

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **David M. Howard by Paul Ericksen (CN 484, T4)** for the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case “[unclear]” was inserted. If the transcribers were not completely sure that they had the words correctly, a “[?]” 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, created by Paul Ericksen and Bella Hicklin-Campbell, was completed in March 2022.

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 Wheaton College Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.



Collection 484, Tape T4. Oral history interview with David M. Howard by Paul Ericksen on April 5, 1993. (67 minutes)

ERICKSEN: This is an oral history interview with David M. Howard by Paul Ericksen for the Archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. This interview took place at 8:40 am on April 5th, 1993, at the office of the Archives of the Billy Graham Center.

Well, Dave, when we finished up last time, you were talking a little bit about...we just talked a bit about InterVarsity.

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: And maybe we can wrap that section up before we go on to other things. You were talking about Charles Troutman.

HOWARD: Yes.

ERICKSEN: And I think we...we pretty much finished talking about him for that period. Now, I don't know whether it would be easier to talk about him because I...were you on the...you worked with him on the field later again in Latin America, right?

HOWARD: Yes. Do you want...that'll tie in later when I come to our leaving the field...

ERICKSEN: Okay, then let's....

HOWARD: ...because he was...he was just coming as we were leaving.

ERICKSEN: Yeah, why don't we leave that...

HOWARD: Yeah.

ERICKSEN: ...sit for the time being then. What was it like working for Stacey Woods?

HOWARD: [laughs] Stacy was a very interesting character. He was a unique person. Full of life, full of energy. He...he was a...he was a bit of a maverick. Whichever way the currents of the present society...the trends were going, he'd go the opposite. He...he would buck the trends, no matter what they were.

ERICKSEN: Can you think of an example of that?

HOWARD: Yeah. He shocked me no end when...I was just coming out of Wheaton College at that time and...or I think I said earlier in our interview here that it was very conservative background that I'd come from. And Wheaton was very conservative. We weren't allowed to go to the movies in those days. We signed the pledge, one point of which was that you could not attend movies as a student at Wheaton College. Then I found out Stacy was going to the movies

on a regular basis. [Ericksen laughs] And he would rant and rave about these people that would limit the cultural understanding. And I...to me that was quite a shock. But here was this man that I admired greatly and yet he would go to the movies. [laughs] And...so that kind of thing. And then he...he was sort of what you'd call "out in the left field," not theologically but in terms of society and in terms of the lifestyle and so on of Christians at that time. Then later when things swung so much to left...like in the 60s, when things be...the general trend of Christians and evangelicals was off in that direction, then Stacey became a flaming right-winger type of thing. That...that's just the way he was. He would buck society whichever direction trends were.

ERICKSEN: Did that tendency get him in trouble much...

HOWARD: Yeah, he....

ERICKSEN: ...get the movement in trouble?

HOWARD: Yeah. He'd make enemies, but, you know, those of us who knew him well, we loved him as a...as a man of God...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...whose heart was out there to reach students for the Lord. But he...he had his enemies, because he would...he was very blunt and straightforward, and didn't pull any punches, didn't hesitate to say what he thought.

ERICKSEN: What kind of an administrator was he?

HOWARD: He wasn't the best administrator, no. No. He...he needed administrative help. He was very much of a hip-pocket administrator, just worked out of his...out of his hip pocket. And I can't remember if I mentioned earlier the...one of the classic cases. It's often quoted in InterVarsity circles was...did I mention this about...?

ERICKSEN: I don't think so.

HOWARD: The...at the end of one of the orientation sessions...this was way back in the mid-40s or late-40s rather, I guess, when InterVarsity staff was very small, just maybe twenty or thirty staff members for the whole country.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And he had just finished an orientation session up at Campus-in-the-Woods, which was an island camp up in Canada that InterVarsity had those days. The famous story was one of the young ladies who was just coming on staff at that time, her name was Ann Childs. She later married Charlie Hummel, who was with InterVarsity. She's Ann Hummel now. But as Stacey was pulling away from the dock in a boat leaving the island, she...Ann was still standing on the dock there along with some others. And just...or maybe she was leaving, I forget which. But

anyway, the boat's pulling away and Stacey shouts out...she had been assigned some of the southern states, perhaps South Carolina, Georgia Alabama, I don't remember what. He just shouted to her, "Oh, Ann, take Florida too!" [Ericksen laughs] "Take Florida too." [laughs] Add to your assignment the whole state of Florida in the state. [laughs] You know, just a very, as I say, hip-pocket administration. Just whatever...whatever was at hand, that's the way he did it. [laughs]

ERICKSEN: Now in terms of oversight of his staff...

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: ...how...how did that work?

HOWARD: Well, it was very much personal type of thing. And, of course, in those...there was very little oversight really in those days. Everybody was sort of turned loose to go ahead and do your job. Things were very loosely organized. As I say, they only had a few staff members and they had to cover the whole country.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And it wasn't like today where a staff member might have one university or maybe two or three universities...

ERICKSEN: Yeah.

HOWARD: ...or...at the most one city. In those days it was three or four, five states they might have. And they might see Stacey once or twice a year. So that...and they'd write but Stacey wasn't a great correspondent either. He...that...that wasn't his style.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: Charlie Troutman was. Charlie was much better in that way.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: But you know it was pretty much, "You're on your own. turn you lose, go get the job done." [laughs]

ERICKSEN: Now how did it...in terms of uniformity of what was being done around the country, did that vary a lot because of that?

HOWARD: Yeah, it did. It varied with the personality and the gifts of the particular staff member. I noticed this when I came on as staff in 1949, dependent on who I was traveling with as to what the particular emphases were or the style...the administrative style. I would sometimes be in the area of a given, let's say a regional director. And some of the regional

directors in those days were very, very different in style. And there wasn't...we didn't have any staff policy manual in those days that told you, "This is what the policies are."

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: "This is the way you're supposed to do it." And orientation was pretty loosely knit. You were given a free hand.

ERICKSEN: How many staff workers were there at the time that you were on staff?

HOWARD: My recollection would be...I could be off a bit, but round 30 perhaps for the whole country and Canada. [laughs]

ERICKSEN: And, of course, you got to travel all over.

HOWARD: I traveled both countries, the whole U.S. and good bit of Canada because the two countries were one movement at that time.

ERICKSEN: Now based on your experience working in InterVarsity much later...

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: ...and also at a much more developed state...

HOWARD: Uh-huh. Yeah.

ERICKSEN: ...when you look back at 1949, 1950, what...what impressions do you have of InterVarsity?

