

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Arthur Frederik Glasser (CN 421, T1)** 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 on the part of the speaker.

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

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

[] Words in brackets are comments by the transcriber.

This transcript was made by Bob Shuster and Kevin Emmert and was completed in January 2011.

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 421, Tape 1. Oral history interview with Arthur Frederick Glasser by Bob Shuster on September 14, 1989.

SHUSTER: This is an interview for the archives of the Billy Graham Center of Dr. Arthur Glasser by Robert Shuster. This interview took place on September the 14th [1993], at 10 am in Dr. Glasser's office at the school of World Mission at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California. Dr Glasser, what...how do you describe your family background?

GLASSER: My mother was born in Germany in Eberfeld [now part of the city of Wuppertal] in the Ruhr district, and was quite involved through her parents with a German exclusive Brethren Assembly. John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren movement, went to Germany and at that time was instrumental in contacting some of the people who later became members of my family. So I think of myself as brought up in...with that sort of a tradition behind me...a strong evangelical, but rather exclusive perspective in terms of church relationships. You know the Plymouth Brethren have their open assemblies but they also have their exclusives. Well, this was the exclusive of the exclusives. My mother and her family came to America when she was still quite young. She was enrolled in the Lutheran school....

SHUSTER: When was that? Was it a...?

GLASSER: I...I don't really have a specific time but it was a good ways back. My grandfather had a position open for him in Patterson, New Jersey. He was an engineer of sorts...in those days Patterson was known as the silk center of the New World [America] and in the matter of weaving and things of this...that was his technical skill. But this was in Patterson, New Jersey and...so that's my mother's side. My father's side, the family is Swiss. My father was born in this country, but I have a grand...his mother used to tell me of her experience as a young girl of hearing that Abraham Lincoln had just been shot. That was one of the early memories. So the family was Swiss and German...and although a lot of people think that because of my present interest in the Jews, Glasser must be a Jewish name. [Chuckles] I don't think there's any Jewish blood in us. And that's a measure of a misfortune, I presume, because I'd be a lot sharper than I am now [both chuckle]. More intelligent, I mean, not sharp in the wrong sense. But my father was a very ambitious person. He had been the private secretary in the Tiffany Jewelry House in New York City and the man who was his boss encouraged him to study law. And so he became a lawyer in the city of Patterson, started his own firm and was quite entrepreneurial and quite successful, but the Depression was quite a problem to him because a lot of his projects had to be cashed in on and that was rather difficult. My mother and father were blessed with four children. I have an older sister, Carlin [?], who is presently with the Lord. I have an older brother, John, who just recently retired after a long and rather successful medical practice as a gynecologist. And I came in as number three, and my younger sister Dorothy. She and her husband are.... Well, he is now retired, George Shepherd. He is one of our most faithful enthusiasts for the School of World Mission, a very generous donor who helps me finance people who come to our school whose background is OMF-CIM [Overseas Missionary Fellowship-China Inland Mission]. So we have our continuing linkage with the mission that I later came to serve. [Pauses] We were brought up in...because the Reformed background was Swiss, we...?



SHUSTER: Now your father was of Reformed background?

GLASSER: Yeah, you know the people coming from Swiss would automatically be Reformed. And so we were attached...attached to a Presbyterian church, which was in the neighborhood. And the very fact that it was a kind of a liberal Presbyterian church doesn't speak to well for the discernment of my father. I don't ever think of my father as an ardent professing Christian, although on his death bed he signed a statement confessing himself as one who truly believed in Jesus Christ. But my father had a lot of activities, especially raising prized cattle and farms of one sort and another in New York State, so he was always away on weekends and I have almost no recollection of ever going to church with my father. He was a man who was warned, "If you keep up this interest in your prized cattle and your farms, you're going to lose you family." And in a very real sense that's what actually happened.

SHUSTER: Who warned him?

GLASSER: Well....

SHUSTER: Where did that...who gave him that warning?

GLASSER: That interest in family?

SHUSTER: No, who gave him that warning?

GLASSER: Oh, a man named Eckings...Dr. Frank P. Eckings, who was the family doctor.... And a very fine Christian...a man who presided over my birth, and a man with whom my father and my older brother used to go on vacations. I was never included, being more or less the kind of the number two or the black sheep, and all that sort of thing. You know how it is [?]. But so that I could say it for years that Jesus Christ meant nothing to me. We would go to church because at the church was a very good scout troop and we were all active in scouting...my brother and I in summer camps and things of this sort...the scout camp. I think the scout camp kept us away from local drug stores so that we would lead a normal, wholesome life. The German side of my family (my mother's family) since the German-speaking [Brethren] Assemblies of northern New Jersey were all a little bit out of my range, not being at home in German...who...we sort of were at a distance from them, but I always admired my grandfather...Anton Viza. He was a very warm, ardent, little Saxon, and his wife had been.... Now his...my grandmother, who my mother knew, had been a very active Christian...Lutheran Christian in Konigsberg in northeast Germany, in the Protestant part of Germany. And she had a desire to serve the Lord (as I understand the story), and the only way a Lutheran...a young Lutheran woman would translate that desire into something active...well, she went and joined Kaiserswerth. Kaiserswerth is in the land by...it's a deaconess training center in the old Lutheran tradition. And she liked her Lutheran church, her stained glass windows and her Bach and the rest of it, and being a deaconess. Why she ever got to know this Saxon, Anton Verser [?], I don't know. She was decorated by the Kaiser actually...gained an Iron Cross [German military honor] at the Battle of Sedan [1870] for nursing under fire. And that was part of the tradition. Well, I...I...when I came along had she had long since passed away and my grandfather had remarried. You know....



