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WEST VIRGINIA COMMUNITIES - CEREDO

AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH: J. W. Workman

AS CONDUCTED BY: Jim Deeter

DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 27th, 1984

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Gina Kates

Jim: This is a conversation recorded with Mr. J.J. Workman. (J.W. Workman). J.W. Workman, thank you for correcting me. J. W. Workman, longtime member of 1st Baptist Church in Ceredo. And the interviewer is Jim. I am Jim Deeter, a graduate student at Marshall University, and this interview is in conjunction with a historical, oral historical research of the 1st Baptist Church in Ceredo. And this particular interview is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for History 580. The interview is being conducted in Mr. Workman's home on July the 27th on 19 hundred and 84. Mr. Workman, I just want to start by asking you to tell me a little bit about yourself, where you were born, where you grew up, a little bit about your background, your work, your family, just that kind of thing, if you would.

J.W.: Okay. I was born in Wayne County uh, above Wayne, probably uh, five or six, maybe 10 miles above Wayne, on a little farm and uh, I lived two or three different places in the area until I was seven years old. Then I moved to Ceredo, my parents moved to Ceredo. My father came here to work on the N & W Railroad. And I grew up in Ceredo, attended grade school and quit school after about 2 months in the 8th grade, because of the illness of my father. I got a job and went to work. And uh, I lived here all my life until after I was married, which was in 19 and 25. I married Gladie Thompson and lived in Wayne County, about 10 miles above Wayne. And uh, I lived here like I said, went to working on the railroad, I got transferred to different points, moved around quite often, but after moving back to Ceredo, after living in Spencer, I lived at New Martinsville, and then at Spencer, and moved back to Ceredo I was trying to remember the time but I can't remember the date. But, during the time I was living back here, I was saved in the 1st Baptist Church of Ceredo. (mmm) And uh, some months after that I had to leave again to go off to work, go away to work. And I moved to Spencer, West Virginia and we lived there for 20 years. And then uh, the job was discontinued there and I came back to Ceredo, moved back to Ceredo, we built this home in 19 and 57, and they discontinued the job here again, and I had to go to Parkersburg. And the last 10 years I worked, I worked at Parkersburg, but we still maintained our home here. And I retired it'll be 17 years in October since I retired. And we came back home to live. And we of course moved our membership back to Ceredo, 1st Baptist Church of Ceredo, and I've been a deacon in the church out there for a number of years and taught Sunday School classes and uh, still maintained our membership out there. (mmm)

Jim: So you've had a long time association with the 1st Baptist Church in Ceredo.

J.W.: Uh, yeah, yeah. Yes, I guess about uh, about 19 and 30 no, 19 and 37 when I was saved, and of course, we moved our membership to Spencer when I went to Spencer to live (mmm-nmm) and outside of that we've had our membership out there all these years.

Jim: Mmm-nmm. Do you have uh, children that are in the church now or that have been in the church?

J.W.: well, all of our children belong to a church, but not of 'em lives here, so they don't belong to this church. (I see) we uh, we have one son who is a minister, he pastors at the (Inaudible)...Baptist Church, near Florence, Kentucky. He's the youngest son. This daughter that you've met here is a twin, his twin. (oh) And I have a boy who lives in Clendenin, or near Clendenin, west Virginia, works for a gas company and he teaches Sunday School, and we lost a son in March (mmm) he lived at Firstwoods, Kentucky, he attended the uh, Southern Baptist Church over here at westwood, near Flatwoods, (mmm-hmm), and I have the three daughters, uh, one lives at New Haven, west Virginia, and they attend the Southern Baptist church near Pomeroy, Ohio, (mmm-hmm) and I have a daughter in Vermont, Bennington, Vermont, her husband is a minister, a baptist minister. And they have lived there for oh, a number of years; I don't know just how long, (mmm-hmm) And then this daughter lives at uh, north Ridgeville, Ohio, and she attends the baptist church in Leary, Ohio. So they're all attending church.

Jim: Yes, they're all associated with church.

J.W.: All attended, and associated with church and all attend church at different times. I always knew if they weren't working on Sunday, or some sickness or something I knew they was gonna be in church. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: You attribute that to your early teaching, then or your early training of them?

J.W.: well...I would give my wife credit more than myself. My wife was a christian when we was married. But I ...see, we were married in 19 and 23 and I didn't become a christian until 19 and 39. (mmm) She always took the children and went to church, Sunday School and church, and I'd stay home. And I attributed my life of being a christian to her leadership. (mmm-hmm) And also the children. But we did, after I became a christian, we had 'em all in Sunday school and church, every Sunday.

