

Voices from the Past

“Grace Christian School”

By Pastor Jerry and Gail James

May 22, 1982

Tape #27

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Joel Miyasaki

August 2003

Brigham Young University- Idaho

Harold Forbush: The Grace Christian School of Rexburg Idaho. It's my opportunity this afternoon, Saturday, about 2:30 PM on the 22nd of May, 1982, to be at the Grace Christian School as operated by and supervised, presided over by Pastor Jerry James and his assistant- the one who provokes him, maybe to good works is his wife Gail James. Now, what I'd like to find out is when the school here in Rexburg was established and was there a planning period for that, Pastor, before it was established. Tell us a little background. How it came to be.

Jerry James: Well actually, I guess, how well we really became interested in Christian education- we've always had an interest in that area. But- and we've determined that we wanted our children to be in a Christian education or have Christian education as they grew up in a Christian school. So we had pretty much decided that while our children were before school age. About August of 1977, a pastor from Idaho Falls called us one day.

HF: Had you come to Rexburg by that time?

JJ: Yes, we were in Rexburg. We moved to Rexburg in 1975, September of 1975.

HF: Oh, okay. Prior to the flood?

JJ: Right. Anyway a pastor that had a Christian school in Idaho Falls, his name is Pastor John Lovegrove.

HF: L-O-V-E-G-R-O-V-E?

JJ: Yes sir. Called and asked if Gail my wife would be interested in teaching in kindergarten program at Gethsemane Christian School.

HF: How do you spell that?

JJ: G-E-T-H-S-E-M-A-N-E.

HF: Just like the Gethsemane in Jerusalem?

JJ: Uh huh.

HF: Okay.

JJ: Gethsemane Christian School, that's a ministry of the Gethsemane Baptist church there. Anyway we had previously enrolled, or actually registered, our oldest boy who would be in first grade at Gethsemane Christian School that summer not knowing how we were going to work it out because we really felt strongly about putting our children in Christian schools. So when he asked this question, well, it just, of course my wife has been a nurse and she'd worked for a doctor in a doctor's office here in town and this- she'd never thought about teaching school. But he indicated if she'd be willing to just

follow, they had the curriculum to follow if she would be willing to do as they directed in the school. And she thought it would work out real fine. So anyway, she did teach that year and by...

HF: She traveled back and forth?

JJ: She traveled back and forth. I was here in town, I wasn't involved in the school but she went back and forth ever day, teaching half a day there in the four-year-old kindergarten the first year. Well, this supplied for our, of course, our oldest boy to go to school- to a Christian school and so she was getting paid for it too. Plus they did at that particular school, they allowed for the teachers to have free tuition for their children which was a real help. So she taught her the school of '77-'78 and she taught the next year '78- '79. And this, by that time, our other children was old enough to go to kindergarten and so they were enrolled in Kindergarten that year. One...

Gail James: One was in first grade.

JJ: That's right. Okay, anyway, that's how we kind of got a little bit of introduction into a Christian School. That's how my wife got started teaching at least. So that fall, in fact that school year my wife was teaching down there the second school year, we said, "Well, good night, we need a Christian School in Rexburg. Why can't we have one here? Why do we need to go down to down to Idaho Falls? We should have that ministry or have that opportunity for children in this town." And so we prayed and pursued, and we decided that we would at least start a kindergarten that school year. That would be 197- the kindergarten, we didn't know what we were going to- our kids, two of our children by that time were, you know, primary age on into primary age.

HF: Now at that point in time, did you have a building?

JJ: We had a mobile home that we used for our children and we're going to use that for kindergarten. We didn't have any-right now were in a log building that we built here, our learning center. We didn't have that then- we didn't build that until to summers ago.

HF: What the summer of 1980?

JJ: Right.

HF: The summer of '80 you built this building, this edifice?

JJ: Yes sir.

HF: And it's- what is the address here?

JJ: 262 N. 2nd West, Rexburg.

HF: Uh huh, and it's a log building and would you tell me something about the dimensions? What facility- what is the nature of the facility here?