SHUSTER: Who told you the stories about your grandmother?

GLASSER: My mother...my mother told me...yeah, she used to speak of her—tall, slender Prussian. My grandfather was rather short.... But, you know, love triumphs over ecclesiology and I guess that's what happened [Both chuckle]. But the strange thing is (and maybe we shouldn't speak of this)...but my...his second wife destroyed the Iron Cross. So that was part of the story but we never could see it, you know [Glasser chuckles]...the thing that she had gained through...well, the tribute the Kaiser had given to this group of nurses that...tending the wounded at that battle. Well....

SHUSTER: She destroyed it by accident or out of jealousy or a little bit of both? Or....

GLASSER: Don't try and probe the depths of a second wife when the first wife is being idolized [Glasser laughs]. She was a kind of a shrew, but I liked her. But my grandfather, he had on the wall of his living room a beautiful picture of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and the caption was, "In der Wuste," you know, "In the Wilderness". And here was the Tabernacle in the center and the tribes gathered around, and the idea of a pilgrim life, being the Lord's, outside the camp. You know, the typical ways in which the exclusive look at things. Because that made an impression on me. But even so, Jesus Christ meant nothing to me until my brother had an experience of Christ at...while he was an undergraduate at Princeton. And this brings into the family a.... [recording turned off and on]

SHUSTER: There we go.

GLASSER: This brings into the story a man who has had a tremendous impact on both my brother and me, a man named Donald Fullerton. Donald Fullerton's home was in Plainfield, New Jersey. He was a graduate of Princeton, had been active in World War I in artillery at the front, was quite active in business, and then under the influence, perhaps of his mother (who was one of the board members of the Women's Union Missionary Union [sic], he made a commitment to Christ and a commitment to world mission...or world vision...world mission. This meant that he decided to preach Christ where Christ was not named, and went to central Asia as a missionary. He was a loner. He should have joined a mission society; he should have secured the regular formal training that a mission society would have. He should have become more regularized in his approach to the whole missionary task. But he was a loner...he was well to do, so he could finance his own way. And how he went to Asia...he went to India and had hopes of getting into central Asia, contacting CIM missionaries there, but his health broke down. He visited Afghanistan during his travels. He used to tell us stories of that experience...of a man being stoned to death in the streets of Kabul for confessing Jesus Christ. He was a very personable man and a graduate of Fuller...of...of Princeton [Glasser corrects himself]...a man of culture, refinement, etcetera, etcetera. Well, on his way home from India, his health having broken down, he was quite...in quite a quandary as to what he should do with his life. And he stopped in London and he sought the counsel of a very prominent Baptism minister in that day, F.B. Meyer [Frederick Brotherton Meyer, 1847-1929]. And through this conversation, a question was put to this fellow, Fullerton, "Well, what was your purpose in going to Asia, to central Asia?" And he said, "To preach Christ where Christ was not named." And this man said, "Well, don't deviate from this. You have to go back home. Your health demands it. Now



preach Jesus Christ where Christ is not being named, and I would suggest,” he said, “that you go to your university.” And so this man, living not far from Princeton, in New Jersey, decided that that’s what he would do. In those days, there was no InterVarsity Christian fellowship; there was no Campus Crusade. The Student Christian Movements were quite captured in the liberal mood of the day. You know this was the time from the fundamentalist/liberal controversy in American history (that is, the latest edition of that controversy). Anyhow, he decided that he would go to Princeton and do this work. And, of course, he was independent; he paid his own way. No need to check with church or anything else. So he started wandering around this...the mains between the buildings at Princeton, and he overtook an undergraduate and engaged him in conversation. And in no time at all led him to faith in Christ...that was my brother. And my brother became the....

SHUSTER: So your bother was the first person that he talked to?

GLASSER: Well....

SHUSTER: At Prince....

GLASSER: That...well, I don’t know. He may have spoken to others, but I know he overtook this young guy. Anyhow, this...this was the beginnings...marked the beginnings of an organization that still exists today that’s called the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship. My brother is one of the charter members. And in no time at all a Bible study group was started at Princeton and it’s been kept going ever since. And it’s had some...it’s had a remarkable impact on...on the missionary movement of our day. In fact, I think that somebody somewhere ought to study the...the...the contribution that the PEF has made to world evangelization, because many of these people who were gifted and...you know, gifted naturally, but under the influence of a Bible teaching ministry led by this fellow Don Fullerton...here’s always...not a few of them...of us...who became missionaries in time.

SHUSTER: Who were some of them?

GLASSER: Well, Jim Renick. I know several who went to France. There...oh ,you’re asking me a lot of.... Bill Marlow [?] (who became the head of World Presbyterian Missions for the PCA [Presbyterian Church in America] movement). Oh, the...the...all sorts, and it would be very interesting to track them all down. Anyhow, its been a...it’s a really interesting story. I think that this movement...this little PEF...never really large, but always really missionary oriented. Well, anyhow, my brother naturally contacted me at that time through a series of strange circumstances.... I was in a private school down in Virginia. I graduated from high school and I was only fifteen; possibly because I was physically large, they kept skipping me with the result that I was out of high school. I was only fifteen and father didn’t want to send me to university.

