “but we are not here to argue theology or to talk about anything other than how do we save a nation; now when we save this nation we can go back to doing, to arguing among ourselves about theology and everything like that.” And so they all laughed you know? And that was the opening statement of the Moral Majority.

Miller: (1:15:47) And when was that?

Westover: (1:15:49) That was in April of 1979.

Miller: (1:15:52) And you were there at that meeting?

Westover: (1:15:54) I was there.

Hall: (1:15:55) And what was...what really went on at the meeting?

Westover: (1:16:00) Jerry just talked about why an organization like Moral Majority is important, because 70 percent of the Christians in America were not even registered to vote, OK. That was an estimate but it was a pretty good estimate, you know? And the reasons they weren’t registered to vote is the pastors had always told them “religion and politics don’t, they don’t mix.” And the politicians told them that too, so they would stay at home, you know and so we were losing America by default and so Jerry said “The reason we need a Moral Majority is because of the deafening silence of the pulpits of America.” and he was talking to the guys who were deafening silent, you know? And so the idea was to, to put together organizations that would motivate pastors to, to talk to their people about issues, not political issues, this, this has nothing to do with politics, it wasn’t democrat it wasn’t republican; it was pro-life it was pro-family it was pro-national defense and it was pro-support of Israel – those were the main tenants of the Moral Majority and none of those are political, they are just moral issues that the family should be concerned about and so the pastors need to bring those issues to the public, to their people and get their people registered to vote and get them out to vote, never tell them how to vote. Jerry never encouraged anybody to tell anybody how to vote, because that wasn’t the issue – you vote just exactly like the bible, the moral issues, you vote the moral issues and if this guy

is a democrat or he's a republican or he's a independent or whatever party he is a part of, if he is on the same tune with these moral issues then you should encourage your people to go out and vote on those issues not the party.

Hall: (1:18:22) Now I don't know that meeting, did...when did the national office come into being? Was that here or in Washington or where?

Westover: (1:18:29) Well it started here obviously, well and for, for, for purposes of being close to the action, there was an office opened in Washington D.C.

Miller: (1:18:47) Who were some of the players as far as the field work, so to speak, so the pastors we really the national spokesman, the voice of the movement but who were the ground workers so to speak?

Westover: (1:19:00) The very first executive director of the Moral Majority, I can picture him but I cannot place his name right at the moment I can think about it for a little while, but he was a Christian from down in Florida and he was a guy who was, who knew a little bit about the political process and so he was the very first one, now the, the major thing that was on the agenda from the very beginning was electing a president in 1980 and so Jerry and Tim LaHaye and D. James Kennedy and Charles Stanley went and met with a lot of the different guys who had the possibility of getting the republican nomination, now the reason for the republican is that the platform of the republican party was exactly the same as the, as the tenants of the Moral Majority, not that they all followed it but that was the platform and so the idea was to replace Jimmy Carter with somebody who believed in those same things and so there were a number of the people that they met with, I was not in on any of those meetings, but they met with Ronald Reagan and the guy who actually got them together with Ronald Reagan was Sam Moore from Nashville, Tennessee who owned the Thomas Nelson Publishing Company at the time and so Sam was instrumental in introducing Reagan to Jerry. Sam had been involved in republican politics, that's how he knew and so virtually from the moment that Jerry met Ronald Reagan Jerry said "This is the man who can save America."

Miller: (1:21:16) Now did you ever meet Ronald Reagan?

Westover: (1:21:18) Many times, during the campaign I was involved with uh, one of my clients over the years was the, the NRB the National Religious Broadcasters and so I was working with them, doing, doing, doing some projects during, during the campaign of 80 and so I met Ronald Reagan then and was kind of a bridge that brought Ronald Reagan here to Liberty University to speak during the campaign, that was under the auspices of the National Religious Broadcasters and so I was kind of in charge of that...

Miller: (1:22:04) What were you doing for the National Religious Broadcasters?

Westover: (1:22:07) Once again everything that I have ever done for anybody I did so much that it is hard to explain what I did but I am project oriented and so whenever a project needed to be put together I would put it together and do it. And so I was just doing things.

Miller: (1:22:30) What do you recall about Reagan's trip here to Lynchburg, anything?

Westover: (1:22:34) Not really, it was uneventful, he was just a candidate then...

Miller: (1:22:38) At that point?