HOWARD: [laughs] Greatly changed. Drastically changed. And not because one was necessarily better. And that...this...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...and this is no reflection, let's say, on Stacey Woods. It's just a totally different atmosphere. The universities were different. The world was different. See, I came back to the States 1968, '69, twenty years after I had been on staff previously. So...but the big change was in the administrative leadership. Dr. John Alexander had become president when I came...he's the one who invited me back to the States.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: He had been the chairman of the Department of Geography at the University of Wisconsin. He was an academic man, PhD, had been a professor for twenty years, headed up the Geography Department, which was at that time considered one of the finest geography

departments in the whole U.S. He was chairman of it. But then he been invited by the InterVarsity board to become president of InterVarsity. One of the first things he did was to get into the American Management Association training sessions, training for management because his management all been in the academic world...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...which is a different type of management. And he really began to straighten out InterVarsity in terms of pulling things into a structured format, a good policy manual. He worked hard on that sort of thing. He was very strong in his orientation of new staff, giving set guidelines, parameters, this sort of thing. One of the strongest points that he had, I felt administratively—this was very good and I appreciated it—was his strength in delegating. He delegated to his staff their responsibility. He expected them to do their job. I don't know how far you want me to go on this, 'cause we're going to get into InterVarsity.

ERICKSEN: Yeah. Not too far.

HOWARD: Well, why don't we leave it there...

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: ...because that's a whole different story and....

ERICKSEN: Yeah. And I would like to pursue that.

HOWARD: Yeah. Why don't we leave that then. Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: So, that...but that provides some comparison...

HOWARD: Yeah.

ERICKSEN: ...with the earlier period...

HOWARD: Yeah, right.

ERICKSEN: ...which it sounds like there wasn't that sort of thing.

HOWARD: Oh, no. Oh, yeah.

ERICKSEN: How would a staff worker be orientated?

HOWARD: [laughs] Well, the orientation was...my orientation, 1949, was much more along the spiritual lines of personal spiritual development, development of Bible study personally and how to lead small Bible study groups. That kind of thing. We had some of the financial orientation, some of the policies, but my recollection, and again this is over...[laughs] this is

forty-five years ago, would be that there was very minimal orientation of the specifics of administration. It was much more our personal development, our relationship to God, our relationship to the students we'd be dealing with, how we were going to lead Bible studies. Had a lot of training along that line, how to lead small group Bible studies and that kind of thing. Now, InterVarsity had that later too...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...but they added a lot more of the other.

ERICKSEN: Did you have any contact with David Adeney while you were on staff?

HOWARD: No. At that stage no, he was in China at that time.

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: That was before he got driven out. I knew he was.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: Everybody in InterVarsity knew about David Adeney. I didn't actually meet him until sometime later. And I can't remember exactly when that would have been because he came back to the States after being driven out of China, became Missions Director of InterVarsity in the early 50s. He directed Urbana '54. I was not there because I was on the mission field. So I did not meet David until perhaps late '50s or early '60s. I really can't remember when we first met.

ERICKSEN: Okay. When we were talking last time you referred to some of the early InterVarsity Missionary Conventions. There was '46 and '48 and '51. And I don't know if we got beyond that. Those were the three that you were at.

HOWARD: Yes, I attended the first two as a student and the third as Assistant Director.

ERICKSEN: Can you just talk about your impressions of each one of those? Maybe what was different about the second and third ones...

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: ...and the impact they had on you?

HOWARD: Yeah, I think that the...the first had a profound influence on me, just in terms of my own relationship to God, and the broadening perspectives of the world and that sort of thing. The others became better organized. The first one, because it was a first-time effort, and it was put together rather rapidly...comparatively speaking.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: It was done after the war was over and it was a sudden thought, “Well, let's try this.” And Christy Wilson was the director. Christie is a wonderful godly man. There was a strong spiritual emphasis there. The later ones became more organized, better organized. I...I...I'm not sure exactly...I know that '46 was formative for me. '48, my decisions had already been made about the mission field, so I was looking forward, now as a senior in college. I was getting ready to go. Stacey Woods was approaching me then about coming on staff as a missions staff member. So my thinking then was much more focused than it had been in '46.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: So, it's a little hard for me to remember how that convention actually affected my thinking...

ERICKSEN: Yeah.

HOWARD: ...because I was looking forward. “Am I going to....” I was struggling with the question, “Am I going to go on InterVarsity staff now as mission staff member or what...what are my next steps?”

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And that decision was actually made at Urbana '48, because Stacey put the bee on me. He said, “Dave if you're going to accept this job, I want to know because I'd like to have you on the platform the closing night. We want to present you to the students,” [Ericksen laughs] along with Wesley Gustafson, who was becoming the new Missions Secretary at that time. And so I said, “Okay,” and I accepted. So, the final night of Urbana '48, Stacey had Wesley Gustafson, the newly appointed Missions Director, and me, newly appointed mission staff member, on the platform to present to the whole convention. So, my decision was made then. And it was kind of rather rapidly made, and yet in hindsight it was clearly on the Lord. And '51 for me was totally different because I was behind the scenes. I was assistant director. Wesley Gustafson (Director) was out on a platform. I was behind the scenes, hardly ever got to any services. I was running back and forth, doing errands, making sure things were running properly, making sure people are getting where they should be on time. All that logistical sort of thing that has to go on at a convention behind the scenes. And interestingly enough...let me just toss this in here. You have material here about Paul Little. Paul Little was a brand new staff member at that time. It was his first year on staff.

ERICKSEN: '51.

HOWARD: '51. He had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania the year before and he'd come on staff. He was a staff member down at the University of Illinois. I think it was...that's where he was. But anyway, yeah, he was in Illinois. And Paul was...didn't have any specific assignment at that convention. And he was a smart enough guy to see that there were

problems developing behind the scenes, little jobs that were being dropped, things falling between the cracks. And I was rushing around trying to get my hands on a thousand details. Paul came along and sort of tagged along with me, just kept his eyes open for things that needed to be done, and then he just went and did them, just did them, made sure they got done without being asked. That was a wonderful relief to me and a great orientation for Paul, who from that point on was involved in every Urbana up to the time of his death. And then he directed Urbana '70. But he was a key factor in earlier conventions in administratively handling things. In fact, actually in Urbana '67 he was, for all practical purposes, the Director because Eric Fife, who was the Director, was not well. His health was in very bad shape And Paul literally just kind of took over and did things. But he had started that way back in '51, just by keeping his eyes open, seeing things that need to be done and doing them. And I remember when [laughs]...when he became Director (1970), I was his Assistant Director [Ericksen laughs] because I had just come back from the field.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And I remember his word to the staff and everybody then was—and this is typical Paul Little way of saying things—he said...he had a kind of a gravelly sort of...scratchy voice. And he'd say, [imitates Little's style and voice] "I want staff members here who are ready and willing to do the job needs to be done. Now when I say, 'Carry out the garbage, I want the garbage carried out now!'" You know. [laughs] That's...that's the way he would work. But that's what he did way back in '51. If there was garbage to be carried it out, he carried it out right then.

ERICKSEN: Any other IVCF figures that you were rubbing shoulders with at that point that you want to comment on?

