Oral History Interview of Cal Thomas

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Miller: (0:00) Welcome to this interview in the Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives. This interview is being conducted on March 19, 2015. Today we’re interviewing Cal Thomas. My name is Randy Miller. I’ll be conducting the interview today along with Lowell Walters. Greetings, Lowell.

Walters: (00:19) Hello Randy. Hello Mr. Thomas.

Thomas: (00:20) Greetings to you guys.

Miller: (00:22) And as we begin today could you just tell us a little bit about yourself? Where you were born? Where you grew up and your family history?

Thomas: (00:30) I was born in Washington, D.C. in [unclear] and two parent family, unusual today, I know. Grew up in Northern Virginia and Maryland, in the Washington suburbs went to public high school there, Walter Johnson was the name, graduated from American University and started my career in radio when I was sixteen years old at a local radio station in Rockville, Maryland, called WINX, joined NBC news as a copy boy at the age of eighteen, and depending on your view of the media, worked my way up or down from there.

Miller: (01:07) Now were you raised in an evangelical Christian home?

Thomas: (01:10) No, we were—I would say it was nominally Christian in the sense that we went to church most Sundays at a Disciples of Christ church and we didn’t—we had a Bible in the home, but I don’t ever recall having it read to me or reading it myself. My dad was a World War II veteran along with his brothers. And I—it was later in my life that I discovered a great need for a relationship with God and discovered—well I’d always heard about Jesus of Nazareth, but never really pursued a personal relationship with Him until I was in the midst of this career
ladder and thinking that it would bring satisfaction and peace and fulfillment, but finding increasingly it did not, and began a search for something deeper. It’s a very long story, but God reached down to me and redeemed me, and I am His servant for the rest of my life.

**Walters:** (02:13) Can you comment on what the stressors were that precipitated your desire for the peace at that time?

**Thomas:** (02:20) Well I had—my wife to begun to do some volunteer work at the National Prayer Breakfast Office in Washington and came home one day and said, “I’ve met some men you need to meet,” and so I met them and long story short, they invited me to a little prayer breakfast where a federal judge stood up and talked about the possibility of everyone in that room having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and I’d never heard that phrase before, and then they invited me to a Bible study, which I’d never studied. My grandfather gave me a silver—said he’d give me a silver dollar when I was twelve years old if I memorized the 23rd Psalm. That was the last serious Bible studying I did, and then I heard this man at this Bible study reading from a living paraphrase, and I said, “Wow, I’ve got to get me one of those!” And I got one and began reading it, and the Holy Spirit began working in my heart, and when I was fired by NBC in 1973, I was forced to choose, and my wife said, “You know, you’ll never be free of this burden to be a success, until you thank God for losing your job.” Which sounded kind of crazy at the time, but it was that night that I committed my life to Christ. My career went in reverse for twelve years and nothing seemed to be working, except God was working Himself into me and teaching me things that would eventually be of tremendous use as a syndicated columnist then the platform that he was going to give me, but wasn’t going to tell me until I was ready for it.

**Walters:** (03:50) So what was your career like in the sixties is that—you made it through the sixties…

**Thomas:** (03:55) Well I made it through the sixties. I survived the sixties.

**Walters:** (03:57) (Chuckles)

**Thomas:** (03:57) Yeah, well it was—I was in the Army for a while, Vietnam, I didn’t go there, I was Armed Forces radio in New York and finishing college, and you know, growing up and maturing, basically. The late-sixties I worked for a NBC affiliate television-radio station in Houston; where I covered the space program at the height of Apollo which was a great time to be there and also the medical center during all the heart transplants with Denton Cooley and Mikey DeBakey. So I was on the network a lot doing reports from Houston and learned a lot from a great news director, I had down there named Ray Miller.

**Walters:** (04:36) Now we ask a lot of peripheral things as they come up in the interviews here...

**Thomas:** (04:39) Yeah.
Walters: (04:40) Any comments on the Space Race in your experience there?

Thomas: (04:44) Well it was part of the dynamic between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union of course put the first vehicle in space called Sputnik in the late fifties and that created the Space Race and John Kennedy’s famous promise in the early sixties to “put a man on the moon” by the end of that decade; and the interesting thing about the space program is that it united the country in ways that have not really been replicated since 9/11 and everybody was for space program. It gave Americans a vision, a purpose, the race with the Soviet Union, incentive, and out of that came, you know, that great book by Tom Wolfe…

Walters: (05:29) The Right Stuff.

Thomas: (05:30) …The Right Stuff, thank you. And it really was, I got to know some of the astronauts and these were the crew-cut, clean-cut family men, all the things that many of us felt represented the real America, or at least the America we would like to go back to in the midst of the drug and free love culture of the sixties. So there was a great culture clash, as well as the international clash with the Soviet Union.

Walters: (05:58) Now was that—was that a true representation of those fellows or can’t you comment?

Thomas: (06:03) (Chuckles) Yeah well sure, yeah well some of them. Yeah, I mean you think of John Glenn and Annie, who was—who had this deaf problem, and she had gotten help at this, I forget what they call this, hearing-aid center in Roanoke, or near Roanoke College, and you know, John was—went on to become a U.S. Senator, Democrat from Ohio. Alan Shepard, the first American in space. I got to know him a little bit, wonderful guy. They were human, they had problems. Some of them had martial problems, but they had a great—they had great commitment, not only to their task, but a great love for the country and they certainly embodied how Americans view themselves—how we view ourselves, I think. What we would like to be: hardworking, achieving, clean-cut, you know, no drugs, it was a great time, it really was, gave people something to believe in again. Especially, as I say, in the midst of the cultural upheaval of the sixties.

Walters: (07:05) So what do you think of prospects of going to Mars and that sort of thing? Or is that a waste of money these days?

Thomas: (07:10) Well I’d like to send some politicians there, frankly and some other people, yeah. But no, I think exploration is a good thing. It was—I’m sure they had these discussions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whether it was worth it to send these ships out to explore new lands. Well, that worked out pretty well. So I think, you know, human beings have always been expansionist in their minds, we are unique among the creations of God and we’re always looking for new frontiers. That’s what Star Trek was all about right? Boldly going where no man has gone before?
Walters: (07:44) Well Randy’s more of the original era. I’m more next generation Star Trek. (Chuckles)

Miller: (07:50) So let’s bring it in then to the history that we’re particularly interested in today and focusing on Liberty University, the Moral Majority. How did you first hear of Dr. Falwell?

Thomas: (08:01) Well I’d heard about him… of course he was on television and it was… I didn’t get to know him until the funeral of Art DeMoss and I was there, and I met a guy there who was working for him at the time named, Harry Covert, and I was expressing to him—this would have been around 1971-2 somewhere in there. No. Yeah, no let’s see. I can’t remember. Anyways, No, it was later on the 70’s. Sorry later in the 70’s. And I was expressing some frustration with my career and kind of stalled here in Washington; I was back in Washington from Houston. And it didn’t seem to be going anywhere, I wasn’t making any money, I couldn’t break through. The column hadn’t started yet. I didn’t—hadn’t even thought about writing one. And so, I was expressing this to Harry, and then Harry, without my knowing it, had told Jerry about this. And I guess it was 1979, early 1980. And Jerry called me and said, “Listen, I understand, you know, you’re kind of frustrated. We’re doing a work down here, we’re putting together the Moral Majority”. He generously offered me a job as vice president of communications, and my kids, scholarships at Liberty Baptist then and LCA, then known has Lynchburg Christian Academy. And I’d never heard of Lynchburg, Virginia. So my wife and I came down here and were struck not only by the beauty of the place but the vision, and the personality and commitment of Jerry. And I’d never done anything other than journalism; other than my time as a disk jockey when I was sixteen. And so it was kind of a leap of faith. So we came down here that prove to be in many ways a foundational building block for what I would eventually do as a syndicated columnist.

Walters: (10:06) That was about ‘79 or so?


Walter: (10:14) And that’s when the Reagan and that election period was starting to get going.

Thomas: (10:20) Oh yeah.

Miller: (10:22) And so, now here in town you actually move to Lynchburg. Did you attend Thomas Road Church?

Thomas: (10:26) Oh yes, oh yes.

Miller: (10:28) And so, since we use these for the history of the University and Thomas Road Baptist Church and the Moral Majority, kind of what were services like in those days? Did you have anything to do with the I Love America or the Save a Baby Home, anything like that?
**Thomas:** (10:45) Well I think I—I think I encouraged Jerry to start the Save a Baby Home, at least I was a part of that; was a strong pro-lifer. I think that was great thing that he did. And that was also an inspiration for me. I’ve done a lot of fundraisers for pregnancy help centers around the country for the last thirty years. That certainly was a model for what I would do later. No, I didn’t do anything on the I Love America, the rest. The services were, this was, I didn’t come out of this, what we call then a fundamentalist background, but I met a lot of really great people who really love Christ and who may not of had an advanced degree from a Ivy League University, but who had great biblical wisdom which I found was more compelling then worldly knowledge. And it a great experience. It was meeting people and going places I would not of met and would not of gone without him.

**Miller:** (11:51) One of our journalism professors, when we were at our event yesterday, mentioned a connection with Eunice Shriver; she wondered if you remembered anything about that? Putting together…when they were starting the Save a Baby that sent a book or something like that to Eunice Shriver, does that…?

**Thomas:** (12:12) Well yeah, yeah. Eunice of all the Kennedy family members, sister of J.F.K of course, was a pro-lifer, and would occasionally write a letter to the editor on the subject of the Old Washington Star newspaper and she was my seatmate at her brother Ted’s house one night when we all had one dinner together. I liked her a lot. She, of course, was a primary caregiver and caretaker of her sister, Robyn, who had been given this lobotomy by their father because that was thought to have—be able to cure whatever mental challenge she had at the time. I don’t think it was Down Syndrome, but I think it was maybe something similar, and then of course it didn’t work and she spent the rest of her life in an institution, and Eunice was a very, very strong pro-life Catholic at every level, not just the unborn, but the mentally and physically handicapped, the elderly. She was the real deal. I think she was my favorite among all the Kennedys.

**Walters:** (13:18) Well now, for the record, the Save a Baby, you’re talking about the Liberty Godparent Home, correct?

**Miller:** (13:21) What’s now the Liberty Godparent Home, but didn’t it start as…?

**Thomas:** (13:23) The Save a Baby then, that’s right.

**Miller:** (13:27) And… so alright. We talked a little bit about Thomas Road; come over to Liberty Baptist College. What was your role? Did you have any role in the college particularly?

**Thomas:** (13:37) Well let me go back to—you asked a question early about what was the services were like at Thomas Road Baptist Church. Now again, I didn’t come out of this background and some of the great hymns, I mean, I came to love, especially, those by Fanny Crosby. Some of the choruses, the…what was it called? The Sounds of Liberty, who started off with these great songs, it was like a production. It was like amazing and then Jerry—there was a line about—I think it was Ed Dobson who said—No I’m not going to say that. (Chuckles) He’d
come out—Jerry would come out, and he was on, and you know, did a really Bible-based sermon, there were few like him. I mean, he was a man of strong conviction, of biblical knowledge, of great passion, of a wonderful personality. I mean, he—it was funny to watch people as we would travel around together and we’d go to CBS or NBC or whatever. They all—you could tell by the bookers and even some of the anchors, they had this expectation of him going in, you know, that he was going to be a rigid, angry, judgmental, “holier than thou,” “better than you person,” and most of them he charmed, and when he left, you know, they would—I’m sure they would be thinking because I know how they think, “Well, I don’t agree with him, but he is certainly an interesting guy.” You know? I always thought that that was great progress. Once in a while we’d do a show together. I remember coming out of CBS in Washington once, and we were both on together. And he was telling me, he says, “You know, you really are the best.” I said, “No, no, you’re the best, I’ve learned from you. This is great stuff.” He’s a lot of fun to be with.

Walters: (15:28) So for the record, what were you folks up to, so to speak, at that time in ’79 and ’80? You know, tell us about what those shows were focusing on.

Thomas: (15:39) Well his thing was to energize or reenergize the conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists to be part of the civic responsibility or opportunity that is ours as American citizens. Those who know the history of this know, Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson wrote this book on the history of fundamentalism, know that after the Scopes trial, many people from this background went into a kind of catacomb existence. That, you know, government is evil, Hollywood is evil, the culture is evil, we’re going to withdraw from everything and just preach the gospel and do nothing else. And Jerry was saying I think, that you know, “If you don’t—if you want a country like you inherited from your parents and grandparents, you’re going to have to fight to preserve it against these forces.” So he was trying to awaken and reenergize a new generation to actively confront culture, to be a part of the government, and to, as Reagan said, “Remember that we are only one generation away from losing all of this.” So I think that was his, in addition of course to preaching salvation in Christ as the ultimate and only answer, he was trying to reenergize a generation to their privileges as citizens of the United States.