Jim: You have 4 children?

J.W.: six.

Jim: Oh, six! Three daughters...

J.W.: Three daughters and 2 sons living and one dead.

Jim: Okay, six children. Okay. Oh, when did you, you retired 17 years ago (it'll be 17 years in October), okay, 17 years October, and you retired from the N & W. was it the N & W?

J.W.: no, for the Chessy System.

Jim: For the Chessy System...railroad and you began then to make your permanent residence here in Ceredo (that's right), and you

started the well, you had been a member of 1st Baptist but you weren't, were you still attending here before that time?

J.W.: Well, just occasionally. You see, the last 15 years I worked, I worked in Parkersburg (un-nun), and we still maintained our home here. My wife's father lived here with us and uh, until he died, he died in at the age of 88, but I had been in Parkersburg 6 years then. And just coming home on my two days off. After he died, my wife came up and spent the last 2 years with me in an apartment up there but we just kept our home here. (mmm-nmm) And we kept our membership out here at the 1st Baptist Church. Because when I would come home my days off weren't always on Sunday, (mmm-nmm), but the times that I could be home on Sunday, we attended church out there. (mmm-nmm) And of course, then after I retired uh, we started going regular.

Jim: Right. You're a deacon in the church now? (that's right) And you, in the last 17 years and you're a regular....I'm sure you've had probably a regular habit of attendance there (oh, yes, yes) uh, what uh, let's say in the last 17 years, share with me how you felt when you first started going back to church regularly after you retired. What you saw in the church and whatever you remember about those early days.

J.W.: Well, it was a good feeling to get to come back regular. I had like I say, I had went occasionally when I'd be home on Sunday, which wasn't very often. But uh, we had a young pastor when I retired and uh, (who was...what was his name? do you remember?) Uh...(was it Phil Kessee?) No, no uh, Phil Kessee had just left here (okay)....(Harold?) Harold, yeah, (Reverend Harrod) I was trying to think of his first name. Harrod (Harrod) Harrod was his last name. (I've got it here some place)

Jim: Tell me what you remember about Reverend Harrod.

J.W.: Well, this was his first church, after coming out of seminary. (mmm-nmm) And he was very enthusiastic and uh, did the church a lot of good as a young minister. And he depended on me, see, he led the church in to going from the American Baptist to the Southern Baptist, during his ministry. Which he was only here 18 months with the church, affiliated with the Southern Baptist, during his ministry, and uh, of course, I had been a deacon in a church one time before. But up until that time, we didn't ordain deacons. But I was one of the first deacons ordained after we became Southern Baptist. There was four of us ordained at the same time. (mmm-nmm) And me being retired, he depended on me a lot for help which I was awfully glad to help him. (mmm-nmm) But uh, I don't know, I think he was just a little bit uh, eager to see the church grow more, maybe he might have become just a little bit disappointed that it didn't grow as fast as he thought it should have. Anyway, he only stayed 18 months. (mmm-nmm) We're still awfully good friends and he's down in Kentucky, we hear from him occasionally. And uh, he left to accept another church. We had a...an old gentleman but the name leaves me, who served as interim pastor through the time he left until we got