HOWARD: One man...and I just had an interview this past week concerning...Cleo Buxton, who was one of the...the regional directors for the Great Lakes region. Young fella here now named John Waldrop is writing a biography of Cleo Buxton, who later became a key figure in the Officers Christian Fellowship for many, many years. Cleo had just come out of the service. He'd been a...he'd been a serviceman...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: He was a major in the army and had been through some of the worst and most extensive fighting of the war in Italy. He was on staff for a few years before he went into the Officers Christian Fellowship and spent the rest of his life primarily with military people. But that period of time, the late-'40s, and up to early '50s, he was with InterVarsity. He was a great guy. I...I could talk at length...I talked for two hours the other day with [laughs] John Waldrop about him, so I don't...don't want to get into that here. John is writing a book on him. John's the son of Bill Waldrop of the ACMC here at Wheaton. But Cleo had a good influence on me. He gave me a lot of marital counseling. I was engaged that year that I was traveling. I had just gotten engaged in September of '49. I traveled with Cleo for the better part of a month in his region. He handled me differently from some of the other regional directors, where I'd come into their region, they would kind of turn me loose. They'd make the itinerary for me, tell me which

schools I should go to, and then send me out to go to those schools. In Cleo's case, he took me personally in his car. And we traveled together for almost a month, I guess, visiting campuses in the Great Lakes states region. And almost always he was with me. So, we traveled in the car a lot together and talked. And he knew I was engaged, so he talked to me a lot about marriage. In those days there wasn't much formal marital counseling going on. That's a...that's a more recent development. Nobody had marital counseling. Basically, Cleo Buxton gave me perhaps the only real martial counseling I got. And he didn't think of it is that. It was just that here he is with a young man who's getting ready to get married. And Cleo had a big heart for young men, wanted to reach out and encourage and disciple young men, which is what he did all his life actually in the military.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And he did that for me. And it was really great. I appreciated it.

ERICKSEN: Okay. I asked you a question last time about Dr. Edman and we deferred that and then we didn't get to talk about it at the end either.

HOWARD: Uh-huh. Yeah.

ERICKSEN: Can you talk about the contact you had with Dr. Edman while you were here at Wheaton?

HOWARD: Yes. he was president, of course, when I came.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: Then he had a year sabbatical, the year of 1948-'49, which was my senior year. That was a sabbatical for him, so he was in the East in the Boston area doing some study, writing a book...writing the book that he wrote on church history. *The...oh, I forget the title...The Light in the Darkness*. That's not the exact title. But anyway, that year Dr. Roger Voskuyl, who later became president of Westmont College, was the Acting President here. And during the course of that year, there was quite a bit of turmoil that went on. Let me see now. No, I have...no, I'm sorry. I'm wrong. He was gone the year '47-'48, which was my junior year, that year. And that was the year Dr. Voskuyl was the Acting President. And he had been the Dean, Academic Dean prior to that, and they made him Acting President. And he did a great job. Dr. Voskuyl was a superb administrator. Then, Dr. Edman came back in the summer of '48. And one of the first things he did which caused a tremendous uproar on campus was to ask for the resignation of the most popular professor on campus, who was Dr. C. Gregg Singer, a history professor. Everybody was thrilled with Singer and everybody wanted to get into Singer's courses. They were hard to get into. He was such a highly prominent and popular teacher. Well, for whatever reason (and the reasons were murky), but Dr. Edman asked Dr. Singer to leave. And when that happened, the student body just went up in smoke. I got caught in the middle of this because I had just been elected president of the student body, Student Council they called it then. In May of '48, I came to summer school. I went home after graduation. I came back to summer school the end of June,

1st of July perhaps in '48. Found out that Singer been fired and the campus was in an uproar. And students kept coming to me, "Well, can't the Student Council do something about this?" And they jumped on me, you know, to get into this thing and see if we couldn't do.... This was...Dr. Edman was very, very unpopular at that point for what he had done. It caused great turmoil. Well, I got caught into this thing and was...we met together as students. And we talked about what we ought to do. And I met with faculty, and I met with trustees, some of whom were also very angry. And some of the faculty were ready to quit. They were up in arms. They...everybody liked Singer. And oh, it was a mess. So, I got into this thing so deeply that one day Dr. [Charles C.] Brooks, the Dean of Students, called me into his office. And he'd been working with us on this too. He was unhappy about it, but he was being very, very tactful...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...and very, very neutral in the thing, but trying to help us students work our way through also. He said to me one day...he said, "Dave, I want you to go home and talk to your father." Now, my father was a trustee of the college, but Dr. Brooks said, "You're not to go home and talk to your father as a trustee." But he said, "If I had a son your age who was in over his head into a messy problem like this, I'd want to talk to him." And he said, "Your dad is a godly man." He said, "You need to go and just talk to your dad about what you're caught into here. You're in a slime pit and you need to be...you need the advice and help of your dad. But you're not going as student body president to talk to trustee. You're going as son to father." So, he sent me home for a weekend. He paid my way home. I went home and talked to my father. It was very helpful. I unloaded all this stuff that have been piling up. My father appreciated it and he tried to give me good advice. But then he said to me, "Well," he said, "I'm a trustee of Wheaton College." [Ericksen laughs] And he said, "I can't hear this sort of thing and in good conscience not do anything about it." So, he did something about it. And what he did was in the by-laws of the trustees there is a phrase, or there was then. I presume it's still there. I haven't checked this out but I'm sure it's there, that if a given trustee requests the chairman of the board, under some internal crisis, to call a special meeting of the board, the chairman had to do it. So, my dad called the chairman of the board and requested a...a special extracurricular or...meeting of the board of trustees. So, that was held at the end of the summer and the purpose of that was to deal with this whole question with Dr. Edman. And I happen to know.... Now this...this is off the records please, but I know that there were trus...

ERICKSEN: Well, maybe we better not say it for now because....

HOWARD: Okay, okay.

ERICKSEN: We maybe...we....