Westover: (1:22:39) At that point he was raising some...

Miller: (1:22:43) Was, was he raising some republican nominee and he was still part of a field of other candidates...

Westover: (1:22:49) That's right yeah, the real, first big event that Ronald Reagan was involved in with quote "Religious right" was in Dallas, in early 80 and so Jerry was involved with some other people who were putting it together, I was not involved in the project at all other than just that I showed up in the thing with Jerry, you know? And but it was, there were about eighteen thousand there at Reunion Hall there in Dallas and Reagan was one of the spokesman, excuse me he was the keynote speaker is what he was, there were about fifteen pastors and speakers that all had to be on the platform saying something so everybody have five minutes to say it you and some of them didn't do it in five minutes, but anyway [chuckles] uh, Reagan stood up and his first words were, and I mean the place was just crazy and you now this was a political event and Reagan says "I know that you, as pastors, cannot endorse me, but I can sure endorse you." And people screamed for about ten minutes after that, you know. One of the things that I remember so

vividly was that E.V. Hill, one of the pastors, and E.V. Hill can't say anything in five minutes, but they told him, they said "E.V. if you don't quit in five minutes we will turn your microphone off." You know and he said "OK, OK, OK" I will never forget his speak as long as I live, he got up and he said "This reminds me of a story." Everybody thought "E.V. you can't tell a story." He said "It's a story about a deacon of a church." He said "He couldn't put three sentences together without five cuss words; he just had the filthiest mouth anybody ever had." And he says "His wife told the pastor one time, she said 'Preacher you got to talk to him and tell him to quit that cussing.'" So the pastor said "OK I'm going to take him fishing, so they go out fishing and they are in the boat, just the pastor and the deacon and the pastor said "Deacon, you got to quit that cussing." He says "You embarrass yourself, you embarrass your family, you embarrass your church, but more than that you embarrass your God." And the deacon was just heartbroken he says "You're right preacher, man I got to quit that, now I am going to quit it, I've said my last cuss word." He said "just that time the pastor caught a great big fish and he was wheeling that fish in and he was saying 'Deacon grab the net, grab the net, grab the net!' and he got it closer to the boat and just before the deacon got the net out the string broke and the fish swum off and the preacher was livid he raised his voice and he said 'Deacon! At a time like this somebody needs to say something!'" Well everybody laughed.

Miller: (1:26:17) [*chuckles*]

Westover: (1:26:17) E.V went on and says "Last year there were forty million little babies that died in there momma's womb, it's time for somebody to say something. Last year over fifty percent of the marriages, even in Christians were divorced; it's time for somebody to say something." He went on three or four of these things and he said "and I would love to be the one to say it but they didn't give me enough time and he turned around and sat down."

Miller and Hall: (1:26:43) [*laughter*]

Westover: (1:26:43) The people applauded for ten minutes, [*laughter*] that's the greatest message I ever heard and it took him about four minutes to do it, so.

Hall: (1:26:52) Now are you, what, the so called front-man when Falwell went to the Republican convention that year?

Westover: (1:27:00) Yes. Uh, that year, no not that year.

Hall: (1:27:03) OK.

Westover: (1:27:03) Excuse me. I was a virtually everyone except that one was in Detroit and as far as I know nobody went with him, he, I think, I don't know who went with him, it wasn't me though.

Hall: (1:27:21) But to say, what year was that?

Westover: (1:27:23) That would have been 1980.

Hall: (1:27:25) 1980 OK.

Westover: (1:27:26) And I was working with Jerry but I wasn't the guy then, you know? And so I do things with him but that wasn't one of them.

Miller: (1:27:38) Now the saying has been made, "The road to the White House is made though Lynchburg, Virginia." You know, but it seemed like towards the end of Jerry's life he really focused his attention more on the University and the church. When did that switch kind of occur?