Walters: (17:04) We’ll come back to this a little bit more later.

Miller: (17:07) So we asked about the college then, were you involved with Liberty University?

Thomas: (17:12) My wife and I were dorm parents I think for a couple of semesters. I taught one course, I mean, I was so busy doing other things, I had little time. But teaching just that one course, the preparation gave me a new level of respect for teachers. Because it’s hard work! But I enjoyed it. I love the students here. I love coming here, it’s energizing to me.

Miller: (17:34) So which dorm were you in?

Thomas: (17:35) I can’t remember. It’s one of the old ones, you know…
Miller: (17:38) But it was actually on the campus

Thomas: (17:40) Yes.

Miller: (17:41) Rather than the hotel downtown.

Thomas: (17:42) No, no, it was on the campus, right.

Walters: (17:46) And so you lived in a dorm as a dorm parent?

Thomas: (17:48) No, no, no it was just a… it was—I think they called us “Dorm Parents” but we didn’t live in the dorm. We had a house out on Woodland Avenue.

Walters: (17:56) So what was the ministry that you did through that? You had the kids over once in a while?

Thomas: (18:03) Yeah, we’d have them over to the house once in a while and visit with them in the dorm and they’d sit in the hall and I’d teach a lesson from scripture or I’d answer their questions or I’d ask them questions. Where are you from? What are you studying? What are you struggling with? And once in a while, you could meet them one on one and you know they’d share some things with you. Or just being available to them I think was the main thing.

Walters: (18:25) Now, as a benchmark for the culture so to speak what were the things that were on their minds at that time?

Thomas: (18:32) Well, the same things that are on… you know, human nature never changes. Clothes change, hairstyles change, mode of transportation change, but human nature never changes. So, you know, boyfriends, girlfriends, broken hearts, what am I doing here… you know.

Miller: (18:48) What’s God’s will for my life?

Thomas: (18:49) Yeah, what’s God’s will for my life. How do I find it? You know, basic stuff. It just never changes.

Walters: (18:53) Do you get a sense that there were more addictions? Was pornography as big of a deal back then?

Thomas: (19:00) I don’t think it was as big of a deal because it wasn’t as readily available. You know, you’d have to go to a bad part of town that if you were seen, it would hurt your reputation if you tried to find that stuff. Of course, you know, get it online anonymously now. That’s not progress.

Miller: (19:14) About how many students were at the university at that point?

Thomas: (19:17) I don’t remember because again, I wasn’t part of the university, but considerably fewer than there are now obviously.
Miller: (19:24) And... okay.

Thomas: (19:25) And while I was there, you know, while I was here in Lynchburg this is when Jerry’s incredible vision of—they called it The School of Lifelong Learning, and back then you had video cassettes that people would get. You know, they’d sign up for these and they’d send them the cassettes. Today, it just seems so amateurish, but I think Jerry led the way in this vision for going to college without actually being on the campus. And of course now I think I was told last night at dinner that something over ninety thousand, eighty-five, ninety thousand people involved in LU Online, amazing thing. He started it all.

Miller: (20:11) And so were there some other folks that you worked with particularly at Liberty? Just any names that you recall?

Thomas: (20:16) Well, Ed Dobson who was then the Dean of Students when I came here. He became a very, very close friend in so many ways. And of course he is struggling in the final stages of MS now as we record this in March of 2015. Ed was from Northern Ireland, and he basically introduced us to the country and we’ve been going there for almost thirty years now and have a small place over there that we escape to from time to time. So he and Lorna became very dear friends. Our kids grew up together, and we’ve kept up over these years.

Miller: (20:54) And it’s Lou Gehrig’s disease?

Thomas: (20:56) Yeah, ALS, what did I say?

Miller: (20:57) You said MS.

Thomas: (20:58) Yeah, ALS. I’m sorry.

Miller: (21:00) Right, and so you two—since we are mentioning him—you two wrote a book together.

Thomas: (21:06) Well we did. Kind of controversial in some quarters, I didn’t pick the title. The publisher did—not my favorite but called “Blinded by Might: Why the Religious Right Can’t Save America”. And we waited I think it was fifteen years after I left—a little shorter when he left I think—to write it because we wanted perspective. We tried to say, “Look, this isn’t about going back to total withdraw from culture, but it is a balance between the two kingdoms.” You’re not going to convince the unregenerate—the people who have not been transformed by the renewing of their minds—nor is there any expectation in scripture that the unbeliever will be persuaded by biblical perspective unless they have been converted. You’re not going to persuade them to accept a worldview that comes from a kingdom of God if they are unredeemed members of the kingdom of this world. That’s the essence. We talked about some of our experience. We’re very fair, we sent the manuscript to Jerry and the staff down here before it was published asking for any factual corrections. It uh... ignited a firestorm which I won’t go into, but we gave him the last word. I interviewed him and he is the last interview in the book. I didn’t respond to it, I
just let him have his say and that last line is that ultimately, we’re not going to be able to save this country without a spiritual revival. And that’s the whole point. He made the point for us; he was absolutely right.

**Miller:** (22:32) After the book was published did that effect your relationship with him?

**Thomas:** (22:35) Yes, I’m sorry to say. He wouldn’t speak to me anymore. I reached out on several occasions and said, “Look, let’s meet.” He met with Ed, and of course Ed was in the early stages of ALS then, but he wouldn’t meet with me. And I regret that to this day because no human being is perfect. I have my flaws, we all do. We all see through the glass darkly. We all—our perspectives change and I admired him tremendously. I really did love him. I mean, I think I couldn’t spend five years since seeing him almost every day and getting to know him. But there was much to admire. We have a history of moral improvement movements in modern times. Prohibition tried the same thing. The diagnosis of the problem was correct, too many men getting drunk, wasting their paychecks, abusing their wives, spending the rent money on liquor. But the solution was wrong; trying to pass laws to ban alcohol, because you don’t deal with human nature. It’s been the same with moral improvement movements throughout history. The greatest power we have as followers of Jesus Christ is the message that He offers of a new life in Him. That is what transforms us by the renewing of our minds. That is what changes behavior. You look at the story of Louie Zamporini, who recently died as we record this, chronicled in Laura Hillenbrand’s marvelous book, “Unbroken”—less so in the movie I’m sorry to say. When he was converted at the Billy Graham crusade in 1949, up and to that point, he was headed towards alcoholism, he was addicted to cigarettes, he was getting ready to divorce his wife, he was angry to the point that he wanted to go back and kill the man who had abused him in the Japanese internment camp during World War II. And after an enormous struggle where he didn’t want to go forward, he was converted that night in 1949; came home, poured the booze down the drain, went cold turkey on the cigarettes, told his wife he wasn’t leaving her, and eventually went back to Japan to find the guy who abused him to share the Gospel with him. Now no law could’ve produced that kind of behavior. That is a result of a transformed life. So what we have done—we who are conservatives and Christians, we have tried to marry the two kingdoms and it’s like oil and water, it just doesn’t work. You have to choose which one. We have the greater power. Not everybody is going to be saved—this is the work of the Holy Spirit. And we live in a wicked and an adulterous generation, in a fallen world. The phrase I hate the most is, “I want to make this world a better place.” You’re not going to make the world a better place. Jesus is going to make the world a better place by transforming it. And He’s going to make people better by transforming them. And out of that, the world can be a somewhat better place on the way to the ultimate transformation. If you look at revivals, my favorite is the one of 1857. It started when two men began praying on Wall Street, in New York, on their lunch hour. And they were then joined by other man. And there wasn’t enough room, in the little room, for all of them to meet. So they decided to meet at the churches, in the evening and they invited their wives. And when the revival hit, ten thousand people a week were being converted in New York City alone. Not a,
no direct mail, no TV, no radio, no organization, this was the work of the Holy Spirit. When the revival jumped the Atlantic and reached the coal mines in Whales, this was all written about in J. Edward Noor’s wonderful book on the history of revivals in America: so many coal mines—there was a work slowdown, somebody asked, “Why was there a work slowdown?” and the answer was, “So many miners were converted, they stopped using bad language and the horses couldn’t understand what was being said to them.” Crime disappeared virtually in London. The pubs closed. The police had nothing to do so they formed quartets to sing at the revival meetings. There was a young man in Chicago who wanted to teach a Sunday school class and he was told, “We have too many teachers. There’s not enough room. Go out and find some boys on the streets and take them into the woods. Get them under control and when you do, bring them in here, we’ll try to find space for you”. That young man was Dwight L. Moody and that began a ministry that lasted a half century and continues to this day, long after his death. So there is the greater power we have. David said, “Put not your trust in princes and kings, and in mortal flesh that cannot save;” and if we do Jesus plus anything, it’s really Jesus minus. So that’s what I learned from all of that experience. Sorry to go on, that’s a…

Walters: (27:16) Well…

Thomas: (27:17) Thirty minute talk, I reduced to two minutes.

Walters: (27:19) (Chuckles) In recent years though, we’ve seen the same sort of thing with the homosexuality…

Thomas: (27:24) Yep.

Walters: (27:25) …Issue. You know, fallen world takes a fallen sort of approach to things, so.

Thomas: (27:32) Of course, yeah and then you’re going—it’s not just gay marriage, now you’re going have the plural marriage, the polygamist, you have the transgenders. G.K. Chesterton said, “The danger when men stop believing in God is not that they’ll believe in nothing, but they’ll believe in anything.” Or if you want to quote Cole Porter from the 1930s, “In olden days a glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking. Now heaven knows anything goes.” And that’s what you have when there is no standard. When the constitution is no longer a standard for government, anything goes in government. Eighteen trillion dollar debt and counting, Supreme Court becoming a law unto itself. I remember a speech that the late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen gave at the national prayer breakfast in 1979. He asked a question. “How do you define a football field? By its boundaries.” We’re busy eliminating all boundaries for everything! Economic boundaries, relational boundaries, cultural boundaries, moral boundaries, and what do we have? We have chaos at every level. We won’t live under the constitution for our government, we won’t live under God’s law as for our personal lives, and so we have divorce, cohabitation, single motherhood, 55 million abortions as of 2015, and all of these other things. And God is giving us over, in my judgment, but you don’t get that back through laws. We worship the golden calf of the DOW Jones Industrial Averages. In DOW we trust, not in God,
and God is giving us over. And we have the history of warnings from Moses, through Jesus and Paul of what happens—and through history—what happens to nations and individuals that forget God.

**Walters:** (29:18) We had this question later, but it seems appropriate to bring it up in this context. It seems like there’s these periods of time where like for instance, Britain had their worldwide empire and I think God used that for missionary outreach to some degree, and then the United States kind of had—maybe it’s a false Pax Americana that we’ve had. Who’s on the rise spiritually? Who—is the United States beyond hope? Who is the—what nation would be the up and coming one so to speak to deal with these issues, if there is one right now?

**Thomas:** (29:57) Well I don’t know because I’m not a prophet, but I will quote this from a man who I use frequently now in the lecture circuit. His name was—he was a British Diplomat, since you mentioned Britain—named Sir John Glubb and he was born in 1897and is no longer with us, as you might imagine. But he wrote this little book called “The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival”, and he summarizes it in the end, he says most empires last an average of 250 years, really from B.C. to modern times, and some, a little longer, and some shorter, but the average is 250 years. In 2015, we will be 239 years old—getting very close to that 250 year average. And here’s his summary of what happens to empires and I think it fits perfectly the profile of the United States right now. He says, “We do not learn from history because our studies are brief and prejudiced. In a surprising manner, 250 years emerges as the average length of national greatness. This average has not varied for 3000 years. The stages of the rise and fall of great nations seem to be the following: The age of pioneers, the age of conquests, the age of commerce, the age of affluence, the age of intellect; the age of decadence. Now he says, “Decadence is marked by defensiveness, pessimism, materialism, frivolity, an influx of foreigners, the welfare state, and a weakening of Religion. And decadence is due,” he says, “To too long a period of wealth and power, selfishness, love of money, the loss of a sense of duty.” This was written over a hundred years ago, or about a hundred years ago. And it is as true today as it has been throughout history. Who will replace America? I don’t know, I don’t know, but the kingdom of God is coming soon and that will be the ultimate replacement.

**Miller:** (32:05) Let’s bring it back then to the local history that we’re really wanting to emphasize today. So let’s get back to Lynchburg. You’re living in Lynchburg. Can you tell us anything about being a parent at LCA, did you have any particular involvement with Lynchburg Christian Academy?

