

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Margaret Igelsias (CN 74, T75)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case [unclear] was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as “ah” or “um” are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

. . . Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence of the speaker.

. . . . Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

() Word in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

This transcription was made by Bob Shuster, Katherine Graber, and Paul Bartow in September 2013.

Please note: This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.

Collection 74, Tape 75. Oral history interview with Dr. Margaret Geiger Iglesias by Bob Shuster on October 25, 2010.

SHUSTER: This is an interview of Mrs. Margaret Geiger Iglesias...?

IGLESIAS: Right.

SHUSTER: By Bob Shuster for the Billy Graham Center Archives. It took place on October 25th, 2010 at 9:00 AM over the telephone. Mrs. Iglesias, why don't we start with when and where you were born?

IGLESIAS: Alright. I have your questions right here too. Yes. I was born May 19th, 1923 in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

SHUSTER: Saint Paul, Minnesota. And I know that you first went to...was it...

IGLESIAS: Taccoa Falls.

SHUSTER: Taccoa Falls Bible School?

IGLESIAS: Yes.

SHUSTER: How did that come about?

IGLESIAS: Well my sister was a teacher there. And I had finished high school in Minnesota. And I didn't know where to go from there, so I went down to Georgia for a few years. And from there, it seemed as though the next good step would be to go to Wheaton.

SHUSTER: Why was that the next good step?

IGLESIAS: Well, they had, you know, a larger school and just more was possible if I got the training at Wheaton.

SHUSTER: What were you planning to be?

IGLESIAS: A teacher. Probably...well...a high school teacher. I thought [laughs].

SHUSTER: And why did you select Wheaton out of all of the potential schools?

IGLESIAS: I guess various people that I knew said that Wheaton is a good place to go. You know, a Christian school.

SHUSTER: How did you...when and how did you first meet Billy Graham?

IGLESIAS: Oh, I suppose it was standing in line waiting to go eat a meal in the dining hall, I would imagine.

SHUSTER: Oh, so you don't really remember what the first occasion was?

IGLESIAS: No. I remember talking with him sometime. But I couldn't tell you exactly when.

SHUSTER: What was his physical appearance at that time? What did he look like? What did he sound like?

IGLESIAS: What?

SHUSTER: What did he look like? And what did he sound like at that time?

IGLESIAS: Of course. Tall, good-looking, big man on campus [both laugh].

SHUSTER: What did he sound like?

IGLESIAS: Same way he does on radio or television.

SHUSTER: And how's that?

IGLESIAS: Good speaker.

SHUSTER: Well I mean as talking to him, what was his.... Did he have a Southern accent? What was...?

IGLESIAS: Oh heavens, I don't remember. And it wouldn't have bothered me if he had, because I had been going to school in Georgia for a couple of years.

SHUSTER: Did you ever have any classes together?

IGLESIAS: I don't think so. Not that I recall.

SHUSTER: You mentioned that you sometimes saw him and Ruth Bell together when you were shelving books in the library?

IGLESIAS: Yes. Because I did some of my work to earn...for my college expenses there. And so one of my jobs was to work at the school library. And I think...I would remember the table that I usually saw them sitting. Yeah.

SHUSTER: What struck your...what kind of couple did they make?

IGLESIAS: Oh. They were very good looking and...easy to talk to.

SHUSTER: You mentioned that you chatted sometimes when you were on line in the cafeteria, what did you talk about?

IGLESIAS: Probably about...the school in Georgia. Or Dr. Forrest who is the founder of that



school.

SHUSTER: Why would you talk about the school in Georgia?

IGLESIAS: Well, because Billy was acquainted with Dr. Forrest.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh. So what kind of things would you say or would did you talk about it [sic]?

IGLESIAS: No doubt the school. Goodness, after fifty some years do you think I would remember? [Laughs].

SHUSTER: Well, it doesn't hurt to ask. Did you ever hear him preach at the Tabernacle?

IGLESIAS: I probably went once or twice but that's not where I usually went to church. I went to College Church right off the campus. And at least part of the time I was at school there, I lived...just within half a block of the west gate of the school.

SHUSTER: So you don't really remember anything from the Tabernacle?

IGLESIAS: No.

SHUSTER: Okay.

IGLESIAS: I knew that there were students who went there regularly. But I really liked going where I went and partly because I liked the Sunday school teacher there. At College Church.

SHUSTER: Who was the Sunday school teacher.

IGLESIAS: Uh-huh. It was one for college girls. A girls' class.

SHUSTER: Who was the teacher of that class?

IGLESIAS: I think it was Mrs. McDonald. But I'm not sure.

SHUSTER: Now I know that Billy sometimes also spoke in chapel. Did you ever hear him speak there?

IGLESIAS: Probably. But goodness, I was there what...three years. And I went to chapel every time. Every time that.... We were expected to go every day to chapel. Not once or twice a week.

SHUSTER: So you don't recall anything in particular about the way he preached?

IGLESIAS: No.

SHUSTER: He was also president of the Christian Service Council in '43. That would have been your sophomore year. Were you involved in the Christian Service projects at that time?



