

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **John Abram Huffman (CN 389, T4)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words that 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 transcript was made by Katherine Graber and was completed in August 2014.

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 389 Tape 4. Oral history interview of Rev. John A. Huffman by Bob Shuster on May 26, 1988.

HUFFMAN: Jack Wyrzten...

SHUSTER: ...oh, excuse me. This is a continuation of the interview with Reverend John Huffman which took place on...at the Billy Graham Center on May 26th, 1988 and it's now three-o'clock. You were saying?

HUFFMAN: Jack Wyrzten was so confident that the Symphony Hall would be packed out that he said advertise his service to start as soon as Symphony Hall was packed. So half hour before the service was supposed to start, it was packed, as was the New England Conservatory Hall across the street which seated, I don't know, maybe five or six hundred. Now, that's how this whole thing was. To my knowledge, Percy Crawford never came back to New England again after that one time. He may have been there before. Jack came as often as we could get him.

SHUSTER: And the reason Crawford didn't come back was...?

HUFFMAN: He just....His demands were so great, nobody would meet them. I certainly wouldn't and the results were not that great.

SHUSTER: How would you compare their preaching styles?

HUFFMAN: Well, Jack's not a preacher. He's just a talker. He's not an ordained minister, never was. Percy is a sort of a [sic] old type...old-fashioned type of orator. He was a polished, well-trained speaker. I don't mean to minimize him. I simply say that they're just two different types. God has all kinds of types.

SHUSTER: Sure.

HUFFMAN: But the pragmatic fact was that in high-brow New England, the person that you thought would go over big, just made it. He didn't flop, but he didn't...and there was no encore, so far as his return, and Jack to this day can pack them out. I should maybe not say this, but I will. It carries through to the family. Jack...Jack Wyrzten's family (though his wife is dead) to my knowledge has followed not in his footsteps. I don't know that there's one that even desires succeeding him at Schroon Lake and so forth, but they have been serving the Lord and having a ministry, a unique ministry of their own type, and I want to be careful on this, but to my knowledge there isn't one of Percy Crawford's kids that would have...that has consistently followed in their father's beliefs. I think that says something.

SHUSTER: Yes. I know we had....Shortly after NAE got started, that was when Youth for Christ also began.

HUFFMAN: Right.

SHUSTER: Were you involved in the early days of that movement?

HUFFMAN: From the beginning.

SHUSTER: Can you describe a little bit of your involvement.

HUFFMAN: Yes. I had been in youth work from 1936 we started the National Conference for Christian Youth at Winona Lake, which was a new thing for, I will say, the smaller churches, largely the Holiness churches and the...the Free Methodist, the Pilgrim Holiness, and so forth. They'd never had a youth worker of any kind. And then as I have mentioned before today in New England, I was asked to take over the youth program that J. Elwin Wright started in Park Street Church which ran for a couple years under my leadership then. And then in the summer of 1944, I was asked by an outstanding NAE leader in New England who came from the Midwest, if I would consider tying in with Torrey Johnson in a nationwide movement.

SHUSTER: Who was that who asked you?

HUFFMAN: His name was Charles Campbell. He was a...had been a newspaper man in Chicago, got converted under Torrey, had an unfortunate marriage, came to New England, tried to start life over and became very active in NAE and at one time became president actually of...head of the New England Fellowship and a very close associate of...of mine. Anyway, I said, "Well, Charlie, I got about all on my...I have my hands full. I have a church. I have a daily radio program. I have *The Evangelical Hour*. I have Winona in the summertime, and..." But I said, "If...when I get back from the summer... this summer (that was in the spring of '44)... if, by the time I get back to New England, someone hasn't taken that jump, I'm ready to take it." In the meantime, I got a letter from Torrey inviting me to be a part of the original first gathering at Winona Lake, which he had called together. I was at Winona Lake every summer because I was connected with Winona Lake School of Theology already by that time in one capacity or another. So I was there when Torrey called this meeting. There again, just as there was a general feeling across the nation that there was need of a national organization to give clout, to give presence to the witness...the evangelical witness in the nation, there were sporadic groups all across the country of youth leaders coming up. One of them Roger Voskuyl...I don't mean Roger Voskuyl...Roger *Malsbary* in Indianapolis, and he called his organization Youth for Christ, and then of course Percy Crawford had his out in Philadelphia, and there were...there were youth groups, parachurch movements across the country, but they'd never gotten together, and they were all indigenous to each other. So we got to Winona. Torrey had been down to Indianapolis and spoken at Roger Malsbary's Youth for Christ, thought the name was good, thought the idea was good, and he got the idea for Youth for Christ that Ockenga had gotten out in New England...from...from Malsbary he got that... that Ockenga had gotten from Wright out there about NAE. There should be a [sic] international... it was called "international" when it was only national...but it was called International Youth for Christ Movement. So we met there at Winona Lake, and I don't know how many there were of us, probably sixty...I think at least sixty from the West Coast, the south, the north, from Canada, and all across New England, and so forth. And there was a general sentiment that something should be done about this. Another meeting was called, but this time Torrey was the convener of this meeting. Then there was a meeting called



for...in the fall somewhere...Cleveland or somewhere. I have it in writing, but I didn't review my notes before coming here, but at that meeting, Torrey was elected. I think Roger Malsbary was named as the convener of that meeting and yet it was so obvious that the natural leader for this was Torrey that Torrey from that point on took hold of this thing and made it go.