**Thomas:** (32:23) Yeah, my kids went there so yeah I was involved. I love Lynchburg. It’s the first small town—small to me, having grown up in Washington, lived in New York and Houston—that I’d ever lived in. You get to know the people at the bank by name and people at the restaurant. You recognize the waiter/waitress and just—it was a different experience for me. It was a great experience. We had made friends here that you know occasionally we still see, and only lived here for five years, but it was great. The whole idea—we had one of the things that
lead me here—I mean obviously the Lord lead me here, I think, but we had gotten a note home from our youngest son elementary school, public elementary school. Inviting parents to a meeting to discuss the growing drug problem at that elementary school, and I wasn’t making much money at the time, and I turned to my wife, I said, “If I have to bag groceries at night at the local supermarket; he’s not going back to that school”, and that’s what really converted my way of thinking on the absolute preeminence of a biblical-based education. That you can’t have a significant worldview that will help you through life to navigate all of the temptations and trials that come your way without a—the Bible as your intellectual and moral foundation. And so that along with Jerry’s generous offer of, you know, scholarships for the kids and the offer at vice president of Moral Majority. All of those things put together, and I was ready to go. Somebody else had offered me a job somewhere else and I remember praying with my wife, “You know Lord, Oswald Chamber says, ‘Your will is God’s will, if you’re rightly related to Christ, unless He steps in and checks.”’ So I remember praying the kitchen with her in Rockville, Maryland, “Lord, I’m going to take this other job, unless you step in and check,” and the next day Jerry called me. Check, that’s why I came here.

Miller: (0:34:33) I first met you in 2007 a few days after Jerry Falwell’s funeral when you came to speak for a seminary banquet and it was kind of interesting to notice the national reaction to Jerry Falwell’s death compared to the local reaction around here, “We’re praying for you Macel.” You know, who all knew Jerry Falwell’s wife’s first name and all. And so, the question I’d like to ask you is, what sense were you getting in the Lynchburg community of the influence? You came in as an outsider and so you’re shopping, you’re at the gas stations, the grocery store, the barber shops, and all. What were you kind of getting the sense in the community of Lynchburg of the testimony or the influence of Thomas Road Baptist Church, Liberty, and the whole area?

Thomas: (0:35:24) Well, there was always a love-hate relationship early on between certain parts of the city. The newspaper, one reporter in particularly, I remember. And you know a couple of the professors at Lynchburg College. The city’s government liked him up to a point because he was bringing in revenue, and politicians forgive a lot of sins if you bring in revenue ‘cause money covers a multitude of sins in their mind, right? And he was building and so the construction people and those who supported the construction industry were happy about that, but they were embarrassed by the national attention and the constant references to Jesus and all these other things, so it was kind of a love-hate relationship. And I’m sure—I mean I didn’t go around and interview people, there were probably some people that said, “Oh thank the Lord he’s gone;” whatever lord they prayed to. And there were others who knew him, and this is the difference. I say a lot—we have been becoming increasingly divided since then. We’re all parts of groups now. We’re African-American. We’re Latino. We’re Hispanic. We’re gay. We’re straight. We’re conservative. We’re liberal. Everybody has a label now. We’re all parts of groups and I think that has further divided us. I don’t often quote Whoopi Goldberg favorably, but she said, “I’m not African-American, I’m an American.” Well God bless you, I believe that too. But
there are people who are interested in keeping us apart and I think that’s destructive to what is supposed to be the United States of America. In terms of your question, you know, I—I mean I came down for the funeral, didn’t stay very long, and went home because I had a lot going on, but I wanted to come and pay my respects, and met some old friends I haven’t seen since I was here, and told some stories, and heard some stories that was kind of fun.

Miller: (0:37:25) So let’s go into the Moral Majority era then. Tell us what you know about the foundation—formation of the Moral Majority. You were their communication director, so what was the message? What was happening on a day-by-day basis? What was your job? Tell us a little bit about your days, and your years with the Moral Majority?

Thomas: (0:37:45) Well of course it started in 1979 when Jerry met will Paul Weyrich and Howard Philips and they were speaking about the concern of the drift of the nation and they felt that Jimmy Carter was a disaster as president, that abortion continued to be a major problem, the drug scene. All these cultural problems that they correctly diagnosed and Howard and Paul were looking for a political solution and a relationship they believed with Jerry—who was very well respected in the fundamentalist and, increasingly, the evangelical community—as creating an amalgam of a political-religious force. And they sat around in a room and you know, “What are we going to call it?” And I think it was, it was either Howard or Paul, I can’t remember who came up with the idea of a moral majority which produced a bumper sticker years later that I laughed at. It said, “The Moral Majority is neither.” I love that, that was very funny. (chuckling) We used to collect some of these things.

Walters: (38:55) Were they playing on the whole thing of the Nixon era where there was a “Silent Majority”?

Thomas: (38:59) Yes, that was part of it. But the whole idea was flawed because if in fact there was a, quote, “Moral Majority”—whatever that meant, nobody really was able to define it—there wasn’t! Even at that time, the most liberal estimates were that maybe there were only about 30 million tops of people who identified as evangelical Christians. And within that group, maybe at the outside of Gallup was taken seriously, 50 million, but I think that was way too high. And even if you agreed with that in a nation that is now over 300 million people, that is not a majority. Now within evangelicalism, you have a lot of different stripes. You have African-Americans. You have the Jim Wallace Sojourners type—the more liberal wing. You have the moderate types like Christianity Today, and some of the folks in Wheaton, Illinois. So even that is fragmented so if you boil it down then to people who believed as we did—inerrancy of scripture, bodily resurrection, incarnation, virgin birth, all these doctrinal things—then you reduce the number even further. And then of course, the media which loved this kind of stuff, ate this up. I mean, Bill Moyers did this special in 1980 at the Dallas meeting that Reagan came to where he famously said, “You can’t endorse me, but I endorse you.” This was, I think, in August—July or August of 1980. Bill Moyers did a special, and I’ll never forget his question which made me laugh out loud. “Where did these people come from?” He comes out of liberal
Christianity. I was on his show once some years ago. He said, “Now Cal, you and I both read the same Bible, why do we come to different conclusions?” And I said, “Because I believe the author.” So that was kind of fun. I like Bill, he was kind of an interesting guy. So there really was no “Moral Majority” and of course there were no moral people. We’re all sinners, we’re all flawed. Nobody is righteous. No, not one, right? So that right there, but it caught on with the media and of course they hyped it because it was conflict, and the media loved conflict. And so, Jerry became a national and even international figure and that raised the level, and a lot of people knew we were taking in at one point a million dollars a day from folks sending in contributions who wanted a better country. Who doesn’t? Who wanted to “return,” in quotes, America to some bygone day that they thought was better than this. And I think it was an effort that meant well, but as I said earlier, it was bound to fail because the people we were trying to reach were a minority, not a majority. And the real solution was the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Walters: (41:55) Now in 1976—I’m showing my age here—but in 1976 I’m a little first-grader and I’m hearing the adults around me talking about how that Jimmy Carter is a born-again Christian and such, and I always found it a curiosity as I went through the next four years and approached junior high schooler age that here’s Jimmy Carter saying that he’s born again and yet the Moral Majority and my parents and other people were all hyped up against him. Can you speak to Christianity versus job performance so to speak?

Thomas: (42:33) Yeah, I—

Walters: (42:34) Speak to that sorta thing.

Thomas: (42:35) Yeah, I went to church with Jimmy Carter, I knew him. Very nice guy, I sat there in Sunday School with him when he taught the class, he had good Bible knowledge, still teaches, I think, in Plains, Georgia where he went back to and very nice guy and I got to know him a little bit and my wife danced with him once at the White House at a Christmas Party, there’s a picture somewhere of that. But there’s a difference between knowledge and application. You know, the Scriptures say, “By your fruits you shall know them.” We can’t, nobody can judge another person’s faith, so I take it as an act of faith and credibility that he loves Jesus, however, there is something else. There is a belief not only in Jesus, but there’s a belief in God’s written word and, you know, “By your fruits you shall know them.” So I think there are certain basics that a true believer has to embrace because the Scriptures are very clear and Jimmy Carter was not embracing these things, abortion is a primary one. He hired Sarah Weddington as a top advisor; she was the attorney in the Roe vs. Wade case in 1973. Why would you do this? This would be like President Obama hiring a member of the Ku Klux Klan, I mean, what would that be about? And then on—he’s now for same sex marriage. Clearly marriage is a covenant established by God between a man and a woman. No serious believer who believes the Bible is God’s written word, with Jesus being the incarnate word, can disagree with what it says. Now you can have disagreements and still be a serious believer, on taxes, on the defense budget, you can argue those things and a lot of other stuff, but the central teachings of Scripture and
human relationships which God has established because He is our Creator, you cannot deny, or you’re denying Scripture. So I don’t judge somebody else’s faith when they tell me that they are born again, but I do judge the application of that faith on fundamentals of Scripture when it comes to human relationships and the value of human life.

**Miller:** (44:58) Now in the Moral Majority when you came on you were the communication director, have your views evolved even in the five years that you worked for them? So did you start off believing in what they were doing—

**Thomas:** (45:11) Yes.

**Miller:** (45:12) —and that diminished through the years?

**Thomas:** (45:15) Yes. As I became more serious about the Bible and what it teaches and learning about the two kingdoms and what Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world, if it were, I would have told you.” And the concept—the ultimate church-state moment when Jesus stood before Pilate and Pilate said to Him, “Don’t you realize I have the power of life and death over you?” And Jesus said, “You wouldn’t have that power at all if my Father hadn’t given it to you.” And what Paul says to Timothy about God places leaders in positions and we should pray for those in authority and I’ve met President Obama last week for the first time—it’s taken me six years—at the Grid Iron Dinner and people said, “What’d you say to him?” I said, “I told him that we pray for him every Sunday in our church.” He was kind of taken aback, I think. He said, “Well thank you and thank your congregation.” But that’s what we’re required to do; it doesn’t mean you just pray for Presidents you voted for. God has His own purposes with who He puts in authority. You look throughout Scripture; He would put leadership in authority when the ancient Israelites were rebellious. He put horrible leaders—He put them in bondage in Egypt! He had got Babylon; He exiled them because they were worshipping false gods. We worship false gods, but we’re more sophisticated about it. We don’t set up altars now, but we worship the false god of the Republican Party, we worship the false god of the kingdom of this world and there were consequences to that. So yeah my views on that and the limitation of political power have evolved, but not on the fundamental issues I believed in when I was here.

**Miller:** (46:48) So for the history for the record when you first started with the Moral Majority, what was it you were trying to get the members to do, okay? You know, you get your card. You send us some money. Is this just a place to send money and let us decide what we’re going to do with it or were you trying to, you know…?

**Thomas:** (47:04) Trying to get them to register to vote. As I said earlier, you know, Jerry led the—he was the Moses leading the fundamentalist out of their Egypt, their catacombs, their separation from culture and from government. After the Scopes trial, they had retreated, and they left a barren public square devoid of their influence and their—and the Word of God. And so, he was back into engaging culture. Now there’s nothing wrong with that. I mean I engage culture in my columns, but I see my role now far more important than hoping that someone would read a
column who is a liberal-democrat and say, “Wow, that was such a powerful argument. I think I’ll vote republican in the next election.” I mean that never happens. So God gave me the platform not to consume on myself or to convince people of the rightness of my position, but as a means to witnessing to my colleagues. That is a far, far more satisfying, and I feel the pleasure of God in that, and we’ve seen many of them come to Christ as a result of that. So that’s—and then change their minds. I mean, look Bob Beckel, my great brother had the privilege of leading to Christ and he became a pro-lifer and the story I like to tell about him is that he used to do these fundraisers for Kate Michelman, then the head of the National Abortion Rights Action League, and she called him a year after he was converted or two years, and said, “What are you going to do for us this year Bob?” He said, “I can’t do it anymore, Kate.” And she said, “Cal got to you, didn’t he?” And he said, “No, Jesus did.” You see now there’s the difference. I argued with Bob on pro-life position, never changed his mind, but when he was transformed by the renewing of his mind, he changed his mind. This is the greater power that we have, and if we subsume it into politics and become just another interest group along with teachers’ unions and the Koch brothers who are libertarians and all that, just one more group to be placated. I remember George H.W. Bush once came to the National Religious Broadcasters and quoted my favorite Bible verse, John 16:3. He got it wrong. He meant John 3:16, but someone said, “Throw a Bible verse at them, they’ll vote for you.” That’s the kind of cynical manipulation that comes out of this and will get a politician out using religion. “We need to get back to God. Yay!” And we’ll vote for them and then they get in office and what do they do? You know nothing.

Walters: (0:49:32) So tell us though. What were—what was a typical month like in Moral Majority?

Thomas: (0:49:39) Yeah.

Walters: (0:49:40) How did lobbying work? Give us the operations so to speak as you saw it and, you know, how did things go?