SHUSTER: Why were they skipping you because you were physically large?

GLASSER: Just because they saw [unclear]....

SHUSTER: Why would they make them skip you?

GLASSER: Well, don't ask me. Don't expect to find the educational system to be particularly rational at this point. [Chuckles] Let's just say that's what they did. Anyhow, I skipped three classes and the result was...I was sort of...I had a lot of difficulties adjusting socially to people because always being skipped. And of course, the schoolwork I guess wasn't too difficult. But...there I was, so I was sent to a private....

SHUSTER: You mean you were shy or you were....

GLASSER: Just wrapped up in myself. I had a desire to go and take the examinations to go to West Point [Military Academy]. But...and I did come in...just missed by a squeaker. Two guys ahead of me got appointments and I conferred (that is competitive exams throughout New Jersey). There was a lot of interest in that because of the Depression period nobody had any money to go to college, and so therefore an opportunity to get a free education from the government was not to be despised. But I....

SHUSTER: This is while you were fifteen?

GLASSER: Anyhow...no, fifteen, sixteen or seventeen...I went to a military school in Virginia. And....

SHUSTER: Was that VMI [Virginia Military Institute] ?...or....

GLASSER: No, VMI was sort of a college. [Pauses] Isn't this funny...it's a.... Anyhow, I'll tell...it'll come. A place at Fort Defiance, Virginia, and it was a teen [?] school. So I enjoined life there and thought maybe I should be a...should compete for an exam....

SHUSTER: At this point?

GLASSER: At this point. But as I say I came in third in the exam, so that was enough to decide my father. That time I called my father to...he said, "When you go to Cornell, you study engineering 'cause you seem to like it...like mathematics." He never suggested...I wanted to go to Princeton...and was very ambitious that his older son go...his older son go to Princeton and he made a great deal of that. My father and I never really clicked too well. I don't recall much in the way of friendly companionship type of relationships with him. He was always wrapped up in his...in his business...law business and his real-estate business on the side, and then his farms, weekends. Although, later while going through university I used to work for him on his farm as a...just as a way of spending my summers working. He'd generally give me about ten bucks at Thanksgiving time, but you know I was grateful. Here he had four of us in university at the same time and that was quite a drain, as you can very well believe. Anyhow, my brother wrote to me concerning Jesus Christ and I couldn't quite figure out what happened to him. But he said that there would be a conference of students, and this conference...I had to attend because I was about to go to Cornell and didn't know much about universities and here I could be with a lot of university students and that sort of thing and, "Why not get in further with this." So it was in the summer in between leaving this military school and going to Cornell that I attended a student conference at Keswick, New Jersey.

SHUSTER: And that's 1931?

GLASSER: That would be 19... [pauses] 30...[pauses again] it would be 1932, I think, yeah. 1932. And this was my first contact with evangelical Christianity. And Fullerton was there and Robert McQuilken of the Columbia Bible College (the president), he was there and others. And...it was that during that conference I became aware of the fact that my life was aimless. I can't say that I had any particular conviction of sin. But, you know, the atmosphere of my grandfather, that you believed the Bible...that was something that was sort of built into me...took the Bible seriously, etcetera. So that when people spoke about Jesus Christ, you know, in this evangelical fashion I must confess I was quite drawn to it. The actual point of decision came while preparing for a tennis game during the afternoon break. There was Max Lutherat [?]. He was a student there at...from Lafayette College (later became a prominent Wycliffe Bible translator in Mexico). And we were...I was waiting with another guy to take over the tennis court when he and his pal finished their game. And during the course of things there was sort of chit chat back and forth talk between ourselves (me and Max), and he turned to the man alongside of him and said, "You know I just discovered God's will for my life." "God has a plan for my life; I just discovered it." And then this fellow said, "What do you think it's going to be?" "Well," he said, "I think I'm going to be a Bible translator." And so forth. Well, the thing that stuck in my mind was that God had a plan for a life. And I think that it was on that basis that I was drawn to Jesus Christ.

SHUSTER: That was a new thought for you?

GLASSER: Absolute new thought...that becoming a Christian meant coming in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ that would result in his unfolding to you a plan for your life. That was, I guess the military pattern where you took orders from above, and he was, you know?

SHUSTER: "I say go and they go. I say come and they come." [paraphrase of Matt. 8:9]

GLASSER: Well, oh, pretty much that way. There was no...there was no issue of a thought as they say. There was no issue of sin, particularly. Conviction of sin came later. The meaning of the cross, all that came later. So I tended in personal evangelism since then to try to avoid using any stereotype patterns, that you had to do this first, then that. So, as far as I was concerned, I was soundly converted. This man asked me what...I said to him...he said, "Do you think we ought to do something about Jesus Christ?"

SHUSTER: Now what man was this?

GLASSER: Fuller...Fullerton. And I said, "Yeah, I think I should." And I said, "What do you do?" And he turned at John, you know, 1:11 and 12. It was the text that talks about having received them who receive him, to them he gives the power, so forth.

SHUSTER: Now did you go and seek him out or was he stalking...?