another pastor. And he did the church a lot of good. (mmmm-rrrr) He lived over in Ashland and he uh, came over every day and was at the office part time. (mmmm-rrrr) And he got another pastor, who was Bob Davis (mm-rrrr) and he was here 4 years. And uh, I guess uh, (mmmm-rrrr) in Ashland, (mmmm-rrrr) uh, (mmmm-rrrr) uh, (mmmm-rrrr) people attend church more then they gradually drop off. (mm-rrrr) I've heard other pastors talk that it was that way some of the time. But he stayed 4 years and left. And then Reverend Hubert Six came. And he served with us for 10 years. (mmmm-rrrr) And the church uh, uh, grew at the first of his ministry, was very strong and then uh, it'd be up and down a little bit, all those years, like most of the churches are. But uh, he did a real good job in the church. And uh, I think everybody liked him mighty well. Of course, not everybody, 'cause there's always some people who will find fault with a minister. You know...through your experience. (mmmm-rrrr) But uh, he did lead the church in to growing and (mmmm-rrrr) we did some overhauling of the sanctuary while he was here. And not extensive but quite a bit of inside work. (mmmm) And then Dr. when he left, Dr. Armstrong, who had come here from a Southern Baptist Convention to work as a missionary evangelism, on evangelism, in West Virginia, who came to preach for us while until we got a pastor. And the uh, search committee talked to him about it and he finally accepted the pastorate. (mmmm-rrrr) It'll be uh, two years next month since he's...has since the other pastor left. (mmmm-rrrr) Well, the church has grown, he baptized over a hundred and fifty people since uh, since becoming our pastor. (mmmm-rrrr) And uh, not all of 'em are attending church regular like they should. But the church has grown and he has led us into a building program. We've ...I don't know if you've ever heard of it or not, but we have 'Together We Build' program in the Southern Baptist Convention. They sent a man here to lead us and uh, instruct us in the raising money for the new church. And we had committed with what money we already had in the building program, we had a 1 2 million dollars committed over a three-year period. That's coming in uh, the pastor told me day before yesterday that about as he expected it would. (mmmm-rrrr) We have now the last report I had, 223,000 dollars in the bank (mmmm), but uh, it's the idea that we had on this was when we go into the building, we go in debt-free. These commitments will be paid and of course, it's all drawing interest now and in a three-year period, starting last year, spend one year of it next month, I believe he told me, that uh, we figured that we'll have ...let the contract when about 3/4 of the money's in, and by the time it, the building's finished, it'll all be debt-free. And it's gonna be a wonderful thing, you know, a small church like this, I don't know just exactly what the membership is but uh, around 400 I believe or something that way. Now, we don't have any wealthy people but to think that you could raise amount of money in three years (mm-rrrr) it's wonderful. It's uh, Dr. Armstrong is a very intelligent, experienced man in uh, leadership (mmmm-rrrr) and uh, he had not pastored churches for some time. He had been in uh, evangelistic work and administrative work and this is the first church he'd pastored for a number of years. But he was intrigued with the possibilities here and he has, with his

Leadership, let's say, the church was really grown. And I'm sure that in two more years we'll be moving into a new building.

Jim: That's great. I know you're all excited about that. (oh, yes, yes). ^{ammm}.

J.W.: To think about not having a big lot of debt (right) and having to pay all that interest, that was the idea (right) of going that way. Our building is old, it's nice inside, I don't know if you've ever attended or not, (no), but it's not large enough, if we have a good crowd, we have to put chairs in the aisles you know, and it's really not large enough for a large congregation but oh, it's beautiful inside. But the outside is old and it's oh, been kept up in pretty good condition but you can't do much with the building that's that old, you know.

Jim: Let me go back for a minute to oh, Brother Farrod, in the early '50's or the '50's when you came back after you retired, oh, you said we led the church out of the American Baptist Convention and into the Southern Baptist Convention (right). I had heard that from the other people I talked to but from your point of view, why did we do that?

J.W.: Well...I don't know if I could answer that...now, now, I've been told, not by him, but I have been told before that Reverend Fiesse had started the movement before he left (mmm) and like I said, Brother Farrod was very enthusiastic, that was his first church and he was excited and I don't know whether any pressure had been put on him to...from the Southern Baptist Convention or it was just his ideas to take it up from there or what. Of course he had to have help doing it because he was a young minister.

(mmm) But oh, it went very smoothly, with the exception of a few, we lost a few members. Of which will happen most any time like that ever happens (mmm). But oh...I had been very well satisfied and as most of our people have with the Southern

Baptist. Because of the program they have, called the cooperative program, (mmm) we oh, each church, see our Baptist churches are, you might say, they're independent. That is, when you belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, and we get help from the convention and but each church makes their own rules and own decisions, so they oh, the Southern Baptist Convention asked each church to give a percentage of what their total income is and that goes into the fund to buy some headquarters overseas, to some headquarters here in the United States, and not the way the Sunday School Society, it only those say, it all goes into our fund for the (mmm) and that is the same program and they give a certain percent of ours, I don't know remember how just what, I don't about it, to the fund to that program and I'd maybe to the association. But oh, like I say, we...our church makes our own rules. We follow the programs of the Southern Baptist Convention as far as possible that we do (mmm), but they can't tell us what to do, you're going to this or you're going to that, see, we make our own decisions.

Jim: Let me see, we're talking about Pastor Harrod, and Pastor Davis and then career Davis, was Hubert Sir, and then Mr, Dr. Armstrong. Let me just talk about them for a minute and (okay) you share with me your ideas. If you had to rate Hubert or excuse me, Pastor Harrod and I can't remember his first name but if you had to rate him, what would... If you had to say what was his strongest points and what was his weakest points, how would... how would you... what would you say to that?

J.W.: (pause) Well... I think his strongest point probably was evangelism. (mm-hmm) And of course his... I expect his weakest point would be the lack of experience and Mr, maybe not being able to carry out the programs that he'd started.