Thomas: (0:49:46) Well my primary thing was kinda be a second in command to Jerry when he wasn’t available or didn’t have the time or whatever. I would be the voice. I’d do the interviews with print and broadcast media. I know I did the old Phil Donahue Show, I think at least ten times. I think I did it once with him. But mostly you know, when he wasn’t available, and so I would and I guess I had some credibility with some of the media because I’d come out of it. I mean, for a brief time anyway, I had these credentials. I’d worked for NBC. I was doing some other things so, and I knew a lot of these people and they liked me personally and so they’d have me on and you know, I’d talk about what we were for. You know we were pro-life, pro-traditional family. I still remember it. You know, we were against the drug culture. We were for a strong national defense and pro-Israel. I can’t believe I remember all five of those right now. That’s how they were drummed into me, and so that got a lot of discussion and debate and again the media loved conflict and I would be on with four, five, or six, sometimes ten liberals and just me which was great; I prefer working alone, and you know, they’d kick it around, and I
remember one line in some of the T.V. evangelism scandals in the eighties. I was on—did a Donahue Show. “Now Cal you’re not going to sit here and tell us these people represent true Christianity are you?” This is in New York hostile audience, you know. I said, “No, I’m not going to say that Phil, any more than I’d say that you represent true American manhood.” So I was able to turn things around, get a laugh from the audience, be self-deprecating on occasion and still make the point. So that was kind of my role. Then I did a radio commentary that was on several hundred radio stations every day addressing some of these issues.

Walters: (51:30) So where—if you were going to work, where was work geographically? How often did you go to D.C.? Did you interact with Doctor Godwin? Wasn’t he the VP—the executive VP? Tell us about the workings as best you remember and what you can offer us there.

Thomas: (51:52) Well there were no typical days, I mean we had a Washington office, I didn’t go up—I went up there occasionally. When Nightline wanted me on, they’d send a plane and that was kind of nice. There were no typical days. Again, I was writing scripts, I was answering press calls. My major job was to interact with media questions and answer their questions or do interviews. You know, write an occasional letter to the editor. I remember I helped Jerry write this “My turn” column for Newsweek Magazine. To try and to put a face on the Moral Majority and keep our issues in front of the public and energize people about the importance of getting registered to vote, and to vote intelligently because those who disagreed with us certainly were organizing people on the other side. So those were my major duties and responsibilities. No two days were alike. Sometimes I’d be traveling, sometimes I’d be here, you know I had—but that was my major role.

Walters: (52:55) And what was your take on Dr. Falwell as he went through this? He was having a high old time just living, you know, totally enjoying it or did he do it somewhat out of regretful hope?

Thomas: (53:06) No, no, no, he was a joy to be with. He had an incredible, positive personality. I took him to an African-American church in Washington once. I remember this, I wanted him to meet some black pastors there who I knew, and it was really interesting. I mean, I saw acts of great compassion and kindness that the world didn’t see, and I never wrote about it. But I remember it was a young black child. He went to the airport with us to fly back to Lynchburg. And Jerry was asking him what he wanted to do and the rest, and the kid had a—you know, wanted to make something out of himself. He came from a single parent home as I recall, and Jerry gave him—wrote down his private phone number, his home phone number—and said, “When you graduate from high school, you call me, and you’ll have a four-year scholarship at Liberty. And at one time he was walking down the street in Washington and Macel was with him, and there was a beggar on the street, and Jerry took some money out of his pocket and gave it to him. Macel said, “Jerry! Don’t do that! He’s just going to spend it on cheap wine or something like that.” Well…you know. Jerry had the capacity for great kindness because he had a lot of opposition when he came to Lynchburg from the denomination…sorry, the
fundamentalist group that didn’t want him to start another church here because there was already one here, so I can retell the story, I’ve heard it a thousand times—the old Donald Duck bottling plant, you know. He started Thomas Road Baptist Church and of course he turned it into a megachurch, but he was fun to be around. He was a practical joker. Sometimes we’d get up early in the morning and we’d be traveling together coming out of the hotel and he’d go down the hallway at six-thirty in the morning and he’d knock on somebody’s door and run to the elevator and some half-dressed person angry would open the door and I’d just be passing by and they thought it was me. He, one time coming out of New York as a joke he ordered the pilot to put the plane into a dive—probably violated some federal regulation—scared the heck out of everybody, it was very funny. He was a practical joker, I mean, he was a lot of fun to be around. And people didn’t understand and that’s what confused a lot of people ‘cause they had this image, you know? Of some guy who wanted—if he had this opportunity, he’d pass out chastity belts to every woman, that he would—“Don’t go to movies, don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t chew, don’t go with girls who do.” Negative, negative, negative, negative and then they’d meet him—and it would be something totally different, and he had a tremendous ability to debate. He was absolutely the best I’d ever seen. He could turn an argument around, even one that the host would thought he would be losing, and come out of it victorious, wiping the floor with the other guy. It was amazing to watch.

Miller: (56:02) So you dealt with a lot of politicians and a lot of theologians and all. Just going to throw out some names and if you could just share some memories—Francis Schaeffer.

Thomas: (56:16) Well he was a major influence in my life. I think I was responsible for bring him here and introducing him to Jerry and having him speak. He taught me how think. There were three major players in my early life with Christ. One was Dick Halverson who got me out of religion and introduced me to Jesus. The second was a man in Houston name Ralph Neighbor who taught me sound doctrine. And the third was Francis Schaeffer who taught me how to think. And all three of those put together form the foundation for what I do and how I think today. So Schaeffer was an enormous influence and continues to be in his books—continues to speak to a dying culture today as they did then.

Miller: (57:00) Did you had a personal relationship with him or just kind of watch him from afar?

Thomas: (57:05) Yes, Yes. I visited with him in L’Abri. I had meals with him. When he visited the U.S, I went to various things—the movie: “Whatever Happened to the Human Race,” “How Should We then Live,” I was in on some of those—helped him promote them.

Miller: (57:21) I got to visit him in the Mayo Clinic in Rochester right before he died.


Miller: (57:27) Tim LaHaye?
Thomas: (57:28) I like Tim and Beverly they were another great voice—practically Beverly with ‘Conservative Christian Women’. She and Phyllis Schlafly of course were great antidotes to the feminist movement of the time. I think of course Tim’s series—“Left Behind” series was a huge hit and it caused a lot of people to think about the end times, which a good thing to think about ‘cause I think we’re in the middle of them.

Miller: (57:57) Well now, you had the whole ERA thing in the 80s. Where do you see feminism being right now? That it used to be a major force and everybody was talking about it.

Thomas: (58:08) Yeah.

Miller: (58:09) And so now have they achieved the goals that they want to have or what do you think about the whole…?

Thomas: (58:11) Oh, they never achieve the goals they want to have because then—you know success is the enemy of fundraising. So if we ever solved racial conflict in America what would Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson do? You got to look at the Middle East, I mean, when Clinton was President he brings Yasser Arafat to Camp David, gives him back ninety-five percent of what he wants and Arafat turns him down because he wants the conflict. So conflict is something that raises money and gets attention, but I think feminism is kind of fractured. I think you’ve got the next generation which look, not all feminism is bad, equal pay for equal work is certainly a good thing, allowing women to sign contracts in their own names without their husband’s co-signature, there’s nothing wrong with that. A woman should be able to have credit in her own name and all these other things, so I think to a certain extent, that element of feminism was a good thing. The rest of it you know, the Betty Friedan and the Gloria Steinem, “Women need a man like a fish needs a bicycle” those kinds of things, I mean, I think there are certain things in human nature that desires the other gender. God has made us male and female, but society is pretty much dissipated. I think younger women are suffering from the two elements that were introduced in the late fifties and early sixties. The Playboy philosophy of Hugh Hefner which detached sex from a martial commitment and the philosophy of Helen Gurley-Brown of Cosmopolitan Magazine, who famously said that, “Nice girls go to heaven, bad girls go everywhere,” bad theology, but on the one, but nevertheless. So I think a lot of women are looking—and what’s the number one complaint among women today? Men who can’t commit, and that comes out of this movement of the sixties—the feminism and Hugh Hefner.

Miller: (1:00:03) Before we leave Tim LaHaye, you had mentioned Howard Phillips and Paul Weyrich as the kind of the founders of the Moral Majority along with Jerry Falwell. But wasn’t there a group of people that included Tim LaHaye? Did you have an advisory board?

Thomas: (1:00:16) Oh yeah, that came along later. Sure, and Charles Stanley was on it for a while and yeah a number of prominent pastors and theologians were part of it.

Miller: (1:00:25) But that was a later as far as the meeting where it was all formed it was…
Thomas: (1:00:30) Those three were kind of the trinity of the Moral Majority movement.

Miller: (1:00:34) Pat Robertson?

Thomas: (1:00:37) Well he certainly was a force in raising the visibility of what we called then “The Moral Issues in the Country.” Another man who had started out small his father was a U.S. Senator from Virginia. Started out with a small investment and a small television station in Virginia Beach and transformed it into the juggernaut that became the 700 Club.

Miller: (1:01:02) Now, he had an unsuccessful run for president there. In those days, he had his Christian organization and there was the Moral Majority. Were you kind of co-belligerence or were you competitors?

Thomas: (1:01:19) Well the Christian Coalition came along later. And I mean to a certain extent, everybody was competing for a piece of the same size pie. You had Jimmy Swaggart out there before his collapse. A lot of people on TV, and it was competition for basically the same people. It wasn’t growing. Businesses grow, universities grow, growth is important for financial stability, but pretty much back then we were talking to the same group of people and competing for their contributions and donations.

Miller: (1:02:02) Charles Colson.

Thomas: (1:02:05) Well he certainly was a great miracle of God. I mean the top Nixon aid, hatchet man, book Born Again, wrote another book called, Who Speaks for God? which was really good and he made a lot of the points I’ve made in this interview about the two kingdoms and how they’re going in different directions. Now he kind of changed his mind. You know, he started Prison Fellowship was his greatest work founding that, but then he got into the politics of it. He pretty much separated himself for some time, but then he made this alliance with James Dobson and I think they were herding a prison fellowship for funds, is what I’ve heard, but that was his greatest work and his most enduring work.

Miller: (1:02:50) R.J. Rushdoony was more mentioned among the intellectual folks there was a certain—there was a certain stripe of folks that he appealed too. Can you just comment on his whole philosophy there; almost of theocracy type of thing?

Thomas: (1:03:09) Yeah. Well, you know, I’ve met him a few times. Interesting guy and, but again this is the idea that your—that believers are going to create a theocracy and force everybody to agree to their view of God and what He wants. This is what we’re fighting against now in the Islamic world. That’s their point of view that their god wants a theocracy and to kill everybody who doesn’t agree with them. That’s a very dangerous thing and I, you know, because we’re all sinners and nobody has God’s point of view. We can all be corrupted by that kind of power and again as I’ve said earlier, not everybody agrees with that. Not every Christian believes that. Somebody said to me once, “Well you know the Old Testament calls for the stoning of
adulterers. Would you agree with that?” I said, “If that’s the only way we can get term limits in Congress, I’m for it.” (Chuckles) You got to use the humor here. But this is—this is not what, you know, God gives us the freedom to choose and He chooses whom He wishes to come to His kingdom. Not based on our merit, but based on His grace and mercy, and I think that’s the kind of humility that draws people willingly by the power of the Holy Spirit to Himself not a theocracy.

Miller: (1:04:22) Couple other names, Jesse Helms.

Thomas: (1:04:24) Well, you know. I knew him a little bit. He was a great friend of Liberty and of Jerry, and he was a very, very strong and consistent conservative. There was never any hypocrisy with him. You knew exactly where he stood at all times. He didn’t put his finger in the wind to see about the shifting, you know, winds of public opinion. He was a consistent conservative. Nobody agrees with anybody a hundred percent. I think he was wrong on Martin Luther King holiday. African-Americans wanted a holiday so they could celebrate the contributions of that man, but I mean a lot of other things, foreign policy, especially, he was right on.

Miller: (1:05:04) Robert Billings.

Thomas: (1:05:05) I didn’t know him that well. I mean I knew him a little bit. Kind of a, you know, I don’t want to say French, but he was kind of on the sidelines for some things. As I recall, he was very strong on biblically based education, and I’d see him from time to time, but not often. I didn’t know him well.

Miller: (1:05:22) ‘Kay. I grew up in Minnesota and so I was just going to use this as an example to say… for the state of Minnesota, just to pick that one as an example. We had things that were on the steps of all of the capitals across—you know, the “I Love America” rallies, but what was the Moral Majority trying to get individual people who were members of the Moral Majority to do in Minnesota? Were they trying to have state influence? Or was this a national organization and we’re—we’ve got our big five and we’re trying to deal with things on the national level? That’s really my question.

