

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Dr. Hudson Taylor Armerding (CN 514, T5)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case “[unclear]” was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as “ah” or “um” are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

- ... Three dots indicate what the 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 parenthesis are asides made by the speaker.
- [] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

This transcript was created by Issam Smeir and Wayne D. Weber was completed in February 2001.

**CN 514, T5. Oral history interview with Hudson Taylor Armerding by Paul Ericksen on May 10, 1995.**

**ERICKSEN:** Well, we were...we were talking just about your hearing about what's happened more recently.

**ARMERDING:** Yeah.

**ERICKSEN:** As you think...I mean, you were here during the 1970 meetings and as far as the '50 revival goes and what has happened more recently, you've just heard things, from...from what you've heard and of course it's...it's been [claps hands] relayed to you what...what are...what would you say the similarities and the distinctive of the 1970 meetings?

**ARMERDING:** Well, as best as I understand it I think as what I said few minutes ago that these were student...

**ERICKSEN:** Yeah.

**ARMERDING:** ...student oriented in sense of a student burden. You probably know that in 1936 it was Dick Hillis who got up and said we need to do something and he was student at that time. So there...there's that similarity. The understanding I have of the testimony of the 1950 as well as '70 and now here that the testimonies were genuine, they were not exhibitionist, they didn't try to have an extreme that was...not a lot of shrieking or falling down or any of those kinds of things that you at least read about in the...some of the frontier revivals type things. There was none of that. And that the [pauses] effect was to reach people who on the surface would be somewhat improbable like Dr. Galleon's comment to us. He said he had given up on this student, and then I think that it was Wednesday night saw the same student standing up and praising the Lord and indicating his commitment to Him. I think that certainly was true because of the facts in 1970 we had people who weren't even interested in coming but at least they tuned in, [to the radio] see. And I would have never thought that Colonel Ellis would be reached at all. I thought it was good from that stand point. I guess I would say that [clears throat] the fact that this continued over a sequence of several days would distinguish it from both 1950 and also 1970. And the fact that there was an overt and opportunity for commitment, we did not have that in 1970. I think that was very, very good. Someone said over two hundred young people on the Thursday night and I don't remember that there was anything like that in 1950 either. So I think the sequencing was good. I think the...the lack of attempting to control it on the part of either chaplain or president or anyone else was probably common to all of these. And I think that's good also in the sense of not trying to put into some kind of a structuring, but rather just to let it go provided, of course, that it didn't get out of hand with extreme behavior and thankfully it didn't. So I would...I would say there's a fair number of similarities. But I guess I like the idea that yours recently was sequenced over several nights, did have a time for commitment, did have the gathering around individuals. Those were good things that I do not remember from the other time.



**ERICKSEN:** One thing that they were encouraging I think during the meetings and have done subsequently is the accountability groups or discipleship groups. Was there some kind of mechanism like that?

**ARMERDING:** I don't remember anything like that, no. That would be a very positive thing it seems to me.

**ERICKSEN:** Now John Armstrong, I think, talked about [pauses] going to another campus, maybe to several. Do you recall any of that kind of function?

**ARMERDING:** Yeah. Yes, I think there was but I don't...I can't tell you now in particular. I don't remember that. But I...I do think that there were beyond Asbury [College] there were others but I can't...I can't document that.

**ERICKSEN:** Was there any evidence of impact in the churches in the community here in Wheaton?

**ARMERDING:** I don't know that either. [pauses] I guess I would have to ask somebody who might have looked at it more analytically say in the [Wheaton] Bible Church or the College Church.

**ERICKSEN:** Yeah. Okay. Anything else we should talk about as far as the...the 1970...

**ARMERDING:** No, I don't think so.

**ERICKSEN:** ...meeting.

**ARMERDING:** I...I think that...I think what you're doing though is very important before it gets too much farther down. And I would say that whether you have done it or whether it's even practicable to do it, I wish there would be some way of circularizing the classes which were on campus at the time and as simply as saying, "Do you have any recollections and if so give us a response." This might turn up some very personal things that...of which none of us here would be aware. But, for example, I ...we did not have any of our children on campus at that time. We had one that graduated in '68 and then the next one came in '71 so we...we didn't have any of our family actually here at the time. So I don't know whether this could work but I hope it may pursued.

**ERICKSEN:** Well, now we have done a little of that but probably we might be able to do more because as you...as you say and as I think John Armstrong said too there were people coming up to him many years later who he would have had no idea...

**ARMERDING:** Exactly.

**ERICKSEN:** ...of the impact that it had...

**ARMERDING:** Exactly.

**ERICKSEN:** ...on their lives.

**ARMERDING:** Yeah, when you think of the dozens and dozens of people who came to the microphone and...and then the others who obviously were listening on the radio. I just don't know that there's any good way short of asking them to give their recollections. But I think it'd be a fruitful thing if you could get the funding for it and send it out to the known addresses of people in that era.