GLASSER: He...he sought me out. He was the kind of man who sought people out. In fact Fuller...Fullerton was forever...was characterized by people as the guy who always wanted you to

do something about the Christian message, not just understand it. He wasn't interested in making Christianity intelligible. He wanted you to respond. And so he asked me, and I said, "Well, I" And so we had a brief prayer. I can know the place, there under a tree there off to the side. I was a...it was the transaction of a moment but certainly the implications that have been long lasting. Yeah. The...the upshot was after...either after this he started working on me in this way: "Now, what are you?" And I said, "What do you mean, what am I?" He said, "Well, read the text again." And so I read "As many as receive him to them he gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which are born not of blood nor the will of flesh but the will of God." [John 1:12-13] You know that text. And he said, "Well, what are you?" And I said, "I don't understand your question." He had me read the text and read the text. And after a while I caught on. "Well, it would seem that if a person receives Jesus Christ he has the right to become a son of God." I said...he said, "Then you are a son of God. Do you feel like a son of God?" I said, "I don't know about feeling." I said, "Well, it says that if you receive him, which I feel like I've just done, therefore you have a right to become the son of God. I must be a son of God because I've received him and feelings don't really adhere to the point." He said, "Do you look like the son of God?" I said, "I don't know if I look like a son of God or not. All I know is I have received Jesus Christ here in this place, under this tree, and therefore I must be a son of God." And it's a funny thing, that sense of assurance came to me at that time that has never left me. And I've been grateful for this but I don't know if I would automatically lead a person into the direct questions that he used with me, but perhaps he saw me as rather a stubborn person [Shuster laughs]. Well, anyhow, there it was. And, oh I met some very wonderful Christians there...fellows and girls. It was a...it was such a new world...such a refreshingly wonderful way. I think the very atmosphere of those Christians was more intense of that which disposed me...my heart to Christ.

SHUSTER: How do you mean it was a refreshingly wonderful world?

GLASSER: Oh, Christian girls and Christian fellows, you know, there was something...there was a cleanness, there was a direction to their lives. They were all attractive people. At least I didn't think there was an oddball among them. This was...this was just what I encountered. There must of been about a hundred there, in Keswick, New Jersey. And the emphasis of course was on the Keswick message, which was "to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." [Phil. 1:21] The whole idea that sin is not possible...sin is not necessary. God has called us to a life of victory. You know, a life of usefulness. And of course, the missionary purpose was very clear. Now through this man Fullerton in the subsequent years that we were together, the whole idea of mission (I didn't have to be persuaded about it...it was just how it rubbed off)...because he had done this, well, why shouldn't we all. So he set the option that that might be for us too. You see, so that...in a sense no one had to persuade me of a Bible basis for missions or the need to do this or that. Here was Romans 12:1 and 2. You would surrender your heart. You present yourself a living sacrifice and...whereby you...you discover for yourself what is that good, and excellent, perfect will of God. The will of God is disclosed to the person who surrenders his heart to Christ. And he earnestly desires the will of God. That is as simple and as direct a point as that.

SHUSTER: Okay, if you could backtrack for a second.

GLASSER: Yeah.

SHUSTER: You were mentioning about when you were a child your family went to the Presbyterian church.

GLASSER: My, well, we went, the children went.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh.

GLASSER: I wouldn't say "we" family went. I don't think we as a family ever went to church...the whole family.

SHUSTER: Uh-huh. Was there any kind of family devotional activity?

GLASSER: No devotional activity.

SHUSTER: Prayers or...?

GLASSER: No. Now later on...now mind you, I had never been baptized, but that's a funny story...I was out, probably with some of the guys, on our street...I must have been about eight or nine and crabby and dirty and this and that. And I was called into the house by my mother, and there to my surprise I saw my aunt (my father's sister), who was a very ardent Presbyterian. And she was the one...she could play...played the organ in one of the Presbyterian churches and so forth. She was quite a person. Schoolteacher and she marshaled people around, and she marshaled me around. I liked her. Aunt Henrietta Ardensen [?]. Anyhow, sh...there was my Aunt Henrietta and the pastor of this liberal Presbyterian church...Howard A. Dare of the Eastside Presbyterian Church of Patterson, New Jersey. And my father was there, and for the life of me, I didn't know what was this gathering. When my aunt I knew had been working on my mother that the boy hasn't been baptized and he ought to be baptized, and something may happen to him if he's not baptized. She was a very legalistic Presbyterian, so that baptism meant that which kept you from....

SHUSTER: Going to hell.

GLASSER: Yeah [chuckles], eternal darkness, etcetera, etcetera. So I was told to wash my face and come in the living room. And...and there the pastor said some things, he read from the little book and put some water on my head and the family standing around and that was it. And then I notice my father gave the pastor a ten dollar bill, and I thought, "Boy, he got...he got that..." [laughs] And after that I was outside the house screaming with the kids. So that was my baptism into the Christian church.

SHUSTER: What did it mean to you then?

GLASSER: Nothing. Meant nothing. I...I don't...think I...I don't think I gave it one moment's reflection. It was one of those things.

SHUSTER: You mentioned that your aunt had been talking to your mother about it and your mother had been resisting?