SHUSTER: Why was he obviously the natural leader?

HUFFMAN: Just because he was charismatic [sic] not charismatic, but charismatic. He was well trained. Torrey was a Greek scholar. He's a seminary man. He was mature enough that he had enough experience in starting his own church here in the suburbs of Chicago, and he just had the vision, tremendous vision. He had a real vision. So he was the natural choice there again. How did he become that? I would say Malsbary was the J. Elwin Wright. He just faded into the woodwork, and Torrey in this field was the head Ockenga. It was just natural he should be our leader. And Youth for Christ was set up very loosely as it still is, where pretty much upon the recommendation, if not the personal anointing of Torrey Johnson, the vice presidents were blessed or chosen from across the country. And I was the one that was... I remembered my promise to Charlie that if nothing's done by the time I get home, we'll do it. I went back and we did it, and we started the rally in Boston, and immediately I was named as the regional vice president of...of Youth for Christ International in charge of the New England district. So I've always started at Park Street Church. We started immediately in the fall, but before we started, we had a little committee of three that met regularly almost daily for prayer meeting, early morning prayer meeting. Charlie Campbell was one and Reginald Berry [?] who was now the Youth Assistant [Pastor] of Park Street Church, took my place there, was another, and I was the third. We met and prayed and prayed and prayed until we... we were sure this was of the Lord and we launched in a big way, and that rally, under my leadership at least, continued from its founding in '44 until I stayed with it until about '49 or '50 as director of it.

SHUSTER: About what age group of people were you attracting in the early days.

HUFFMAN: We were attracting a lot of high schoolers, and as the war was on...a lot of servicemen because Boston was a seaport. It was a [sic] air base, and we had a large percentage of servicemen. I would say the average age probably would...there were adults that looked in on it from time to time. The Park Street auditorium seated 1100. If it got down to (we seldom did in that period of time)... if we got down to 800, we were worried. We thought we were slipping. It was comfortably filled every Saturday night, year in and year out. A different speaker every week. We had a staff, good staff. The whole lower floor of Park Street Church was given to us as our headquarters. We had a serviceman center there. But the big thing...and we used radio. We had the backing of every evangelical radio program in New England. We started with one rally; we ended up with some fourteen rallies in New England. I stayed at the home rally. WBZ gave us time on Saturday afternoons for what we called the New England Youth for Christ radio roundup. We would update the whole area on what is happening, and we would have a role call of every one of the rallies throughout New England. Each man was indigenous in his leadership. He was not responsible to pay dues or...or to....He was not manipulated by headquarters, but we all...if we flew under the banner of Youth for Christ it was "Geared to the Times, but Anchored to the Rock" or "Anchored to the Rock, but Geared to the Times," whichever it was. It was our

motto, and it was really a revival movement among young people. I would say the average age probably was 22 maybe.

SHUSTER: What was a typical program like?

HUFFMAN: Ours was a fast-moving program because we opened on the air. We had a half hour on the air. We started on the dot, and we had split second timing. We had excellent talent. We had a paid staff, basically a paid staff, but we brought in speakers and additional talent to every program. We'd have a...a typically fast moving half hour program starting at 7:00. At 7:30, we'd move into a typical youth rally, go off the air, and then we would have a lot of singing and testimonies and girls' trio, soloists, instrumentalists, testimonies, but the thing that I never thought of at the time because I was reasonably young...I wasn't that young, however, I was... let's see, I was in my late 20s when this was going strong. But I...going over the newspaper clippings that I have of that period, I saw where a Unitarian came to visit our rally and stayed at it. We had successfully overcome the failure of Christian Endeavor [Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor]. Now I didn't realize this was happening. But I knew Christian Endeavor was drying out...dying out. It was a very powerful evangelical movement among all churches...many churches at one time. Dan Poling grew old with Christian Endeavor and this Unitarian critic that came to see our rally stated among the things about...he said that they have...they have overcome what has killed Christian Endeavor. The leadership is young leadership. And we would have service men and service girls and high schoolers and...and young talent by and large. We'd bring in some old timers like Homer Rodeheaver and some outstanding...but by and large, it was a fast moving teenage, post-teenage production.

SHUSTER: Who were some of the speakers and people?

HUFFMAN: Oh, I listed a hundred of them in my chapter. We had Vance Havner, Bob Jones Jr. Gypsy Smith Jr. We had...well, we had Harry Ironside. We had Ma Sunday. She always drew a crowd. We...I guess I mentioned Harry Rimmer. We had...you name them, we had them.

SHUSTER: Did the youth YFC meetings get a lot of attention in the secular press.

HUFFMAN: Oh yeah. Always.

SHUSTER: And why was that?

HUFFMAN: Because it was live. It was alive. Things were happening.

SHUSTER: And how do you mean that? What things were happening?