HOWARD: Yeah. Yeah, well, okay. We'll leave that. Anyway, the upshot let's say was that when Dr. Edman came back in the fall when students came back there was a lot of unhappiness on campus. A lot of turmoil. We had our student council retreat the beginning of the year down at...I think it was at Winona Lake if I recall correctly. And I was leading that as president of the student council. And Dr. Edman came. And I...I don't remember whether we invited him or

whether he just decided he better come. I forget which. But be that as it may, he was there at least part of the time and met with us students, at which time some of the more radical students, those who were more upset about this, really went after him, just... I used to say that if this had been 1969 or '70, the students would have burned down Blanchard Hall. I mean these students were angry the way the students of the late '60s were angry, at which time they took actions, you remember. They'd locked up the deans and they'd burn down the buildings. And there was that kind of an atmosphere here. But, of course, we weren't that type. I mean, the students were not...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...about to lock up the dean or to burn Blanchard Hall. But the attitude, as I said...well, some of these students went after Dr. Edman very, oh, viciously that day of that student council retreat. And it was a tough time. And he was...I'm sure he was impressed with this, but he...he had been under tremendous emotional strain at the time. And he just broke down emotionally there in front of us students, and...and just a complete emotional give-way for a period of time. He just wept profusely. And then in the course of the year, naturally, things got back onto more normal. But let me say this about Dr. Edman. To his credit, he apparently, as far as I could tell, never held resentments against me personally, which he could easily have done. He had to know that my father is the one who called that board meeting. And that was a very, very traumatic board meeting. And as I say, I've got information about that board meeting that I shouldn't put on this tape, but it was a traumatic time for him and the board members. He must have known. He knew that I had been to see my father and as a result of that this board meeting was called. He could have been very resentful about me. But I picked up none of that all during the coming year, when I was President of the student body and had to have relations to him as President of the College. He was very gracious and kind to me in every sense. Most of my relationship really then was with Dr. Voskuyl [Roger J.] who'd become...what the title they gave him. Was it Provost or...? He was...he had been Acting President the year before. And then he was moved into an administrative position, which was sort of like second-in-command. Provost to think...if that wasn't the title, it was...maybe it was Dean of the College. Whatever it was, I had a lot of contact with him. And he was marvelous. But years later—1962—when I was on the mission field, they were gonna have the Missions in Em...Missions Emphasis Week here at the College. Nowadays the students handled that pretty much themselves. But Dr. Edman is the one who got in touch with me and invited me to come all the way up from Columbia to speak for a week at Wheaton College in the Missions Emphasis Week. That was 1962—what's that?—thirteen years later. And I was amazed because I always thought deep down underneath he must have resentments about what I did as student body President at his time of greatest crisis, in his time is president. But he's the one that invited me. And it wasn't under any pressure from students or anyone. He got in touch with me and he said, "David, we'd like you to come up from Columbia, spend a week on the campus, and speak to our students about missions." Which, to me, spoke of the bigness of the man.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: I was amazed.

ERICKSEN: What did you learn in the course of that about...I mean, you talked about being in over your head, or at least that was Mr. Brooks evaluation of the situation. Did you learn things in the course of all that that you were able to use later?

HOWARD: The thing that I... this was one of the things...I think I mentioned this the other day in our interview, that the...the influence Dr. Brooks had on me.

ERICKSEN: Yeah.

HOWARD: His concern for people, for the students. And he in tension, as I mentioned, at times with the adminis...admissions office, who would say, "Well, the student came in. He signed the pledge. He broke the pledge. Out he goes."

ERICKSEN: Right.

HOWARD: "Black and white." Dr. Brooks would say, "We want to save this student." Now in this case, it was the same thing. "Dr. Edman the president is in trouble. We've got to help him. Students are in trouble. We've got to help them."

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: "We've got to understand what's going on here." And his bigness of heart...I learned more from Dr. Brooks in this than from anyone else. It was a...it was a very valuable experience. Another thing that I learned was that there were areas where Dr. Edman had made some serious mistakes. Now he's a human being. But we had had the President sort of up on a...on a pedestal. You'd think of him...and he was such a godly, wonderful man and key leader in the Evangelical world, and one of the best-known Christian leaders of the country at the time. So, we kind of had Dr. Edman up on a pedestal. But then as I got into this thing behind the scenes, I found out areas where he'd made some bad mistakes. No doubt about it. And it made me recognize the weakness of humanity that even a...a godly, totally committed man to the Lord will make some griev...grave mistakes. And it made me realize the weakness of my own flesh, my own heart. And then later on in my administrative duties and dealing with people who had problems, you say, "Okay. Well, good night. Dr. Edman, one of the key Christian leaders of the day had made some bad mistakes." And I saw those mistakes. I heard them with my own ears. I saw them in my own eyes. I shouldn't be too shocked when I have problems or somebody else have problems. I think it gave...made me more understanding of the frailties of human nature. And the forgiving grace of God and God's ability to restore a person to an ongoing leadership in spite of some mistakes that have been made.

ERICKSEN: Do you think that Dr. Brooks sort of anticipated what was going to happen by sending you to see your dad and the way that that would play out?

HOWARD: He had to. He wasn't dumb. He had to know.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: You go and talk to a trustee, and this trustee is a honorable man like my father was. There's no way he's gonna take this sitting down. I don't think he...I'm sure he didn't do it for that reason.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: He was not trying to precipitate something...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...not at all. I think he felt caught in the dilemma and that's why he said...kept saying stongly to me, "Now, you're not going as student body president to talk to a trustee, but you need your father's advice and help."

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And see, he was there again, seeing my need as a person. And that was...to him that was even more important than what might happen at the college as a result of that. Which, again, was that same lesson for me. He saw me as a person who was in trouble and needed help. And he felt my father was the person to give that help. He had tried himself for weeks working with me. And he finally decided, "It's time for you to go see your dad." And let the chips fall where they may. And if the chips fall with him acting as a trustee, well, so be it.

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: Yeah.

ERICKSEN: You had decided to be a missionary.

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: What did you picture yourself doing as a missionary?

HOWARD: I wasn't sure but I...I guess my primary interest was what we would...what today would be called the "unreached peoples." That was not a phrase being used...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ... at that time, but getting to a place where the gospel had never been given freely. That was my big focus, which meant that in my college years I began to focus on Afghanistan as a country where I might go, knowing that you couldn't get into Afghanistan in those days. It was a totally closed country. But it was a country where the gospel had never been established, never taken root. There had been efforts here and there, but it had been largely closed country. So, I focused on Afghanistan strongly. And I even wrote papers in...term papers in classes here in college on Islam, preparing for that kind of thing.

ERICKSEN: Did you initiate any contacts with missions that would be working, let's say, around the borders?

HOWARD: Uh-huh. Yes, I did. One thing I did. At Toronto '46 at the Urbana convention, I talked to Christy Wilson, who is the convention director who was going to Afgha...he was heading then for Afghanistan.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And he ended up spending twenty-two years there, or something like that. I talked with him briefly. Now that wasn't...couldn't get into any depth. He was director of the convention. He was very busy.

ERICKSEN: Right.