Thomas: (1:06:01) Well we put out the image that we were organized in all fifty states, but as I—Ed and I wrote in Blind by Might that wasn’t exactly true. I mean it’s—there was sometimes there was a phone, a separate phone on the Pastor’s desk for those pastors who wanted to be part of it, and just because he had a phone on there, we said, “Well that was our chapter member.” But I don’t recall any money going from here to the chapters. It usually was the other way around and I think that, you know, turned off some people who felt that whatever work they were doing was not appreciated at headquarters. They were looking for some kind of return on their investment and, as I recall, didn’t really get it, that’s just the way the organization was setup.
Miller: (1:06:44) So when you left the Moral Majority what kind of happened to it after that?

Thomas: (1:06:56) Well it—I left in ’85, my column had started in ’84 and I had to make a choice. I knew I didn’t come here to stay here forever. I mean, I knew I was going to be here a limited time. I didn’t know how much—how limited it would be but when the column started in ’84 it was clear that God was moving me out and was going to do something really exceedingly, abundantly above all that I’d asked or even thought. I had no idea that it was going to take off as it did and become the number one syndicated column in the country. But—so I left in ’85 and I, you know, I wrote Jerry, “Thanks for the privilege of being here. It’s been an incredible experience,” and you know we parted friends and kept up from time-to-time until the book came out.

Miller: (1:07:39) Recently, the Archive’s gotten a large collection of papers from the Conservative Caucus, Howard Phillips’ group. What can you tell us about them? Was there any connection between the Conservative Caucus and the Moral Majority?

Thomas: (1:07:55) Well there was a working relationship I think. Nothing—I don’t think there was a formal legal document or anything of that nature. Howard was a… well very smart man. I almost said intellect, but he may not like that, and he—each one brought something. Paul Weyrich was very knowledgeable about the workings on Capitol Hill. When he had come to Washington he had worked for a senator I think from Kansas I believe he was from. And so he was very smart about the operation thereof. Howard was more of a political visionary. Jewish background, later became a believer, and was very strong on Israel and knew a lot of the philosophy behind some of these issues. He was a very strong constitutionalist as Mark Levin and some of the others who followed him. So he knew his constitution and he wanted a government based on the constitution again, and of course he was correct—he was absolutely right on that. We’ve seen all the consequences what has happened that we have escaped the borders that the constitution provided.

Walters: (1:09:20) Tell us about the Reagan Presidency and the whole—how did we come to…how did we (chuckles) How did the Moral Majority come to support Ronald Reagan in particular? Do you know anything about that endorsement if it was an endorsement? Tell us about did you have any exposure to him directly in those years?

Thomas: (1:09:44) Well, I met him. First time I’d met him in ’76, I think, when he came through Houston when I was working there. He was running against Gerald Ford, it was kind of a brief, and he wasn’t all that serious about a campaign. But I liked him immediately. I mean, he had the actor’s skills and the way of connecting to people, and I was really impressed by how he had thought out issues, and revealed later in the books about his radio essays and how he had slowly converted from a Roosevelt democrat to the republican philosophy. I think that he knew how to speak the language that connected with conservatives, a very nice and ingratiating man. You met him and you just felt that you were the only one in the room that he was speaking to you and
really cared about what you had to say. That’s a gift, not all politicians have it. Clinton had it. This one—Obama doesn’t have it. But I think he spoke the language as I said in that meeting in Dallas, “You can’t endorse me but I can endorse you.” He ticked off the big government, cultural collapse, abortion, all this stuff that resonated with the so-called Religious Right at that time. Those were our issues, and he knew that. Now, he tried to do something about it, but was not completely successful. He tried to get rid of the education department, but Reagan also had a great line, “The only proof of eternal life in Washington is a government program.” And it is pretty tough to kill anything once it gets started. And then, you know, I think he disappointed a lot of people when he named Sandra Day O’Connor because they wanted the first woman on the Supreme Court. And I remember saying at the time on Nightline—I was on with George Will—That she had a very thin background as a state legislator in Arizona, and I didn’t think conservatives that were going to be happy about it. Now I got a lot of flak for that. Somebody told me, “We can’t be publically against Reagan because we need the access.” And that was one of the things that was kind of a shocker to me. I thought we were about principle, you know, we were going to stand on principle, but you need the access to give the appearance of influence, and the appearance of influence gets the contributions. People send in for that.

Walters: (1:12:06) Well, I think… am I right on this? That in Blinded by Might there’s an anecdote about him calling and apologizing almost about it or, “trust me on this” to…

Thomas: (1:12:16) Yeah, but before. He called Jerry; he made a number of calls, and one was to Jerry and said, “Trust me on this,” because Jerry had this relationship with him. He trusted him. But I think there were others who wanted to get the first woman on the court as a political act to soften Reagan’s image among certain groups.

Walters: (1:12:40) Well then were there any other issues that the call went the other way so to speak? Where the phone call so to speak where the president calls up someone at Moral Majority and says, “I’m about to do this,” or “What do you think of this?”

Thomas: (1:12:55) Not that I recall, he wouldn’t have called me, he would have called Jerry if he called anybody. But no, I don’t think it worked that way. I think, you know, that Jerry was very strongly supportive of him as I was and many were. I mean, Reagan was a breath of fresh air after the miserable Carter years

Miller: (1:13:18) The misery index

Thomas: (1:13:19) The misery index, yeah, double digit inflation, double digit unemployment, and high gas prices, long lines and all that stuff.

Miller: (1:13:27) In 1984, Liberty was an intrinsic part to Baptist Fundamentalism ’84, and they got Ronald Reagan to come and speak. Did you have anything to do with that?
Thomas: (1:13:38) No, I didn’t have anything to do that, but I do remember that now that you bring it up. I hadn’t thought about it in years. I do remember the event. I think that the whole world fundamentalism is no longer in vogue really, it’s past its prime. There’re places like Tennessee Temple University that are closed. Some of these other places don’t have the—you know, people want a positive, affirming, joyful faith. They don’t want to be locked into the world is completely evil and you’ve got to be entirely separated from it and hunker down in a bunker somewhere and wait for Jesus to come. And that’s what Liberty is not! You walk around the campus, kids are smiling and nice looking, dressed well—or well they don’t dress well, but that’s college. You know, they’re positive, they’re fun to be with, and that’s what a Christian University ought to be.

Miller: (1:14:35) I think they prefer to use the term “conservative evangelical” these days, rather than fundamentalist.

Thomas: (1:14:40) Well I don’t even like labels. I remember Jerry and I were together at the 1984 democratic convention in San Francisco which was quite an experience as you might imagine. Sister Boom-Boom, some guy dressed up as a nun, was among the demonstrators outside. And I did an interview, my column had just started, and I did this interview with a reporter for the Christian Science Monitor. And she asked me at the end of the interview, she said, “By the way, are you born-again?” I said, “What do you mean by that?” She said, “Well… you know.” I said, “Yeah, I know, but do you know?” She said, “Well I guess I don’t know.” I said, “Well why would you want to use a label you don’t know the meaning of.” She said, “Well would you tell me what it means?” I said, “Sure, I’d be delighted. Now the first thing you need to know is the term was not invented by Jimmy Carter, though the guy’s initials were the same.” I was working with CNN once and a producer said, “What are you?” I said, “Tall.” She said, “No no, where do you go to church?” I said, “I am the church.” She said, “Look wise guy, what do you do on Sunday morning?” I said, “Well, depending on how I feel, I get a cup of coffee, read the paper, take a shower.” “Look, when you leave the house, where do you go?” I gave her an address. She said, “Is there a building there?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “What’s the name on the building?” I said, “What are you getting at?” She said, “I want to know what you believe.” I said, “Now we can have a conversation.” Somebody asked me, “What’s your denominational background?” I said, “Fives, tens, twenties, fifties and hundreds.” See, if you give them a label, they’re able to define you by their understanding, or more importantly their misunderstanding, of the label. So I want them to ask a question. I want to go back to the original cast. The original cast is always better than the road show, right? So the original cast is Jesus and the disciples, let’s talk about them and not all this other stuff.

Miller: (1:16:19) Well in that light though, there was this whole movement called the “Religious Right.” How would you define the Religious Right?

Thomas: (1:16:29) Well I think they were right about—we were right about a lot of things. But going back to what I said earlier, you don’t force those things through the political system on
people who don’t agree with them. You have to make your case in a fallen world in the general marketplace of ideas. I asked John Stott, the great theologian and one of the Queen’s spiritual advisors, this question some years ago. When I was a reporter in Houston, I saw a man come in and the issue was about whether to allow certain adult bookstores to expand in a certain area of Houston. And this man came in, and he had a big King James Bible with him. He plunked it down on the lectern and was about to give his testimony before the city council and he starts quoting scripture. Now I said to John Stott there was nothing wrong with what he said because it was right out of the bible, but he didn’t get his way because that’s all he had to say. And I said, “What should he have done?” And John Stott told me that, “He should have made the case that God’s principles work regardless if whether you quote their source or not.” So he should have talked about the loss of the tax base, the increase in crime that comes when you allow these kinds of places to proliferate, the potential and actual abuse of women and young girls. Go down and make a case based on the consequences of this kind of behavior rather than quoting scripture to a city council that may not believe or accept it. And that’s what I call being as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. Gambling, you know let’s take that—or now they call it gaming because we change labels, but it’s the same thing. All the promises made by the gaming industry: we’re going to have more money for education, we’re going to have more jobs, it’s going to improve the local economy. Every time that’s been allowed, it’s proven to be false. So you don’t go in and try to make a biblical case to a secular government, you go in and point out how the promises have not been lived up to and how they can’t be lived up to because you are appealing to the lower nature of people, see? So that’s the way you do it.

Walters: (1:18:51) Well even Jesus himself told stories.

Thomas: (1:18:53) Exactly, parables. Yup, absolutely, that’s the way to do it.

Miller: (1:19:00) So, as you’re in those years when you were heavily involved with the Moral Majority so you were really interacting with the other side. What was the reaction of the liberal world to the Moral Majority? What were some of their tactics? You know, I…

Thomas: (1:19:17) They were scandalized; I mean they thought they had the whole territory to themselves. The first line was, “violating church/state separation.” They always dragged that out. And then when it was pointed out that they were doing the exact same thing from the left for last thirty or forty years, they tried to shift into some other opposition line, whatever it was. It varied from place to place. And then you had Norman Lear come in with People for the American Way. George McGovern started a small group that didn’t last very long, I forget the name of it. And other groups from the left that tried to counter the Moral Majority, but of course they already had the platform. They had the big media at the time, this is before cable and talk radio. We were just saying we wanted to be a part of this pluralism and tolerance that we hear so much about. So I use this as a debating tactic; I turn their own language around on them. You’re talking about inclusion, but you want to exclude us. You’re talking about tolerance, but you’re not tolerant
toward us. You’re talking about participation, but you don’t want us to participate. So you turn
their arguments around on them and make them defend their position, works every time.

**Miller:** (1:20:34) I seem to have heard some stories about Dr. Falwell and Jesse Jackson, do you
have any memories?

**Thomas:** (1:20:40) Yeah, I invited Jesse to come down here, I’ve known him for a number of
years. Jerry was shocked when I told him, and he said, “Well, we’re not going to put him on
television but he can come in during the church service.” It was really interesting, because then
Jesse invited Jerry to a black church downtown. And the people were asking for Jerry’s
autograph, and Jesse made some disparaging remark about them which I won’t repeat here. I
mean, I was there and watched all this stuff. But Jerry had an interesting relationship with the
black community. I remember he—this was amazing—he went and spoke at a black, I think it
was a Baptist church in Baltimore once, and I was with him. He talked about being brought up in
a racist subculture, a segregationist era where black people were not allowed to be baptized in
the church he went to, and the black jokes and this kind of thing. He talked about his conversion
to that other point of view that we’re all made in God’s image and said some other deeply
personal things which he didn’t talk about too often. The pastor got up afterward, I’ll never
forget it, he said, “I’m not as interested in where a man was twenty-five years ago, as where he is
today,” and welcomed him. The black community is very forgiving. You know, they’ve been
robbed of a lot of things by some of their bad, bad leaders who want only their votes and only
their money and whose lives have not been changed. It was interesting to see Jerry interact with
black people.

**Miller:** (1:22:27) Seemed like there was a college he went to and there was kind of an uprising
and there was kind of an uprising—what’s your position on this? And he says, you know, and
how many African-American students or black students do you have at Liberty University? Do
you know the story I’m talking about?