HUFFMAN: The whole town was turned upside down Saturday nights in the heart of Boston. See, the concept of Youth for Christ was...Dr. Biederwolf wrote a book or preached a sermon on the world's Saturday night. And he said, "Saturday night is the devil's night." Youth for Christ picked that up and said we're going to take the devil's night. Torrey used to say it this way: if kids are going to get in trouble, they get in trouble on Saturday night for some reason. But Youth

for Christ...and Torrey was a genius at this. He would drive it in... drove it in to us, make certain that your active Saturday night participants are in their own churches Sunday morning, working as hard in their own churches as they work Saturday night. And that was something we...it was backed by prayer. Prayer was...we always had a prayer meeting before we started a rally [clears throat]. But it was sensational in Boston. Gill Dodds had just won the world championship. He was a world champion miler. He became our...our vice president, and the sports world got into this thing. I mean, the young sports world. But the message was...it was just a vital, driving, wonderful thing, and we had a center servicemen could come in and sit down in our...in our center and give a word message to their loved one back home and get on the ship and sail. And we'd pack the dictaphone cylinder up and send it to his sweetheart back to the Midwest. And then we had...The lights turn on Saturday in the heart of Boston for God, and that was true in all these areas. We weren't exceptional.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh. What kind of coverage did you manage to get out of... You did get a lot of coverage in the secular press?

HUFFMAN: Yeah.

SHUSTER: What kind of coverage was it?

HUFFMAN: Feature articles on what happened. They'd even give us splashes on what was coming. I mean, they started to look forward. Send the reporters in, find out, "What you got up from this week [clears throat]."

SHUSTER: Why don't we go on and talk a little about the Winona Lake School of Theology [Huffman coughs] of course that...your father had been involved with that and then you yourself as well. So why don't we get some of the background and purpose of that school.

HUFFMAN: I think if you don't mind, I'll just sketch a little bit about what I was doing educationally in New England so that that gives a background for this.

SHUSTER: Okay.

HUFFMAN: I realized I was born in an evangelical home. I went to a Christian academy and a Christian college and by the time I went to Boston for schooling. I had already had a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Arts degree... all of that work taken in thoroughly evangelical settings, and I sensed the fact that my work probably would be in the field of education, so I purposely went to the citadel of the Athens of education in America which was Boston and registered in Boston University School of Theology which was a rank liberal school. It was old-fashioned Methodism backslidden. And then I went from there to Harvard which was a Unitarian seminary. So I had...got a degree from Boston University School of Theology. At the time I was in Boston University School of Theology I was already at Park Street Church, and we were just a few blocks from the Boston University School of Theology which was on Beacon Hill. And here was a fiery young evangelical actually preaching at Park Street Church, because I mentioned once before that Ockenga took ill and very early I substituted

for him in the Park Street pulpit, in a rank school that taught exactly opposite from what Park Street believed. So I got a degree from there. Then I went across the...across the river and went to Harvard Divinity. I had a period of about ten years there. I graduated in '38 from Boston University School of Theology I guess it was... '39. And then in 1950 I went to Harvard Divinity, and I took two years of graduate work at Harvard Divinity on a doctoral program. I didn't finish the doctoral program there, but it was work I wanted. I was pastoring. I was still active, as active as I could be. But I was being groomed to become president of Winona Lake School of Theology. Then I...I...after two years in Harvard, which was Unitarian, I went back to Boston University under Brightman's era [Edgar S.] Brightman was the father of the "God is dead" movement. He wrote his book on the finite God and so forth, and I took work under Brightman, and I specialized in mental health on... in a course on a doctoral program at Boston University. Again, I didn't go for the doctorate...I didn't...but I had all that. Now, with that background, all this time I had been at Winona Lake from the time I graduated from college in '33 and then I graduated from Winona Lake School of Theology in '35 with my Master of Arts. Then I went to New England and then from '40 on, I was back on the staff at Winona Lake School of Theology and remained in that from '40...1940 to 1970. So there's 30 years.

SHUSTER: You were on the staff as...?

HUFFMAN: I was on the staff first of all as just a teacher. I must make plain that Winona Lake School of Theology was a summer graduate seminary. Never had a course in the winter. Never gave an honorary degree, but gave full degrees, and it... it got its teachers from the existing winter seminaries, evangelical seminaries from this country and from abroad. So, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan founded this school in 1920. He didn't think he was founding anything, but he opened the doors to the preachers to come at the Winona Lake Bible conference and several years in a row he had the school of preaching there and that was picked up by Dr. Biederwolf as the basic...the basis for founding Winona Lake School of Theology. It ran from 1920 to 1928 with no degrees, just simply theological courses. Then they felt they should have a thorough seminary program for teachers in Bible schools and colleges, Christian colleges that couldn't take time off to go to school year-round, but they needed...we would now call it...continuing educational courses. And then in '28, Dr. Biederwolf brought my father there. At that time he... he was the dean of School of Religion at Marian College which is now called...changed it's name to Indiana Wesleyan at Marian, Indiana. And Father put the school on a curriculum basis. From 1928 at that point they followed the specifications of the American Association of Theological Schools and became a regular theological summer seminary. In 1940, I went back from New England... from that time on every summer and taught and then I became assistant dean...then I became registrar, then I became assistant dean, then I became dean. Then....

SHUSTER: When you were teaching, what did you teach?