JJ: We have – the dimensions would be approximately twenty-six by fifty. That includes bathroom facilities here and also we got a wood stove for our heat in the wintertime. We got – it's an open beam type ceiling. We built the tresses; they're like a scissor tress so it's quite an open building. It's got – we have...

GJ: A small platform up front.

JJ: A small platform up front that we use for also for – to put the pulpit on and we use it for Sunday services and normally during school too. Programs, we of course, we arrange the kids. It's nicely finished; we've carpeted it, and it's adequate for our needs at this point.

GJ: We still use the kindergarten building or the kindergarten trailer up front – still has it.

HF: It's adjacent to the property?

GJ: It's right on the property, just adjacent to this building.

JJ: Just west of the log building, toward the street.

HF: I see.

GJ: So we still have kindergarten there, and then we have the older grades over here.

HF: They taught the first grade on up through what, the equivalent of the eight grade?

JJ: We can. Actually, we have the curriculum to go up through high school. We have one high school student. One student would be in ninth grade.

GJ: Actually, we were planning the first year when started kindergarten- then we were going to put the children down at Gethsemane, the older two. Again we ran into a problem: how to get them back and forth and so forth. And then we were introduced and came across the A. C. E curriculum, which is Accelerated Christian Education Curriculum, and it allows you to have all grades in one room. And it's an individualized program of learning where the children read study their own material and then five subjects generally takes a year's work. And if they can go ahead and do more than a year that's fine. We encourage them to do as much as they can or if it's a student that's behind- we are able to go back and give them the work that they need to have. And they each have their own little office around the edge of the room. So the school is set up a little different than you normal, traditional classroom.

HF: Now in this room here, what's the size of this room where you have your teaching, learning experience?

JJ: It would run something like the outside dimensions, well, it would run something like twenty-five by thirty-eight which would be our. Then the offices go- are around the perimeter of the room which are, their offices are like a learning carrel, like a study carrel designed like an English maybe or a language lab at a public school. But they're designed so the student can have privacy and work in his area and not try to discourage his- disturbing other students while he's working.

HF: You mean you have kind of a portable wall?

JJ: Uh huh, yes, we would, we have dividers that we slip between each student.

HF: Dividers, I see. And that would constitute kind of a personal carrel or something like that?

JJ: Uh huh.

HF: I see.

JJ: We call them offices.

HF: Officers?

JJ: That's their office.

HF: Now, in this room then, as a practical matter this year, you've been teaching what, youngsters that are in the equivalent of the first grade up through ninth grade?

JJ: Uh, yes sir.

HF: And how many students have you had?

JJ: Right now we have twenty-one in this, in the learning center- Twenty-one students in here.

HF: In the learning center?

JJ: Right.

HF: And they span what grades.

JJ: That'd be from first grade up through the ninth.

HF: That ninth?

JJ: Most of them, most of those children, are under third grade because we've had three years of kindergarten and some of your kindergarten students come up. About fifteen out of twenty-one children are first through third grade, children that have come up from our kindergarten department. Of course we have some others too, in addition.

JJ: Right now we have around sixteen students that would be in the kindergarten area where my wife teaches in the other building in front, the building in front that we use for the four and five year old kindergarten. So in total we've got around, close to around forty students where we've gone over and we've had some that drop out this year.

HF: Now, how many of the faculty?

JJ: This year we've had my wife and I, I've kind of, I'm principal and yet I've been here part time- I haven't been here all the time during the week. And this has been a year where we've just- finances were tight and I worked outside some. And we had a couple that worked in the learning center as his aid or monitor, assistant supervisor. And so he worked in here in this area. My wife has taken care of the kindergarten. And I've filled in for like sickness or when one day- actually, one day a week I'm here in the learning center. I've been actually working here.

HF: Now who is this couple here?

JJ: Their names are Jim and Nita Bratten.

HF: Bratten?

JJ: Yes sir. And they've worked this year, they will not be with us next year, but they came and worked for us- this is their first year of teaching actually.