HOWARD: But then what I did do...got a little advice probably from him, and then from some other people. This Margaret Haynes in particular, she was a board member of InterVarsity. And she was a close friend of my family's. And she'd been a missionary herself in India many years before, close to the border of Afghanistan. I got advice from her. So, I got in touch with what was then called the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, which is today TEAM, The Evangelical Alliance Mission. They were working on the borders of Afghanistan in what became, at that period of time, Pakistan. Pakistan came into being as a country in 1947, '48. It previously was the northwest frontiers of India. And TEAM was working on...in that area. So, I got in touch with them. I went into Chicago where their headquarters were then. They hadn't move to Wheaton until later. Talked with Vernon Mortenson, the personnel director then. He later became the general director. And I met T. J. Bach once, who was the old general director then. And I met a doctor from that area named Andy Carsgaard [sp.?]...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...who was working as a medical man with the TEAM in that area. So, I was definitely moving that way. Then I also met with one or two men who were...who had already gotten into Afghanistan as engineers. [door closes] In the late '40s, the Afghan government asked American engineers to come over and establish a...a technical school for technical training. And some Christians got in on this and it was lain...main...mainly run by Christians. One of these was a fellow named Dick Söderberg. And I got in touch with him, met him, and had some long conversations with him. And it was clear...I'm not an engineer. I wasn't getting that kind of training at Wheaton College. My training at Wheaton as a Bible major wouldn't qualify me for getting into the country under those circumstances. So, I thought I had two options. One was to work on the borders as a straightforward missionary, like under TEAM. Or Dick Söderberg said, "Look, you're an athlete. We will need a physical education program in this school. Why don't you go get a master's degree in Phys Ed and then come and head up our Phys Ed program in the school in Afghanistan." And I gave serious consideration to that. I loved athletics. I'd been active here in Wheaton in them. And that was a very serious consideration for a period of time. Obviously, I didn't follow through on that, but.... So, I was focusing that way.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh. Now where did the change occur?

HOWARD: Yeah. Well, the change occurred during my Graduate School days here at Wheaton. I got married. After my year in InterVarsity, July of 1950, Phyllis and I got married, and I came back to Wheaton Grad School...to Wheaton to go to grad school. And we kept...spent two years here.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: During that two year, which again was a wonderful time, studied under Dr. Tenney and others, and it was great development for me personally, we finally decided that time has come to start investigating other possibilities, open ourselves up. Maybe Afghanistan is not the area where God wants us to go. Let's put out some feelers. So, I wrote to I think about four mission boards. One in Africa, one in South America, one in Japan, and then we'd already been in touch with the TEAM for the Afghanistan region. And we got letters back, and this was very interesting. I'll never forget this. We wrote to one mission board, which I won't mention, which was working in Japan at that time. And I got a...I told 'em...I sent the same letter to all...to all of these boards, basically, who we were, what our background was, what our training in college and grad school was, and what we were thinking of doing. And...and [laughs] from this mission board in Japan I got back a mimeographed letter. And it was very poorly mimeographed. It was the old spirit duplicator done on wax, which was a purple ink type of thing. And I got this rather smudgy purple ink letter with us mimeograph signature on it, thanked me for my letter. "We're glad to hear from you, we're glad you're interested in our mission. Here's some material. Be glad to hear from you again." Felt as though you'd been kind of cranked through the system. I also wrote to the Latin America Mission. I immediately got a handwritten letter from Ken Strachan, the general director himself...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...in which Ken said, "I just got your letter. I'm on my way to Costa Rica. I haven't...I..." In fact, he wrote it...he mailed it from New Orleans. He was actually on a plane when he wrote it, flying from New York to New Orleans to Costa Rica, mailed the letter in New Orleans. He said, "I just want you know I got the letter. I will be answering it completely as soon as I get back to Costa Rica. But thank you for it," and so on. Very nice personal letter, handwritten. Then a couple weeks later after he'd gotten back to Costa Rica, I got a full, two-page typewritten letter which he answered all the questions that I had taken up. Showed real keen interest and wanted to enter into dialogue with us and so on. Well, you can imagine the contrast in my mind between those two mission boards. One that cranked me out with a mimeographed letter and the other where the...not the personnel secretary but the general director himself writes two personal letters to me. And I...at that stage I was beginning to think, "Well, it's much more important to find a group that we can work happily with than it is to worry about geography." In other words, is it more important to say that I must go to Afghanistan, or is it more important that we find the type of mission board with which we can work happily where whatever gifts God has given to us can be used conjunction with others? And I felt that was the more important thing. So, as we investigated, then we finally boiled it down to two boards. We were still interested in

Afghanistan and the LAM. The feelers into Africa didn't develop either particularly. So, finally it came to the place where it looked about equal to us, the possibility of going to the borders of Afghanistan under TEAM or going to Latin America. It was almost like flipping a coin. Now that may sound a little bit unspiritual, and I didn't literally flip a coin. But Phyllis and I talked and prayed about it, and we'd been impressed with TEAM and what they were doing and the people we'd met. We were equally impressed with the LAM, and especially with Ken Strachan. Finally, we said, "Well, let's apply to one of these boards and ask the Lord to close the door if that's not where he wants us to go." So, why we chose LAM I'm not quite sure, except maybe the balances tipped slightly that direction. Anyway, I remember taking a letter and I can still remember putting it in the mailbox thinking, "Well, Lord this is it. I'm going to mail this letter. And that's not the mission board you want for us, you just have them turn us down. That's okay. We'll...we'll apply to the other board." So, I mailed the letter. And obviously we were accepted by the LAM. And things developed, and that's where we ended up spending fifteen years.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And that was nothing negative about TEAM. It was just that in this case that seemed to be the direction where God was sending us.

ERICKSEN: Now had you met Ken Strachan...

HOWARD: Yes.

ERICKSEN: ...up before that?

HOWARD: I had met him a couple times here at Wheaton. He'd been on campus, but not long enough to really know him, but I'd been impressed with him. He was a...he was a humble, very down-to-earth, godly sort of a man. He related to me as an individual here on campus very graciously. Fact, one thing that impressed me, I guess, was that he was on campus once and somebody told me, "Ken Strachan would like to see you." And I thought, "Why in the world was he...?" I think he was speaking in chapel or something. Why did he want to see me? And so I looked...I looked him up in the dining hall or somewhere. And then he asked me, "Could... could we get together?" And if I recall correctly, I guess his reason was, Ken was the kind of man who was always looking for leaders. And he found out that I was a campus leader. I don't remember whether it was my senior year, or whether I was president student body, or one of my other years. I'd been a class president. I was active in other things. But he apparently was looking for people that he found out had some leadership ability. So, he reached out to me originally here.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And that impressed me. And then I was impressed with him. As a humble, very gracious, very down-to-earth man of God. So, I thought, "Well, that's the kind of leadership I'd like to work with."

ERICKSEN: This may be jumping ahead a little bit.

HOWARD: Alright.

ERICKSEN: What was he like to work for?

HOWARD: Oh, yeah. That's jumping ahead. You want to wait? I mean I...

ERICKSEN: We....

HOWARD: I'll put it in here if you want.

ERICKSEN: Sure, why don't we talk about that.