HUFFMAN: I taught...I taught largely in the field of practical theology, preaching and homiletics. I did teach somewhat too in...in the church fathers, church history, but my...my main thing was....I taught...we had courses in radio also...but in the field of practical theology primarily. Then in 1953 I was made president of Winona Lake to succeed my father. Whenever you talk about Winona Lake, people said, "Oh, I know that. I know the seminary. I know Grace

Seminary.” Well, Grace Seminary was never heard of when we started. Grace Seminary was a split off of a Brethren seminary and came to Winona much later. But from 1920 until 1971, Winona Lake School of Theology always had summer courses at Winona Lake, Indiana. And it got to the point where under my leadership it expanded. It at one time was simply two-and-a-half weeks in the summer time. It got to the point that we had two...we had one two-and-a-half week semester. We had two four-week semesters. So we were doing in the period of two summers...in a period of three summers, a student could do a full academic year of seminary work at Winona Lake School of Theology. We had 18 teachers each summer, 18 different teachers each summer. And usually, a professor, he would come for one or two time times only, and then he would not come back normally for maybe three or four years. So we had a constant flow of teachers from the finest schools in the country.

SHUSTER: Who were some of the teachers?

HUFFMAN: Oh, we had going way back Melvin Grove Kyle from Xenia-Pittsburgh [later Pittsburgh Theological Seminary] in archaeology. We had A. T. Robertson from Southern Baptist Seminary. We had J. C. Masee in practical theology, the great Southern Baptist evangelist. We had, coming down a little bit more...we had L. R. Marston the bishop of the Free Methodist Church, a great psychologist. We had Kist [?] of Biblical Seminary. We had George L. Robinson from McCormick. We had Gursner [?] from Pittsburgh Seminary. We just had a constant flow. We had...I could go on and name on and on and on, but we...we kept alert to who was leading the field and we...an interesting thing about Winona Lake School of Theology: in those days the division was in...within evangelicalism was not Modernism and Liberalism, it was Calvinism and Arminianism. So we sought religiously to have the same number of Calvinist teachers as Arminian teachers. Not Armenian, but Arminians. And...we...well, Carl Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, [Merrill C.] Tenney, (I'm going on naming teachers), and Gleason Archer and we had Fuller [Seminary] men, we had Southern Baptist men, we had Conservative Baptist men, Northern Baptist men, Lutheran men. The Leander S. Kaiser [?]. We just had 18 different teachers every summer year in...every year, year in, year out. We also had flying seminars to Bible lands. We would take four teachers and anywhere from 30 to 60 students every year through Europe [train noise in background]. We'd...we'd spend two-and-a-half days in London, two-and-a-half days in Paris, two-and-a-half days in Rome, and then we'd go to Greece. We'd have about three or four days in Greece. We'd go and spend about...this was a six weeks' tour. But this was academic work where teachers taught on location. Carl Henry lectured on Mars Hill [refers to the hill where the ancient city government of Athens met and from which Paul preached, as described in Acts 17: 19-34], on philosophy and Tenney would lecture on the new...on church. [Arnold C.] Schultz would lecture on...on archaeology in...at a dig in...in...in Israel. So they...and Ed Young would lecture on Old Testament at the Pyramids. I'd lecture on...on the Old [New?] Testament in the catacombs [of Rome]. So we took students right to the place where these things happened, and in the course of ten years, we took some 2000 over on the flying seminar trips. That was a credited course.

SHUSTER: And what was the main objective of the school? What was the...?

HUFFMAN: Well, it really...to be in modern terms, it was a continuing education program for



teachers primarily who needed to sharpen up in their...in their field...

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: and also for students that wanted make up work or required work that they could speed up the programs in their seminary programs. And all through these years from '28 on, our courses were quite generally accepted by all seminaries and that wasn't because we were accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools because they had no accreditation for a summer seminary. That was because we got Princeton professors, we got Northern [Baptist Seminary] professors, we got...you name them. We...we got professors that were top in their field, and they taught the same courses to us they taught to their students in their own year-round seminaries. And we got letters from them to that effect, and they graded the same way, so we had very little problem with transferring credits at par value to leading seminaries. Then when it came to the Fuller [Seminary] merger, we were accredited by the American Association by becoming a member of Fuller.

SHUSTER: And of course even before that, the schools that allowed these summer courses for credit were themselves accredited.

HUFFMAN: That's right.

SHUSTER: So, I imagine the accrediting agency accepted....

HUFFMAN: Well, we had a letter from the American Association of Schools stating that any of their member schools had the option of accepting our credits if it was their teacher teaching and they could validate the fact that they taught the same courses, made the same demands to students and the same grading system.

SHUSTER: Now how did you come to be affiliated with Fuller?

HUFFMAN: Through Ockenga again. Ockenga was the...was the founding head of Fuller and Charles E. Fuller was of course the...the big name and the money man for when it started. Carl Henry was also one of the first teachers, [Harold] Lindsell. So, Ockenga had a dream from the beginning, before Fuller was ever really...really matured. He was talking to me about our school. We were by that time...you see, Fuller came into the picture...what...late '50s, yeah. By that time, we were 20, 30 some years old. Ockenga wanted to cash in on our record...our track record of three decades and a half. And he knew...he taught for us. He knew what we were doing. Wilbur Smith taught for us. I have...there were so many that....So he began talking to us about the possibility of our becoming a summer school division of Fuller Theological Seminary. We were interested. We had our concerns, and they had their concerns too. They didn't want it to affect their accreditation, and we didn't want it to affect our...our liberty of taking in worthy students. We didn't want the academic thing to overbalance the real mission we had.

SHUSTER: How do you mean worthy students?