Westover: (1:27:58) Basically, when Reagan went out of office, I am saying things out of school now that I probably ought not to say but I think I can get by with it. When Reagan was elected, there was no doubt about the fact that 28 percent of the votes that were cast for Ronald Reagan were from people who had never voted before, who was registered to vote by their church, by influence from their church or from a religious television station or something, in other words, from the things that the Moral Majority did, so, so the Moral Majority really did elect Ronald Reagan, whether anybody wants to admit that or not, that is the case. Now from the Moral Majority there was an awful lot of other organizations that sprung out, Christian Coalition under Pat Robertson was one of them, and there role was different than the Moral Majority, but very important, there role was to educate the people on the voting of all of the politicians so they could see that this guy didn't vote the way they wanted to, but this guy did, you know and so they passed out the voter guides and Pat Robertson started the CBN and so he was a, a big voice in the religious right also. There was not a lot of interplay between Jerry and Pat, there was no animosity, I mean, you know, they got along well but, I mean, they were doing different things,

but Pat's organization came because there as a Moral Majority and there was something that needed to be done you know and so he did it. During that time though after the election, Washington and the media honestly thought that there was a monolithic group of people called Christians that could be moved from place to place and if Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson and or Pat Robinson said that "This is what you've got to do" they would all go and, they would all go rush into it.

Miller: (1:30:35) Almost like the NRA or something like that...

Westover: (1:30:37) That's right.

Miller: (1:30:37) This is a voting bloc, when really it was just common people,

Westover: (1:30:41) That is exactly right, and also it was not s voting bloc because you and I both know that Christians have never been a bloc of anything, but, but Washington thought so, so much so that Jerry and I could walk down the hall of the senate building [*cough*] and secretaries, senators secretaries would look at us and say "My Gosh, that's Jerry Falwell." And they would run back in there and tell the senator "Jerry Falwell is out there." The senator would rush out in the hall way just to meet Jerry Falwell because they honestly thought that Jerry Falwell controlled all of these votes. In reality he did not, the Christians of the world have never been monolithic in anything and they never will be, but for a little while everybody thought they were, and as a result there was a lot accomplished in Washington during those days, because they honestly thought Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson could say "Go do this." And man they could come and bust the door down, so everybody wanted to please Jerry and Pat, that's where the idea came that the road to the White House comes through Lynchburg, it never came through Lynchburg, but they thought it did, and so Jerry and Pat both took advantage of that you know, which was great. In 1987 though, Pat decided he was going to run for president and he messed up the whole thing because he proved that they weren't monolithic, because he couldn't get enough votes to get out of Virginia Beach, much less get to Washington. See and it was because, well I am not going to say what I started to say, but anyway, there are reasons for that, you know and there are folks on different side of religious issues, Christian issues that are not going to vote for somebody on the other side of those Christian issues, it's just the way it is, whether it is right or wrong has no bearing on anything. Pat Robertson at the time decided he was going to run for

the presidency and that, that almost made a laughing stock of the religious right and so, so I credit Pat with messing up a good thing and from, from, from then on it was more difficult, because the media turned on Pat and Jerry virtually at the same time and turned on it's so vehemently that if a president even talked to Jerry Falwell on the telephone, the media would say, "Did Jerry Falwell tell you what to do today?" you know? And so therefore publically, the presidents and the senators and everything started distancing themselves from the religious right, quote unquote, OK?

Miller: (1:33:57) Now I imagine that the whole PTL scandal, Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggart happened at the end of the 80's that didn't help the whole religious right thing either?

Westover: (1:34:07) That, that it greatly, it hurt our income like you could not believe and it was at such a horrible time because the school was doing well, we had four thousand – three thousand students here and the bottom fell out of you income, and you can't tell these students "Ya'll go home, and we'll fix this and then call you back next year." You know you can't do that, you just got to keep on going and digging the financial hole deeper and deeper and deeper and that's what happened to us, and but on the political side, the Bushes were very, very good friends. George and Barbara Bush loved Jerry and Macel and Jonathan and Jerry and [Deany] I mean they were like family but everybody understood, Jerry understood and George Bush understood that they can't publically be friends and so Jerry understood that and so Jerry backed off and so George Bush was still a great friend and when he invited him here for graduation in 91 he came. He got a lot, a lot of bad press for doing it but he did it anyway so you have got to appreciate him, and then, then George W., Jerry was, in a lot of ways very, very instrumental in George W. Bush becoming governor in the state of Texas and that's another great story and he appreciated Jerry and he loved Jerry in fact, when Jerry died, I was at the hospital obviously and it my phone [cough] my cell phone was ringing constantly I would look to see who it was and there were people I didn't want to talk to yet because I knew that Jerry was dead, but the announcement, the official time of death was not announced yet, and it was about 12:15 and, and so I was at the hospital and my phone rang and I looked to see what the phone number was and it was 202-456... which meant the White House, so I answered it [cough] and so Tim Goeglein who was president Bush's, just one of his assistants, who was a good friend of ours who, who came here a number of times, and I went to the White House a number of times with Tim and just a good

friend; it was Tim, Tim said “Duke, is he dead?” and I said “Yes.” He said “Would Mrs. Falwell be available for a telephone call?” and I looked and saw Macel over there in the corner and I said “Yes she would.” And so he said “Just a minute.” And so I walked over and I handed Macel the phone, it was George Bush, George W. Bush, he was the first one to call.