HOWARD: Okay. Then...then I'll have to jump about ten years...no, not quite ten years, but let's see...in...after our first term on a mission field, which was spent Costa Rica...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...had a lot of contact with him then. He was the General Director, and he sort of came and went. He lived in Costa Rica some of the times. He lived in the States. Our mission headquarters were Costa Rica. As a mission, we did not consider the U.S. base to be the headquarters of the mission. We considered Costa Rica the headquarters of the mission. And so, he was back and forth. And I had contact with him there. And then just after our...the time of our first furlough, while we were home on furlough...we were going to be transferred to Colombia. We had spent five years in Costa Rica. We were to be transferred to Colombia. And while we were on furlough, there was a key meeting of the administrative structures of the mission, the... what they called then the Interfield Council, I think it was. And I was not involved in that at that time, although I had been a member of it. But I was on furlough. And they had a major reconstructing of the mission. Ken was the General Director. And [Horace] "Dit" Fenton was the Associate General Director. And then at this restructuring, they set up two more Assistant General Directors, one to oversee whole areas of the mission, the other to oversee other areas of the mission administratively. Dit Fenton was...had moved back to the U.S. as sort of like what they used to call home director, the USA Director. And he was associate to Ken. Ken was over all of it. Dit was in the States. They named Dayton Roberts, who was Ken's brother-in-law.... Dayton had married Grace Strachan. And Dayton is a great guy. He was an MK [missionary kid] from Korea. His parents have been missionaries in Korea, and he married Grace Strachan, and was a great leader. They named him Assistant General Director to be over Costa Rica and a lot of things there. And to my utter astonishment they named me the other Assistant Director. I was only 30 years old. I only had one term on the mission field. And they named me Assistant General Director to be responsible as field director Colombia, plus some other areas that they placed under my responsibility. So, for the next years up until Ken's death, actually, the four of us (Ken Strachan, General Director, Dit Fenton, Associate General Director, Dayton Roberts and me as Assistant General Directors) the four of us met together regularly three to four times a year, and usually for a week at least at a time. So, we spent a lot of time together in the next

seven or eight years. They used to call us the GDX, which meant “General Directors in Executive Session.” And we were like an executive committee of the whole mission. And we really did run the mission. Now working under Ken was a great, great privilege because he was a good, strong leader. Ken didn't like administration and he was good in delegation. But we all knew who the leader was. There was no doubt about...Ken was clearly the leader of the mission, spiritually and in terms of administration we all deferred to him. But he insisted on the other three of us being with him and being part of everything that he was doing. And that's why he called for these meetings. I think it was four times a year. It could have been three. But it's...I think we met four times a year and those meetings would be a week long at least. We'd sit down together, had a lot of fun together. Dit Fenton is a hilariously funny man. Dit has one of the greatest sense of humor of anybody I've ever met, and yet a very wonderful, godly man also. And Dayton Roberts equally so. And they did a lot of kidding and ribbing of Ken and of me. And we just had a lot of fun together. In fact, we used to have so much fun that Dit used to say, “You know, it almost seems sinful to have so much fun doing the Lord's work.” [laughs] But I saw Ken a little bit like Dr. Brooks in the sense of a man who always looked at the person first rather than the work. He was much more interested in developing people than in developing programs for the mission. And if a person was in trouble, Ken [snaps fingers?] jumped the next plane he could get and went right to that person. Didn't matter how low down on the ladder of administration they were. If there was any missionary in the mission that he knew of that was having a tough time, Ken went there to see that person and spend time with him. He did it with me in Colombia when I was Field Director. I remember one time in particular when I was having a really bad time with the national church. We were in terrible tensions there. Ken just came over and spent two or three or four days with me just to work things through and try to make sure that I was doing okay and that relationships in the mission were developing properly.

ERICKSEN: How would he go about doing that? I mean, would he...?

HOWARD: Well, he would just say, “Dave, I think...I think you and I need to spend some time together. I'm coming over to see you.”

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: And he'd come. And I remember this one particular time, this was about 1962 probably, when there were some very bad tensions between the national church and the mission. And, of course, I was caught in the middle. I'm Field Director. And so, Ken said, “I want to come over. I want to help you. And if I can be of help in relation to the nationals...” So, he came and I set him up in a hotel room for a whole day where I told any of the national people who had grievances against us, who had things they wanted to air, “Go see Ken. Go see the General Director,” which is what they wanted anyway. They wanted to see the top man. We set him up in a hotel room and just let him listen all day long to all the complaints, all the garbage that anybody want to spill out on him. And they did, [laughs] all day. And we just stayed out of it. I said, “Okay Ken, you listen to hear what they have to say.” So, the next day Ken and I went out to the beach together. We were in Cartagena, the city there which is right on the beach. And we just went off by ourselves and sat on the beach. And he shared with me everything he'd heard the day before, about me, complaints about me, complaints about other missionaries, complaints

about our administration, all sorts of things. And he was very understanding and sympathetic. I mean, he didn't accept everything at face value. He knew there were always two sides to these things. And I remember him telling me that day something which stood me in good stead for many, many years afterwards, in fact to this day. And I still use it occasionally under the right circumstances. One of these national leaders, it was a lady who was very forceful, very powerful woman—she was a fine woman and good leader, but extremely negative at that stage about the mission, very bitter about certain things. And she said to Ken—he quoted this to me—she said, “Dr. Strachan, when I see a missionary do this, this, and this, what can I conclude except this?” Mainly that missionary is insincere, or whatever it was she was accusing them about. “I put this, this, and this together. How can I conclude anything else except this?” And that would be very negative about the missionary. Ken said, “I said to her, ‘Alva, there's one other thing you might conclude.’” She said, “What's that?” He said, “You might conclude you don't have all the facts.” Which was exactly the case because she was putting together certain things that she saw and she didn't have other facts about it. And that was...to me that was a wonderful lesson. Don't jump to conclusions until you have all the facts. And maybe those facts will alter greatly what your conclusion will be. And that's the way Ken would work. That was a wonderful lesson to me.

ERICKSEN: Was there anything that he heard that he then told you that you hadn't heard already...

HOWARD: No.

ERICKSEN: ...that was a surprise?

HOWARD: No, not...not much. [Ericksen laughs] I...I heard it all [laughs]. But it was good for him to hear it.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And then I was able to give him our perspective, what the problems we saw them. And, of course, Ken was very open. And it really was a healing and helpful time. And part of the result of that was in later things came back together, we got into a much better relationship with our national brethren.

ERICKSEN: Now when...after he'd listened to them and he'd listened to you...

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: I'm just trying to get a feel for how things worked in the mission. Did he say, “This is what you need to do,” or “This is what I think you should do?” Or...what happened next?