Jim: Would you say that he was Mr, good leader, a fair leader, or a poor leader?

J.W.: Well, I think he'd be a fair leader (mm-hmm)

Jim: How would you define Mr, leadership in a pastor?

J.W.: Well, let me think about it just a minute. (pause) It Mr, being able... being able to lead the people and get your points across to them and getting the Mr... getting the people to follow your leadership, you know that's a fair thing. Some people he'd started for many or several they got a lot from going to school, and getting the training (mm-hmm) but I think it's a bit a lot of times. But Mr, but now... like I say, about Mr, Brother Harrod, he was so enthusiastic, I think it... it Mr, bubbled over a little too much, you know, (mm-hmm), he didn't have the experience in leadership that he should have at that time. He was mentioned to me that he made a big mistake by leaving this church as quick as he did () (mmmm).

Jim: Let's move to Mr, Robert Davis. What would you say would be his strongest points and his weakest points and how would you rate him as a leader?

J.W.: Well, his strongest points would probably be that he... he was very understanding and Mr, you know, listened to people's complaints or whatever but his weakest point would be, probably his temper (mm) and Mr, his failure to be sympathetic a lot of times to things that he should have been. (mm-hmm)

Jim: Was he a man that Mr, you would call a good leader, a fair leader, a poor leader?

J.W.: Yes, I would say that he was a fair leader (mm).

Jim: Mr, you said he had problems with his temper, controlling, and control. Mr, was he a man that wanted his own way or was very (yeah, that was mostly it)

J.W.: Of course, you know, if you've pastored churches, you know that problems arise when Mr, people say things that a pastor, I

think if he has the right training, and leadership, he can sit down with them and talk them over kindly and all. But Bob would, he'd talk short, he'd say things to 'em that he shouldn't say, you know, (mmm-hmm) maybe regretted it afterwards. But the damage had been done. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: Okay. What about uh, Hubert Six? What would you say was his strong points, and his weak points?

J.W.: Hubert Six was the most humble, uh, kind person that I ever knew. And he was, he was a good leader in that way, he would never ...you could bring up a conversation in the deacon's meeting or whenever about some person and he would find an excuse for them not attending church or not instead of condemning them, he was ...he was sympathetic and uh, always giving people the benefit of the doubt (mmm-hmm). And he uh, he was very helpful and well, I've said a lot of times before that while he wasn't a big preacher, that he was an awful good pastor (mmm-hmm).

Jim: You think there's a difference then between being a good preacher and a good pastor?

J.W.: Well, what I mean, uh, you know, a lot of people preach a big sermon, wonderful sermons, but in dealing with their congregation, they don't have the sympathy and the, being able to help and do all that they can for the sick or whatever the needs of the people are (mmmh), but he had that ability to uh, he was awfully good to visit the sick or help people who were in need uh, he gave out of his own pocket a lot of times, so much for people when they come to him you know, for help like a lot of people do, you know. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: Now, let's talk for a minute about Dr. Armstrong. Of course, he's the newest of the group and he's been here about 2 years uh, that should be enough time for you to get some idea about what kind of a leader he is and if you had to rate him, what would be his weakest points or his strongest points and then his weakest points?

J.W.: Well, I don't know that I could pinpoint a weak point about him. He's very dynamic, he's a very dynamic leader. Now he uh, expects cooperation, which I think is necessary from, especially from the deacons and the officers of a church, that he have that. And uh, but as far as a weakness, I don't know as I have discovered anything that I would call a weakness in his leadership.

Jim: Do you over the last 2 years, give me an incident or two where he's demonstrated this dynamic leadership you mentioned. Just something that happened that you can remember.

J.W.: Well, the one thing that I would think about would be this building program. (did he initiate that?) Yes, he...(that was his idea?) Yes, he had been here a year until we were, the ground work was being laid for all this. And he has the leadership to

pick the right people to do the jobs that need to be done. I think his years of experience has him helped him in a way lot in those, in that way.

Jim: Do you think a man, to be a good leader, has to be able to listen to the other people's ideas?

J.W.: Oh, yes.

Jim: You mentioned that ... Brother Davis wasn't too good at that. (that's right)

J.W.: But he needs to be able to listen to them but at the same time, he needs to have the leadership that ... that he is the head of the church and that um, he had used their ideas to a point, but he...he still wants them to cooperate with the program that he has out...

END OF SIDE 1

SIDE 2

Jim: ...okay, go ahead.