GLASSER: No, mother wasn't resisting. My...my father was just so passive about all things. And I don't know...I don't know if my father and mother had what I would call a happy marriage. I don't...you now, there...my father was wrapped up in his...his preoccupations. It was always a [unclear]. I think of him as a presence that would sometimes come in and tell us what to do, but most of the time life revolved around my mother. My mother was a tremendously alert person intellectually, a wonderful person in my eyes. A woman who right to the end of her days was continually studying. You'd find her studying paleontology, studying whether or not Genesis fits. She was a...had a very inquiring mind. She wanted to go to Bryn Mawr College, but her mother died and this meant that her father and the younger members of that family...well, she had to keep house. And so her educational ambitions were...were never realized. But she had, as I said, an inquiring mind. She entered wonderfully into all of our joys and enthusiasms - scouts... scouting you know, and arrowhead hunting, hiking, this and that. She was very wonderful in that respect, but she had the [unclear] for others and brought up the family almost single handedly. That's the way I think of it now. And I think there was a lot of tensions between...I know there was tension between my younger sister and my father. And I know that my father always had...had a hard time with me, as I will tell you later. This really came to a...a explosive point. So it was that sort of a family. Decent...very decent, very mild. Very, you know...we were encouraged to read and a lot of that sort of a thing. And we were told that we had the brains and we should excel. That was the atmosphere, you worked hard.

SHUSTER: Did your mother talk to you about God or Christ or...?

GLASSER: I can't recall ever speaking to me about...you know in sense pressing me to make a decision. I always...I wondered why that was, because later on I found that she, you know she...well, she became very active as a prayer supporter of the China Inland Mission and that sort of thing. And she [pauses] later on she would attend prayer conferences at the...that the CIM would hold. But, I don't know. There was always sort of a wistful dimension there that I never fully entered into. But I could wished that my mother would have spoken to me more specifically. We would have prayer at the table...meals.... That would be.... Father would have a prayer that he would recite. But that was a matter...so I'm not the product of what you would call a good evangelical home. But there was an atmosphere that God was, and the Bible was to be...that God was, you know...all parts of the Bible was to be respected. I remember.... Now I used to look...we had a great big Lutheran Bible (I have it actually at home here now)...a Luther Bible filled with the engravings of [Gustav] Doré. Oh, some of them beautiful, some of them hideous, you know [both laugh]. And I thought, "Boy, that's quite a book." It was all in German. Actually, I think they say I spoke German before I spoke English. But of course, my father didn't have the imagination to realize that we could have had a...a...you know, we could have had a bilingual family. And I could have therefore gotten over this hurdle of German. But Father, he from...his, his German wasn't as good as mother's and I guess he didn't want it spoken around the house. I guess he thought, "Let's be Americans through and through." But we were a typical second-generation American family.

SHUSTER: What are your earliest memories as a child?

GLASSER: Well, well, I just, you know, remember going to school, summers. We never went as a family on a vacation together. There was none of that. I can remember getting sick, appendicitis



when I was six years of age, ruptured appendicitis, and an operation, that sort of thing. I...the funny thing is I don't remember other...anything other than as a wonderful...a wonderful home, a lot of security, and every summer as soon as we became Boy Scouts we were sent to summer camp for the whole summer

SHUSTER: And so how old were you...how old were you...?

GLASSER: As soon as you were twelve. So that, you know...my brother became a nature [unclear]. He was a bird watcher, still is, very interested in nature. And I tried to follow but I didn't have the ability that he had, but I became a hike master. And so I became also in charge one summer of taking care of the garbage in the camp and digging pits and that sort of thing. I loved rowing. Rowing later became my sport at university. But, hiking, you know, all the things that were full of fun. Arrowhead hunting, we did a lot of that. I have...arrowheads that we gave to mish...to museums and things like that sort of... Oh, I have some that I have given away and I have some still at home. Things that we have picked up. But there always...these [unclear], you know..., lot of reading, a lot of...but I was going to this liberal Presbyterian church. But scouting took all...that was the...that was the...the scouts had their scout library and I read all about their lives and this and that and this and that, and Tom Swift and his giant searchlight and all that stuff. As I was all...all tied in with scouting. And the group, the fellas of our troop all lived more or less in the neighborhood so we got to know one another, we went to camp together; we did this and that. And....

SHUSTER: What was the attraction to scouting? What was it that....

GLASSER: It was just physical animal life with a...and you know, going swimming, hiking. We used to have, you know...we sent out on hikes for several days in which you had to find food for yourself through your knowledge of how to catch fish and how to, you know...you might catch a snake and eat it. And fruits and grains. Starvation hiking they call it. We did a lot of...it was outdoors.... I don't know if you ever know those books by Ernest Thompson Seton, *Off In The Woods*, and, you know, all great books, all about nature and about hiking and that sort of thing. Those were Depression years, not that the Depression years were.... But was a time in which. As they say, I don't...I was always close to my younger sister. The older two, they were older than us and so they did their own thing and we...we were sort of always together. So if anything that...you asked me for specific recollections of things. I can remember the first day I went to school and like that.... And my grandfather died, my father's father died, and things of that sort but as far as...I'm sorry I just don't have a lot of details. I'm not like your friend Wayne Coggins [Collection 414] who can fill up tapes and hardly get to the sixteenth birthday. All I know is I came to Christ right as I was just about to go to college, and my, yeah....

SHUSTER: I'm sorry, you had mentioned a little earlier that you were the black sheep of the family. What did you mean by that?

GLASSER: Well, father never really understood me. He was...was always a little bit impatient with me, and I guess it was because I was forever, you know, giving him...oh, breaking a window, things of that sort. I was always taken with making model airplanes, making things with my hands.

My brother wasn't that way at all. And so I'd be down there puttering away and I'd come up for meals and that was just sort of a...I don't think I ever had any blows with father in those days, it was just...I was...he used to find me...here I was interested in my hands, making things (and I still do, I like to make of wood, carpentry and that sort), but it was just that our interests were so diverse. My father, strangely enough, I don't recall him ever reading a book, or ever discussing an idea with him.