Miller: (1:37:24) Now just a curiosity question, maybe you don’t know this, but why did George W. never speak here at Liberty?

Westover: (1:37:32) There was always this, this problem of the media. Anytime that the words George Bush and Jerry Falwell were spoken in the same sentence, Jerry Falwell became the issue, rather than the issue they were trying to solve, and we tried every year to get him here, and he honestly wanted to come but his, uh, the political reality was, it would not help him, it would only hurt him. There is no way that George Bush could have come out of that positively, Jerry understood that, George Bush understood that and Carl Rove, who is a very good friend, Carl was the one who was, the political guy, you know? And so Carl came here a number of times and it’s not that anybody had anything against Jerry Falwell, it’s just the reality was that if the president came, nothing good would come of it.

Miller: (1:38:48) Since we are talking in the political realm, probably the, the most criticized statement is the one that happened after 9/11; as a personal friend of Jerry’s, how did he feel about the statement after he made it and the public reaction then that just didn’t die, you know, even after his funeral, just this past weekend on something, I saw somebody quoting Jerry Falwell on that again, can you talk about that for a moment?

Westover: (1:39:17) Well obviously the statement that he made was nothing wrong with, it was an accurate statement, now the media took it and made an inaccurate statement out of it, you know? And the media furor was such that just to calm it down Jerry came back, and didn’t necessarily apologize for it, but he glazed over it. Now, not long after that, Franklin Graham said virtually the same thing and nobody said anything about it, you know? So those things didn’t bother Jerry, Jerry just went on, you know, somebody asked me just the other day, somebody was in town and I took them over to the gravesite, you know and walked around and saw the statements on there and then one about discouragement was there you know, and this guy asked me, he said “What was it that discouraged Jerry?” and I said, “I’m going to say something you

won't believe...I never saw Jerry discouraged, Jerry Falwell was never discouraged in his life." It's not a part, it's not a part of his makeup, you know? Jerry just didn't get discouraged, if things go wrong, they wrong, he just keeps on plodding you know, and so those things, they bothered Jerry for fifteen, maybe twenty minutes, you know and that's the extent of it.

Miller: (1:4:59) As we go back in history, lets pick up on some things we kind of...

Westover: (1:41:01) Yeah.

Miller: (1:41:03) We've gone out of chronological order.

Westover: (1:41:04) [*laughing*] We have indeed.

Miller: (1:41:05) [*laughing*] And, and, and these, have just been fascinating statements you really have unique perspective here, let's go all the way back to that building of the church building bond and one thing, when people talk about "Oh there was some controversy over bonds." There was something in the late 80's, but wasn't there something also in the 70's...

Westover: (1:41:23) There was.

Miller: (1:41:24) Can you talk about that issue for a moment?

Westover: (1:41:28) Rex Humbard was a good friend of Jerry's and Rex was a guy that was probably more on the cutting edge of a lot of things than even Jerry was, Jerry was following Rex Humbard in a lot of things. Rex's organization was, they were raising money for buildings and they were raising money for television and so on and so forth, and they had some people that were out there in the field talking to some of their donors and the donor would say, "Man, I would like to loan some money." He said, "I would like to give some money, but I don't have the money to give, I will loan it to you" and Rex said "I tell you what, I will pay you interest if you loan it to me." "Oh, OK, that would be great." So there were going around and a guy would say "I will loan you five thousand dollars." You know? "OK, so we will pay you 8 percent interest." So they would draw up a note that he was loaning money to the, to the Crystal Cathedral [*actually the Cathedral of Tomorrow*] Organization, you know. Five thousand dollars and it was a demand note, so it could be called at anytime and they were putting money aside in escrow fund in case some number of folks needed to get their money back and they would get it back in

90 days and so they were doing it right [*cough*] and so Jerry saw that and said “Hey this is a good I idea, let’s us do it.” So we started doing the exact same thing. Folks would loan the money to the Old Time Gospel Hour, the Gospel Hour would say “OK, we’ll accept the money, we will pay you interest on it and here’s our note, and it’s a demand note, we are going to set aside a certain number of money for people who want their money back early.”