J.W.: I don't think I've ever met a or had a pastor or had experience with one who had the ability to meet as many as different occasions as he does. Now, he has um, more office work now than we've ever had before. We have more well, we've always had a secretary but not full-time secretary, which we have now. (mmmm) And um, he just seems to have the ability to um, because of the experience that he's had, carry on all these programs and everything, go along smoothly. (mmmm)

Jim: In your opinion, thinking about to Brother Harrod, which is, who was the pastor when you started back to church regularly here, up through Harrod, Davis, Sin and now Dr. Armstrong, what do you think, well, first of all, do you think all of these men accomplished something here? (Oh, yes, yes) What...give me some for instances.

J.W.: Well, I think that each one of them were able to reach people that probably the other couldn't have. Because um, you take especially Dr. Armstrong, which um, the type of man he is and experience he's had and the way he has um, he doesn't...he don't...any, people, he will...he will help the ones that are down and out or the outcasts or whatever you might call 'em. and he'll have just as much compassion with them, as much leadership as he would the man that was making a big salary. Where I have known some pastors that um, you know, of course, you know, the Bible tells us not to do that. (mmmm) I have known pastors who have made a difference but um, like I say, Dr. Armstrong, who has ...and I don't know about his um, his um, financial situation or anything, but he apparently seems like a man who has been used to the best and had anything he needed but he still has that compassion for the poor people (mmmm), and he has um, a lot of

people who have never, who had never come to our church before because they claimed you know, that uh, there was...the church wasn't too friendly and so forth, the very most, the poorest people we have feel free to come there (mmm-hmm). And uh, there's just a friendliness through his leadership that uh, and the some people don't like the idea. They say we're not uh, well, I don't know we're...I can't think of the word I want...want to say, but as he said one time out there, uh, somebody got up and said something and another ...we had some visitors there you know, and he said, it was just a typical Sunday morning, it's uh, you know, we're not, maybe you can mention the word I'm trying to think, we're not uh, following patterns so forth so much now, it's just uh, (not traditional or...) yeah, yeah. As one of our members used to say, Brother J.J. Billups, who leads the singing a lot and he says, just hang loose, anything can happen. But people enjoy it.

Jim: why do you think your people to use your term 'hang loose'? What attributes to that attitude?

J.W.: Well, I feel that it's uh, more of the leadership of Brother Armstrong, but uh, he uh, just wants you to feel free you know and uh....

Jim: Was the church that way say uh, when Brother Harrod was here?

J.W.: Well, not so much at that time. But now, during uh, Brother Six's uh, pastorate here, it became more that way. (more open?) Yeah, more open.

Jim: More fellowship, friendly.

J.W.: Yeah, and uh, if uh, you want to wear a jacket to church, fine, and if you don't, leave it home. (mmm-hmm) You know...people...like I say, it's just ...the church now where they want everybody to feel at home. (mm-hmm) And if you don't have as good a clothes as somebody else, why you see other people there dressed just like you are, feel free to come, you know.

Jim: mmm-hmm. Let me ask you a few questions about the church itself and kind of get away from the pastors for a few minutes. Uh, have you seen any great changes in the church in the last 17 years?

J.W.: Well...I can't see that I have any great changes, no.

Jim: Uh, has...

J.W.: Always preached the Bible and ...

Jim: The mission of the church, what the church is there for, has that changed? Has there...do you have the same mission today that you had 17 years ago? (yes, I think so) And that is what?

J.W.: Not to win souls.

Jim: You think that's the primary purpose for the church being there?

J.W.: Absolutely, yes.

Jim: Is there any other purpose you can think of?

J.W.: Uh....

Jim: For the church being in existence?

J.W.: No, that's about the only and of course, for meeting for fellowshp to uh, cause people to grow (edification?) yeah, we need to (mhmh-hmm).

Jim: Uh...what about the membership over the last 17 years? Has there been any big turn, turnovers in the membership or has there been changes in the membership?

J.W.: Well, it has taken spells by growing. Usually like I say, usually any time you get a new pastor, we have larger crowds for awhile. And people who are already members of the church haven't been coming; they'll come back for awhile, you know. (mhm) Some of them stay, some of 'em drift away again, you know. So uh, the membership has grown and then dropped off at different times. But we have never had the amount of new members in that length of time, that period of time, that we've had in these past two years. In fact, I think the uh, it's better record is that this church has baptized more people in the past two years than any other church in the state. (mhm) (inaudible)

Jim: And why do you think that's so? Of course, we know God's doing it. (well, yeah, sure but) But...