SHUSTER: Was that the fact because you said your mother really loved to read?

GLASSER: Oh, mother could talk a great length. Mother would tell you about her problems you know, and...and then later on her problems with the Bible. She was honest and faced up to the questions and so forth and...but that, that, that all came later. I think earlier my mother was so taken up with the home and the family that.... At first I don't recall her as a reader because she was doubtless busy. That came later when the children had started to scatter and she wanted to enter into our studies, what we were doing. And of course, she was the most interested one, and yeah. She spoke with a German accent. I don't recall that but people who remember my mother telling me that.

SHUSTER: Yeah, the same way with my mother. She had....

GLASSER: You were from Germany?

SHUSTER: No. My mother, yeah. You had also mentioned about when you went to military school you enjoyed that very much. You enjoyed the life there. Why was that?

GLASSER: Oh....

SHUSTER: What was it that appealed to you?

GLASSER: I guess the idea of discipline. I'd read every book on the world, World War I you know. And *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*) you know, all of those books. And so there was...and then there was a certain amount of the German...since the German side of the family was more interested in me than my father's side. You know I was interested and my father would help some of the German relatives come over and all of them had served in the German army, and I got to know them.... A whole lot of brothers and one had a machine gun bullet (apparently a sweeping machine gun)...had a hole in one chest, went through his mouth, you know he was peering over a trench. And, of course, we would have him tell the stories and so forth. So we had a lot of that sort of thing. The German side of the family, they were all much more vigorous, much more religious. They were all strict Brethren, but they never spoke to me (to my recollection now) about Jesus Christ. But I guess they assumed that, "Well, he must have been a Christian like the rest of us." But I always liked the German side. Among the German there were artists, portrait painters, that sort of...very nice medical doctors. Some very fine people. We used to.... The *wisenheimers*.... My brother never really was as taken with them as I was. But anyhow, he had pictures of them in German uniforms and the idea...maybe that all rubbed off on me of being a soldier.

SHUSTER: The *wisenheimers*, was that a family nickname?

GLASSER: Yeah, it's a family. Yeah.

SHUSTER: Yeah.

GLASSER: My father, he was a bit impatient with their strict Plymouth Brethrenism, and so therefore there was a measure of distance. But...see my grandfather was...he was...when he retired from his business, then he got a Model T Ford and he and my uncle, they would go all through the Midwest trying to contact German-speaking farmers and getting their addresses, established friendly contacts with them. And then he set up like a literature depot...German-speaking literature from Germany that he would send to these people. And that's the way that I guess he used his title and this and that. But it was quite....

SHUSTER: Christian literature?

GLASSER: Oh, Christian literature, yes. Then the sad thing was that with the advent of Hitler, the literature (Plymouth Brethren literature) started to change and become nationalistic. And that caused my grandfather great impatience because although he absolutely loved Germany, but at the same time this Hitler business was pagan, so forth. So what he did was to break off relations with the...the members of the family still in Germany, the publishers there, and go to Switzerland to the Plymouth Brethren publishing houses there in German, which were free from the nationalistic taint. And this caused our family to go through a big split. So that it wasn't until after World War II that my uncle went to Germany with that intent to heal the family that hadn't come over. One of my early recollections of....

SHUSTER: This split was between the family in Germany...

GLASSER: That's right.

SHUSTER: ...and in the United States.

GLASSER: Yeah. But I can remember as a little boy in the, one of our homes, there the kitchen was filled with boxes of food being sent to the German relatives. See, this was in '23, '24; somewhere in there. I must have been seven, eight, nine at that time when there was terrible inflation in Germany, and we were sending food to the Germans. Now, later on when Hitler came along they became very bombastic, etcetera. But these *wisenheimers*, the ones that came over, I became very close to. I liked them a lot. They were skilled, they had interior decorators, and, I said, medical work of one sort or another. And they were real fellows. They were much more attractive human beings than the other side.

SHUSTER: How so?

GLASSER: Well, just more hearty, earthy. It's like you go into a Jewish synagogue and you are attracted by the sheer earthiness. [Glasser laughs] They like life, you know, that's...and for me, I don't know, I was just attracted to them.

SHUSTER: And so you feel that at the military school, the life there reminded you of some aspect of your...fami...?

GLASSER: Well, the great advantage of the school.... You see, you had to go to some school.

SHUSTER: Uh huh.

GLASSER: I was only fifteen, and I had to grow up, and...so, that's where they sent me. It's a...but I remember, father had made part in ch...selecting.... I went down to the back of my magazine, here were some military schools and, "Oh that looks like a good one." And it was as stupid as that. I could wish my father had said now, "What are your interests? What kind of school?" the way we later did with our own children, but this wasn't the way he did things in those days.

SHUSTER: After you attended the conference and talked with Fullerton and became a Christian, well, did you think of yourself as having committed your life to Christ then? Is...?

GLASSER: Oh, well, you surrendered your life at the end of a conference like that. That was the great climax, an act of surrender. I think to the best of my ability I surrendered my life to Christ. I got some new friends there...met a girl, a Christian girl. I never had a Christian girl [friend] before then, the daughter of a Baptist minister in New Jersey. And we never...no...nothing ever developed there, but we corresponded during the time I was in Cornell and she was such a bright Christian presence that I had almost no female contacts while at Cornell. Never interested. But I always said a prayer, that a Christian girl is something different. So she was at Wheaton. And, of course, Wheaton was the great place in those days and so forth. That's another story. But this girl, she...she was an incr...later, I don't know, kind of a kooky type. In fact, she was friendly to me and I was friendly to her, and it was very nice. She was going to Wheaton, I was going to Cornell and that was it. And we corresponded. Not way too, too regularly, but we did correspond and the result was she always kept sort of the Christian thing before me. I always think of her as the Lord's way of keeping me aware of the fact that there were Christian women in the world. And that was, they were something different. And it was that sort of thing.