Miller: (1:43:28) And this was a cheaper rate that they could have gotten, than you could have borrowed the money from, and the person was making a better rate of return than they could have in the bank...

Westover: (1:43:39) You got it, you got it. So, so it worked great, it worked great with everybody. Now finally the SEC, the Securities and Exchange Commission got on Rex and they said “Wait a minute, what you’re doing is illegal because you are selling bonds.” “I’m not selling bonds.” You know, “I am borrowing money from people and their paying, I am paying them interest on it.” They said “Well what do you give them in return for that?” He says “Well, we are giving them a note.” We they said, “OK, we officially say that that note is considered a bond.” “OK, you can call it a bond that is alright, I mean, fine, whatever.” They said “the only problem with that is, you’re selling these to people in different states and so you are going across state lines to sell bonds without a license to do that.” And so, and so they put a cease and desist order on Rex Humbard and so Jerry looked at that and said “Oops, we are doing the same thing” So, of all things Jerry called the SEC and said “Look, you’ve clamped down on Rex for doing this, now he was doing it ignorantly and we are doing exactly the same thing, so you send somebody here now to show us what we are doing wrong and how to correct it.” He said “OK.” So they sent somebody, and they said “OK, here’s what you’re doing wrong, you know, but we cannot put that in writing unless we go through the courts to do it, because we have no authority over you, except through the courts” and so the SEC filed a lawsuit against Jerry Falwell even though Jerry is the one that called them in and the lawsuit, all the lawsuit says is “we forbid you to do this anymore.” Well obviously that is not the way it was done in the courts, and that’s not the way it was supposed to be you know? That’s just the way it was so it created a huge furor which actually made all of those notes that Jerry had outstanding which was probably was a couple three million dollars, I don’t remember the exact amount; all of those notes became due and payable today and there wasn’t enough money to pay them, simple as that.

Miller: (1:46:09) So that, that [*unintelligible*] well, good thank you for explaining that.

Westover: (1:46:13) Sure.

Miller: (1:46:14) Mark DeMoss...now, was – what was his title and how did you relate to him and wasn't he kind of Dr. Falwell's assistant? Talk about that for a moment if you would?

Westover: (1:46:25) Well I am not sure I can because to, uh, Mark, did some things for Jerry that I don't do, didn't do and I did a lot of things for Jerry that Mark didn't do so it is kind of subjective whether what it was and would really rather not talk about it [*chuckles*].

Miller: (1:46:48) That, that's fine, but what era was he in? Do you recall?

Westover: (1:46:53) Yeah, he graduated from college here in probably 88, 89, 87...

Miller: (1:47:03) OK so that's far, much farther, this wasn't in the early 70's and 80's then?

Westover: (1:47:07) No, no, no.

Miller: (1:47:08) So he was later on, so, so you were working for Jerry at the same time that he was?

Westover: (1:47:14) Just doing other things.

Miller: (1:47:16) You, and so...

Westover: (1:47:18) and I wasn't on the payroll.

Miller: (1:47:20) Were you ever on the payroll?

Westover: (1:47:21) I was [*laughing*], OK.

Miller: (1:47:23) And when did that come about?

Westover: (1:47:25) Well starting in 90, no starting, starting in about 81 I started doing a lot of fundraising banquets for Jerry and like you say, I am project oriented and so we decided we were going to about 90 fundraising banquets in about 18 months and so I virtually came on full-time although I was still building churches and doing the tours and so on.

Miller: (1:47:56) That sounds about, like on a week average [*laughing*].

Westover: (1:48:00) Actually it was more than that; anyway, uh, and so I came on the payroll as a consultant during that, that time and so the first time that I was on the payroll was probably 81 to 84-85 maybe, OK, and, and so all of that went away and then a couple other times there were some other things that needed to be done, that Jerry wanted me to do, that he put me on a monthly consulting fee for a few months. But I actually went on the payroll, when I moved up here, so Jerry wanted me to come on and I said “Doc, I am never going to work for you full time.” And he said “What do you consider full-time?” “What I mean is I am going to do other things all the time.” He said “Well, you have always been good at multitasking” that’s fine, “so therefore I don’t want a full-time paycheck.” And he said I will put you on the salary that raises you to the highest level of the insurance, and I said “That’s fine.” So, so that was in, uh, that was in 92 and so.