IGLESIAS: Well I went to Chicago by train every Sunday and taught in a Sunday school class for kids. Now I taught in English, but one of my purposes in going was to attend the services, preaching services there which were in Spanish. I was trying to learn Spanish and had never heard any, and this was a good opportunity.

SHUSTER: And that was probably, I imagine, sponsored by the Christian Council on campus?

IGLESIAS: Probably. When we first went to visit the church to talk with people there, Stanley Taylor I think was the one that went with me to find out about it. And it was okay. So I always took my lunch every Sunday and I went and ate on the train.

SHUSTER: Did you have any impressions of Graham as president of the Christian Council that year?

IGLESIAS: No. I'm sure he was a good president. Uh-huh.

SHUSTER: How was Graham regarded by the other students on campus?

IGLESIAS: I think he was regarded very well. Uh-huh.

SHUSTER: Do you have any memories of conversations or any other involvement with...?

IGLESIAS: No, no. The only place probably that I would have talked to him, as I say, was when we were in line waiting to go into the dining hall.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh. Now in February of 1943 there had been an awakening on campus.

IGLESIAS: Uh-huh.

SHUSTER: Do you recall that?

IGLESIAS: Yes, I remember that. Uh-huh. The services went on for many hours and many students were moved, maybe some were saved at the time I suppose. Uh-huh.

SHUSTER: How...how did it impact life on campus?

IGLESIAS: Well, people who weren't...didn't have any great...expectations I guess of being in Christian work were moved at that time. To prepare to go and serve in some capacity. I went, as I said, I went to teach in a Mexican (it happened to be a Mexican) Presbyterian church. And I was of Presbyterian background. My father was a minister.

SHUSTER: Did you go to teach that Sunday school because of the revival?

IGLESIAS: I'm sorry? Did I go to Sunday...?

SHUSTER: Did you go to that...teach at that Sunday School because of the revival?

IGLESIAS: I don't think so. I think I was already going there.

SHUSTER: I see. Did the revival have any impact on you personally?

IGLESIAS: Well, like many of the others, yeah. I spent a good many hours there at the chapel then. Uh-huh. But I already knew the Lord. And I already was thinking of, praying about what I should do after I finished college.

SHUSTER: After...let's see... in '44, Graham had graduated. He went to Western Springs Church as a pastor. And he had started a program called *Songs in the Night*. Some Wheaton students used to go regularly to listen to the broadcast. Do you recall anything about that?

IGLESIAS: No, but I would turn it on if I were.... See, I was living and working in a home just close to the campus.

SHUSTER: uh-huh.

IGLESIAS: And of course we had a radio and listened to the *Songs in the Night*. I remember that.

SHUSTER: What kind of program was it?

IGLESIAS: Music. Mainly hymns, music. Maybe some preaching, but that I don't remember.

SHUSTER: So you just remember the musical numbers on the show?

IGLESIAS: Uh-huh.

SHUSTER: Do you have any other memories or stories about Billy Graham while he was a student?

IGLESIAS: No, [laughs] except I remember seeing him when he was like...with the other guys working and laughing as they were...driving around. And they were probably in the back of a truck moving mattresses from one place to another.

SHUSTER: You mentioned that you were praying about what you would do when you graduated. So what did you do after graduating from Wheaton?

IGLESIAS: Well, I went to help do some literacy work in Mexico with the Wycliffe Bible translators. Summer Institute of Linguistics for a couple of years.

SHUSTER: And then?

IGLESIAS: And then I met a young man at the University of...just a minute. Oklahoma. Well this was a summer school. So there were people from other places too. And there was this young man who was preparing. He had been in the [United] States since he was about thirteen. And let's see, what year would that have been? Anyway, so...met Claudio and married him and accompanied



him to Panama where we began a Christian elementary school on the island of Mulatupo or Sasardi and I believe that the school and the church continued for about twenty years or more, although our family moved to New Mexico as our children needed to go on to school. I think we waited until our oldest one had finished sixth grade which was what our school was. First through sixth, primary. And then we came up here to the states.

SHUSTER: To Texas.

IGLESIAS: Not to Texas. We moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico first. Of course, we also lived in Gallup, New Mexico for a while.

SHUSTER: Well is there anything else that you want to add about ...?

IGLESIAS: About Billy?

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

IGLESIAS: Just a minute, let me glance over this. [Pause] Yeah, I mentioned something about the fellows being in the Wheaton College trucking service, yes. And I would see...Billy and Ruth and talk with them probably in the library. Where they went to study. But the only thing that I remember talking with them about would have been about Toccoa Falls in Georgia, which was founded by Dr. Richard A. Forrest. And I didn't know anything about this Mooseheart Sunday school, no.

SHUSTER: Well yes, that was out in Geneva that he and Ruth Graham went out there sometimes.

IGLESIAS: And then this question "Did you ever go to any of the evangelistic meetings that Billy led in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin," I don't think so. I don't believe so. Maybe one or two at the Tab.

SHUSTER: Well, I appreciate your sharing your memories this morning. Anything else you'd like to add before we conclude?

IGLESIAS: No, I think this probably does it. Let's see. That pretty well covers it I think. And I appreciate your call.

SHUSTER: Well, I appreciate your taking this time. Thank you very much.

IGLESIAS: Uh-huh. You're welcome.

END OF TAPE