SHUSTER: How else did your newfound faith in Christ begin to express itself in your life? How did it...?

GLASSER: Well, the first thing that happened, I had a remarkable answer to prayer. I had written to the housing authorities of Cornell, and realizing that I was now a Christian I requested a...a single room. And they...they....

SHUSTER: You were going to be a freshman.

GLASSER: I was going to be a freshman in the sch...school fo civil engineering. And, and...and so the...I got a letter back: "All the single rooms have been taken. We have given you a double room. And the student who will be living with you is a man named Harold S. Wright.

SHUSTER: Why did you want a single room?

GLASSER: Well, I thought as a Christian, why...well, in those days an evangelical Christian was kind of a rare thing. I didn't know, you know.... I knew that there was some morality down in Keswick, but I didn't see it any much else in my context around. Naturally, my mother was very pleased that I had become a Christian. My father, he said, "Well, that fellow Fullerton did something for you at a time that I couldn't do anything for you." He said that, but later on became rather jealous of the influence this man had of me...had on me [Glasser corrects himself]. But the idea was, here was a letter from the authorities that I had a roommate, and all thoughts of cultivating my Christian life, you know and that sort of thing, thing...they all flew out.

SHUSTER: Because....

GLASSER: Here I had a roommate.

SHUSTER: Why was that?

GLASSER: Huh?

SHUSTER: Why...?

GLASSER: Well, I thought to myself, "Who was this guy Wright?" Well....

SHUSTER: You were afraid they'd make fun of you? Or....

GLASSER: Well, he might not be a real congenial to my Christian faith or...it was just one of those things that were very difficult. I just...I was confused about this roommate. Okay, so, what did I do? I...well, it ended up that this fellow visited with me, Fullerton, he said, "A matter like that, you might as well pray about it." Now he said, "Analyze the options. The options, part one: there may still be a single room or one become available, although they are all filled up now. So we should pray that that will take place. Secondly, we have to...if you're going to live with Wright, if Wright is not the person for...with whom should live, then we should pray that the Lord will remove him and replace him with someone else." In other words, he started to show me how to analyze the situation, and to pray. "And thirdly, let's pray about this guy Wight. He may be God's answer to your need right now. He may not be a person that's going to dominate you, but he's going to be a real companion, he's going to share you your convictions, eh." So that's...and we prayed, and of course, I promptly forgot after we prayed. And suddenly I had to go to Cornell, and I got to the place first and tried the two beds and there were the two desks and the...the...the room with the desks and then the room with the beds. And.... And I got there and I couldn't choose either one, so I made the most of it. And then the next day there was a knock on the door and here stood a woman and behind her was this guy, and it was his mother and he. She looked me over. And I guess I sort

of passed muster. And I met this guy Wright, and the first thing he pulled out of his bag as it happened, was he pulled out a Bible. He said, "Do you believe that?" I said, "Yeah." "What are you going to do with your life?" "I'm going to be a medical missionary."

SHUSTER: Wright said that?

GLASSER: Wright said that to me, a medical missionary. Wow. Here was my roommate. That was such a remarkable answer to prayer that the glow of it remains to this day. Just think that there were twelve hundred in that opening freshman class and we went to all the churches in...[unclear] were there any members of our class to whom Jesus Christ meant, you know...meant...something. And there were some religious people, but no, we went everywhere and here Wright was my roommate. Boy, that was something. That was a dra...that was as dramatic as the Lord turning water into wine. You know, to think that God answers specific prayer. And in my early Christian experience I had quite a few of these things. Later on, now, I don't have that type of answered prayer. The Lord wants me to, you know, walk by faith, not by sight. And so, answer...dramatic answer to prayer, I don't have very often. I do have them, but not very often. And...and you know...but in those days that was a tremendously formative thing. We went to Cornell....

SHUSTER: So what effect did that experience have on you?

GLASSER: Well, just a tremendous confirming. Oh, you don't know how that confirmed it. And we roomed together for two years. I still keep in touch with him. He's a retired psychiatrist and lives not far actually from Bush in Maine, President [George H. W.] Bush, Maine.

SHUSTER: Up near....

GLASSER: He never became a missionary. But, we've had some good times together. He occasionally comes out here, cause he has...one of his children is out here and so Alice [Glasser's wife] has gotten to know him and we've had nice some times.

SHUSTER: Did...was there other kinds of Christian fellowship at Cornell? You mentioned there was....