Miller: (1:49:17) And so were you on the payroll continuously from 92 to his death?

Westover: (1:49:19) Yes.

Miller: (1:49:21) And so when he passed away in 2007, did that end your job or do you still do something for the university?

Westover: (1:49:28) I still do some things for the university, OK , so.

Miller: (1:49:32) And so right now for you today, you mentioned the tour business, still doing things with tours? Didn’t I see that you had an Israel tour coming up?

Westover: (1:49:41) Yes, the tour business, like I said, virtually everything that I have ever done in my life, I just wake up one day and I am doing it. One of my clients that I was doing some fund-raising banquets for was a ministry down in Florida and one day the guy asked me, he said “Duke, where is the best place to have a high donor banquet?” and I said “That’s easy.” I said “The Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem, Israel.” He says, “Explain that one to me?” I said “Well if you were to take some of your high donors with you to Israel, spend ten days with them, walking were Jesus walked, you explaining to them exactly what the significance of this place is, what is the significance of that place and by the time you get through, you are their spiritual father like no other person could possibly be and then on the very last night that you are there in the Hilton

Hotel, do a dress up banquet where the men wear the suits and ties and the ladies wear the long dresses and their jewelry and you, and you bring them in and show them multimedia that shows where the ministry is right now, where it has been and where it could go with your help.” I said, “If you do that right, you will raise enough money in pledges that night to cover your budget in the next year.” He said “Could you, could you put that together?” I said “Absolutely.” And sure enough I put it together and I have been in the tour business ever since.

Miller: (1:51:26) Are all your tours to Israel or do you go other places as well?

Westover: (1:51:30) We go to other places occasionally but virtually the place is Israel and Jordan, Israel and Egypt, Israel and Greece, Israel and Turkey, Israel and Rome. Everything revolves around Israel.

Miller: (1:51:47) And now you mentioned that you still do a little bit of consulting for churches and buildings and things like that...

Westover: (1:51:52) Mhmm.

Miller: (1:51:53) What other enterprises do you have going on now?

Westover: (1:51:58) Oh about two years before Jerry died I came across an article in the *New York Times*, the question is “Why in the world were you reading the *New York Times*?” I was not I was reading something else that was quoting the *New York Times* and it was about a fundraising event that happened in Dallas, Texas in ‘04. And I read that and what was, what caught my eye was that I knew one of the people that was involved, oh, uh, H. L. Hunt who was at one time the richest man in the world, he had six kids and then a second family with four kids and so on a so forth and, and so his oldest daughter was involved in this fundraising event and it involved insurance and premium financing insurance and how you could arbitrage an insurance, the premiums on an insurance policy against the cost of those premiums, borrowing against the cost of those premiums and you end up with about a five percent arbitrage fee that you can give to a ministry, and I said “That is the most amazing thing I have ever heard.” So I found the guy in Nashville who came up with it and I told him there were applications or what you are doing there that you have never even thought of and I know a lot of people and he and I have become partners in doing this and we are raising a lot of money for a lot of ministries, so.

Miller: (1:53:37) Did I hear you had a jewelry business as well?

Westover: (1:53:40) [*laughing*] My wife dabbles in jewelry and in Israel there are certain pieces of jewelry that are indigenous to Israel, things that have, that deal with the crown of thorns and so some, she met a guy that sold the crown of thorns ring and so she designed some cufflinks and some earrings and broaches out of that crown of thorns and she, she gets those made occasionally and sells them, but that's the extent of it.

Miller: (1:54:16) OK, I just saw your name one time at a booth or something like that...

Westover: (1:54:20) That's, that's my wife...

Miller: (1:54:21) [*laughing*] That's your wife, OK.

Westover: (1:54:22) That's my wife.

Miller: (1:54:23) And so from those days in the early 70's then, now there was the Original Donald Duck Bottling Company, there as the Pate Chapel then that was added on, you made the new building kind of connect and it was a nice, was that difficult to tie those two buildings together?

Westover: (1:54:47) Well keep in mind now, I said the plans to that were already done by the time that I got here and so I was not really involved in the design of the thing, I just built it from the plans that he already had.