HOWARD: Yeah. Sometimes he...if he saw very clearly what he thought we ought to do, he would tell me. There were other times when he would simply say, “Well, Dave, you know you've got a tough job on your hands, and I don't want to tell you how to handle this 'cause I'm

not right there. I'll pray with you. I'll pray for you. Now you...you use your best judgment and I'll stand with you. I'll back you up in whatever you decide." He would take that kind of an approach.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: So that I always knew he was with me. He always supported me, never pulled the rug out from under me, was always supportive. And as I say, if he didn't have the answer he'd simply say, "Well, okay. I don't quite...we're not sure what to do yet at this point, but let's seek the Lord's will on this." I can remember one time him sending me a letter at the end of which he put a verse. (I don't have a Bible. Yeah, we do have a Bible here.) And this...this was great. It was, I think I remember the verse. It was Isaiah 59...or was it 50, verse 10. Let me see if I can find it quickly here. Yeah, this was it: Isaiah 50, verse 10 he put at the bottom of the letter. I mean, he had...it was perhaps in this same period of time, and we were really struggling with problems and the...the direction was not clear. So, he after gone back, he wrote to me kind letter, gracious, supportive sort of letter.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: And then he wrote at the bottom, "Isaiah 50 verse 10," which says, "Now who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark who has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God." And that was, you know, a great encouragement to me then. "Let him who walks in the dark and has no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God." And that was kind of the approach Ken would take. And, "Okay Dave. We're in the dark. You're in the dark, but you know the Lord will show the light." So that was kind of the way he would...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...handle things. [laughs]

ERICKSEN: Now you talked earlier about Stacey Woods being not a good correspondent.

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: And you talked about Charlie Troutman being a good correspondent.

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: And I've heard...when I talked with Marion Chapman, she talked about how he would be voluminous in his writing.

HOWARD: Ken.

ERICKSEN: Charlie.

HOWARD: Oh, Charlie. Yeah, right. Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: Where did Ken fit on the continuum of...?

HOWARD: He was good. He was not as voluminous as Charlie Troutman...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...but, yeah, he was very good. He wrote when it was...whenever it was necessary. He was...yeah, he was always there. And Dit Fenton was the same way. After Ken died and Dit became the general director...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...lots and lots of correspondents back and forth from him. But no, Ken was very good. And it was...it was usually...it was always very personal.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh. Okay. Well, let's loop back.

HOWARD: Yeah, right.

ERICKSEN: You're just on your way into the mission. You were accepted by the mission. Did you...what kind of orientation were you given?

HOWARD: Oh, brother. [laughs] We really had some of the world's most notorious orientation. This was unbelievable. There were four of us in the orientation class of new missionaries at that time. Just Phyllis and myself and Mary Anne Klein...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...who is here in Wheaton right now, you know.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: She was missions pastor at the [Wheaton] Bible Church for many years. She lives right just a block down the street and she lives on Seminary. And she'd been with InterVarsity also, the same time I was. In fact, she was the secretary of the Mission Secretary...Mission Director. Like, she was West Gustafson's secretary when I was mission staff member. And she came to the Latin America Mission same time we did. And then another fellow named Bill Gaité [?], who is still with the mission. He's retired now. He came as a single man, later married a missionary, and spent his whole career with the LAM. We had our orientation in the mission headquarters in New Jersey at that time—they later moved to Miami—in New Jersey under [laughs] dear, sweet people by the name of Mr. and Mrs. William Thompson. And they were old-time missionaries. And they were 19th century colonial paternalistic missionaries of the first order if you ever saw them. I mean, it was amazing.

ERICKSEN: What makes you say that?

HOWARD: Well, the kind of things they told us and what we were supposed to do when we got to the field. And we accept it all. Of course, we're wide open, we're young, right out of college. [Ericksen laughs] And here we are, "This is our orientation, and this is the way it's going to be. Okay." I'll give you some examples. For example, my...Phyllis would ask as we would get down to the nitty gritty, practicality things, "What should we do about this, or what about that?" The answers were unbelievably just so far out, old-fashioned. Phyllis asked a simple question that a lot of ladies would ask, you know. "Are there beauty parlor...can you get your hair done there? Can you get a permanent down there?" And Mrs. Thompson, who was the old-fashioned missionary and hair tied up in a bun in the back, she said, "Oh, my dear. Forget about that. Fix your hair like mine. Don't worry about it again." You know, just tie your hair up in a bun and let that go. Don't think about it again. Then she told us...we had had a new baby then, our first child. He was three months old, and you know how a new mother is with her first child and hovering over like a mother hen. And we said, "Now when we go to the field, will there be...we have to go to language school. Will there be maid help to care of the baby and all that." Mrs. Thompson said, "Phyllis, the minute you set foot in Costa Rica, you forget about that baby. You turn that baby over to the maid. He belongs to the maid for the next year. Your job is to learn a language. You forget about that child. Forget even have a baby." You know how that goes over. And she was way off. I mean, that wasn't the way it was when we got there. Nobody on the field would have said that. But this was the old-fashioned stuff, you know...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...the old sacrifice...you sacrifice your family. Your calling is to God's work and your family comes second, and all that. It was that approach. Another thing she said...she told Bill Gaité and me as men...she said, "David and Bill, you need to know no man in Costa Rica at any time of the day or night, under any circumstances, for any reason whatsoever, would ever step out that front door without a coat and a suit and a tie on." She said, "You make sure you are always dressed. The minute you walk out that door, you have to have a coat, a suit, and a tie on." Well, I believed that. We found out it wasn't true at all. I mean it was re...it was preposterous. But I accepted it so thoroughly.... The first week we were in Costa Rica, my wife had a miscarriage. All the hush...rush and bustle of packing and unpacking, she was only about two months along and we weren't even sure yet if she was pregnant. But she woke up in the morning and had some serious bleeding. It was obvious we needed help. We didn't have a phone in the house. We lived about a mile from the mission hospital. I couldn't speak a word of Spanish. If I had had a phone, it wouldn't do me any good 'cause I wouldn't have known what to say on the phone if a Spanish speaking person answered. So, I jumped up. I was going to run to the hospital try to get some help. But in never dawned...never even occur to me to do anything else except dress up full in a Sunday suit, coat, tie, white shirt, six o'clock in the morning. I put it on. I ran, full tilt, fully dressed in my...in my suit and tie and everything. I ran fast as I could to the hospital to get help for Phyllis. And later on I discovered that, you know, this wasn't it at all. I mean, men go out all the time. Now, of course, today they hardly wear a suit and tie. It's more sports shirts. Bill Gaité said to her...he said, "Well, I have a lot of sports shirts. Should I take any of them with me?" She thought a minute [Ericksen laughs] and said, "Well, you probably better

take one.” She said, “On Saturdays you’ll want to be cleaning your room or working around your house, that sort of thing. So, yeah. You better take one sport shirt.” Well, that was absolutely absurd! Another thing she told us was—and he told us—we had to have a black suit. Men wear black suits, which another was totally preposterous. So, I tried to find a black suit. I couldn’t find a black suit. I looked all over in New York and Philadelphia and elsewhere, and I could not get a black suit. So, I went to Costa Rica. We got there on a Saturday. And the fellow who is chairman of the orientation committee for the mission, wonderful guy named Gordon Hauser, Gordon met us the airport, took us and got us settled. And Saturday evening Gordon came back to the house to see how we were doing. He was dressed in a very dark, dark blue suit. I don’t think...I’m sure it wasn’t black. It was dark blue. And as he came in his dark blue suit I said, “Oh, that reminds me.” He said, “What?” I said, “I couldn’t get a black suit!” He said, “What?” I said, “I...I couldn’t get a black suit. I don’t have a black suit for tomorrow for church.” He said, “What do you want black suit for?” [laughs] I said, “Well, the Thompsons told us that’s the only thing that men ever wear here.” Oh! He threw his head back and laughed. He laughed. He said, “I’m dressed in this dark suit 'cause I’m going to such and such...something that evening, some function. But he said, “Black suit?” He said, “Don’t be ridiculous. You don’t need a black suit. Nobody wears a black suit except maybe to go to a funeral.” He set our minds at ease. But that was the kind of orientation we were getting. And it was...it was the old paternalistic, colonial type of mission superiority.