HF: Has that worked out quite nicely?

JJ: Yes sir. And they've worked this year, they will not be with us next year, but they came and worked for us- this is their first year of teaching actually.

HF: Has that worked out quite nicely?

JJ: It's worked out, it's worked out well. They've really done a fine job, and the students really have good rapport with them. And they weren't sure when they first came that this is where they wanted to be as far in the area teaching. They just- Jim just finished college, he really kind of feels that he'd like to be in history. So they'll...

HF: Well now, what really is your philosophy and either one of you can answer that, behind the Grace Christian School? Why the Christian School as opposed, say to a public school? What advantages does a youngster have?

JJ: Gale would you like to answer that?

GJ: That's a loaded one. Well, the reason why we wanted our own children in a Christian school is basically why we have one and that is we believe that fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. And that a child cannot properly be educated unless the Bible and understanding of God is at the basic of his education. You can't teach American History without understanding Christian principles and things that were laid down even in our original Constitution. You can't understand creation unless you understand God's account in the Bible about creation and his hand in it and how he created the universe and how he has a plan for the inverse. And that God is a God of order; he's not a God of chaos. And we don't believe that education can just have the Bible added to it. We believe that the Bible is the basis of education...

HF: So maybe in one hand, Gail, you have the Holy Bible and in the other hand the mundane text, say, of history or mathematics? Is this what you've kind of saying? That you ducktail each of them together.

GJ: Well, in our – right. And we used a curriculum, particularly here in the learning center for grades one through twelve that is especially written for Christian schools. And even like when the children are back studying Egyptian history it ties it into the time say, when Abraham around and it ties it into Bible history. We do not used the regularly, like public school text books, we use material that has been written by Christian teachers and as they have written it, they have incorporated Biblical truths all through it.

HF: In some way you've got to comply with the mandate of the state which says each child between seven years of age and sixteen years of age must be in a public school setting in Idaho and they have text books and so on. You've got to comply there some way; don't you have to check with the local schools to be approved of this particular fashion, method of teaching?

JJ: No sir.

HF: Don't you?

JJ: No, the requirement that would maybe – actually we have no ties at all to the state as far as the State Department of Education or we would comply as far as teaching days. We are not at odds with state, but we've just. We believe that we have a commission as far as a Biblical commission from God to teach our children biblical principles.

HF: Well, all the fact that your youngsters, the state recognizes that the students you have here are in school?

JJ: Oh yes, right. There's no problem there.

GJ: Right.

HF: And you must have to register somehow those youngsters with the public, somehow don't you?

GJ: Well actually, the way the law is designed is that parents are required to have their children in public school or...

HF: The equivalent.

GJ: Yes, or in equivalent educational situations.

HF: Right.

GJ: So there is leeway there. Now we transfer our records back and forth to any of the schools around. We ask for transcripts and the schools here in town ask and send for transcripts from us. And we believe that we actually surpass the public school standards like our kindergarten students are reading on about a first grade level and some of them are reading higher than that. And we obviously are doing a good job academically or people wouldn't be paying seventy dollars a month to have their children in here to be educated. And our parents feel like we're doing a better job than they were getting in public. Most of our parents here are not our own faith and so they're not here particularly for the spiritual emphasis, but they are here for the educational emphasis and they are pleased with the program. And I believe we have a good rapport with the town and the people who have had their children here just are the best advertisement we have as far as fact we started grades one through twelve just for our own two children that's all we were planning on taking. And then by the time school started, we had nine more wanting to come and by that first mid semester we had seventeen.

HF: Now this was in '80, wasn't it?

GJ: In '79, '80- 79 actually, the year of '79- 80. And we have never really advertised our grades one through twelve, we have advertised kindergarten, but the children that are here in grades one through twelve have come just simply because they have heard that it was a good program.

HF: You mentioned seventy dollars per month. Now would that be for each student regardless of the age of the grade?

GJ: Well, we have- the kindergarten is fifty dollars a month. It's a half a day program and then for the other, for the children on what we call the A. C. E program, that's the Accelerated Christian Education.