J.W.: But, it's through the preaching of our pastor (his preaching is the thing?). I think so, yes, I think so, because he preaches evangelistic sermons.

Jim: Uh, has there been any incidents in the last 17 years uh, concerning membership that you can think of that stick in your mind, like a time, a period when membership went way up and then a time it dropped way down? Any of those, that you can think of that happened that you can remember, that stick in your mind.

J.W.: Well, it didn't drop swiftly but gradually. Now when Brother Six first came here, uh, the church oh, he baptized quite a few people. And we had an evangelist here name of....I can't think of his name now...he was an old evangelistmhm...Wade Clemens. (mhmhm) He came and out on a program here and uh, we had such crowds during that period that he was here that the television cable people put uh, television in the basement, in the fellowshp hall because the church wouldn't hold the people (mhm) and uh, there was uh, I think about 40 people baptized in to our

church during that time, I think he was just here a week. And uh, a lot of people were, went to other churches you know, who had been saved here, and went to uh, their membership to another church (mmm-hmm) so our membership boomed for awhile after that. But it gradually dropped off again.

Jim: What do you think uh....do you have any thoughts about why the membership dropped off? Or why it gradually started to climbing?

J.W.: No, but uh, like I say, I have talked to different pastors, different people who went to other churches, and they say that happens. And membership will get up, and then just gradually they'll drift away. And uh, I have visited a lot of our people who uh, are very enthusiastic for awhile. And uh, then they just drop away, they say well, I've got to get started back, I've got to get started back (mmm-hmm), but they don't give any reason why they don't come back, but they don't come back. (mmm-hmm) And I, like I say, I have inquired to different pastors that I have known, in other churches and they say that happens, it's nothing unique about it, it happens all the time.

Jim: Uh, as far as the membership of your church is concerned, uh, that uh, the membership is made up of mostly older people or younger people or a mixture of both or....?

J.W.: Well, ours is a mixture of both. We have uh, we have quite a few young people at our church, in fact the Sunday school class I'm in now is older men of course, but uh, we have a little thing called a flower fund, actually we put a quarter in a little box for ...called a flower fund. (mmm-hmm) That is kept separately from the church offerings and uh, if anybody, if any class members die or any of their immediate family, we buy flowers for them. And at the end of the year, we've done this for several years, that fund will build up to maybe a hundred dollars, if we haven't had any deaths, you know. (hmm) And we have taken all the widow women in the church to a restaurant for dinner and paid their way out of that fund. And there is more than 30 widow women in our church. And we have one widower. That's..that's uh, odd, I've told so many people about that. To be that many widow women, and only one widower (mmm-hmm).

Jim: Mmmm, that is kind of strange.

J.W.: Uh, it is and uh, of course, the most of 'em are elderly people and not all, there's some younger women who are widows you know, but that is something strange to think about that uh, (yeah)....

Jim: In the last 17 years uh, or so, since you've been going back to the church, any...anything happen in the membership, any humorous incidents or things that stick out in your mind about any of the members of the church that you'd like to share?

J.W.: No, I can't, just can't...

Jim: Well, maybe you'll think of some of those (I just can't think of anything that way). Uh, let's talk for a minute about the economics of the church. Uh, you mentioned to me that under Brother Armstrong's ministry, you've raised a quarter of a million dollars, 4223,000 I think you said. (yeah and uh,) in a year.

J.W.: Well, no, see, we had a little more than a hundred thousand of that (oh), we started the building fund back under Brother Six's administration. But it was just, hadn't been a drive put on about it (mmm-hmm) you see, and we had I think over a hundred thousand (yeah), and then under uh, Brother Armstrong's leadership, we started this 'Together We Build' program and uh, we got committed, they figured a half million dollars, to build a church (mmm-hmm), and uh, of course they had to commit more than four, almost four hundred thousand because they already a little over a hundred thousand. And uh, the drive they put on we had uh, committees appointed and they went to each member and talked to them about committing what they wanted to, what they could, you know. And that's where the remainder of that half a million was committed and it has been ...we've been collecting on it now for a year next month and uh, with what we've already had and what's been collected, we have 223,000 in the bank now.

Jim: Mmm-hmm, I see. Uh, have there been any time in the last 17 years or so that finances have really gotten down low? And have there been a times when the finances are way up there and doing good?

J.W.: Yes, yes. I noted it going that way. Not, not drastically but I have known a few times that uh, the finances under Brother Six's leadership while he was here, it got down 'til they had a little trouble with the finances, had to leave some things off that ordinarily would be taken care of, you know.

Jim: So under Brother Six the finances got a little bit low?