**Thomas:** (1:22:44) Well, vaguely yeah, but there were growing numbers. You know when they
couldn’t make a case of their stereotype and when Jerry would say, you know, “We have black
people, we have Asian people, we have women, we have Hispanic people, we have—anybody is
welcome at Liberty.” If they want to apply and come at the same standards as everybody, it kind
of flummoxed them because they expected a stereotype of the Bob Jones University situation
where at one time they didn’t allow interracial dating. You know, they expected that and they
didn’t get it and so they didn’t know where to go after that.

**Miller:** (1:23:20) It was something along the lines of, “I regret that we only have 13% of our
students that are black,” or something and, “How many do you have?” Yeah, “How many do you
have,” and it was actually a lower percentage at the state school.

**Thomas:** (1:23:34) Sort of like the argument on equal pay, you know? You hear all these libs
argue about equal pay for women, and then you find out that even the white house staff or even
Hilary Clinton when she was senator from New York, pay their female staff members less than men. I believe this is what they call hypocrisy.

Miller: (1:23:52) Well, why don’t you at this point tell us about when you started writing your newspaper columns? How you got into writing the column, and let’s just share that story.

Thomas: (1:24:06) Well I published a book in 1983, which Jerry generously promoted, called “Book Burning.” It was about censorship from the left. So I had never written for newspapers. I came out of a broadcast background. And I decided as a lark, well I’ll write a column. So I wrote I don’t know…600 words? Well, where am I going to send this? Well I’ll send it to the least likely paper in the world to print it, The New York Times, right? They printed it! I have it framed on my wall at home, it’s a historic document. Got an idea when Ted Kennedy came down here, I wrote another called “A Man Who Came to Dinner.” The Washington Post printed that along with a great cartoon that shows two demons out in front of the white house with frost all over the fence—the line being “when hell freezes over,” and the headline was “Ted Kennedy Comes To Liberty Baptist College” as it was called then. And so long story short, I started sending these around to various syndicates, and they all turned me down. And I called an old friend who I had met when he was a White House fellow for Lyndon Johnson; his name was Tom Johnson no relationship, no relation, was then the publisher of the L.A. Times and I said, “Tom, I think there’s a dearth of good conservative commentary in the op-ed page.” He said, “Well maybe you’re right. Next time you’re out here let me know, and I’ll set you up with a meeting with our syndicate people. So I did and that morning I prayed in my hotel room in L.A. for God to do a greater miracle than Moses parting the Red Sea, for him to part the liberal mind. And I said, “If you feel I’m ready for this, I will seek to honor you with it.” And I went to lunch with the chief copy editor and the vice president of the L.A. Times syndicate. They spent an hour telling me all the reasons they couldn’t take on a new columnist. After an hour of me responding to all these objections, one of them asked me, “I understand that you’re a Christian, is that right?” I said, “Oh man…what do I do now?” If I’m too forthcoming they’ll say ‘well this guy belongs on a religion page’ and I just said maybe remembering my prayer that morning. I told them what Jesus meant to me and how he had changed my life. As soon as I finished, he turned to the chief copy editor and said, “Hey, isn’t so and so leaving us in April?” She said, “Yeah, I’d forgotten that.” And he said, “Can you do two columns a week for us beginning April 17?” And that was, as we record this, almost thirty-one years ago and it has been an amazing journey. And that’s why I have inscribed on the back of my watch 1 Samuel 2:30, “He who honors me, I will honor.”

Miller: (1:26:33) So what did you really see then as the purpose of your column? Did you start off with a definite purpose in mind and even today do you have an overriding goal?

Thomas: (1:26:44) Well I think God has given me the platform so that I can be a witness to my colleagues. The rest is just sort of window dressing. I think it’s important to have these principles and concepts and beliefs put out there in the mainstream to be part of the discussion. And it is my
hope that I present them in a credible way. Some of the mail that I get is very encouraging along those lines. Some people say, “Well I may not agree with you, but I respect your opinion or the way you stated it, or you’re not coming off as judgmental or the rest.” So, you know, when I’m arguing in favor of traditional marriage for example, I just point to the sociological impact. I, you know there’s no point in quoting scripture to a largely unbelieving audience. So I talk about the sociological impact the… of the demeaning, diminishing of the value of marriage, and now we have a new study that is coming out on the consequences to children of same-sex parents. World Magazine has got a cover story—were doing this March 2015 on the subject. So I think if you’re going to talk about changing traditional behavior patterns that have despite our flaws over many, many millennia have proved to be far more workable than so-called alternative lifestyles. Then you—it seems to me that you have to justify why yours is better or equal to the ones that have stood the test of time.

Miller: (1:28:31) I…

Thomas: (1:28:32) It’s like more money for government. I mean, government needs more money like Dracula needs more blood. I mean, he’s got enough already, right?

Miller: (1:28:40) (Chuckles) I kind of use as my guideline: well if I would be convinced if someone quoted the Qur’an, then I’ll use the Bible in that sort of a realm, but you do use scripture occasionally in your columns and could you talk about how you decide to do that?

Thomas: (1:28:56) Well it’s easiest at Christmas time obviously, or—I don’t remember what I wrote last week, so I have to go back and look up stuff, but I think when you can make—when I can make a case that relates to something in the mainstream, I mean the easy one I remember off the top of my head. I quoted it recently when Al Gore at the Democratic Convention in 1992 said in his speech, “As the Bible says, ‘Eye have not seen nor ear heard what we can do if we put our mind to it.’” Well that’s a deliberate misquotation of what Paul writes and so in that case, I was able to say, “Well that’s not what it says” and to quote that exact passage and that was a legitimate, without my having to make anything up, use of that platform and it also gave me an opportunity when Gore’s book, Earth in the Balance, came out to examine his theological perspective on the environment. He says in the book that, “the first instance of pollution is in the Bible where Cain killed Abel and Abel’s blood cries out from the ground!” He also said the story of Noah’s Ark is an indication of how much God loves animals. So I knew I could destroy that, any first year seminary student could do that, but I called up Carl Henry, the great evangelical theologian and read it to him. He said, “Did he really say that?” I said, “Yeah, yeah.” He said, “I need a quote from you about that.” So he gave it to me and I was able to work that into my column. So this is you know I don’t—I’m a part of America, I’m a follower of Jesus, but I—I think my—they’re really not my ideas, they’re as ancient as scripture, are worthy to be tossed into the mix and sometimes even you can at least get the attention of an unbeliever if not always convert them to your point-of-view.
Miller: (1:30:45) So, you started off in broadcasting?

Thomas: (1:30:47) Mm huh.

Miller: (1:30:48) You then went to columns. You never really left broadcasting, but lately it seems you’ve been writing books and you have a new book out. You’ve been doing some book signings around here. What got you into the book publishing business and what is your goal with your books?

Thomas: (1:31:02) Huge advances. Well I mean people like a signed book. You go out and speak; they like something they can take home put on their bookshelf. Maybe if I amount to anything they can sell it on EBay. And books are very difficult for me to write. It’s an extremely disciplining endeavor that I have to add to everything else that I am doing. I write two columns a week for syndication. Never missed a deadline in thirty-one years, so that’s a hundred and four a year and however many thirty-one years times that is. I write the USA Today every other week, and then I do radio commentaries, I do speaking, I do care-giving for my wife who’s not—have the best of health, and I have a lot of competition as an aging, white male on my time. So I really don’t like doing the books, and sometimes I felt the thirtieth anniversary of my column is a good time to do one, and so did a little one.

Miller: (1:32:02) But your books aren’t just compilations of your columns—they’re original?

Thomas: (1:32:06) No… A couple of them are—they’re original things, but it’s funny because you know the secular world thinks I’m too religious and the religious world thinks I’m working to much in the secular arena. So, they don’t really sell a lot. They sell a lot on a lecture circuit. They just don’t sell a lot in book stores.

Miller: (1:32:21) Well let’s talk about broadcasting here. We did that other list of names and you did a good job with that; so here in the media—if we could throw out a few names to you. Rush Limbaugh, conservative guy have you worked with him, met him?

Thomas: (1:32:35) Oh yes, I know him. He’s endorsed a couple of my books. I’ve had dinner with him at his palatial estate in West Palm Beach—amazing place. I’ve said that he’s the greatest thing since the founding fathers. I think that—which is an over statement but appropriate in his case. I love him. I think I can’t listen to him all the time, but when I can I’m in the car or sometimes on the internet I try to tune in. He’s entertaining. He’s informative. He’s encouraging to conservatives. His brother I know even better—who’s a solid believer, a lawyer, and he spoke at our media dinner this year, the night before the national prayer breakfast, has a book out on why the trial of Jesus proves the truth of the gospel, is really a fascinating apologetic and interesting family. I like Rush a lot. I think he’s done a lot for encouraging the conservatives out there and frustrates the liberals because he’s so successful. They try to replicate of course what he does and none of them have been able to do it.
Miller: (01:33:40) Sean Hannity?

Thomas: (01:33:41) He’s another great example of an overcomer. Sean was painting houses and doing manual labor before he got into the media. He’s a very nice guy. He wrote the forward to my book, “What Works”—and used to do his show a lot. And I like it.

Miller: (01:34:02) Glenn Beck?

Thomas: (01:34:04) Only meant Glenn once. You know he had this show on Fox but he couldn’t really get sponsors for it. And that’s what—plus he said a lot of controversial—conspiratorial things. He’s doing great in Dallas. I think he’s down there with his publication, “The Blaze” and he does this internet subscription show. He’s a fascinating guy.

Miller: (01:34:26) Well just within the past twenty-four hours though he’s made some statement—“I’m done with the republican party” or something [laughing].

Thomas: (01:34:31) Don’t say that.

Miller: (01:34:32) Well that does bring to mind, and so I’ll get back to some names in just a moment here, but as a broadcaster you try to at least give some air of impartiality. You know, that it would be nice if we didn’t know clearly who that person was going to vote for because they were giving fair treatment to either side here—

Thomas: (01:34:53) (laughing) Yeah.

Miller: (01:34:54) You know, so how have you handled that tight rope walk? Do you clearly identify with one party? Consider yourself an independent? How do you handle that?

Thomas: (01:35:02) Well... again I don’t like labels. I did vote for Jimmy Carter the first time because—you know he had said he was born again. I heard him teach Sunday school and all that. And I thought he was going to usher in a new wave of—if not morality then at least the decency in the oval office following the Nixon era and all the problems associated with that. But, I think that was the last democrat I voted for. Look, neither the republican nor the democratic parties are going to save us because the major problems in America are not economic and political, they’re moral and spiritual and the government can’t touch that area. The government can’t force me to honor my marriage vows. The government can’t force me to develop character or virtue or integrity. Those are internal things, and this is why the founders wanted government to be limited so that we the people could be unlimited, liberty, not license, big difference. So, well anyway… I lost track of my thought.

Walters: (01:36:06) I’ll come back to some of that in a few minutes…

Miller: (01:36:08) Good answer… Bill Maher has been an interesting character with his movie “Religulous” and things like that, didn’t know if you had any thoughts or comments on him.
**Thomas:** (1:36:16) I did a show a couple of times a long time ago, and it was kind of fun. It’s typical what you expect of a liberal. They have three other liberals on and then himself, and one conservative they can beat up on. You know, that’s typical of the way they do things. But you know, I want to tell him his name is in the bible, and he would say, “What?” I said, “Yeah, the fool has said in his heart that there is no God. Your national holiday is April 1, right?” So you know, he’s an entertainer and he’s not the first atheist to get nation prominence. He is part of the world’s smallest minority group because there are no dead atheists.

**Miller:** (1:36:57) Steven Colbert.

**Thomas:** (1:36:59) I don’t know him.

**Walters:** (1:37:00) Colbert.

**Miller:** (1:37:01) Colbert, okay that’s right. Bill O’Reilly.

**Thomas:** (1:37:04) Eh… he’s almost as tall as I am, but makes a lot more money than I do. My goal in life is to earn his withholding. He’s a quasi-entertainer, former reporter—he would call himself in a laughing sense a bloviator. Number one in cable TV! You can’t argue with the results. But as a fellow aging white male, I’m glad to see that he’s still doing well.

**Miller:** (1:37:30) So, have we blurred the lines—it used to be in journalism, there’s the op-ed page, and there’s the news page and so you don’t give opinions on the news and you don’t, in the news you don’t give…

**Thomas:** (1:37:42) Well not entirely. There was a guy, name McCormick, of the Chicago Tribune, who used to put his editorials in the front page. I mean, look, the New York Times has become a wholly owned subsidiary of the LGBT movement. You see stories about promoting that on virtually every section of the paper. One day I remember they did have something on every section of the paper including the sports page. So that’s not entirely correct. I think, you know, David Brinkley said it best, one of my great influencers, he said, “It’s impossible to be objective so we should try to be fair.” And I like that, I like that. Just be fair, if there is another side, report it accurately. I’m a commentator, now, I’m an opinion guy so it doesn’t really matter so much. But all the surveys have shown that even the supposed balanced and fair reporters mostly vote for liberal democrats. I mean, that’s undeniable; it’s just factual. Surveys going back decades have shown this.