HF: Accelerated Christian Education, okay.

FJ: And they- then each student here. Yes, each first student pays seventy dollars a month and then we give break in the family for each child after that. We do have a breakdown as far as...

JJ: In other words, we have a discount.

HF: If you have additional students from that family why then...?

GJ: Right, we have family discounts.

HF: Do you have some instances where two or three members of the same family unit are here?

GJ: Oh yes, we do, we have several.

HF: Well, that's great. Now, of course I'm assuming that they pretty much come from within the confines of the city.

JJ: We have some from the outlying Lyman area.

HF: Oh, I see.

JJ: And we've got some from- the first year we had some students from Saint Anthony. But then the following year they started their own school up there which helped them.

HF: When does school commence?

JJ: Their school up there?

HF: No, here, the daily commencement, your time.

JJ: Nine o'clock

HF: Nine o'clock?

JJ: Nine A.M each day.

HF: So that's a little different from the public school?

JJ: And we run until 3:30.

HF: So that takes care of –and a half an hour for lunch.

JJ: Half an hour lunch and we have breaks of course in the morning and the afternoon.

HF: Now do you open your school with prayer?

JJ: Yes sir, we do. We have the pledge of allegiance to an American Flag, the pledge of allegiance to the Christian flag, the pledge to the Bible, and then we have prayer and we

sing a patriotic hymn: “My Country ‘tis of Thee” or “America the Beautiful.” And usually each morning we go and in opening time we learn a Bible passage, scripture passage, for that month. Maybe eight versus that we’ll learn that month, and then we have a hymn that we learn.

HF: That’s very interesting. Of course all of those proceedings were barred by the Supreme Court in 1962 weren’t they?

GJ: Yes.

HF: And a suit with... I can’t remember her name.

JJ: Mary O’Hare probably.

HF: Right. And since 1962, and of course the government, the president has now specifically advocated that he would certainly favor an amendment to the Constitution.

GJ: It’s kind of interesting that suit.

HF: An amendment to the Constitution and it’s very likely that this will be started to get that done.

JJ: Uh huh.

HF: You were going to say something Gale.

GJ: I was going to say that it was kind of interesting that since that time, since 1962 and since that really went into effect and also since they went – since legislation was moved that anything referring to God be taken out of the textbooks that the academic achievement scores have continued to come down hill in the testing of the public school children. And it very definitely made a difference in their academics and their standards. They dropped also the dress code. We have a definite dress code here: the boys have to have their hair tapered, short and tapered off the ears and collar and eyebrows and we wear uniforms. Our uniforms are red, white, and blue- patriotic uniforms and the boys wear shirts with ties, the ties have patriotic design of the American flag on it and the girls have a little tie also that matches, out the same material. And we believe that the uniform gives a discipline. It just makes sense that if children come to school in a sweatshirt and jeans attire, then it’s sweatshirt and jean academics that’s going to get done. It just seems to go together. So well...

HF: Do they don this uniform once they get here or do they...?

JJ: They wear it to school.

HF: They wear it to school?

GJ: They wear it to school and home from school, both, right.

HF: And the parents have to clean this up and take care of it.

GJ: Maintain it, buy it and maintain it.

HF: But it's yours- is it their wearing apparel or is it yours?

JJ: It's theirs.

HF: It's theirs?

GJ: They buy it.

HF: Okay. Out of this fund? Their ninety, or sixty dollars, seventy dollars?

JJ: No, it's actually...

HF: It's an extra.

JJ: It'd just be like school clothes. They buy for their children to go to school, their clothing.

HF: Oh, I see. Is this wearing apparel designed by you people or by your church or by the Grace Christian Program?

JJ: Actually, it's recommended by Accelerated Christian Education. They don't require it, but it's recommended and we think it's really a great idea. And it's been a real boost to the morale of our students I believe.

HF: Now you had mentioned preciously that there are five basic areas in which you give academic training, what are those Gail?