J.W.: A time or two, yes. But...

Jim: What would...what would you say would be the cause of that?

J.W.: Well, when people start...quit coming to church, your attendance goes down (mmm-hmm), especially during the summer time when so many people go on vacation and uh, Brother Six never preached on giving very much. He didn't like to preach about money. Brother Armstrong is just the opposite way. For the first several months he was here, he ...he put on a drive preaching about tithing. (mmm-hmm) And uh, it caused a lot of people to start tithing. (mmm) So uh, since he's been here, there's never been any financial uh, problems at all.

Jim: So, finances then uh, are usually not a problem or haven't been a problem at 1st Baptist as long there's a strong leader.

J.W.: No, no, they haven't. Outside of just two or three times like I said in the summer time maybe they would have to hold off

giving to this un, said it a while ago you know, program to the Southern Baptist (the co-op program?) yes, cooperative program. Maybe we'd have to hold up the payment for that for a month or something, you know, until people got back in church (right), but Brother Six didn't like to preach about ...about giving. It just wasn't his type.

Jim: Just like ...he just didn't like to do it...did he give any reason?

J.W.: Well, I felt like he was afraid of hurtin' people's feelings. He...he wouldn't say anything or do anything to hurt anybody's feelings (mmm-hmm), but uh, on the other hand, Brother Armstrong is very aggressive on preaching on giving. And uh, I think it's caused a lot of people to start giving more that wouldn't have give, you know, especially tithers.

Jim: Uh, just let me ask you to remember the methods of some of these men that we talk about, the pastors. Any of them do anything that was uh, uh, unique or different or so different that you thought about it at the time, that you thought was real different? The methods that they used, whether it was preaching or pastoring or....leadership, whatever. Any of them have any unique ideas or ways of doing things?

J.W.: I don't un, I don't recall anything that way, unique. Like I said about Brother Davis, you know, he a lot of times made statements that uh, I think he didn't think before he said 'em you know, that uh, maybe you wouldn't expect the pastor to say but uh, I don't think there's anything ...Brother Six in addition to being a un, good pastor, he ...he wanted to help people so much that I think he let a lot of things interfere with his church work. We have volunteer fireman over here (mmm-hmm), he joined the volunteer fire department where they're called out at all hours you know, and uh, then when they passed the law in WV that they had to be a paramedic in the ambulance, he went and took that training for paramedic. Well, Ceredo and Kenova cooperated a lot between them. If un, Ceredo got a call and they didn't have a paramedic, they'd call one from Kenova. And if Kenova got a call and they didn't have one, they'd call Ceredo. Most of the men were working, where Brother Six was usually at the office or where he was available and they kept him busy all the time with that you know. I think he let that interfere with his pastorate quite a bit (mmm-hmm), but like I say, it was his desire to help people that caused it. (phone ringing in background)

(tape shuts off and then on)

Jim:okay, un, we've been talking about uh, leadership and how different leaders do different things and you were telling me Brother Six had an interest in helping people and so forth. Let me just un, spend a couple more minutes on the...how you feel about the importance of a strong pastor in a church. Uh, now, you've been actively involved in this church for 17 years, since you retired and before that you had association with the church

off and on. uh, do you think 1st Baptist Church in Ceredo, would you, if you lost your pastor, and you didn't get another pastor for a long period of time, do you think the church would cease to exist? (oh, no) Why not?

J.W.: Because we have the leadership among the deacons and leaders of the church that they'd immediately start getting somebody to uh, act as interim pastor. That's what we've always done. We uh, a lot of churches and this church had an understanding before the time that I came here, they would try if one pastor or one preacher to come one Sunday or whatever. Well, we found out that that wasn't a good idea, when Brother Harrod left, I was chairman of the deacons and we immediately talked together that we needed somebody pretty regular and this old gentleman was retired that lived over at Ashland but an awful kind old man. And we contacted him and he kept the church together and uh, kept ...we had as many people if not more going to church when we got another pastor. We didn't let the church run down. (mm-hmm) And uh, we did the same thing uh, after Bob Davis left, we had a young man who was going to Marshall University and uh, we contacted him and he filled in and he could still go to Marshall and still take care of the church (mmm-hmm), until we got Brother...Brother Six. So uh, I don't think that our men in the church or our leaders in the church, men or women, would stand by and watch the (inaudible)...because we'd immediately try to get somebody that was capable of holding them together, you know. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: Do you feel that the 1st Baptist Church of Ceredo in the last 17 years or so has been an asset to the community, the church?

J.W.: Oh, yes, yes.