Miller: (1:55:01) And now the Lynchburg Christian Academy building with the separate classroom building.

Westover: (1:55:06) Yep, yep.

Miller: (1:55:07) When did that come in the chronology?

Westover: (1:55:09) That was actually built at the same time that I built the sanctuary.

Miller: (1:55:14) And so was it all part of the same project? That...

Westover: (1:55:18) Somewhat, but I was, but it was all done at the same time, it was going at the same time building it and they needed some help and my group helped and we needed some help and that group helped and so on and so forth and it was a family operation.

Miller: (1:55:37) Since this is part of the Liberty University Archives, you know in those early days the Lynchburg Baptist College met in Thomas Road buildings and things like that did you have any involvement in the early building for Liberty, the college aspect of the ministry there?

Westover: (1:55:54) Not really, my role with Jerry at that point was just working with Jerry now occasionally a project would come along that I would need to get involved in and I did, for instance, the stadium, I built the stadium, ok I was working for McDivett & Street at the time but, but, but during the process management, and I built the Vines Center I put the three stories on top of DeMoss and I built the six story, the six story dorm down there that had to be done in a hurry, that building, that building, that six story dorm was built in a hundred and thirty five days, and that was a monster.

Miller: (1:56:51) Well now as one that's involved in construction, you know, I recall when the new sanctuary was built over the campus north facility there, Jerry said "It is going to be done by this date." And, and did you two ever have any conflicts over a where you know? Where you would say, "Jerry we can't do this." And he would say "No, it needs to be done." Did you ever have any of those kind of conflicts?

Westover: (1:57:14) No, those words "can't" never existed.

Miller: (1:57:18) [*laughing*]

Westover: (1:57:18) When Jerry decided it was going to be done sure enough it was and every, the stadium was another one, Jerry never started on a project early enough to give you enough time to do it, the stadium, from the moment we put the first shovel in the dirt to the day they played the first football game, was twenty four weeks, now you say it cannot be done – yeah it can, OK. The, the Vines Center, the shape of the Vines Center, the dome and everything is an exact replica of the, of the facility of, for Baylor University in Waco, Texas, the dimensions are exactly the same, the roof was, the roof structure was designed by and built by and installed by the same people that designed and built and installed that one, the only difference is the one in

Waco was built on flat ground so that they had to have steel for the, for the stands, here we built it in a ravine and had to bring dirt in and so we, and so we created the bowl for that and so that is the only difference in the two buildings except for the fact that the building in Waco costs \$13 025.00 per seat, the vines center costs \$875.00 dollars a seat, the one in Waco was built in 18 months and we built this one in eleven and a half months.

Miller: (1:59:00) Now had Jerry seen the Waco one?

Westover: (1:59:03) No.

Miller: (1:59:03) No.

Westover: (1:59:05) I did.

Miller: (1:59:06) You, you did and so, so you suggested the...

Westover: (1:59:09) Yeah...

Miller: (1:59:10) pattern for it...

Westover: (1:59:10) Sure.

Miller: (1:59:11) Although I do recall an early video were he kind of points to the ravine and he had that dream in his mind before...

Westover: (1:59:19) Absolutely.

Miller: (1:59:20) it, did, did you see him, see him do that with other places on campus?

Westover: (1:59:24) Oh yeah...

Miller: (1:59:25) Talk about that for just a moment.

Westover: (1:59:26) Well

Miller: (1:59:44) You know? Where he would point at something and say "Oh this is going to be this and this is going to be that."

Westover: (1:59:31) The one thing that always surprised everybody about Liberty University was, they said “Where is your master plan?” and I would point to Jerry, there it is right there because we would come on campus and Jerry would say “Hey, that’s where we need to build the DeMoss building, or that’s where we need to build the stadium, or this...” You know? Jerry dreamed every one of these things and we have at least a dozen master plans around here someplace because every now and then you will get involved with something that the city wants you to do and the first thing they want to see is your master plans, so we have somebody draw a master plan, it means absolutely nothing, but somebody wanted to see it.

Miller: (2:00:16) Well, I think we are going to take a break here now and we will pick up. We have so many more questions to ask you, so with that we will conclude today’s interview with Duke Westover. This interview has been conducted as part of the oral history project of the Liberty University Archives.

[End of Interview]