GJ: We have Social Studies, Science, English, Math, and Spelling are the basic areas. And the, of course, later on in high school, we have electives and we branch out a little bit, but through eighth grade those are our five basic subjects.

HF: Where do you get text materials?

GJ: Well, they're published by Accelerated Christian Education in Garland, Texas or Lewisville, they moved there: Lewisville, Texas.

JJ: That's right outside of Dallas.

HF: Is this a branch of the Baptist, one of the Baptist sects or groups.

GJ: No, it's actually non-denominational in nature. It's Bible based and it certainly fits with Baptist teachings and thinking, but there are other than just Baptist schools that used it – it's not per say Baptist.

HF: Oh, I see. In other words, the Presbyterian maybe or the Methodists or other sects that sort of are grouped kind of together would certainly find no reason to find fault, or they would be happy to accept the program. And they do accept the program?

JJ: Yes sir. There's other groups certainly outside of the Baptists that use the materials.

HF: Is it a world-wide thing?

JJ: Yes sir, it is. They have schools- there probably, I think right now- there's over four thousand schools like ours across, mainly the United States. But there are also international, there's Australia, Africa, the Philippines, Canada Europe, those areas.

HF: You mention the Gethsemane School in Idaho Falls. Quite recently we had a young man who is on juvenile probation, and we have gotten him into that school I think in Idaho Falls.

JJ: Uh huh.

HF: And he's living at home, and his mother takes him to that school. I think he's about a thirteen or fourteen year old boy. And I think he's getting along very nicely.

GJ: Good.

HF: So we're happy there. Now, would Pocatello have one?

JJ: Yes, I think they do have a school using ACE curriculum. Blackfoot I believe has one; Idaho Falls- there's another school in Idaho Falls that does use- other than Gethsemane that uses the curriculum too. So there's several here in the Upper Snake River Valley.

HF: Now you had commented that for while that there were individuals from Saint Anthony coming over here. Is that...?

JJ: Not since they've started their school over there, they've pretty well- it's been, it was a hardship for them to come as far as- the winter driving and so forth. It's been – it's worked out good for them over there to have their own school.

HF: And is it also this ACE program?

JJ: Yes.

HF: Which church sponsors over there?

JJ: The Upper Valley Baptist chapel with Pastor George Eichler.

HF: Oh, do you know anything about the numbers?

JJ: I think he- there are around fifty students year.

HF: That compares to your, did you say forty-one.

JJ: We've had forty-one, forty-two this year. You know it's kind of fluctuated a little bit.

HF: I see.

JJ: But they have some; they have older students than we do. I know they- we've not had as many like high school age students, and I think they've had more in that age group. Which, I know there's some students from Ashton that come down to their school too. Which would kind of, I think Ashton's going to start a Christian school this next year.

HF: Is there one over at Driggs?

JJ: No sir, I don't believe there is.

HF: Or out of Dubois, out that way, Roberts?

JJ: They've started a little school out by Montevue that has- it's just a small, maybe involving just two or three families that uses this curriculum.

HF: How about in Rigby?

JJ: No.

HF: Well that, that's interesting. Now Pastor, does the contributions that they, you know, monthly tuition that is paid, does that fully sustain the program here at Grace Christian School?

JJ: It pretty well pays its own way, yes sir. It pretty well pays the way of the school.

GJ: Although the church had already- it's furnishing the land it's sitting on, and it already bought the kindergarten trailer, but as far...

JJ: As some of the buildings, right.

HF: And maybe some of the heat bill and things like this?

JJ: They helped in utilities.

GJ: And also we don't pull salary from the school either because we do have support otherwise through the church. So actually, if it would actually pay its own full way it would take more than seventy.

HF: Uh huh, now those, the couple you had teaching here in the summer, this school year, they are supposedly paid through the school, full salary?

JJ: Yes sir.

HF: Is that somewhat comparable to public school salary?

JJ: I don't know what public school salary is; I imagine it would be, probably for both them, it wasn't as much- I would think.

HF: Uh huh.