HUFFMAN: Well, we felt that any person who...who really desired to...to go to seminary who hadn't had the privilege of going to seminary ought to be able to go to seminary. We wouldn't accept a person as a seminary student unless he was a college graduate, but beyond that, we felt that people who for some reason or another got started in a church for instance early and had an active church and couldn't just stop and go away and leave the church ought to be able to go on. Jim Kennedy is a sample of that. He...the first time Jim Kennedy of Coral Ridge Church, Jim Kennedy of the Evangelism Explosion was started in his church work at a [sic] early age and was so involved in building this tremendous church, some 8000 members now, he started in his living room of his home, and he just felt in need of training, seminary training, and he just couldn't cut away from his church to do this. So, I was in Florida raising money. That's pretty much the job of a seminary president [Shuster laughs]. And I had an appointment with a man who owned a hotel, Christian hotel, along the coast...the east coast of Florida, Charlie Pitts [?], the big bridge builder of Canada. And he kept me waiting for an hour-and-a-half in the lobby of his hotel when I had an appointment to see him. When I came in, he had a man with him, a young man with him, and he said, "Look, John. I'm sorry that I've been so late in...with my appointment, but I've been talking with this fellow here. He's pastor of growing church here in Florida, and he's coming to me to ask should he quit the church and go off to seminary. He feels the need of further seminary training, and he said...I told him 'I got a man sitting there in the lobby that can answer your question for you.'" And he said, "Tell him about it." And I told...that was Jim Kennedy. And I told Jim Kennedy he could come to our school for three summers and could earn a masters degree. And....

SHUSTER: Now this was after you were associated with Fuller.

HUFFMAN: No, no... no. This was before. Long before. And so Charlie Pitts [?] said, "Okay. I'll underwrite... I'll underwrite your...your whole expense up from Florida with your family and your expense for three years...three summers...three seasons at Winona Lake if you do it, Jim. That's your answer. You've come here to ask me what to do. This is it." So Jim started doing that and he...he was one of the best students we ever had. Graduated cum laude. Went on to the University of London program...which we were the examination center for the University of London, England on their PhD in theology. He went into that program and got his... he didn't get his PhD from that but he got started in it and then he graduated with his PhD from New York University. But he wrote his dissertation for us for his masters degree was *Evangelism Explosion*, which finally was published and became the fastest moving soul-winning thing.

SHUSTER: Right.

HUFFMAN: So that...that's the.. the...Winona picture.

SHUSTER: How long were you affiliated with Fuller?

HUFFMAN: Thirty years.

SHUSTER: You were affiliated with Fuller for 30 years?

HUFFMAN: Oh, Fuller. I thought you said how long was I affiliated with Winona.

SHUSTER: No. How long was Winona...?

HUFFMAN: Four years. Four years.

SHUSTER: Four years?

HUFFMAN: Yes. Approximately four years.

SHUSTER: And how did you finally come to separate from...?

HUFFMAN: Well, again I'm not going to get too deep into that, but I just wanted to check my dates here. Yes. Actually, we...the...in developing, it was years in developing. Ockenga was talking to me continuously over a period of years. But for actually my being on the board and being...we being a part of Fuller and Fuller a part of us was '62, '63 and '64...

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: ...of that...that period. What was your question?

SHUSTER: How did you come to separate?

HUFFMAN: Oh. Yes. We weren't too sure. I say "we"...

SHUSTER: Who was we?

HUFFMAN: Well, Winona Lake School Board was not too sure what Fuller was going to become. We were a hundred percent convinced that the Fuller that we knew at that moment was a school we would be happy to be associated with. We had a keen lawyer who had been through a lot of these mergers and much against my better judgement, he insisted we write into our merger agreement that there should be a ten year period in which either institution should have the privilege of withdrawing from this merger at will, Fuller from us, we from them with no debate. And that was written into the merger agreement. So we went in. I was to have gone in as vice president of Fuller in charge of summer school activity. However, our board insisted that if we went into it, I should be on the board of Fuller Seminary. And Ockenga felt that was right too. Harold Lindsell was dean of Fuller at the time we went in, and Harold would have loved to be on the board and they refused Harold the privilege of being on the board. They felt that an administrator should not be a board member. So he couldn't be on the board. So at Ockenga's insistence, I agreed to go on the Fuller board as director of the summer school division of Fuller and not as vice president. That kept from a conflict with the Lindsell situation. So not only was I to be on the Fuller board. I was...we would have one other representative on the board. Now that might look as though the tail is wagging the dog a little bit, but we had 30 years' history which they wanted, they needed. They were brand new, and we had the finest theological library in the country at the time, and we had a long history of...of record...a track record. So I became a

member of the board, fully aware that trouble already was brewing when I became a member of the board on inerrancy. I knew that.

SHUSTER: How were you aware of that?

HUFFMAN: Because it was a hidden issue within the...within the Fuller faculty and board and... and I was alerted to it. I knew it and I...I.... Ockenga was very, very open with this, and he said, "John, we're writing this merger agreement so that at any time anything should happen that there has to be a divorce..." He....by this time he was beginning to not be too sure of his permanency as a leader. Dan Fuller was coming up now, and Dan had been a successor to me as an assistant at Park Street church some span in there but...and Ockenga had had some experiences with Dan there that alerted him. Then Dan went to...to Europe for training and got into [Karl] Barth and that training there, and he...he and Billy Graham and Taylor, H. J. Taylor and so forth and a lot of them were concerned [sic] what was happening. They believed....