**Miller:** (1:38:39) And so there’s the blurring between editorial and news and also between news and entertainment. I mean…

**Thomas:** (1:38:44) Oh yeah

**Miller:** (1:38:45) Any comments?
Thomas: (1:38:46) When I started, I wanted to be in show business... when I started my thinking about a career. And now the news has become show business, so I’ve arrived. Yeah, I think it began to devolve. When I was with NBC where the president of NBC came in and said, “Well the news division is going to have to start making money now along with the entertainment division.” Prior to that, Robert Kintner, who was the president of NBC at the time I was there, said, “The news division will do news; the entertainment division will make money.” So any time you feel you need to go on the air with a special or anything you’re carte blanche. And Gulf Oil Company had a sponsored something that Frank McGee had called “instant specials” and when McGee felt journalistically it was important to go on he didn’t even have to ask—Gulf would sponsor him automatically. That demonstrated tremendous faith in the quality of the journalism at NBC. All of that’s gone now of course, it’s all infotainment and a lot of serious stories never get on the air. That’s why we don’t see things—we didn’t see things like 9/11 coming. We were worried about shark attacks off Florida instead of terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Miller: (1:40:04) It doesn’t seem as though there’s all of the local news bureaus and they used to have stringers on the radio stations and all that. News is a totally different business now than it was back then.

Thomas: (1:40:15) Yeah, it’s a product. We had at NBC we had foreign bureaus in Berlin, London, Tokyo, and every year in January the network would bring the foreign correspondents back and they’d go on tour and have these town hall type meetings. Intelligent people would come and ask intelligent questions about the Japanese economy, about East and West Berlin, about the British government, and they were fascinating and wonderful. All that’s gone now, stringers and part-time workers and that kind of thing.

Miller: (1:40:45) Although has the social media and the internet allowed everybody to be a newscaster now?

Thomas: (1:40:52) Without question.

Miller: (1:40:53) In a sense, but then we just have a million different opinions out there and we don’t really have the investigative reporting and/or it’s all just to find scandals and something that would be entertaining to watch. The Dateline NBC or something.

Thomas: (1:41:09) Yeah, a lot of trivialities. And you know, the local news every night it’s murders, bodies found, it’s rape, it’s all this stuff, it’s not really important stuff. And again, when you talk about race, for example, living in Washington D.C., it’s black on black crime. Very few stories, very few stories about successful African Americans, about intact families, about a mother and father and the minority communities loving and raising their children and sending them to the right schools; it’s all about the other. And this has a corrosive effect on the most open minded person. You see this, you put in the alarm system, the gated community, you don’t want anything to do with any of that. And that further separates us I think.
Walters: (1:41:53) Isn’t that partly due to the fact that you don’t have an audience for it too? The general public doesn’t give a hoot about the stuff that matters?

Thomas: (1:42:03) Well it’s part of—It’s conditioning. I mean, if you eat nothing but sugary stuff, then you try to get off it, your body goes through a withdraw. And I know that from a diet I was on. After three days, you’re okay. But it’s the old line of, “If it bleeds, it leads.” You know, human nature. You slow down for multi-car traffic accident—you rubberneck. You want to see the bodies, same thing, exploding cars, exploding tankers, exploding people, gunshots. And look at certain so-called entertainment. CBS is virtually the crime broadcasting system. Murder, every show is about murder. Every show is about women being abused. Every show is about corruption and dishonesty and lying and people who can’t live up to their commitments. And after you have a steady diet of this, over and over and over again, corrupt politicians, it wears on you it wears on your—and you become a cynic. I say when I go out with Beckel on our common ground thing, we get… When I was growing up we subsidized and encouraged the things we wanted more of, and discouraged and penalized the things we wanted less of. Now it’s been flipped, we subsidize and encourage the things we say we want less of and penalized and discourage the things we say we want more of, and are shocked to find were getting more of want we want less and less of what we want more of. The culture promotes the lower, while we claim to want the higher. And so, we get more of the lower and less of the higher and we have envy for the higher. I was called lucky once in a public forum. I said, “Let me tell you about ‘lucky.’ I’ve been not hired because I was too young and now because I’m too old. I’ve been not hired because I was white and not a preferred minority group. I’ve been fired. I have been overlooked. You know something; I never filed a law suit. I found a way like water to get around the obstacle—over, under, around, or through it, but we don’t do that today and I think that’s had a corrosive effect on our culture.

Walters: (1:44:14) Let’s talk a bit about conservatism. We talked about the Moral Majority and that sort of thing and we led into about Christianity and fundamentalism in the sense of people don’t seem to want—you know a negative sort of faith. And what you don’t dos—you know a list of don’ts. In conservatism; in some ways when we started this interview, it was refreshing to hear space exploration or something that you had viewed favorably. Sometimes it feels like conservatism is just always—we can’t progress… we can’t… you know…

Thomas: (1:44:58) Negative… Negative…

Walter: (1:45:00) Yeah what can? What is government good for?

Miller: (1:45:01) No new taxes and so therefore…

Walter: (1:45:03) Yeah, yeah… What is government good for? What it should be doing?

Thomas: (1:45:06) Yeah…
Walter: (1:45:08) What are things that conservatism should be promoting and growing?

Thomas: (1:45:11) Alright look, it’s all part of the same package. I mean Thomas Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, described the role of government. First he said, “We’re all created equal and endowed by our creator with certain unalienable Rights among them Life, Liberty, pursuit of Happiness.” and then he said, “And then to secure these rights Governments are instituted among Men. The purpose of government is to secure the rights that God has endowed.” It’s right there in the declaration. The Declaration of Independence is the philosophical foundation of the constitution. It came first. It is on that that the constitution rests. So we have to get back to the purpose of government, and the joy of liberty and the power of the individual. The liberals understand human nature. They know that a lot of people would rather get a check then earn a check. They understand that envy, greed, and entitlement is the unholy trinity of the Left, but you can get a lot of people to embrace that. There’s a line from West Side Story, “Hey, I’m depraved on account of I’m deprived,” beautiful line from Stephen Sondheim; but that’s the attitude today. “My circumstances are not my fault or if they are my fault, if I did things that have imprisoned me in these circumstances, it’s your fault that I can’t get out of them.” It’s the man. It is the white establishment. Are we going to tear that apart? No. See, it’s not where you start; it’s where you finish, an old Broadway song. It is the old Horatio Alger story. Okay you had an absent father and your mother was a drug-addict, but you started a small business and now you’re CEO of your own company. I mean Ben Carson is the current preferred Horatio Alger story. Grew up in inner city Detroit in a shooting gallery, but his mother kept an eye on he and his brother, absent father, made them do their schoolwork, checked their homework. They found out later that she was a virtual illiterate, but they thought she could read the homework and kept an eye on them where they were and instilled in them a joy of learning. Now why aren’t we focusing instead of the criminals and the rest? I mean, it’s just… you know, once again if you encourage and promote you’re going to get something better than if you discourage and tell people they’ll never become anything.

Walter: (1:47:39) So where does—you know it seems like people that claim they’re concerned about the environment, want to worship the environment, but yet where does stewardship come into play, I mean?

Thomas: (1:47:48) Alright, there’s a difference between environmentalism and conservation. My dad belong to something called “The Isaac Walton League” which was among other things in promoting you know, fishing, hunting that sort of thing—promoted a clean environment. That means not throwing your Styrofoam packaging from McDonalds on the floor, but put it in a proper receptacle. It does mean caring for the water and the air and not dumping sewage and junk into it that makes it uncomfortable for yourself and for others. But it doesn’t mean, you know, this global warming fiction. First of all, even if it was true there’s nothing that can be done about it because you got the Chinese are not going to sign off on it, you got the India—India’s not going to sign off on it, and these are the two major polluters in the world. So, you know I believe in being a good steward of the fallen world. I was even thinking about it yesterday. Last
night, unwrapped a little one of those mints that you get when you leave the restaurant. There was no place to throw it so I had to hold it until I got back into my hotel room and put it in the wastebasket. A lot of people just toss it on the ground as the little thing won’t matter. So that’s part of my conservationism leftover from my parents’ generation and I think if you teach that then you’re going reach—and you know I think the environmental movement was right on sewage being dumped into rivers and streams. Yes, control that, but for the greater good. But now, you know, the EPA wants to—is talking about monitoring the showers we take in hotels to see how long we stay in the shower, and this is where unchecked government eventually leads. They are already in our light bulbs, in our cars, and a whole bunch of other things. Do we want them in the shower in the hotel with us? Big brother taking a shower with us? Not me.

Walter: (1:49:35) Now maybe I’m going to open up a can of worms here, but you know even here at Liberty there’s more of an emphasis on collecting big data and tracking what people are doing, watching, how much time they spend on everything. Can you comment on the state of privacy as computerization and the digital world has come about?

Thomas: (1:49:58) Well it’s almost evaporated. Well the government knows where I am, they can reach me anytime. They—I think the social media thing—a lot of people I know particularly, you know say people in their thirties and forties, married people are getting off the social media. I’ve heard stories of women especially about guys reconnecting with old high school flames or college flames and destroying their marriage. There’s—we have communication but, we don’t have conversation. Everything’s been speeded up. Speeding up the process by which we send and receive information hasn’t made us wiser. In fact, I would argue in many ways it’s dumbed us down. Twitter is a joke. I mean you say something, “I had a hamburger for lunch.” Who cares? Much better to spend time with somebody and find out where they are and where they’re headed and where they wanna go. That’s why I love coming to Liberty. I love to hear some of their questions at the journalism class that I talked about. I love conveying information and experience because that’s what older people did to me when I was starting out in the business. So I love doing that sort of thing. We don’t spend enough time getting to know each other anymore.

Walter: (1:51:03) Do you leverage social media in any way to—how do you utilize social media, if at all?

Thomas: (1:51:11) Well, yeah.

Walter: (1:51:12) I mean, tell us about that.

Thomas: (1:51:13) I post my columns…

Walter: (1:41:14) Is it a gateway?

Thomas: (1:51:15) I post my columns on it for particularly our younger generation that doesn’t read newspapers anymore and I get—and I’ve had over a thousand columns—a thousand
comments on one column just recently, actually, it was closer to three thousand now that I recall. So that’s how you reach people who aren’t reading the newspaper. Yeah, I wanna be out there. I want to have a presence on twitter and social media, but I don’t tell everybody what I’m doing. Matter fact, when I said that I was—I did post yesterday, “I was coming down to my favorite university to speak to couple of classes.” I got a big reaction on that, but I usually don’t tell where I am or my movements or anything else.

Miller: (1:51:52) Well, let’s switch gears. Tell us your views on Israel. You mentioned when we were talking about the Moral Majority that was one of the five major points of…

Thomas: (1:51:59) Right.

Miller: (1:52:00) …the Moral Majority.

Miller: (1:52:01) Well I think Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and as such, deserves our support. I’m not a—you know, I don’t support Israel for theological reasons and we can get into that if you want, but, I mean you know, God dispersed the Jewish people two thousand years ago for the rebellion as He had done in previous times. And I don’t see them accepting the Messiah that was theirs before he was mine, and I was grafted in. But I have many, many Jewish friends who including Orthodox, who I love tremendously. I have spoken to Zionist groups in synagogues and I do believe God is going to restore Israel and there will be a remnant, as the scriptures say, come out of it and who will receive their messiah. If this is that Israel, I do not know, I’m not God. It could be a future Israel, but I’m a huge supporter of it. I know Benjamin Netanyahu, I’ve interviewed him, I’ve met him on several occasions.

Miller: (1:53:12) Just this week he had a major victory.

Thomas: (1:53:14) Yes he did, that was great. I’m a big cheerleader of it. He understands the deal, and he spelled it out when he spoke to congress. He understands what it is unlike a lot of our secular diplomats who think, “Gee…if we just give Israel’s enemies what they want, they won’t make war no more.” Well that worked out well between Neville Chamberlain and Hitler, didn’t it? Tyrants have to be opposed, they can’t be accommodated.

Miller: (1:53:37) So would you consider yourself a dispensationalist?

Thomas: (1:53:40) I don’t get into labels. I’m a panmillennialist it’s all going to pan out in the end. You know, Jesus said, “Don’t be concerned with dates and times, just do what I tell you.” That’s good enough for me.