**ERICKSEN:** What would you say was the...the impact that the revival had on you?

**ARMERDING:** Well, it...it was another indication how that God does respond to fervent intercessory prayer, that He continues to work in people's lives and that with that there would be a...an expectation that...that in His broad strategic scheme of things, He was doing something that was going to make it effective to redirect people's lives into more obedient areas of service. And to listen to these students all through the night talking about renunciation on the one hand, which I personally happen to believe, (you know, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ)...that there was a renunciation on the one hand and a desire to commit themselves to the Lord and to serve Him, that I...I just felt was a marvelous demonstration of how...how God works, kind of a...a friend of mine used to call it "a season of the soul" type of activity. And I also feel that and have felt for some years that if it could happen on one occasion, not that it had to be precisely the same, but that generically a similar type of moving was possible and frankly necessary, and that has been the focus of my wife's prayers and mine over these years and that's why we're extraordinarily grateful for what the Lord did on this campus.

**ERICKSEN:** When you were a student back in the late 30s was there talk about the what '36 revival had been like?

**ARMERDING:** No, I don't remember hearing about that at the time. In fact I don't...it was again my provincialism I am sure but only later did I know about that and that's interesting about the foreshortened outlook [laughs] of people trying to work and go to school and everything else. You're so cut off with the immediate all the time.

**ERICKSEN:** Yeah, yeah. Well, I want to thank you very much for...

**ARMERDING:** Well, it's been my joy.

**ERICKSEN:** ...for sitting

**ARMERDING:** And I...

**ERICKSEN:** ...and sharing.

**ARMERDING:** ...just again record our profound thanksgiving and the same time realizing a...a truism: Wherever the work of God is aggressively going forward, one can almost guarantee the opposition of the enemy because he's not concerned about the indifferent people. He's concerning

about the real threat and therefore I would not be surprised, of course, to see some backlash, whatever you want to call it's because the enemy does not like to see these kinds of things happen. And I think we need, and my wife and I have been praying to that end, to pray against that. The beautiful thing in Job 1 and 2 is one we claim for our family. Remember Satan says to God, "You've put a hedge about this man." [Job 1:10] Well, we've prayed for God to put a hedge about our children and I think we should pray that God put a hedge about this campus. The enemy would not be able to prevail and I think that the intercessory prayers of God's people can do that. So that's our focus.

**ERICKSEN:** Well, please keep praying.

**ARMERDING:** Yeah.

**ERICKSEN:** Now you're mentioning the sort...the spiritual battle did you see evidence of that during the '70 or following the '70 revival?

**ARMERDING:** Well, only in the sense that...that it was...it was pretty evident that people were wrestling with the whole conflict between [clears throat], you know, the lust of flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life on the one hand. We did...we did certainly see that continuing and sometimes rather surprising. We had the son of a very well-known Christian leader who [pauses]...involved in very...very questionable, oh, a high degree of sexual attraction type of activity and realized again that the culture is so oriented to feed those incipient capabilities that unless one is rigorous in mental discipline, each of us is subject to that, see. Well, we...we sensed some of those struggling in the '70 and the following time because the culture even then...well, you may of heard of the films *I'm Curious Yellow*, *I Am Curious Blue* when pornography was actually permitted out on the screen and of course the *Playboy* thing and everything else. [laughs] I even had people subscribe to *Playboy*, and we'd get a copy in the office and then of course, have to call them and tell them that it was a mistake and to cancel it. But I'll tell you one further thing that may be a product of all of this. The fellow of the name of Mel Lorentzen and Alva Steffler of the Art Department and I forgot who else (I guess that was it), anyway we formulated an ad and actually ran it in the Chicago issue of *Playboy* magazine. It was a series of things that...nothing other than just a face of pretty girl and an automobile and a skiing vacation, you know, and a series of lines like this and then the whole idea is: "What is your life, is this all there is to life? If you want to know more." Well we got some responses but never got anything specific out of it but it was our effort to try to penetrate a market totally separate from what we were doing and we got a grant of several thousands dollars from Taylor, the fellow who put out the living Bibles.

**ERICKSEN:** Ken Taylor?

**ARMERDING:** Ken said that he would give us enough money to help buy the ad. Well, again unfortunately there was not immediately anyway any overt thing but it was another effort to see to try to go from the campus and to address the broader area that in some way could be related to all of this, much as it did not have a...a very tangible outcome that we'd hoped for. We took a Glen Ellyn address box and we got several responses. We answered all of them but nothing really came it.



**ERICKSEN:** Well, let's bring it to a close. Thank you very much.

**ARMERDING:** You're welcome and thank you for your time too.

**END OF TAPE**