ERICKSEN: Had they been in charge of the orientation long?

HOWARD: Yeah. They had for a while.

ERICKSEN: Did they continue to be in charge?

HOWARD: No. Ken Strachan began to catch on to this. He saw what was happening.

ERICKSEN: Huh.

HOWARD: And they made drastic changes very quickly. In fact, I think probably our class of orientation may have helped in that, ‘cause I remember Ken...I think he asked us (and Dit Fenton did to) wanted to know...you know, “How did...how was your orientation for you, now that you’ve been on the field for a while?” So, we told him some of these things. We wrote some of this up to Ken. I think it was perhaps Dit, who was at that time Field Director in Costa Rica, wanted to know. And we told him a lot of this stuff. And they made total changes in that very quickly, within two or three years from then. They were having much, much more valuable and longer orientation with the right kind of leadership.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh. As you look back on your orientation, what were the...what were the things that you did benefit from that? Or the advantages of being around the Thompsons?

HOWARD: Yeah. Well, I’m sure that the strong emphasis on getting the language first. You know, that...that was a big thing. That is your number one job the first year. You get there, you forget everything else, you get that language. And I think we took that and we did it. And we

plunged in and worked very hard on the language for language school. And it paid off. I was able to preach in Spanish after about seven months, I think, of language school. And I don't say this to boast, but people have told me that my Spanish was far better than the average missionary. And in fact, the way that this was proven to me was I could answer the phone and talk in Spanish on the phone and people did not know that I was a Latin...that I was not a Latin. They would often think I was a Latin...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...when I'd talk on the phone, they didn't see me face-to-face. When they'd see me they'd know that I wasn't a Latin. But I think we, both Phyllis and I, got Spanish apparently better than the average missionary. And I can still handle it quite fluently now. I mean, even though we've been gone for the field for...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...over...for twenty-five years now...

HOWARD: ...I was back in Latin America last month, preached in Spanish with no difficulty. So, I can thank the Thompsons for that strong emphasis.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh. How long was the orientation?

HOWARD: It wasn't long, maybe four days, something like that.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: It wasn't one of these two-or-three-week type of things. [laughs]

ERICKSEN: Now you talked about choosing between LAM and TEAM.

HOWARD: Uh-huh.

ERICKSEN: And you...you...that you're...you felt it was important to have a mission that you could work with.

HOWARD: Yeah.

ERICKSEN: What was it about LAM that made you feel that way and appeal to you. I mean, you already referred to Strachan's personal communication.

HOWARD: Yeah.

ERICKSEN: But what was it about LAM that...?

HOWARD: Well, I think it was...it was that more than any other one thing.

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: Then Ken took enough interest also. He told us that his brother-in-law Dayton Roberts, who was going to be in the States at that time, he thought it would be nice for Dayton to meet us and talk with us. So, Dayton came here—he was here in the Wheaton area on one of his trips in the States—came and had lunch with Phyllis and me. And we were impressed with him too. Dayton was a wonderful fellow. In fact, I could talk a little bit more about him when we get to my time on the field, 'cause he influenced me greatly. But I think it was pretty much what I've already said. It was just that if this is the kind of leadership that LAM has...

ERICKSEN: Okay.

HOWARD: ...a man like Ken Strachan, that's what we want to work with.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh. Okay.

HOWARD: And again, I emphasize, this was nothing negative about TEAM. We weren't comparing it negatively with TEAM.

ERICKSEN: Sure.

HOWARD: It was just that we had that contact and were well impressed.

ERICKSEN: Let's see. When you went down to Costa Rica, did you go into the Spanish Language Institute for your language work?

HOWARD: Yeah. What happened was we arrived two months late. The language school terms, which start in January, May, and September, and we were supposed to go in January, but our visas didn't come through. We were stalled. We were held up in Florida. We waited for two months in Florida waiting to get our visas. So, when they arrived, we got to language school two months late for a four-month course, four-month quarter. And we thought, "Well, we'll have to wait." But they said, "Well, let's get you started anyway. Let's get into the course."

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: So, we got started. And then one of the missionary wives, Eileen Remington, wife of Bob Remington who was with the radio work down there, took us in the afternoons and gave us personal tutoring. So, we actually caught up. We did a full quarter's work in half a quarter. We did four month's work in two months. So, by the end of that first quarter we were caught up and were able to move into the second term of language school. And actually, I discovered we were even ahead at that point of some. By...by third term in the language school, we were in the most advanced group.

ERICKSEN: And I presume that your wife got to see the...the baby once in a while.

HOWARD: Oh, oh, yes. [laughs] My goodness. Yeah. No question about that, yeah.

ERICKSEN: How would you evaluate the Institute's program?

HOWARD: The Spanish Language In...? Excellent. Absolutely excellent. It was a heavy program. We had classes five days a week, four hours in the morning every day. We were expected to study five hours a day outside of class, and we did that conscientiously in the afternoons. We'd go home and we'd study all afternoon, maybe part of the evening. So, we were putting in eight, nine hours a day, at least five days a week, and sometimes studies on Saturday, in language study, which is why I think we did quite well in the language.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: No, it's a fine school. They had a wide variety of types of classes. They had the basic grammar classes. They had reading classes. They had second and third terms. We had practice preaching classes, where we would have to prepare sermons and preach them. We had phonetics classes where this expert in phonetics would teach us the pronunciation, that kind of thing.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: It was a very, very...and some of it was cultural orientation too.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: Cultural orientation to Latin America.

ERICKSEN: Did either you or Phyllis have an easier time with the language?

HOWARD: Probably I had a little easier time. Phyllis does well...

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: ...but she would always claim that it was much easier for me than for her. She would say that, but she does well too.

ERICKSEN: Uh-huh.

HOWARD: She teaches Spanish now. I mean, she teaches bilingual courses out in Elgin. She's a bilingual teacher for children in early grammar school.

END OF TAPE



Wheaton College
For Christ and His Kingdom

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