SHUSTER: When you say "he" you mean Ockenga?

HUFFMAN: Yes. And they believed that this...this merger with Winona Lake School of Theology would help solidify Fuller as well as help give us a strong accreditation.

SHUSTER: What was your concern about inerrancy at Fuller?

HUFFMAN: Well, whether they believed in inerrancy or didn't at Fuller.

SHUSTER: Whether you believed in inerrancy?

HUFFMAN: Whether Fuller believed in it. It was in, it was written into the...into the declaration, theological declaration and was in it until quite recently. But there were...this...at the time we went in...and I went on the Fuller board the Fuller board not quite, but almost unanimously was one hundred percent solid on inerrancy. I say not quite...the not quite is the thing that broke the camel's back. The not quite, well, was David Weyerhaeuser who had left the Moody [Bible Institute] board because he couldn't swallow their theological position, and crossed his fingers and went on the Fuller board with all his money behind him. And that was alright. I mean, it wasn't alright, but that wasn't...that didn't seem to be a threat. And the threat came when the new president came to Fuller. That was the threat. Okay. So I say my eyes were wide open when we went in there, and I sat there, but I landed there.... By the time I got there... Carl, Carl Henry had resigned and left because of this. Shortly thereafter, Lindsell resigned and left because of what they believed was Fuller's failure to follow through on their avowed doctrine of inerrancy.

SHUSTER: How did they fail to follow through? What...?

HUFFMAN: We begin to get reports back from the field that students were...were not preaching or believing inerrancy, and when we traced it through again and again, they got that seed planted by teachers at Fuller. And for a time, the early days...my early days on the Fuller board, I would

say that the staff (I mean that the board) was solidly, solidly united with that one exception on this business of inerrancy. And Weyerhaeuser would give voice to it...that he'd go along with...with our...with the position. He didn't make any issues of it at that point. We began to find that on the faculty there were those who behind the scenes were not...they didn't believe in inerrancy. One of the most fundamental men that Fuller had ever at the beginning, Paul Jewett, had reversed himself in New England in his...in his New England training on this business of inerrancy, and there were others. So pretty soon we had a faculty that was divided on inerrancy, a...a board that we thought was united on inerrancy, and it was a question whether this was going to be a faculty-run or a...a board-run school, and then....The problem there was that Charlie Fuller...dear Charles Fuller, a man of God and one of the greatest saints that ever lived, finally got to the place where he had to walk the chalk line here. He and Ockenga were just like that. They were like David and Jonathan. I mean....

SHUSTER: You mean they were close?

HUFFMAN: They were very close. And he tried to get Harold Ockenga to come out there and take over the *Old Fashioned Revival Hour* and give himself full-time to Fuller. And...so...it went along nicely. We went along well for the first couple years. We had to get a new president because Ockenga was never full-time president of Fuller. He was always president in absentia. And for the early days, that sort of worked. Finally, he...he...when he was there two different periods as president of Fuller and the first period he got by fairly well. Then as the issues began to build up and as the faculty began to demand a hearing and to demand the ability to...to have a say as to what's going on at Fuller, then the issues began to get hot and the real thing came when on what is called "Black...Black Saturday" in this book on....What's the name of this new book of...[George] Marsden's?

SHUSTER: *Defending*....

HUFFMAN: Not *Defending*. *Reforming*...

SHUSTER: *Reforming*.

HUFFMAN: *Reforming Fundamentalism*. Yeah. [Train noise in background] For a time, for quite a time, there were...there were deep rumblings and deep uprisings where people were signing the...signing the statement of faith. They had to sign the statement of faith saying, "We believe in inerrancy," like the...like the Wheaton signing. Some were signing it with mental reservation. But that was not known generally until Dan Fuller came back from Europe and the Fullers wanted him to be president of Fuller Seminary. He wanted to be president for a time. And then he saw that that wasn't the thing. So they...he was...dubbed to be dean of Fuller Seminary actually and even when he was...when he was installed as dean, I was there. He had not yet taken a stand on this business of inerrancy. He was tinctured with liberalism. He was under Barth. He was not really a Barthian in the truest sense of the word, but...but it might have been better if he had been than what he was. But he was a weakling and nobody took him seriously when he came back. He was an untried person. He had come back, he was an unknown.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: But dear Charlie Fuller, it was his son and he had a mother and a strong mother and Dan's a good man. I know him, and I love him, but he...he had...he was forced to take his stand, and when it came to a final meeting of the board and the faculty, a joint meeting, which was called...I was through all of this.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: I was in all of these discussions. Finally, Ockenga had tried to settle this issue and tried to satisfy the board and himself that there wasn't a person on the Fuller faculty but that they not only signed the statement on inerrancy as well as everything else, but that they...they really believed it. But it became evident that something was...was wrong because this isn't what was getting out to the students in some instances. So we had a long weekend. Wilbur Smith...

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: was there and all the faculty and all the board members practically. So it came to the point where people were told to bare their soul and really tell what they thought. Dan was just back from Europe, and he'd sat through session after session and hadn't said a word and one of his friends said, "You're just sitting there like a mummy. Speak up and say something!" And he decided to speak up and say something. And what he said wasn't good. And he simply said that, "There are parts of the Bible that aren't true. We have to face it. There are mistakes." And he came out at that meeting and...and simply took his position as one who did not believe in inerrancy.