GJ: They teach here, and I think most teachers at Christian schools teach with idea in mind that it's a real ministry. They're not they're to, as far as- pay is a secondary thing.

JJ: It's not really a career as such as far as a – in other words it's not just a job, it's more of a ministry to them. They feel like they make some sacrifices.

HF: And it's interesting, we walk about beginnings. When Ricks College was commenced up here on the hill in 1888, they had a Mr. Spori who had been, he was a German. And they invited him to come here because had some formal training, and in the summer months he would work on the railroad and do a lot of things to keep the school going. And there's a lot of testimony to the effect that parents bringing their youngsters down here. Of course, it was a public school, it was not on the college level or anything like this, it was a really an elementary school with secondary. And later it became, you know, higher education but in the beginning it was a hard situation and parents would send potatoes down and garden vegetables, canned fruits and everything to help sustain the fifteen or twenty or thirty kids, you know, who were going to school here. And they would only go, or course in those days, why in the fall and the spring the boys were expected to be out on the farm. And so they could only go in the wintertime you know. Well that's quite a long hundred year history, but pretty small beginnings. But it's kind of interesting. Now, the Baptist Church I think you mentioned was established here in '75?

JJ: Uh, yes sir, we started in a home actually in the fall of 1975 meeting as a Bible study.

HF: Did you have Sunday service as well and maybe some other...?

JJ: We started out mainly, we just sort of went – which would be a Bible study and then grew till the spring of '76 before the flood happened. We had a met in the Library there were the firehouse is now. In the ladies, well, kind of the club room that the library had, the Webster room now. We met there from actually, maybe, March until June, somewhere in March, about three months during that time. And then we had, I now

morning services then, morning services along with the Sunday school time. So we had at least some Sunday services along with, you know, along with Bible teaching time. And then when the flood took place, well, we began, or course, well, the library was- they had to tear it down. But we met in homes until we were able to purchase the mobile home that we have in front, and the we- now that took place around August of '76 and then we. It was a flood damaged mobile home; we refurbished it; we worked on it which involved mainly just re-insulating. It wasn't really structurally damaged as far as the outside, but we started meeting in it around August of 1976. And we used it until we built the log building in 1980 for our meeting place as a church.

HF: Who built the building- this edifice for you?

JJ: Our people here at the church did. We...

HF: Donated labor pretty much?

JJ: Uh huh. We bought the logs from a little saw mill up by Tetonia, a fellow that had a saw mill that sawed the logs.

HF: Hill?

JJ: He's actually from Wyoming before he came here.

HF: Oh, I see

JJ: But we bought them from him, and he showed us how to make the tress for it and gave us the pattern and made the pattern for us. And he supplied most of the wood. We did have the foundation and sub-floor that far, but it was donated labor basically.

HF: Well now, Pastor, what about the future for the Grace Christian School here. Do you see visions, a need maybe, to expand in the next few years or- what are your feelings?

JJ: We-at the present time we are, we have adequate building space for the students that we have. I could foresee possibly some expansion, perhaps the ministry, in the next few years it's very possible. Again, we just have to take it when it comes or plan to prepare for that when it comes. We're not seeing great- lots of people perhaps. Our school is small, our church also, we probably have eight or nine families that are involved in our church.

HF: Now, in the summer time when the Arizona sun-city people, does this, is it swollen somewhat?

JJ: Yes, we see as many as ten couples that would visit us during the summer.

HF: Quite regularly?

JJ: Fairly regularly.

HF: I was going to comment that I was visiting a rotary a few days ago with Reverend McClure, Coke McClure. And he commented that the program with the sun-city people here that come up the last few years, every summer maybe seven or eight or nine hundred here at given periods, has greatly affected his attendance. And so I guess that's why I asked the question what it's done to you. If you find your walls bursting?

JJ: Well we haven't had that problem, but we do see more folks, more of the sun-city people come which has been, it's an encouragement.

HF: I think he commented that he had to put on another session or two, you know, service on Sundays or something. It's really tremendous. I know we see a few sun-city people in our Sunday school. And with the LDS, it adds a little bit but not a great deal. Well now, I'd like to learn a little about your background. Where did you take your formal education?