GLASSER: Well, there was the k...Cornell, you know the religious work, and of course went up to look at that. We knew that John R. Mott had been a graduate of Cornell. He was the great contribution of Cornell to the ecumenical movement, etcetera, etcetera. But, see at this conference at Keswick I learned about League of Evangelical Students, which was the precursor to the InterVarsity (although I had no linkage with it). It was sponsored by Westminster Theological Seminary and it had a tremendous opportunity. It was the only evangelical thing, but it absolutely missed the bus because it was tarred and feathered with the Westminster emphasis of making the world safe for the Reformed faith. And evangelism, simple evangelism, discipleship training, Bible study, and these things just did not figure. It was...it was that sort of a situation. Well, anyhow, we thought "Let's find out about these evangelical students." So we wrote them and asked them to send down a guy, and they promised this guy would come, but he didn't come, and it was that. We started our own chapter. We had, you know...we had a few come to Christ, so forth. But it

was not a very successful thing. We gave it on one occasion, got Dr. Don Grey Barnhouse to come and speak to us, and tried. But in those days I didn't know anything. I mean, I can rem...I can remember at Cornell that fall for the first time reading the Gospel of John all the way through. I can remember. And that was that. And with that little instruction, of course, everybody wanted me to be the leader of this thing among the students, and I was just a freshman. Well, we struggled. There were some women that were believers that joined us. And, so we had a little group for prayer and...but never anything spectacular. But all during Cornell we had a witness, so forth. You know, my roommate joined a fraternity...joined a fraternity and got caught up in that.

SHUSTER: After two years?

GLASSER: After two years. So he drifted out of the Christian thing. I stayed out as an independent. In those days you didn't join a fraternity. It was too corrupting so.... You didn't go to movies, you didn't do all of these things, you know the old evangelical, or fundamentalist stance then. You had a Scofield Bible and that was the answer, and Christ was coming and so forth. And, so, you know, I was more or less that sort. I taught a Sunday school class in a little Baptist church downtown for years. I became very active in engineering and active in crew. I rowed for Cornell for three years and was quite successful, and then my senior year I broke my right knee. The cartilage in it...no, not a bone break, but the cartilage. And skiing, and so I didn't row my senior year, but I rowed all the other times. So my time at Cornell was really busy, engineering and...and...then...in athletics, and was offered a scholarship to stay on and study sanitary engineering, which was more or less the major field. But I...I didn't want to do further study. I should mention one thing. My freshman year among the first guys I met in my class were two, three Muslims from Afghanistan, government exchange students, and Chinese. It was my first contact with Muslims and my first contact wit...with Chinese. And that was a tremendous eye opener. I became wary of the world outside. I became active in the International Club at Cornell. You know, all the international students would come and I sort of liked being with them. And this....

SHUSTER: What was it that impressed you about the international students?

GLASSER: Well, just the...it wasn't that the students impressed me but here was the world to be evangelized that I had heard about at Keswick. Each summer I would go back to Keswick, maybe work for my father on his farm, or Fullerton would take me down and for a couple of weeks we'd go down into Appalachia and he would speak around at various little small rural churches. And I would try and speak but I didn't know much.

SHUSTER: Do you recall some of your first experiences as a speaker?

GLASSER: Generally not very effective. Oh, I can remember the...Fullerton should have said, "Now what are you going to say? Take this passage. How are you going to break it down?" He should have given me more instruction. You'd get up, and I'd give my testimony and then I'd talk a bit. But I...I...I.... Now this is something that may not be for the record, but I felt that this fellow Fullerton had slight homosexual tendencies, and I was a little bit afraid of that, so that we were very close and yet we were not close. There was an apprehension that I didn't know much about

what it was, but I knew at that time things seemed to be.... "I wished I could get away from this man. He's too...he's dominating me too much." And later on when I did break with him it was an emotional crisis of first magnitude, and so forth. Well, you see, it was Depression years and I had to graduate in 1936. We were still coming out of the Depression as a nation, but still very poor.

SHUSTER: If I could ask a couple of things before we get on to that.

GLASSER: Yeah. Sure.

SHUSTER: You had mentioned that Donald Barnhouse came down once when you were....

GLASSER: Yeah, he came.

SHUSTER: Do you recall any...do you recall his speech? Can you describe him as a speaker?

GLASSER: Yeah, I...well, of course he was the man who gave intellectual respectability to the evangelical moment in the 20s and 30s. He had a tremendous appeal. Unfortunately, the meeting that we had we had broadcast in that town in the churches. So the place was filled with church people who wanted to hear Don Grey Barnhouse, and the students were few and far between. That was the one disappointment. He gave...but he gave an excellent address.

SHUSTER: What kind of a speaker was he?

GLASSER: Oh, well, he was.... Barnhouse was a man who, first place, he had a rich vocabulary. The vocabulary of a man who really could stand up alongside of any your professors. He could talk. Secondly, he was biblical through and through. He would take a passage and expound it. He was unim...he was very much like John Stott in that sense. John Stott, is English but John Stott, you now, when he gets up to speak he takes a passage and expounds it. He wants to be a preacher of the word. Now that was Barnhouse. Barnhouse could expound Romans. Barnhouse could expound Genesis. Barnhouse was that sort of a person. And actually, the naive...there was a naiveté of the time about him as I think of him now. I...I don't...I would say he was very unsophisticated in the field of eschatology. He almost inhaled the Scofield Bible, right down the line. He would talk about the tribulation, he'd talk about the rapture, he'd talk about the Jews, he'd talk about world-wide evangelization. That after two thousand years of fooling and fiddling around, the Jews would do it in a couple of days, and you'd hear that sort of thing. So that...but I admired Barnhouse, and Barnhouse was one person who when he spoke, oh on radio, we heard he was to be speaking and there we'd go. He was...he was the student speaker of that generation.

SHUSTER: At this time were you a member of a denomination? Had you joined a church...?

GLASSER: I didn't leave my Presbyterian church. I got baptized....

END OF TAPE