SHUSTER: And what was the reaction of people at the meeting?

HUFFMAN: Absolutely shocked. As we approached the meeting (it was a night session) and we had an all day session, and Wilbur Smith thought it was going to be so dull, he went to his hotel and read a book. He wasn't even there. We were startled. I mean, I say "we." I wasn't startled. I had had talks with Dan Fuller. I knew what he thought, but it was a startling revelation to...to the world that we had on the Fuller board people that had been signing the statement of faith year after year, and they didn't believe it. And one man got up, George Ladd by name. I knew George Ladd when he was a preacher in New England in a little scrap of hard circuit Baptist church and a great scholar. And he said, "What I'm going to say now may cost me my job." But he absolutely repudiated what he had been taught and had been teaching for years! And...

SHUSTER: Repudiated in other words inerrancy?

HUFFMAN: Yeah well, inerrancy was...was the most flagrant of...of this but all variations of that. So but that...that debate...that whole thing cost Charlie Fuller a big part of his *Old Fashioned Revival Hour* constituency. It got out among them. It cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars of money that didn't come in any longer. Cost him some of his closest, lifelong friends, board members and faculty members, Wilbur Smith number one among them, who had to take

issue, and dear old Charlie he was...he was...he was a man of God, wonderful man of God. But he was...he was on the fence. I mean, here was his son who should have been kicked in the pants and told to get out if he didn't believe what he signed. But he wasn't. He was the heir to the throne, so to speak. And it put Charles in a...Charlie Fuller in a very bad light. But in all fairness, we have to say this: if Ockenga had been full-time president of Fuller Seminary, things wouldn't have gotten out of hand. It could have run as Dallas [Theological Seminary] ran...has run all through these years. And here's where Taylor comes into the picture. At the hottest session that we ever had, which was "Black Saturday," [pauses] Charlie...Charlie Fuller made a statement. No, I was talking about Taylor.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: H. J. Taylor said to Harold and that... it wasn't "Black Saturday." It was in that board meeting that week.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: He said, "Harold, Fuller Seminary is your baby and you'd better...." I want to take this back. This wasn't at that session, this was earlier.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: But Ockenga was pastoring a church (Park Street Church), which he was at his zenith at Park Street Church, and very popular there, very successful there. A missionary program moving up to a million dollars a year for missions alone from that single church, and he had that burden upon him. He was a president of NAE a part of this time and always a titular ahead of it in a sense. And here we had Fuller growing up...a big school developing here. It was... when we merged with it, it wasn't that big. We had as many...at least half as many students at Winona Lake as they had there when we merged.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: We had one hundred and eighty students... eighty in one picture there that...and they would run probably not more than double that. So here he was, trying to run from 3000 mile distance a seminary which is a full-time job in itself and all these other things. H.J. Taylor said to... to Ockenga, "This is your baby and God's going to hold you responsible for taking care of it. Isn't it important enough for you to leave Boston and come here full time?" Ockenga said, "Give me a few minutes, and I'll give you an answer." He went out and called his wife up, long distance, told her what was going on, came back and said, "I'd like to give...be able to give you an answer, but I need...just give me another day or two." Now, those who had their man in mind who they wanted for president, Dan Fuller number one, Charlie Fuller this time number two and Jewett number three who was behind the scenes in the Fuller home all the time. I knew Jewett when he was a kid out there in...in...in school in the east. And that element said this...(and Weyerhaeuser) they said, "This is our...this is our chance. Let's not give him..." Fuller got up and said, "Let's not just give him a couple days. Let's give him a couple weeks to decide this." In the

meantime, they touted their choice, which was [David Allan] Hubbard who was under fire at the school he was in there at the Wheaton of the West...California [Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA]?

SHUSTER: Biola?

HUFFMAN: No, no. The college up at...

SHUSTER: Seattle Pacific?

HUFFMAN: No. Oh, that's something. Anyway it'll come.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: So they started working to get...to get Hubbard in. Now I was on the board when Hubbard was voted in.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: Ockenga finally said he could not come to Fuller full-time, but he had said before that, "I am against...I am against Hubbard." He was against Hubbard on a doctrinal basis...beliefs. He felt that he had too much in common with those who were...

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: ...non-inerrants. But he said, "If...if I don't come...if I finally have to tell you I can't come," Then he said, "I will...I will vote for Hubbard and support Hubbard." And then that's what happened.

SHUSTER: Even though he was doctrinally opposed to him?

HUFFMAN: Well, even though he had serious doubts, yes. I voted...I voted for Hubbard to come. It... it seemed to me (and I know Taylor did) he came... there was no strong opposition to his coming in when he was voted in by the board. We...he gave us assurances that he did believe in inerrancy, that he would go that route, and we were hoodwinked on that.

SHUSTER: What if you....Let me ask you too another thing that Marsden brings up in the book referring to Winona Lake School of Theology. He tends to emphasize more a question of debts the school had.