JJ: I attended college Western Baptist Bible College in El Cerrito, California, which is east bay side across from San Francisco. Graduated from there in 1968.

HF: Were you born and raised there?

JJ: No sir. I grew up in Porterville, California, which is down in the Silicon Valley in the present Bakersfield area. And so that's about two hundred and fifty miles away from where I went to College. Anyway, I attended school there and graduated really not planning on the ministry as such, but God had plans that I didn't have plans for and directed us. My wife and I married in 1969.

HF: Did you meet at school?

JJ: Yes sir. We meet at the Bible College while attending school.

HF: Well, that's interesting.

JJ: And we, after a period of time, after I finished school, we decided that- I pretty well felt God wanted me to be in the ministry and prayer and seeing his will and leading. And so, we eventually moved to Montana in 1971 in the summer of 1971. And I pastured a little church; we pastured a little church in Glen Creek Valley in the town of Phillipsburg.

HF: Where's that?

JJ: It's a – if you draw a line between Missoula and Butte you might intersect Phillipsburg but it's not big.

HF: Oh, the Western part of Montana?

JJ: It'd be in the western part of Montana close to Anaconda, close to Anaconda, Montana. Just a town of about a thousand people- old silver mining town around the turn of the century. Logging had pretty much and agriculture and farming are probably what's kept the town alive. The more steady people would be those in farms, but anyway...

HF: How long were you there?

JJ: Approximately two years, and then from there we moved to Whitefish, Montana which would be up near Glacier Park to be pastor of the church in Whitefish for about a year and a half. And then, we, after I resigned from pastor there, we moved down to this area. I actually, I was working with a fellow who was- helped a fellow. I didn't really know what the next step was for me, but I worked with a fellow he was building a free style dairy barn for Dairy land dairy over in Saint Anthony so. And he lived in Whitefish and he had a job to build this barn so we came down to this area and it just seemed like God wanted us to be here so...

HF: And you kind of liked it here? You were attracted here for some reason?

JJ: Well, to tell you the truth. I enjoyed Montana more, but I thought there was a need here so God impressed me with that, the Lord impressed me that. So we ended up moving here in the winter – actually December of 1974. We lived in Ashton for about nine months and then September of '75 we moved to Rexburg and began to work in the Baptist church.

HF: Now, since you're independent in your operation and you're not subject to being assigned and so forth in a what do you all it a conference or a convention, kind of ecclesiastical program, what – you have some affiliation with the Baptist movement though don't you.

JJ: We personally are working with; we are affiliated with Northwest Baptist Mission, a small mission agency or group that works primarily in the intermountain area. Now as far as having, there's really, it's not a question of them, the mission group of being authority over our particular group, but mainly an attachment because of their like faith and like opinion. But Doctor Nola Higgins is the director of Northwest Baptist Missions.

HF: And where's that located?

JJ: It is right now in Grand Junction, Colorado. This is where the headquarters is located, but we are- it's a very loose connection. I would describe as...

HF: Do you get your proselyting pamphlets and things, your literature from a given source?

JJ: Not- they're not all the same source. We probably, a lot of our literature we get from various places. We are- like our Sunday school material, we order from Regular Baptist Press in Shamburg, Illinois near Chicago.

HF: Uh huh.

JJ: Our- which, these are study books or study guides, tracts, things of that nature we get from different places all over the United States.

HF: Now, Pastor James do you have a systematic program whether it's active or sort of in-active in proselyting in the area?

JJ: We would go, now let's see. There's been time we've gone door to door like missionaries from the Mormon Church would do. Door to door type of canvassing or visiting people, inviting them to – maybe give them some literature. We've done that type of work. And probably some of the most and best contacts we've had is just people we've met. Some have been through the school, people that have their children in school. And I would describe those as probably some of the better contacts we've had because people have come to see what we stand for, what we believe. And people we've associated with through business dealings, things like that.

HF: Uh huh, I see. Well now, for example, the sun- city people coming in here. How would they know about your location here and our church services? Do you have something in the paper or on the radio or how does that get noised about to them?

JJ: Well, we do have a... there's a church page in the *Standard Journal* each Thursday and we're listed there. We do have an add in the Yellow Pages. And as far as our church-persons looking out for churches that would be probably it, the extent of it.

HF: Oh, I see. I hope you don't mind me enquiring about this. Well, it's trying to determine you know the church affiliations here in the community of course it's an accepted topic of conversion that the LDS Church or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints commonly known as Mormons predominated this area. And yet we should recognize that there are Catholic services that are done here in Rexburg, rather on regular basis I think and the history would show this and the Catholic Church has been here for a long time you know there's Seventh Day Adventist I think there's a church.

GJ: They're Jehovah's Witnesses.

HF: Jehovah's Witnesses, excuse me, that's probably what it is: Jehovah Witness. And let' see is there still another one?

GJ: The Presbyterians.

HF: The Presbyterian Community Church, I guess that would be it. Now during the flood I think there were one or two other groups that were rendering a real fine service here in the community. You mean more or less cleaning up and so on. I don't remember.

GJ: The Mennonites were here.

HF: The Mennonites that's one of the – quite an active group I think?

GJ: Yes. They had about forty people come on a disaster team. They were here some time after everybody else quit. They were still going at it.

HF: Uh huh.

GJ: They were here months; a year about a year wasn't there, Pastor, over in Teton?

JJ: Yes sir. John Harvey, I believe he started a Teton Bible Chapel.

GJ: His wife worked in the disaster office.

JJ: Worked with the Teton Inner Faith or something like that.

GJ: Right.

HF: John Harvey you say?

JJ: Yes sir.

HF: It seems to me like there was another name which just doesn't come to mind at this time that was from over there too.

JJ: Orville Twitchell or let's see.

HF: Now does Orville- he's...

JJ: I don't know if he's still in the area or not.

HF: There's an Orville Twitchell that comes to mind associated with the rabbit rising of 19...

JJ: Maybe it was Gene Twitchell I guess his name, Gene Twitchell that's where I get the rabbit rising.

HF: Well now, do you feel quite satisfied with your election to settle here in Rexburg or is there an area maybe of disappointment or how do you feel? If that's too personal, you don't need to answer.

JJ: We view the community as a very good- I mean we enjoy living here. We enjoy the people, but I guess most important would be we view the community as a real challenge to be able to have the opportunity to present the Bible truth. And so we feel it's not a competition with the LDS Church which would be the majority here. We've grown to love many of the people that are in the community over six years going on seven years

that we've been here. And we feel like this home to us. You know we don't feel any- there's really not any pain or disappointments because we haven't seen great flourishing work as a result of our ministry.

GJ: When we were talking about moving from Montana to here. We enjoyed Montana, but I was raised in Boise and Boise in my home town and so coming to Idaho was like coming home to me. And so I didn't mind it at all, and my family then is not too far away either, we can go see them.

HF: Now they, your family, live in the Boise area?

GJ: Yes, I have two sisters and a brother over that way.

HF: Oh yah, are your parents still living?

GJ: No, my parents aren't living. Neither one of our parents is living; they're all gone on.

HF: Well that's fine. I appreciate the opportunity of having this put down today. I think it gives us a little different slant of things. Now we're planning this Rexburg Pageant for the centennial year, and in being involved with that I've purposely tried to call different ones to be involved and get input of what they think that would be helpful. And you people are invited. We're having another meeting on the 5th of June, that infamous day you know in June. And we're going to meet there in the board room of our historical society in the restored tabernacle, and it will take about an hour, but you're surely invited to come and at least get an idea what is taking place with reference to writing and what's being written on the history of the area with representation in this pageant. And then I've invited the Pastor give us the invocation on the 4th of July in a sunrise service on Sunday the fourth. And so we're interested in trying to encourage and promote and working together for the betterment of our community. Than you very much.