Miller: (1:53:48) Well, but let me ask this as a follow-up though. Is the fact that for the largely dispensational crowd influenced by Scofield and the Scofield Reference Bible there that made up the leadership of the Moral Majority. That seemed to—“We need to clean up the world because the kingdom is coming soon.” Did that have any personal effect on you and did you buy into that?
Thomas: (1:54:17) Well you know if you think the kingdom is coming soon, then he isn’t coming because he said, “I’ll come when you least expect it,” right? So I just don’t get into that. I don’t put myself in categories. There are certain things that are above my pay grade. You know, some guy argued with me once. “You believe in a literal six day creation?” I said, “I don’t know, I wasn’t there.” You know, when the conversation between God and Job when God asked him, “Were you there when I laid the foundations of the world?” The question was more than rhetorical. The question was meant to convey to Job, “You don’t know what you are talking about! You haven’t a clue!” And so I think that people who say, “I’m very firm in this position. You know, I know what has to take place before Jesus comes.” The only thing I know that has to take place before Jesus comes is what he said would have to take place before he comes, and those things are in place. I mean, if you put your Bible next to the newspaper, you see it is no longer prophecy, it’s current events. But since a day to the Lord is like a thousand years, I don’t know if it’s going to be another thousand or if it is going to be today or tomorrow. It’s not my requirement. I’m not required to know that. What I’m required to do is to do what he told me. And that is love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, care for widows and orphans, visit those in prison, feed the hungry, clothe the naked. Not as a social gospel, as our friends on the left do, but as a means of conveying the love of God for the physical body so that they will be made aware of their greater need for a spiritual transformation.

Walters: (1:55:55) So you bring up the social gospel. Define that for the audience.

Thomas: (1:55:59) Well it’s salvation by works. That if I do enough good things, and I will define what is meant by “good,” then God will be pleased with me and let me into Heaven. Salvation by works. Basically what the Islamic view is: the five pillars of Islam, pray 5 times a day, the charity work, the other things, then Allah will let me in. They don’t have an assurance. Theirs is not a salvation by grace through faith, theirs is a works salvation and that’s what the religious left believes, but of course scripture teaches otherwise.

Miller: (1:56:38) Well if you were the king of the world, or at least here of the United States, what do you think the United States’ reaction ought to be to militant Islam?

Thomas: (1:56:49) Well certainly not accommodation. I mean, God said throughout the Old Testament, “You must purge evil from among you.” We’re letting them in. The big mistake that the secular progressives make, is that by importing these people who believe in a theocracy and those among them who believe in a theocracy—not all of them do, but significant numbers of them—that when they see how we live together, that we tolerate you know we have a church here and a synagogue there and a mosque there and look, we all get along, that that is going to impress them so much that they will be like us. When throughout history, Islam has been a worldly, conquering force that is more of a political—what did I do? Oh, sorry, thank you—that is more of a political here and now entity than it is anything else, and I think that’s a major mistake. Karen Hughes, who was a top aide to Bush 43, went to Saudi Arabia to meet with a group of women during the Bush Administration, and said, “Oh in America, we can drive cars.”
The women there said, “Oh, we don’t want to drive cars.” How do you respond to that? First of all, it displayed an incredible naivety on her part, again that everyone wants to be just like this—us. Bush said himself, “Freedom beats in the heart of every human being.” Well, it depends on how you define it. Because for those promoting Sharia Law, they believe that that’s freedom for them. So Margret Thatcher said once, this is so great, “We in the west make a mistake when we transpose our morality on those who don’t share it.” We think that everybody can be made to think like us. Tolerance, pluralism, freedom to worship as you please. They don’t think like that, and they are using our misguided thinking against us. They’ve got groups associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas (that would be CARE in Washington) or other groups, that are dedicated to undermining the United States. But we don’t want to talk about it because we’ll be called “Islamaphobes” and we don’t want to be called “phobe” anything.

Walters: (1:59:01) So not only should a place like Liberty University even be training champions for Christ with a Christian worldview, but we definitely need to be educating as to what the other worldviews really are and where they are coming from.

Thomas: (1:59:14) Absolutely, and read the Qu’ran. I mean, it’s all there. “And so, What about the Old Testament and the other things?” Well, that’s been replaced by the new covenant, it is no longer operative because the law has been fulfilled in a person named Jesus. And so while we get instruction from Ecclesiastes and Psalms and Proverbs we read the history and the lineage and Moses and the law. All of that stuff was a preview of the coming attraction, who is Jesus of Nazareth. And so the old covenant has been replaced, not cancelled because he said, “I came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it,” very important. But it’s been replaced by a new covenant, and so that’s the difference where you love your neighbor, pray for those who persecute you, and the rest.

Miller: (2:00:06) Well, so let’s—we’re running close on time here towards the end—so let’s bring it back to Lynchburg talking about Jerry Falwell here, we were talking a little bit earlier about Dwight L. Moody. What impact do you think that Dr. Falwell has had on the nation and the world?

Thomas: (2:00:28) Wow, that’s a big question. I certainly think he awakened a lot of people, as I think I said at the beginning, to the social and cultural opportunities they have to bring the mind of Christ into the marketplace. Now nobody has ever been converted by a good debate. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit. But if you bring somebody who particularly is accomplished in a particular field who has a vibrant faith in Christ, whether it’s in medicine or journalism or acting or whatever it is, and all of these things are a part of Liberty, then I think you can get a hearing, and that’s all you can ask for. I drag people up to the cross, and if God wants them he brings them over. My responsibility is to present as accurate a reflection in my sinful life of the person of Jesus of Nazareth as it is possible for me to do. I fail him, but hopefully less and less as I get older. Many of my friends are liberals and nonbelievers—people of the democratic party and the rest. None of them can say honestly that I hate them. I care about them just as God cares about
them and I want them to see something of Jesus shining through in me so that they might be
drawn by the power of the Holy Spirit to Him. Not to my political point of view, which is… you
know, but to a person, and then He can do with them as He will.

**Miller:** (2:02:13) I guess where I’m thinking with the question is if I were to ask you what do
you believe is the legacy of Dr. Jerry Falwell? What, you know…

**Thomas:** (2:02:25) Well this university. I told him often that the Moral Majority would come
and go, but what you’ve done, what you are doing at Liberty will be your legacy, and I still
believe that and the evidence is there every time I come back here. And not just in the
construction. This is—I mean I’ve sent children and grandchildren here, we’ll be sending
more—this is the premier Christian university in America. It is everything that Jerry Sr. wanted
it to be. His son has done an incredible job of following through on that vision, and I’m proud to
recommend it to, not only to my own family members, but to anybody else who asks me and to a
lot of people who don’t ask me.

**Miller:** (2:03:14) Why do you think in these days—we just had a couple of Universities closing
within the past month here or so—why did Liberty start out in 1971 and come to the place where
it is today compared to other places that have been around a lot longer and eventually closed or
dwindled down to nothing? To what do you attribute that success?

**Thomas:** (2:03:37) I attribute it because—to the notion that an education can’t just be about
getting a good job to make money to buy things. An education has to have a purpose, because a
person must have a purpose in life. Some years ago the theologian R.C. Sproul did a conference
which I was happy to be a part of called “The Hunger for Significance.” Every human being
wants to believe that their life matters to someone, for something, has a purpose. And Liberty
combines those notions in a way that few other places can. There are a lot of agendas at some of
these other schools. People want to have a degree in feminist studies or in African American
studies. That’s not going to get you anywhere in the world. That’s not even interesting frankly
beyond a narrow niche in our culture. Liberty gives you vision. Liberty gives you purpose and
hope and encouragement and purpose and fun in life. It’s fun to be here. You feel that you really
are developing your purpose in life when you’re here. And what could be better for an advanced
education than that? So you get the whole package here all in one place, and that’s why I’m
happy to endorse it.

**Miller:** (2:04:58) Now I realized that when we were talking about your family way back in
question number one, didn’t really get the chance to ask you about your wife and you’ve
mentioned your children. Could you just briefly tell us who are you married to, what was her
maiden name, when you got married, and how many children you have?

**Thomas:** (2:05:14) Well I like to say, “We have four children, one of each,” and watch people’s
reaction, you know, personalities. We were married in the 60’s and her name is Charlotte Rae
Thomas, her maiden name is Heath. H-E-A-T-H. She was in the theater, that’s what first
attracted me to her because I wanted to be in theater. Has a tremendous singing voice, and we were in a couple of shows together and fell in love and did the traditional thing and got married, had four kids. We struggled a lot in the army and making 99 dollars a month in New York City and had to have a second full time job in a civilian area just to make ends meet. We didn’t have much, but she more than anybody else got me interested in the things of God. She had gone to Bob Jones and at a time when they were far less forgiving than they are now about certain things and was running from God and rebelling against that. And I never really rebelled, I just was kind of lukewarm, I didn’t know anything. My grandfather said he’d give me a silver dollar once if I memorized the 23rd psalm. That was the last serious bible study I did. Forgive me if I’m repeating myself, I don’t remember who I said what to down here and after a couple days… but so yeah we, you know, the thing about kids is there are no guarantees. I mean, you take them to church, you pray for them and with them, you send them to a Christian school, but ultimately they have to make their own choices. And some made the right choices, some made the wrong choices. Some are coming back after making wrong choices, some are in transition. I’ve asked the Lord in my lifetime if He would allow me see all of my children and grandchildren on the right track. And, you know, I think He’s beginning to answer that prayer. I hope it’s completed by the time my time here is completed. But it’s a challenge, kids are a challenge, you know? There are no perfect children because there are no perfect parents. You try to do the right thing, and hopefully it works out alright.

Walters: (2:07:15) Speaking of kids, future generations, say the Lord tarries a million more years before He comes back. Look into the crystal ball so to speak, what do you see as the coming of—what’s on the horizon for the United States based on current trajectories? Or is there another country going to—I know we talked about this earlier in the interview, but India seems to be forthcoming as an economic power along with China.

Thomas: (2:07:48) Asia is where it’s happening. We were in Asia about 18 months ago, started in Singapore, went up to Thailand, even Vietnam, wound up in Hong Kong. A lot of great stuff happening in Asia. I go back to what I said earlier about Sir John Glubb. I mean, there is a cycle—America is not in the Bible. I mean, God says in Isaiah that he regards all nations as a drop in the bucket and less than nothing. That should be a humbling thing. And Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” I think we fall into an area of idolatry when we think of America as being something better than other nations and Americans better than other people. We’re all sinners. Now there’s a—I would rather live in America than had been born into any other country. But we are still sinners, and we’re still a fallen world and America is part of that. But as Jerry said at the end of our book, “Blinded by Might” in the last interview we did with him. He said, “I don’t see—” I’m paraphrasing, you have to go back and read the exact words, but he said, “I don’t see much of a future hope for America unless there’s a revival.” I believe that. I think the current trajectory in national debt, giving people what they want in exchange for their votes and the mass immigration without assimilation, an uncontrolled border of a country produces nothing but chaos. This is a deliberate plot by the Democrat Party to import more
democrat votes because they couldn’t win with the ones they had here sufficiently. And to create a permanent class of voters that will vote only for them, for democrats, and relegate the Republican Party to extinction. I think the moral and cultural landscape is getting worse and worse now with same-sex marriage. Not just same-sex marriage, but the divorce of heterosexuals. I mean we don’t have a great track record; even a lot of Christians are getting divorced. And so, pornography, all this stuff, but it shouldn’t surprise anybody because as I like to say, “Don’t worry, everything is right on schedule.” God is not out of control, he’s got it.

**Walters:** (2:09:52) Do you see particularly fertile ground for revival on the different other country anywhere?

**Thomas:** (2:09:58) No, I don’t, I wouldn’t… I don’t know. But I mean Europe is a mess. It’s totally gone and I think going to be taken over by Muslims, I really do. And you see that everywhere. The only thing I learned in physics before I flunked table of contents was that nature abhors a vacuum. And if there’s a spiritual vacuum, something is going to fill it. Something will, and in Europe it’s Islam. They’re marching forward, they’re on the march. It’s a terribly dangerous thing.

**Miller:** (2:10:25) Well we are out of time, but I’d like to ask you what would you like Cal Thomas to be remembered for? What legacy would you like to leave in this world?

**Thomas:** (2:10:37) That he loved God and he belonged to Jesus Christ and can’t wait for the resurrection. One of my favorite—it is my favorite—tombstone markings is in the basement of St. Paul’s cathedral in London. I don’t remember who the guy was, but I do remember his tombstone. It was a flat slab, and it had his name and birth and death dates on it. And the only thing written on there, and it was written in red, “Awaiting the resurrection.” I can’t wait to see Him face-to-face and long for the day when He says, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” That’s better than a Pulitzer Prize, which I guarantee I will never win.

**Miller:** (2:11:15) And with that, we’ll conclude today’s interview with Cal Thomas. This interview has been conducted as part Oral History Project of the Liberty University Archives.

*End of Interview*