HUFFMAN: That is absolutely made out of whole cloth. When we turned...when I turned... when as president, I signed the paper of the merger, we turned over three hundred and eighty thousand dollars' worth of debt-free real estate to Fuller in the Winona Campus. Fuller assumed Winona Lake School of Theology as its department. I was a depart...departmental head under the president of Fuller seminary. Before any such issue was made in a board meeting....I have the



papers on this. This will be in my chapter which I'm working on here. I've finished the chapter, but it isn't polished. It isn't...I haven't got it as refined as I want it. I will quote....I don't propose to publish this.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: I propose this to be for my children's record and only that... maybe someday it'll be published. I'm not....This is history.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: This isn't....And I hope it remains history. But in a meeting where Fuller was facing, after we were officially....We turned it over debt free.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

HUFFMAN: I mean, they owned our property. Then Fuller had some debts it had to meet, and they took...the board voted to borrow X number of dollars. Something like five hundred thousand dollars. Something like that. It wasn't that exact amount, but of which one hundred thousand dollars was to be for operating needs for the summer school division, which was at Winona Lake School of Theology and that was to be borrowed on the campus, which was debt-free. We never borrowed that money, and Marsden had a good chance to know the facts because he went to Lindsell and said, "What's the story on this Winona Lake School of Theology thing?" And Lindsell said, "If you want to know the story, talk to Huffman. He's right here in Newport beach. Get it from the horse's mouth." And Marsden never, never got to me. He got only to people like Weyerhaeuser who were dead set that this thing was going...was not going to be returned to us. So what happened?

SHUSTER: What was not going to be returned to you?

HUFFMAN: Our...our campus. So we had a hundred thousand dollar operating money voted to us by the board.

SHUSTER: Of Fuller?

HUFFMAN: Which we never.... (Yeah of Fuller!) which we never drew upon, and I had a record of going out and raising as high as...before...before we went into the merger, I had to raise...I had to raise about a hundred thousand dollars just to be able to go in free. I could go out and get money like that and I did. There was no money problem until Hubbard and his crowd saw that they were in trouble theologically, then they made that story. That was made out of whole cloth.

SHUSTER: So the...really the sole reason for the separation was the question of inerrancy. Separation between...

HUFFMAN: I, well our... our... our reason for it was that. Absolutely. I mean, Marsden says that then we had this...this big meeting at Winona Lake. We had the faculty at Winona Lake. We had...I mean, we had the board meeting at Winona Lake. And....You gonna cut that or...?

SHUSTER: No.

HUFFMAN: Alright, Okay, stop it just a minute [tap recorder turned off and on]. We cut it once again. I'm trying to get.... [Recording is stopped and restarted] At a board meeting of the trustees of Fuller Theological Seminary in the summer, I guess, of '63 (I'll have to double check that date), for the first time, I was aware that there was going to be an attempt to make some kind of a...some kind of a financial problem the issue rather than the real issue between Winona Lake School of Theology and Fuller Theological Seminary. By this time, we were aware that...

SHUSTER: We being...?

HUFFMAN: By that...by this time the Winona Lake board of the Winona Lake School of Theology was aware that there were serious defections and deflections on the Fuller faculty, particularly on the matter of inerrancy which was a very primary issue with us, and we were called into a regular session of the Fuller Theological Seminary board at Winona Lake campus at our invitation. I should say that by merger agreement, our board remained intact. Our charter in Indiana as Winona Lake School of Theology remained intact and was to remain intact for ten years to provide for a possible reversion by Fuller or by us within that period of time, so that there would be a [sic] unbroken continuity if that should ever happen, which we trusted would never happen. Marsden in his book says that they came to play hardball with me at that board meeting. I was absolutely unaware of that. I was unaware there was going to be any problem. Unfortunately, Ockenga was not at that board meeting. That's the only board meeting that I ever attended to my knowledge he wasn't present at. He was out of the country. He had informed me before going that he would be gone and that immediately upon coming back he would want to see me to see what had taken place, but I was unaware that there was any...any kind of a difficulty because we had been working together with...harmoniously with Hubbard on these problems and with Dan Fuller trying to resolve the problems. But when we got to the board meeting, it became...

SHUSTER: When you were trying to resolve the problems, you mean problems about finances or inerrancy?

HUFFMAN: No, no, no. There was no problems about finances except the normal problems that you have in getting a budget in, going out, and shaking the bushes, and drawing on your...on your credit to go over there was never an issue. Our...our bookkeeper was in constant contact with Fuller's. Our records were channeled through Fuller regularly and reports were made through them. Anyway, I got there and just prior to this, an incident took place that tipped me off that something was happening. A professor who...a graduate of Fuller was brought back as an assistant professor but who was...

SHUSTER: At Fuller?

HUFFMAN: At Fuller Seminary. But who was not allowed to teach as a full time professor by both the board and the dean and the administration and who had been told (we'd been told) would never be promoted to a teaching position because of his theological beliefs, or lack of beliefs...was made assistant librarian instead of a professor, so that he wouldn't get tenure and was sent by Hubbard to our campus under the pretext of reviewing our library and making suggestions as to what should be done with our library. But while there, probably unaware that I was now at this time on the academic affairs committee of Fuller Seminary, confided in me that he had been promised full professorship by Hubbard. And I knew that that promise could not have been given if the covenants made to the Fuller board by Hubbard himself were kept. And that prepared me to realize that I owed something to my...to my alumni who were meeting there that same time that our...the Fuller board was meeting at our campus at Winona Lake, and between sessions of our meeting, there was a meeting of the alumni banquet. There was the alumni banquet, noon banquet, and at that time, various members of the alumni association had come to me and said, "What's all this about?"

SHUSTER: We need....Tape's almost out.

END OF TAPE