Jim: In what ways? Can you give me some ideas?

J.W.: Well, if there's no other way of winning souls so many of the people in the church has accepted Christ during that time, and uh, many of them are strong church members because of that and uh, I think any, any community appreciates a church where the gospel's preached and it has always been out there. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: You're...are you saying that someone who comes to your church and is converted and then goes back to the community, is a more, is a better citizen?

J.W.: That's right, yes. And they're able to live the kind of lives to show other people in the community that that they are Christians.

Jim: So you said 1st Baptist Church then, it's mission is to evangelize (that's right), to win people. (that's right) And ultimately, that's gonna affect the community that the church is in. (absolutely, yes) That the people will be better people for it. (yes) That's what you're saying.

J.W.: If uh, someone comes out there and hears the word preached, accepts Christ then baptized and then goes back out and tell their neighbors about it, why, it's...creates an interest in them wanting to come you know, or come to some other church, if not that one. (mmm-hmm) And that's one thing that Brother Armstrong has always even during revivals or whatever we have, he has never stressed that you must join this church but accept Christ and then he loves to talk with them, about the church, but if they want to go to some other church that's wonderful. In fact, one man during the revival we had uh, where several people were saved, uh, he lives in Kenova and he's attended the 1st Baptist Church in Kenova for a number of years but was never accepted Christ. Well, he accepted Christ out here and he wanted Brother Armstrong to baptize him but he wanted to go to the Kenova church, so he baptized him and accepted him as a member of our church and then all he had to do was have his church down there to ask for his letter up here and he was a member of the 1st Baptist church of Kenova. (mmm) But he liked Brother Armstrong and wanted him to baptize him. (mmh) And uh, he's not uhk he's not strong on trying to influence people what church to go to but the main iday is to get them saved and then let 'em go to whatever church they want to. (right, uh...) Of course we do ...we do accept them gladly, if they want to come to our church. (sure, sure)

Jim: Are there any people in particular that you can think of that's been converted in the last 17 well, let's say since Brother Armstrong's been here, or before and then they've gone back into their community, back into the Ceredo area and you've heard of some things they've done, had some positive influence on the community?

J.W.: Well, maybe only through visitation. Uh, we've had a visitation program. In fact, every Wednesday night, they have prayer meeting and then they go out in two's and visit for an hour and come back and report back to the church. And uh, several of our members, especially the ones who have only been members maybe for a year or two years are good visitors on those teams, to go out and visit. And they have a prospect list and they have uh, made a survey you know, of the community and they know people who do not go to church anywhere and those are the ones they try to visit. (mmm-hmm) And uh, some...a lot of our men have become stronger christians through going out and visiting that way and telling other people (mmm-hmm).

Jim: Okay. Uh, let me ask you one final thing. Uh, if you had to define the role of the pastor and you've already told me I think that you felt that to be a good leader, you had to be able to persuade people, just be able to get people following, follows his leadership, I believe that's what you said. Uh, what do you see the role of the pastor as? What do you see his job as?

J.W.: Well, now, of course his first priority is uh, preaching the word, that's his first, but he must also be a leader in that he can guide people who he has won, to become stronger christians. And to cause his congregation to become stronger through the

different programs that he puts, that he puts into effect on ...in the church. (mmm-hmm) You know, you see some people are just natural leaders. Others it's a chore for them. (mmm-hmmm) But it seems that Brother Armstrong is one of those that's a natural leader. He knows what words to say to convince people and uh, it's hard to say no to him (mmm-hmm). so, he's just a dynamic leader. (mmm-hmm)

Jim: You're a deacon in the church (yes), how do you see the role of deacon? What do you see a deacon as being?

J.W.: well, a deacon's job is uh, as a church helper, a pastor helper. To assist the pastor in... 'cause he can't ...he can't do everything. He can't ...our church has now 17 deacons and uh, they divided the church role up, which is quite a chore and gave each one of us a list of members that we are responsible for, we're supposed to visit 'em uh, at least every three months, visit in the homes of those who are family members you know. And uh, just like the pastor was out here the day before yesterday and he told me he was asking all the deacons to contact their family members, we're having a revival starting Sunday, and ask them to do three things. To first pray for the revival, and then try to attend all the meetings they could of the revival, and to try to bring at least two people who are unsaved to the revival. (mmh) Well, he can't do all that. But with these deacons, each one of us has the list of members and the telephone numbers on the list and all, uh, that's the one job that we do, you see. (so...) So, that's the role of a deacon, is to assist the pastor in the and it's impossible for him to keep up with all the members so, we've....

END OF TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW