

I

August 11, 1998: Afternoon

Wallace. Take the big chair and sit down, Soren. If you don't mind, I'll turn on the cold air. Make yourself at home.

Soren. Which books on tapes have you been listening to lately?

Wallace. I've got one in there now – Philip Yancey. Do you know him? He's a Wheaton man. No, use the other hand (*referring to the hand held switch for the reclining chair*). It works slowly, but it works all-right.

Soren. I like this, grandpa.

Wallace. Yea? It's tough, though – you have to wait till the end of life before you can use it (*smiles*).

Soren. So, grandpa, I've decided that another year in Russia would be somewhat...

Wallace. ...superfluous?

Soren. Redundant. I'm looking at seminary now.

Wallace. Well you have Trinity – that's a good school. I don't know much about any seminaries. I think I'd stay away from Harvard or Yale. Princeton is a good school – used to be.

Soren. I'm considering a year of study at an Orthodox seminary...

Wallace. We had a large Greek Orthodox church in Oak Lawn when we were there. I don't know much about Orthodox theology. They make much of the Trinity, don't they?

I don't hear them spoken of much. I don't know if their influence is great or not. What makes you interested in Orthodoxy? Or that's a hard one to answer (*smiles*)?

Soren. The beauty, the reverence for the Gospels in the liturgy, the traditions...

Wallace. What about the emphasis on the personal religious experience?

Soren. As opposed to...?

Wallace. A strictly liturgical interpretation of Christianity. We have in our Western Christianity a good deal of revival movements. The Renaissance was one of them, and the Reformation. And the roots of our Swedish .. lie in revival fires that went over Sweden toward the turn of the century. My mother and dad were a part of them. And they joined with the people. Personal salvation, not by works, not by liturgy, but by faith. The emphasis was on faith. But I don't remember having read of revival movements in Russia or the Orthodox tradition.

Soren. Did your mother come into contact with the revival movement in Sweden or in America?

Wallace. Well, she was twelve when she came over, not very mature. The Swedish people who came over were of the revivalistic tradition. It

used to be called Pietism. I don't know if Dave still has the book. I had the book. It was entitled *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration*. It was very helpful to me. He might still have it. I think you'll get a good deal from it. The emphasis of the pietistic movement was on personal religion. You have to be born again. You have to grow in grace. Your Bible is literally God's word to you. And so on. I don't think you found it in the Russian church, did you?

Soren. You just brought up four or five subjects, but if we take reverence for God's word, I've seen that in the Orthodox church.

Wallace. There was quite a Baptist movement in Russia, wasn't there?

Soren. Yes. I was at a Baptist Church in the Ukraine just last week.

Wallace. Were there many people there?

Soren. Over a hundred.

Wallace. I'm glad to hear that. You think you'll go back to Russia to minister?

Soren. I'm not sure.

Wallace. You're not sure. I've been impressed with the scripture that I've known for so many years: "Trust in Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to *thine own* understanding." Don't let your mind determine your future. "Trust in Lord with all they heart, and lean not on thine own understanding. And in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." In Jeremiah there's a verse that says "It is not of man to know his ways."

I look back over my own life, and I see how the Lord has led us. He lead me to the wife that I had. And when we were laboring in Minnesota, we got a call from California. And we went out there, and it kind of set a new pattern for our life. Each step we must make by faith. I think I could have served the Lord better than I did.

Soren. Why do you say that?

Wallace. Well, I've had a feeling of inferiority—sometimes they call it humility (*smiles*).

Soren. But what do you call it?

Wallace. I didn't grow up in a home where the ego was honed. My parents came out of the pietistic movement – and I don't think I've ever surmounted the influence of those days. As far as I know, I've preached the word and followed his ways. I never thought of the church as an organization where I was the chief executive. But now the pastors are very eager to build big churches, meet everybody's needs. My congregation was always the Lord's people – the flock. The pastor is overseer. The church is the body of people, saved, to meditate on the way. It was the pastor's task to nourish them, feed them (*looks for some paper on the table*).

Soren. What are you looking for?

Wallace. I was looking for a sheet of paper. Did it fall on the floor there? What does it say?

Soren. “Your diaconate board would like to know what social activities you would like to see in our church. Mark your interests and add any suggestions.”

Wallace. Now read the list.

Soren. “Day trips, holiday dinners, monthly birthday coffees, potlucks, new member receptions, traveling suppers, mother/daughter banquets, father/son banquets.”

Wallace. That was left at my door, and I don’t know which church it refers to. But somebody evidently has the vision of a super church, doing everything for the community. I can’t accept it as a Biblical teaching on the Church.

Soren. When you say you don’t feel as if you surmounted the influence of the pietistic movement, I’m not sure what you meant – an insecurity as to what Christianity is?

Wallace. No, it’s not that. It’s a psychological problem, not a Christian problem. I remember when we were living in Oakland – many years ago now – I picked up a book in the library there. And I read this sentence – that “it didn’t seem possible for a person who’s entered adult life without much self confidence to ever acquire it.” I think that would be an accurate statement about myself.

Soren. So if self-confidence isn’t acquired in youth, you think it’s almost a lost cause to attain it later on?

Wallace. If the set of the mind is set, there is not much you can change. I don’t know if that’s true or not. But I’ve thought that for many years, and I know that for myself, I’ve suffered for lack of self-confidence.

Soren. It seems to me that it would take amazing self-confidence to stand up in front of your church every Sunday.

Wallace. It was never self confidence that put me in the pulpit. Rather, a feeling of duty, entirely. I had studied the word, it was time to preach, and I was called upon to administer the word, trusting that it would be of value to the congregation. I have reasons to believe that it was—many times. In other words, it wasn’t a natural confidence.

Soren. Did your self-confidence build over the years?

Wallace. I don’t think so.

Soren. Did you get much positive feedback at the outset of your ministry?

Wallace. In all of my churches I’ve been always well thought of in the sense that I’ve never had a church that turned against me in any way. That’s by God’s grace. But my confidence in myself has not grown over the years. There’s a need to turn on the Lord always, particularly when ministering to other people.

If I go in the rooms up here (*pointing upwards to the second floor*) just to visit, I always pray first that the Lord will help me to render a spiritual

ministry. I can't just go in and say "hello" and "goodbye." That's been my experience.

Soren. Have you had that approach from the beginning of your ministry?

Wallace. Yes, I went from high school to Moody Bible Institute, and studied God's Word there. We had—they call it "practical duty": Sunday schools, street meetings, jail meetings, mission meetings.

We had practical work. Assignments were given to us by the director of the program at Moody—sounds pietistic (*smiles*). But I could never take any assignment with a feeling of self-sufficiency. Now this is *my* experience – my frailty.

I remember we used to go to the jail on Sunday mornings. This is a jail on the East Side—it was on State street and eight-nine hundred south. We used to go there. Imagine having the task of preaching for those men, so far removed in life from the life you were living. I always prayed that the Lord would have his way. I used my violin a good deal there. But it was always with a sense of inadequacy, except as I had the Lord to depend on, which I did.

I've seen men that are in Christian work today that have a super abundance of self-confidence, or seem to have. Men like Bill Bright. But I could never go into it that way. I never had that inward support.

Soren. Did you have the support of your father?

Wallace. I never had companionship with my father. He worked in the factory and he wasn't well. And my mother was pretty much on the strict side. I remember that. No humor (*smiles*). Life was hard.

Soren. Not a lot of spare money in the house?

Wallace. No, we had money enough. We never lacked anything. My mother and dad bought a house. They paid \$2,500 dollars for it. Of course they couldn't pay for it all to begin with. They had payments to make. Mother also had her mother and her sisters in Sweden, and they were very poor. And mother would send money over whenever she could spare it.

Soren. Do you have any warm memories of you father?

Wallace. No, I don't want to give the opinion that we never had any contact with each other. It wasn't that. I remember that Sunday was the day that we were locked in. We could not play anything on that day. It was the holy day. We weren't permitted to go outside and play ball. We were locked in the house.

Soren. So you relaxed around the house on Sundays?

Wallace. We tried to (*smiles*).

Soren. How did your father spend his Sundays?

Wallace. Dad usually slept Sunday afternoon. He worked so hard during the week that his weekends were for renewing his strength and support.

I remember times when I was very close to dad. Many times we'd go down – they called it downtown, and dad would buy meet for the weekend. We had many happy times together. I never think of him doing anything that wasn't of the Lord's will—what we call worldly habits: tobacco, and liquor, foul language, that kind of thing. I had no exposure to anything like that. He was faithful to God, faithful to his family.

Soren. Did he speak of his own faith?

Wallace. No, not really. Except that he was wholly committed to his church. And he always made it to Sunday school, and always made it to prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. I remember once there came a group of charismatic people into our church, and they wanted to start another church of their own. And they approached dad and asked him if he didn't want to leave the church and form another church. Dad never entertained the thought. He was so faithful.

Soren. Which church was this?

Wallace. It was the Swedish Baptist Church of Kenosha – since been the Baptist Tabernacle.

Soren. Did he hold a deacon position?

Wallace. Yes, he was made a deacon.

Soren. But he didn't preach?

Wallace. No, he was no extrovert. That's what made it hard for him in the factory work, I think. He worked so hard.

I had a sister who played the piano. My father liked to hear her play. My violin wasn't so interesting. But Esther's piano playing was wonderful. And she had one little piece, Schubert's *March Militaire*, which dad liked so much. She'd play it often for him. It had a marching tune to it. He liked music.

I remember when he had his teeth pulled. It was a very common experience in those days. It was very painful for him. And I remember him walking up and down the kitchen floor, and I'd hear him singing – kind of a relief for him, but many of the songs were Swedish hymns.

Soren. What were some of his favorites?

Wallace. Do you know the hymn, "Children of the Heavenly Father" and "Day by Day"? And we had one hymn, translated it would be, "We Don't Live Here." And he'd sing those songs. "Sitting at the Feet of Jesus." There were other hymns that he loved so much. But I never heard my mother sing or hum a tune. But she liked music. She liked to hear Esther play.

Soren. Did your dad have any musical training?

Wallace. Not that I know of. He came over from Sweden – I think he must have been in his late teens. He learned English, and learned to read. He always read the newspaper.

Soren. Did you talk about the news with him?

Wallace. We talked about the First World War. We would talk about it.

Soren. Did he pray about the war at the dinner table?

Wallace. No, he was not a leader in that sense.

Soren. Did you see your dad read the Bible often?

Wallace. I don't remember. He was never one to wear it on his shirt sleeve. It was in his temperament. Some people are extroverts. Some people are not.

Soren. Tell me a little bit more about Mr. Mahoney and his mentoring in your life.

Wallace. He was at the church where I grew up. It was the evangelical church in town. There were a lot of Pentecostal churches. He was working for Nash as an engineer. Under the glass of his desk, he would have scripture passages. That always impressed me. He was the one who encouraged me to go to Moody, and I'm so glad he did.

Soren. You would see him at his office?

Wallace. I'd often go up and call on him when I was feeling low. He was a great help.

Soren. How did he encourage you?

Wallace. I'd go up to his home and sit and talk to him. He was sort of an eccentric character.

Soren. What do you mean by eccentric?

Wallace. I don't know (*smiles*). He wasn't an ordinary fellow. For instance, he got hold of an old Ford chassis, and he put some tin around it. And he drove it. He drove it back and forth to work. When he built his house, he didn't hire craftsman. He did it himself – but it was livable.

Soren. Was he married?

Wallace. He married his secretary—a fine Christian girl.

Soren. You and he discussed spiritual things?

Wallace. Yes. He had some books.

Soren. Do you remember which books?

Wallace. He had one book *The Doctrines of the Bible* written by a man named Evans. Not a very profound book. And a book written by R.A. Torrey – he had a great influence in those days. He had a lot of tremendous insights.

Soren. He was single when you visited him?

Wallace. Yes, but even after he was married, he always had time for me.

Soren. Did he know anyone at Moody?

Wallace. No, but he was very much interested in Moody. He had some experience in Los Angeles and got interested in seminary. I don't know – so much different then than it is now.

Soren. He worked in Los Angeles?

Wallace. I don't know. Trying to find his way I guess. Then the Nash company employed him. He was born and raised in Iowa. I remember

he used to take care of his mother. In those days, parents and children were much closer, I think, than they are today. Parents would visit their children.

Soren. After you finished high school, you went on to work at Sherman Williams?

Wallace. No, not really. I had an uncle who was employed at the Shermin Williams paint company. And he said, "I can get you a job." But I never went. I worked at Nash Motors.

Soren. Was that an office job?

Wallace. No, it was called the Sundry Department. We took the orders that came in and filled them. It was quite an operation. We used U.S. Post a good deal. There were some big items, motors, transmissions. We did the smaller ones. I learned a lot about automobile parts. Not sophisticated as it is today.

Soren. Was that a summer job?

Wallace. It went for the whole year. I just felt I didn't want to spend the rest of my life in a factory.

Soren. By then you had enough money for Moody?

Wallace. I had saved up five hundred dollars and moved to Moody and got established there. I worked at a kitchen. Once, I remember Mahoney sent me a check for fifty dollars. It was the only money I ever got.

Soren. Was there anyone besides Mahony who took a personal interest in your decision to attend seminary?

Wallace. No. He's the one that stands out. My pastor wasn't much help – not to me. Some of them were so Baptist that because I didn't go to Bethel, they looked down on that.

Soren. How did your father respond to your decision to attend Moody?

Wallace. I don't remember that my dad ever commented on it. I wasn't living at home then, you see. I was there for three years. I took a two-year course and got a certificate in Bible and Music. I took a course called "Synthetic Bible" led by the director of Moody – Gray. He was a great man in his day.

Soren. What was meant by the "Synthetic Bible"?

Wallace. The idea was to see the Bible as a whole, not chopped up into different pieces. And so we'd read certain passages of scripture and read and reread it, and it was on this principle of indoctrination. You read, and so you absorb what you read. And one tends to become well acquainted with their Bible. And we were. I'm reading the Bible in its entirety now.

Soren. Does it take you a long time to get through one page?

Wallace. I can't read in sentences anymore. I can't see the words. I use a magnifying glass and take it word for word. It's slow going (*smiles*). It's very difficult.

But, I'm so glad for the amount of scripture that's stored away in my memory and my mind. I memorized a lot of scripture.

Soren. At Moody, did you memorize scripture for classes or on your own?

Wallace. It was mostly on my own, although I did have a class where we did some memorizing.

Soren. Did you recite verses in front of the class?

Wallace. Yes. The purpose of it was to prepare us for our practical work. We went there with certain texts – how to win the undecided. Drunkenness.

Soren. So let's take, say, drunkenness...

Wallace. "Wine is a mocker, deceiver of mind, not lies." That we learned.

One thing that I particularly liked in those days was the preaching that we could listen to. Moody church would have various pastors. So many of the great preachers of that day – we listened to them and heard them at Moody. They would come to the Institute and we got to meet them. Great men.

Soren. What are some of their names?

Wallace. [G.] Cambell Morgan. R.A. Torrey. We had a man named Beaver – German. Gypsy Smith. Ever heard of him? He was one of the great evangelists. He was a gypsy. He was a spellbinder when it came to preaching. I remember he came and preached at Moody Church. The church was filled. Every seat was taken. Billy Graham can do that now, but I don't know of anyone else then.

Soren. They came through on speaking tours?

Wallace. Yes. Sometimes they came to preach for a week or two. A great spirit would settle down on the meetings.

Soren. Did you play violin or sing for any of those meetings?

Wallace. No (*smiles*). Rodeheaver was a singer in those days – published some song books. I don't remember the names.

Soren. While at Moody, were you and the other students very involved in the local community?

Wallace. Chicago was a different community. Moody Bible Institute was only eight blocks from the Loop. I remember I used to work down in the Loop. I was working for Mandall Brothers. They had a department store on State and Madison. I used to go down there and work in their dining room as busboy. I worked and made my way through.

Soren. That was for the entire three years at Moody?

Wallace. Yes, but there were other jobs too. That was really a great job, and I'd get a meal for it. Then if I worked till two or two-thirty, I'd get an extra dollar for that.

Soren. That was a restaurant?

Wallace. No, it was their dining room. It was up on the seventh floor. Carson Pierre Scott was right across the street. It was Weebolts the last I heard. Whether it still is or not, I'm not sure. And Marshall Fields had their dining rooms – and they went to Moody to get their busboys.

Soren. Was it while studying at Moody that you worked resetting bowling pins?

Wallace. No, that was in Cedar Rapids. That was at Coe. I graduated from Moody, and I graduated from Coe College with a B.A. And then when we went to California, I did work in the seminary and got two degrees – a Bachelor and Master’s in Divinity. Out of all the schooling I’ve had, I’d give it all up if I had to choose any one and choose Moody. That sent me down the right road. Although it isn’t touted much as an educational institution like Harvard or Yale, it seems for me it was perfectly what it should have been. I needed it so much. I was raised in the church and Sunday school, but I never had real assurance in the Christian faith until I went to Moody.

Soren. Would you say that of all the courses at Moody, Bible memorization and “Synthetic Bible” were the most memorable?

Wallace. They were helpful. I think the most memorable course I took was in Bible doctrine. It was a two-year course. The course in Bible doctrine was close to me because my mind runs to analytical thinking. It got the Bible straightened out and I discovered what it teaches. Because it really isn’t a textbook. It’s the book of life. Things are not set out in A-B-C order. Take the doctrine of the Trinity, for instance. It doesn’t talk in any one particular verse, but all over through the book.

Soren. For your doctrine course, were you reading any books written by theologians?

Wallace. Not much. The Bible was our main textbook. We did have a good library and we used it. I remember especially liking to read in the library.

Soren. Did you read in the evenings?

Wallace. Often in the afternoon when I’d come back from work.

Soren. What section of the library did you gravitate to?

Wallace. I liked sermons and expositions on the scriptures. They were very helpful. I can’t remember the name of one sermon I read – it stuck in my mind...

Soren. By Jonathan Edwards?

Wallace. No, but he was a great preacher.

Soren. He had a sermon...

Wallace. “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”? No, that’s not the one, although that was a powerful message. You could never preach a sermon like that today – got to be about the love of God (*smiles*). Right? You’re going to have to face some of these things. I think that you’d do well if you went back and read over the literature at the turn of the century. A lot of preachers in those days. Because I don’t think that Bible doctrine as it’s taught today is as genuinely Christian. That’s a criticism. I shouldn’t criticize (*smiles*).

Soren. Did you take notes on the sermons you read at the library?

Wallace. No, I'd just read them for my own heart's benefit. I used to go to church in those days and listen to the message, hear the songs, listen to the special numbers, and I'd go home refreshed and renewed and just feel like I'd been in the Lord's presence.

Today so much of our music in the church is on the performance level. It doesn't really minister. It isn't sung to be a blessing, but rather to show the capabilities of the performer.

Soren. Do you think the lyrics of those hymns had greater depth than today's lyrics?

Wallace. Yes. Well for me, a hymn—the real important part about it is what it says. “Rock of ages, cleft for me,” and so on. And I think that the melody – the musical setting – ought to be secondary. It carries the thought, the lyric into your consciousness in a way that is beneficial and a blessing to you. It seems that the music should always be a vehicle upon which the message rides. But I don't see that in the modern musical liturgy.

Soren. But at Moody, didn't you have the same kind of tension within the church between “contemporary” and “traditional” music?

Wallace. No, we didn't have the contemporary music. We didn't have the modern music. There were new songs written back in those days, but they always were written with the purpose of ministry to hearts – carrying a message from the word of God. So many of the songs – we don't sing them any more in our churches. And I feel we're sort of cheating the younger generation by not giving them the songs and the comforts and the inspiration of these hymns.

Soren. Was the hymn which you wrote published in a hymnal?

Wallace. No, I don't think so. It was published by the Moody Bible Institute. Every class in those days would have a class song, and the song would be written by someone in the class who had some poetic inclinations, and the music was to be written by someone in the music department. Every class would have its own song – sort of a tradition.

Soren. Was your song the class song?

Wallace. The class song – yes.

Soren. So it was chosen of all the others that were written?

Wallace. Yes. It was for the August class (1929). School ran for the whole year then. I think they took July off as vacation.

Soren. So it was voted by your classmates?

Wallace. No, it was chosen by maybe the music department.

Soren. That had to impart some degree of self-confidence.

Wallace. No, it didn't. It just was something to do and I did it. I remember I was sitting up in the balcony in Moody Church one Sunday night, and I was thinking of this song. All of a sudden the music came to my mind. I remember writing it down. Then I polished it up and made the entry. I forgot it, and some time later they informed me that my composition had been chosen.

Soren. You composed the music?

Wallace. The music I composed, yes. The words were written by a girl, McKelvie. I didn't know her. We had a large class.

Soren. You didn't get together and work it out with her?

Wallace. No.

Soren. Was it the music department which put the lyrics and music together?

Wallace. I don't know. I don't know (*smiles and yawns*). A lot of things I don't know. That didn't bother me. Well, we've talked a lot about myself (*smiles*).

II

August 13, 1998, Afternoon

Wallace. Say, I was going to ask you. Do you have copies of *Christianity Today* available?

Soren. We have some around our house.

Wallace. I laid out a few copies here. I thought you might like to have a look at them. I laid out a couple copies of the denominational paper. It's changing its format a great deal, and every issue's a little different. I was going to suggest that's a good place to get an article or two published now and then. *Christianity Today* – the headquarters are in Wheaton, I guess.

Soren. Did you ever submit articles?

Wallace. Oh yes, to the *Beacon* I did. Yes. I didn't have any interest in writing, as such. *The Sunday School Times* – I sent in two poems that they published. They were poems I had written in college.

Soren. It seems like the creative juices were really going for you in college. You wrote poems, composed the music for a hymn, and you played the violin. Did you sing as well?

Wallace. Yes, I sang in the choir that has since become the Moody Chorale. Yes, I sang in there.

Soren. Was that a fruitful time for you?

Wallace. Well I guess all my life there have been fruitful times. Except the last few years – they've been difficult. But my mind was constantly active.

We were in California. And up in Beresford. The Chicago area. There was a while there when I thought I would like to teach at Trinity, but there wasn't any opening, it seemed, when I was available. But I did get a lot of teaching on a part-time basis.

Soren. Did you want to teach full-time after the Oak Lawn church?

Wallace. Well, it's quite a story. There was going to be a change in the administration of Trinity College back then. Norton was involved, and Lendrickson and some of the others. And I was available then and they offered me a job or a position in the faculty, but the salary was so meager. I had four children. I couldn't go it on that salary and purchase a house at the same time, so I turned it down. And when we got to Chicago, I was available for part-time teaching, so I did some of it then. And I did some writing for the *Beacon*.

Soren. Is that a national magazine?

Wallace. It's the denominational paper for the Evangelical Free Church.

Soren. Do you still have your articles?

Wallace. No, they've evaporated (*smiles*).

Soren. I'd have to go through the archives?

Wallace. I don't know. I don't think you'd find them.

Soren. What did you write about?

Wallace. I wrote one article on creeds. The denomination was going through quite an intense heart-searching as to whether they should have a creed or not. I was of the feeling that creeds kind of put your thinking into cement (*smiles*). You're not free. I argued it that way. They finally got a creed but they haven't used it much.

Soren. They finally put people's thinking in cement?

Wallace. Yes (*smiles*). If you have a creed, you don't have to think, you know? "This is what the creed says" – but you don't know why. Then there were some others. I wrote an article on tithing at one time. I often wonder if it would have good if I had left the ministry and gone into publishing. I don't know. Because I knew the editor very well. He was very open to what I could offer.

Soren. Were the editorial offices in Chicago?

Wallace. Yes. We had one man who edited the *Beacon* and he did most of the work. I think he had a little secretarial help. But he was responsible.

Soren. What kept you from heading into full-time writing?

Wallace. Well, I was going to school at the time. We were living in Oakland, and I was getting schooling in the Baptist seminary there. And it took too much time. Then we had four children. We had the church to be responsible for. They were busy days – very busy days. So I couldn't do what I wanted to do. That is, I didn't have the time. And when I had the time, I didn't have the energy. Yes. You need energy to write.

Soren. Yes, and there's something about writing – you can never have the certainty that things will go routinely. You're always facing the blank page.

Wallace. And yet there's a great sense of satisfaction when you've finished and you can say, "That's what I wanted to say." And you've said it well. And you have a sense of real satisfaction. At least I always did. I think it's like preaching, too. I had a lot of sermons on my mind, but after I've delivered them I feel relieved. Until then, I'm tense and concerned. But after you deliver them, why, there's a sense of real relief. You've said what you wanted to say in a way that is acceptable to the congregation.

Soren. Writing and preaching seem to parallel each other.

Wallace. Yes. We speak of the spoken word and the written word. I was thinking of your life and I don't know which way the Lord's going to lead you. But if you end up in a parsonage somewhere as a pastor, you should have good training ... that economic category that you'll be working with. I don't think you'd be a good one at a charismatic church. I don't know (*smiles*).

That's something I couldn't do. I know I've faced the situation. Sometimes I should be more charismatic. I could never see anything in the charismatic movement that I really wanted. I didn't want to be throwing my hands in the air. I'm not by temperament that way. So, the charismatic movement never had a temptation for me.

Soren. Did you ever have interaction with charismatic leaders or churches?

Wallace. No, we would meet each other in city-wide ministerial associations, but no, I never had much close contact with them. After I left the church in Chicago, one of the families there – a couple of them – turned charismatic. And the pastor that followed me had to deal with the problem. I don't know that he dealt with it wisely or not, and I don't know how you would deal with it. But, the church began going downhill then.

Soren. It must be saddening to hear those reports.

Wallace. It's been sad for me in the fact that the church I served in Oak Lawn has not continued to grow and the life of the church sort of deteriorated – the spiritual life of the church. I can't criticize the pastor. It probably would have been the same for me, I don't know. But while I was there, we had a wonderfully spiritual church. Jeannette can tell you about those days – how good they were.

Soren. When you say “spiritual church,” what do you mean – a lot of spiritual growth among the members?

Wallace. Well, I guess so. I don't know just how to put it in other language. But you go into this church, and there's an atmosphere – a positive atmosphere. And the singing has got a real heartiness to it, and the praying. When I was pastor of Oak Lawn, it was Bible-carrying time. And all the people brought their Bibles with them when they came to church. So many times, I would say, “Well, let's read our Scriptures responsively this morning.” And then I'd give out the text, and they'd find it in their Bibles. And we'd read that way. You couldn't do that today. Not in our church here. Oh yes, I guess you can. They bought Bibles for the people to look at when they come to church (*smiles*). You can find them in the pews. But carrying their own Bible – they didn't do that. They had a real love for the Word. And you can feel it in their relationships with each other too. There isn't any tension. There never was any between the membership. They were so friendly. And I felt the same. I never have felt that I was at variance with my congregations over anything. We built a church and dedicated it and it kept on growing. The church was filled when I left. That is, they didn't have the room. We should have built larger than we did when we built. The church was built in such a way that it couldn't be enlarged graciously. I wish you could have been there during those days – those years.

Soren. You just mentioned the church ministerial associations. What were and are some of your opinions on the ecumenical movement?

Wallace. Well, I was preaching in an era where Evangelicalism and what we called “modernism” were at odds with each other. So, some places we’d have two ministerial associations—one would be the charismatic group and the other would be *our* churches. But I think that if you go to a modern church that doesn’t have an evangelical tint to it – I think you’ll cool the atmosphere of the church. It’s a mystic something. And the presence of Christ in the audience. I think that much of it has to do with the preaching. If you preach with a warm heart, stay close to the Scriptures, you won’t go far wrong. The Lord will bless that and use it. He’ll use his word.

But I’ve found that in my life, I always had to preach to myself first. I could never preach the sermon just to straighten the congregation out. “I’m going to tell ‘em today (*smiles*).” But I had to come with the humility of having wrestled myself with whatever problem I was dealing with. And I had a great deal of confidence from that perspective. So the sermons were first of all preached to me. By myself. And then I could preach them in the church.

Soren. In that sense, each of your sermons was a reflection of your previous week’s meditations and devotions?

Wallace. Yes, I guess so. I preached through books of the Bible, but they never became sort of stereotyped for me. If there wasn’t anything in it for my soul, then I couldn’t preach it. I couldn’t continue that way. But many times, the sermons were disconnected from Sunday to Sunday. I just had something from the word that I wanted to tell.

Soren. Would you preface such a Sunday by saying, “Members of the congregation, today’s sermon has nothing to do with last week’s”?

Wallace. No, no (*smiles*), I never took the church in when it came to sermon preparation or message preparation. That was my province. I can’t get used to this idea of the church having a musical director, where he comes into the church and picks out the hymns and the choir, and so on. Because for me, the morning service was my province. I picked out the hymns. I picked out the texts. I knew what I was going to preach and I knew which way I wanted to go. And so, I always did that. I wouldn’t give the control of my morning service over to anybody. Because there was something of a “whole piece” to me, and I didn’t want it chopped up by other things. But now it’s so different.

Soren. Were you able to plan the services at all of the churches at which you served?

Wallace. Oh yes, I was of that period. Since I’ve been pastor of a church, other ideas have come. They put the choruses up on the wall, and I know we do that at First Church here. But the church doesn’t have seemingly any homogeneity. It doesn’t tie together. That’s the way it seems to me.

Soren. You mentioned Evangelicalism vs. Modernism. When you say Modernism, what aspects of it are you referring to?

Wallace. Well, there's a doctrinal difference. Modernism was religion without commitment to the historic Christian faith. Christian doctrine is a body of truth. And you have it in the Apostles Creed and other creeds as they tried to develop them. But modernism is a step towards humanism and it tended in that direction, and finally ended up that way. You don't speak of modernism any more, I don't think.

Soren. Now we speak of post-modernism.

Wallace. Yes. Post-Christianity (*smiles*).

Soren. When you speak of modernism, you're speaking of liberal churches which you think have strayed from that basis?

Wallace. Yes, they were liberal. There's no emphasis on personal salvation in the modernistic church. "The Bible is not the word of God – it tells us about God, but it's not God's word." I hope that you'll be rigidly orthodox (*smiles*). You like Orthodoxy. Because you just don't have anything to preach unless you believe the Bible is the word of God, and that it's true and that Christianity is an historic faith rooted in human history.

Soren. In your life, text criticism of the Bible has emerged, beginning in Germany. Did you come into contact with much of that scholarship?

Wallace. Well, I suppose I did, but I was never troubled with the criticism – German Biblical criticism. I knew what I believed. And that's where Moody helped me so much. I was grounded in the Word, and we knew what we believed when we came out. We may not have been as knowledgeable about what *other* people believed, but we knew what *we* believed.

When I was preparing messages, that was always a standpoint – on the Biblical inerrancy of the scriptures and an implicit faith in what God said. And when I'd come across stuff that I couldn't agree with, I'd let it go. I once said that you should read a book like you eat fish: there's some flesh but there are a lot of bones sometimes. Put them to the side, and enjoy the flesh.

Soren. I like that analogy.

Wallace. Yes, that is, don't swallow everything you read because it's somebody's book or under somebody's name you have to accept. You don't have to. Sit in judgment yourself over what you're reading. I don't think everybody does that, but that's the way I've trained myself.

There's something about the scripture – that the Holy Spirit leads you as you read them and study them, ponder them, and deliver them in a message or in a Bible class. "When He the Spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth." Yes. "He'll not speak of himself. He'll speak of me."

Soren. On that note, so often we think of mysticism as a practice not "Protestant," but in accepting that the Holy Spirit guides us in our reading of the scriptures, it's admitting a mystic approach to the scriptures.

Wallace. Yes. Mysticism... There was only the Roman Church, you know. But there were many mystics that appeared amongst them. And theologians. And since then, there have been mystics that are appearing here and there. I think some of them are available today if you want to read them.

Soren. Have you ever found mystic writings helpful in your ministry?

Wallace. I've found them very helpful. But once again, you have to read with discernment.

Soren. Madame Guilian was one of them?

Wallace. Yes. Fenalan was in the same generation. They were French mystics. Madame Guilon has written a good deal. But that was way back in the 1700s, I think, so it's not modern work.

Soren. Did you ever mention mystic readings in your sermons?

Wallace. I brought out what they taught. I didn't refer to them much. I assimilated what they had and made it my own. There was in Sweden and Scandinavia and in Germany back in the 1800s, particularly the latter half, what was called the pietistic movement. And there's an affinity between that and mysticism because there were many mystics amongst the pietists. But pietism developed in Scandinavia and was an antidote to the rigid liturgical element in the Lutheran church. So, really we are all pietists, but we don't recognize it. Because they believed in personal salvation, the efficacy of prayer, and the Christian life, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Soren. Who were some of the main theologians or thinkers of the pietistic movement in Sweden?

Wallace. I can't speak for any of them offhand. Our Scandinavian preachers in the Free Church movement were, I think, all pietistic, so they believed in alter calls and commitments to Christ. I think our Evangelical Free church was kind of the borderline emphasis. Somebody once said, "The Free Church kept alive the doctrine of Christ's return" – because so many of our preachers preached on it. But it wasn't considered a high-class doctrine in the earlier days. Now, to us I think, we've been taught it, and it's real to us. But the pietists went back to Bible study and prayer meetings and personal religious faith. And I think they had a tremendous influence on all of us of Scandinavian origins. My parents were pietists – committed to this kind of Christianity.

Soren. Did pietism arise in sharp reaction to or dialogue with Lutheranism?

Wallace. In reaction to it. Zinzendorff, Count Zinzendorff – have you ever heard his name? He was one of the leaders of the pietistic movement in Germany. And there were others and I can't think of their names right off. But it was a great movement. The Moravians came out of the movement. They were pietistic.

Soren. Your parents were Swedish. You spoke only Swedish until you were five, and your church was closely tied with the Swedish pietistic movement. But look at me – my genes are split half and half. If we take my “spiritual roots,” I have roots in both the Dutch Reformed and the Swedish pietist movements.

Wallace. A bit of tension there (*smiles*)? This was a great problem – the “national” problem – and was very difficult in our Swedish churches. I think it was the same in the Dutch and German churches and so on – that our immigrant parents would come over and they’d have such a warm spiritual experience in the homeland with others of kindred mind. When they came over, they sought for that here. So, there was a language question – they wanted the Gospel preached in ... And I remember in the 1930s, well ... it was a barren season for churches of our bent because we didn’t attract the young people like we should, and we lost a generation there. The old folks wanted the Gospel in Swedish. Or, if they came from some other linguistic group – you’d want to take along with you that with which you were familiar. But we kind of surmounted that, and we’re all English now. So our Free churches don’t speak Swedish at all any more, and I don’t know if there’s any Dutch in the Dutch Reformed churches. But there was that weaning period, when we were weaned from our parents’ language and commitments—to the English.

I remember I went to Seattle, and the General Baptists had a publication department called the Harvester. They put out a hymnal, but the hymnal was put out in such a way that when you purchased it, you could purchase the supplement that they added of the Swedish hymns that were translated into English. So you could buy the Gospel hymns and if your church bought it, you could get the book with a supplement of about thirteen, fifteen hymns. Well, you know the hymn, “Children of the Heavenly Father”, “Day by Day,” some other beautiful hymns. But our church in Seattle had a preponderance of modern young people. You know, when they bought a hymnal, they didn’t want that one with the Swedish hymns attached. I think as we progressed, they discovered the mistake, because this little cluster of hymns were so dear to the hearts of the people that if they had them, they would have used them all the time.

I know we did at the church in Oak Lawn. We had the hymnal with the supplement and sang. Every Sunday, almost, we’d have to have at least one song from the supplement. Translated – you didn’t translate the music, but you translate the lyrics. But there was a movement back in those days that “We don’t want to be known as a Swedish church anymore. We are an American church.” But it was short-sighted, I think. Don’t cut yourself off from your roots. Nurture them, and realize what a wealth you have in your roots.

Soren. How far back do the melodies of the Swedish pietist hymns date?

Wallace. They were mostly around the turn of the century, when the pietistic movement was gaining a foothold in Sweden. And they came out of that. There were several writers that were very well known as hymn writers – Lina Sandell [1832-1903] was one of them, and she wrote the hymn “Children of the Heavenly Father.” The hymn “How Great thou Art” was a hymn that came from that period, and it was translated from the Swedish. But it’s also in Russian. Did you sing it over there?

Soren. Yes.

Wallace. I think what you must have amongst the Baptist people there – although it would be with some variation. But I think you have a pietistic situation there. They believe in the separated Christian life very much. “Come out from among them and be separate,” said the Lord, “I will be to you a Father, you shall be my sons and daughters,” said the Lord. “Touch not the unclean thing,” was First Corinthians. And throughout, the New Testament urges toward holiness of life.

Soren. How do you see those passages in relation to Christ’s own radical involvement in the world – dining with Pharisees and speaking with prostitutes?

Wallace. I don’t know if I should tell you this, but I’ve picked out a book that Philip Yancey wrote, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, and I’m going to give it to your mother and dad, so you’ll have it. Philip Yancey deals with this problem in this book.

The Lord Jesus did make enemies of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, but you stop and study... You’ll know he was right. Phariseeism is a constant danger to Christians – that you become like them. And to us, that’s rigid liturgy and sacramentalism, which pietists rejected. They believed in the sacrament but changed the word to “ordinances.” We believe in them and practice them, but not as a means of salvation, but an evidence of it. To believe on Christ means to have some understanding of your own sinfulness and how it demanded a payment. I guess that’s the word which we find in the cross – Christ.

My mind has always run to seeking a deeper meaning for words. So when in the Bible I’d read about the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the others, I’d always ask the question, “Why did he say that? Why did he do that?” And it seems as though the Holy Spirit always leads me into an understanding of the situation that verifies the teaching of the scriptures. So the scriptures to me are correct.

The Lord seemed to react toward the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They wanted the blessings of their religious stand, but without the change of heart upon which the Lord Jesus insisted.

Soren. “Their hearts were hardened...”

Wallace. Yes. It’s more important *what* we believe and are inwardly committed to than the things we do, I think. You can be living your life according to some of your scruples, and they may seem religious. Paul deals with that in Colossians: “Don’t let anyone put you under the

burden of what to us now looks like legalism.” Confession without a realization of its reality in your life.

Many times in my own spiritual experience, I’ve had to go back over my own spiritual experiences and see whether I am really trusting in the Lord or not. Am I? Or am I just a religious man without any real divinely implanted salvation? Over and over again I’ve had to do that because we have to come back to the basis of our faith.

I remember at our home, we were never permitted to read the scripture on the Lord’s day. There were other taboos of which you’re acquainted with.

Soren. Why couldn’t you read the scriptures on Sunday?

Wallace. It was a holy day. It was to be left free for worship.

Soren. Was that common?

Wallace. It was in those days. We went through that period. Not today. We’d never think of desecrating the Sabbath as it’s being desecrated today. But this was taught in the pietistic movement – that the Lord wants a sanctified life. And in our zeal we overemphasized it, I guess (*smiles*). I’ve been reading in the New Testament just this last week how the Lord healed on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. But the Pharisees put it as a heavy yoke on people’s lives – which the Lord never intended.

I came across a tract many years ago that meant a great deal to me, and it had to do with ... I think it was tithing. And the author presented it in this way – that the Bible teaches, and this goes for the Sabbath day too. And so we ought to obey the scriptures. But the purpose why God gave us these guides to Christian living was not in order that we might fulfill a spiritual obligation, but rather we needed to treat our substances with a tithe in mind. Because otherwise we are apt to grow selfish, proud, and lacking in Christian charity and good conscience. If I use the Lord’s day as a holiday in my life, and I don’t go to church, I’m “free”. What does it do to me spiritually? I lose out. If I use all of my salary or whatever comes, without returning to God a portion of what he has given me, what does that do to me? Not that God needs it. “He owns cattle on a thousand hills,” we say. He doesn’t need it. But *I* need to give, and I think that’s what you would call a pietistic emphasis – that changes that need to be made in society are the changes that need to be made in the hearts of the people that make up a society. And that goes particularly for a church.

We need a spiritual people – people that are committed to allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. Able to take the negatives along with the positives, realizing that in them, if we search, we will find the reason why God is. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Well, I think that its practiced by so many today that it wreaks havoc in a life and a home. “Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal.” And so on. Lots of novels

have been written around the theme of stealing because of some need in your life – food or such. But still, the Bible says “Thou shalt not steal.”

Soren. So looking back on the Sundays when you were locked up and not allowed to even read the Bible – how do you see it now?

Wallace. Well, I don’t see it as a restriction. God has given us the Sabbath day in which we should give attention to our spiritual nature. Man is a spirit, and you worship God in your spirit. Not in your flesh, but in your spirit. And my opinion of all of these pietistic rules and regulations which today are so much thumbs down on—I took them and practiced them. But I’ve changed my mind about many of these things through the years as I’ve understood the scriptures better.

Soren. What are a few of the things you’ve changed your mind on? One is reading the Bible on Sunday?

Wallace. For Sunday, I don’t know that I have to refrain from some other activities. I used to wonder whether I should write a letter on Sunday or not, but I did keep up my Bible reading on Sunday. I went to church. And I went because I was hungry. I’ve never been any other way than just always hungry for spiritual things, and I think some of the most delightful hours of my life have been as I sat in church. Particularly, Moody Church, when I was living in Chicago, because it was such a wonderful church. Grandma Henrietta can tell you about that. But I would go and I would sit. I’d always come out refreshed, because the sermons were so Biblical, spiritually accentuated. Yes. We used to have a pastor at Moody Church by the name of Philpot. And he was such a gracious man. He spoiled me for the ministry (*smiles*). If I could be like him ... yes, he became my model, as it were, for a pastor.

Soren. When you say “spoiled,” you mean the messages were so meaningful for you?

Wallace. I didn’t feel that I ever wanted to go a church that *didn’t* preach the Gospel, that didn’t have something for my heart and soul. And yet there are a lot of churches like that. A lot that you get over the radio and TV are of this order.

Soren. You mentioned the sermons at Moody. But was there a real sense of community? It’s such a large church.

Wallace. No, I think in those days life was slower. Not every family had an automobile. I suppose that most of the families came to church on the streetcar. Some on the El. Many walked. I know we always walked. The Moody Bible Institute was on Chicago Avenue, so it was about 800 North, and Moody Church was about 1600 North. So we walked. I covered that territory many many a time.

Soren. You were also at services throughout the week?

Wallace. No, I was a studious student at Moody and we didn’t go to any weekly services. But to Sunday services we did.

I grew so much spiritually during those days. At least I thought I did (*smiles*).

Soren. At Moody did you have someone whom you would call a spiritual mentor?

Wallace. No, this is sort of a modern idea – disciple somebody else. It's quite modern in church affairs – in the emphasis being placed upon it, I mean. We believed in being a blessing to each other (*smiles*). Christ was mentor to his disciples, of course, but it wasn't in a mechanical way.

Soren. What a way to set out on your ministry – having that background at Moody before heading off to small-town Minnesota.

Wallace. Yes, we were introduced to a real spiritual fellowship at Moody. We prayed and we sang, and did it together, so that when you got out into a church, well, you were ready for that kind of a ministry. Yes, I owe so much to Moody Bible Institute. You would too if you could go there (*smiles*).

Soren. Did you find many other students at Moody of Scandinavian origin?

Wallace. Yes. In the very early days – before I got there – the Swedish department at Moody Bible Institute was the seminary for our Evangelical Free Church, so we had a very vital relationship with Moody. So there were a lot of men at Moody of Swedish descent. I got to know them there, and when I got out into the work, why, we already knew each other.

Soren. I didn't know about that connection between Moody and the Evangelical Free Church.

Wallace. No, I don't think anybody does anymore. Some of the well-known pastors in the Free Church served as faculty members on the Moody staff, and there was a Swedish department. But it's sort of disintegrated, so when I had left Moody's – why, it wasn't much emphasized. But we had a hard time establishing a Free Church Bible school and seminary. There was a feeling in those days that Jesus was coming—so why spend your time in school? Really, I think some folks didn't go in for much education.

Soren. Do you mean a “feeling” in church sermons, meetings, and conversations?

Wallace. Yes, prayer meetings.

Soren. That would have been the late 1920s. Why was there such an expectation at that time?

Wallace. Well, it's just that the Bible teaches it. God's children have always felt an estrangement in this world. “This world is not my home, I'm just a travellin' through.” That attitude and that feeling is so common amongst the Christians, and heaven was such a real place. It was more in their consciousness, I think, than it is today.

Well, I wish you could go back to those days and be a student at Moody. You didn't have the emphasis on the academic or on the social status situation of the school. It's never been thought of as a very academic school, but that's not the only thing that you go to school for, I

don't think. You go there to mature. You go there to settle your inner commitments – if you can keep yourself at it. There's so many young people that have lost their faith in the colleges and seminaries and universities. And they're all known for their desire to set people free from religion, as it were. And I fear for many of our young people that are going to school without a knowledge of what they have in their Christian faith, without the will to maintain their fellowship with the Lord.

Soren. Did you witness that at Moody – people doubting their faith?

Wallace. The drift was in the other way. When I went to Moody's, I wasn't a very knowledgeable Christian. The fact is, I didn't know whether I was a Christian or not. But when I got to study the Bible at Moody, the light began to break. It all came so much to me like the sun rising in the morning. The dawn, when you see a little glimmer of light and then you have more and more light till you have a noonday experience. That's the way my spiritual life has been. More gradual, and very personal.

Soren. Not a series of bright visions?

Wallace. Well, there is a sort of type of Christianity that has to live on the mountaintop. You have to live in a series of highs and lows. I think a lot of our charismatic people are that way. "Did you get baptized with the Spirit? Did you get refilled last Sunday?" And so on.

Soren. It's wanting to be at the mountaintop.

Wallace. Yes, and they can't live in the valley very well. One often finds them that way. Valley experiences are quite needful in one's life.

Soren. "Even though I may walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."

Wallace. Eventually you'll walk through that valley, and you ought to be ready for it when the time comes.

Soren. Are you referring to experiencing the death of a loved-one?

Wallace. No... I remember when Rachel was dying upstairs. Betty and I were there beside her, and we could see that she was slipping away, and then at about one o'clock in the afternoon, she did. But just as she slipped away, a smile came over her face, just as though she was seeing something that we weren't seeing. Because she was a sick girl, she couldn't speak, couldn't express herself, couldn't care for herself in any way. But the Lord gave her that something – I don't know what it was – at the end of the road. "I will fear no evil for though art with me." I think perhaps the Lord fulfilled that promise to her at that time when she needed it. And for our sake too, because we needed it.

Soren. Before grandma's health declined, did she ever speak of her thoughts on nearing death?

Wallace. Yes, her mind was so much on spiritual things.

Soren. Do you remember what she said?

Wallace. No, I can't remember the particulars. I remember I got a subscription for her for the *Reader's Digest* in magnified type. I thought

she might like it, because she always used to like to read the *Readers Digest*. But then when her eyes got bad... But you know, those magazines would come and she'd lay them aside, and she'd sit for hours with a Bible in her lap.

Soren. Did you with her about what she was reading?

Wallace. Not as much as we should of, I guess. But it was underlying our lives entirely.

It was the same way with Nanny. She passed away in the Kenosha Hospital. She was just worn out. She was ninety-seven. She was just worn out. But I remember being with her at the last, and once again that smile came over her face as she was leaving her body and going on. It was ... I'll never forget the uplift I got out of it ... that now she's home with the Lord. And there wasn't any fear. There was no rejection of what was lying ahead. Just a quiet sort of going to sleep in the Lord. And the smile – both she and Rachel had that to give us when we were standing beside them. Nanny had a stroke a night or two before she passed away, so she wasn't able to converse at the end.

Soren. Did she have the stroke at the hospital?

Wallace. Well, it was a day that Founder's Week conference was on – that's the first week of February, and I had gone, and Rachel, and one or two others from the church at Kenosha went to Moody to take in the day. And when we came home, I could see that mother wasn't feeling well. So we called the 911 and took her to the hospital. And it was the next morning that the Lord took her home. She didn't have to lay in the hospital a long time – which is the fear of many older people.

Soren. Were you alone with her when she passed away?

Wallace. Rachel was there – my wife. Yes.

Soren. We spoke about your father's very private faith, and I think of grandma's faith as also very private.

Wallace. Yes. I think that must be the Nordic temperament (*smiles*) showing through. They say that in Sweden that not very many people go to church, but they say that doesn't mean they aren't religious. They carry their faith inwardly. Of course it's a kind of a liturgical faith. They've all been baptized. You can't be a citizen without being a member of the Lutheran Church in Sweden. The two go together. And I would guess that there were a lot of people that would trust in their church relationship for their eternal salvation.

Soren. Speaking of the Nordic temperament, do you run across exuberant or charismatic Swedes?

Wallace. Oh, yes, there are a lot of them (*smiles*).

Soren. How do you explain that?

Wallace. Well, temperament, disposition. We are all born with a certain temperament, disposition. You say, "Why are you like that?" Well, the answer would be "I can't help it. This is the way I am." Many folks born of Scandinavian heritage are sort of recessive, but once in a

while, you'll find a Swede that is very exuberant. Perhaps that's his training, perhaps it's his inherited temperament. But they're certainly not all of one pattern, although they have certain dominant characteristics that you could see.

Soren. I brought my Bible along today, and I was wondering if you could tell what some of your favorite passages are.

Wallace. It seems as though every time I sit down to read, I get something real encouraging. I'm reading the New Testament now. I'm in the book of Luke, but I'm also reading Jeremiah, chapter twenty-one, twenty. There's not much in Jeremiah that will foster... I mean it's taken up so much by the judgments of God upon the nation of Israel for their waywardness, their idolatry.

Soren. "The Lord overthrowing the cities without pity..."

Wallace. Yes, very very heart-searching passages.

Soren. How have you responded to those who ask how one reconciles the seemingly angry God of the Old Testament with the Jesus of the New Testament?

Wallace. Well, I don't know that they have to be reconciled. They're not two personalities. They're one God – expressing Himself, and I would say it's God responding to the godlessness of the Old Testament that called forth the judgments of God. But you have the same in the New Testament if you look. There's a lot said about the end in the New Testament, the existence of hell and outer darkness. I don't see that there's anything to...

Soren. Reconcile?

Wallace. Reconcile, that's right. That was the word I was looking for.

Soren. Great minds think alike.

Wallace. Yes, great minds travel in the same channel, they say (*smiles*). That can be said of substandard minds too.

Soren. You've been reading in Luke eight? "A sower was going out to sow... Then his disciples asked what this parable meant... That looking they may not see, and hearing they not hear. And the seed is the word of God."

Wallace. Yes. Some of it is received and produces good fruit. Some of it is received and doesn't produce.

Soren. This seems to be one of the parables which refers to preaching.

Wallace. Well, I guess so. I think it refers to all of life. God speaks to us mainly through his word, but there are many other ways in which the Lord speaks to us. I think you could get some spiritual messages out of the newspaper if you read it with that in mind.

Soren. In that sense, seed falls everywhere – through literature, through newspapers, through nature...

Wallace. That's right. I think that if you live close to the Lord, everything speaks to you about him. I remember one of our missionary leaders was going out one morning to buy a newspaper, and somebody

asked him, “How come you’re going to buy a newspaper? You’re a preacher.” As though the two didn’t go together. “Well,” the preacher says, “I want to see what the Lord’s doing in the world today.” And that was his answer.

Soren. In that parable, one verse bothers me a little: “To you, it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God but to others I speak in parables.” Taken at face value, it seems to mean that Jesus was preaching to his disciples on a kind of inward elevated track, but to the crowds in parables. Has that ever bothered you?

Wallace. It does. I don’t know if it helps to think of it in natural terms. There are some people that have likes and dislikes. People have, for instance, a propensity towards sports. They can tell you all about them. Others, a lady, likes to sew, but a lot of the ladies don’t. Some like to cook. Could you carry that into the spiritual realm? Some people are drawn toward spiritual things? You’ll have to admit that not everyone has a drawing toward Christ, but those who do are the ones to whom the scriptures mean so much.

Soren. So to those who aren’t drawn as directly...

Wallace. They’ll never understand the scriptures the same way. You take a congregation Sunday morning. The pastor brings a message, and he wonders how many people have received it in the sense of understanding – in the sense of moving toward it, instead of away from it. It’s in everyday life – this tendency toward one thing or another. Some people are fleshly or carnal. Some Christians are spiritual. And I don’t know all the involvements. I only know that I’ve got a spiritual life to maintain, and I must maintain it. And that’s where I think somebody hiding behind a hypocrite – “Others do it, so I can...” No, you can’t do that. You have your own soul to care for. And I think the closer we live to the Lord, the more he’ll reveal to us of his word and of his will and of his love. That will always come to us. But it doesn’t come to people who don’t give any attention to the Lord. You can’t get the blessings out of the written word without reading it. But if you do read it, God has promised to speak to you by it. And he does. I’ve found it so.

Soren. It’s a beautiful parable.

Wallace. Yes. There’s several facets to it. There’s the concept of the spiritual value of the word of God, which is the seed. The life is in the seed. And I think we have to approach the Bible with a sense of it being God’s Word, and with the prayer in our hearts that God will speak to us by it. It is seed. It has light. And yet God speaks to us in other ways too. But when God speaks, it’s God doing the speaking. I would dread the day if it should ever come that I would find no interest in the scriptures – that I could lay them aside and read other literature instead. I dread the day when I would ever lose my love for the Word of God – *if* that day should ever come, which I trust it never will. Because to me, one of the assurances of eternal life is that you *want* what eternal life has

got to offer. And if you don't feel a drawing toward the Lord, then your spiritual exercises will languish. Eventually you'll have a brownout in your spirit, which I think many Christians do have.

Soren. By "Brownout," you mean a falloff in growth?

Wallace. Well, when fall comes and our leaves turn brown, they've lost their life, their vitality. They're not going to grow anymore. They're going to fall off and die. I'm afraid a lot of Christians are that way, where they have lost out spiritually, so to speak, when they were young. Their hearts burned with love to the Lord. "Did not our hearts burn within us when he spoke to us by the way?"

Well, the laity in church are growing lukewarm. Neither cold nor hot – it happens in churches and in human hearts as well. I don't want it to happen to me. I'm kind of fearful.

Soren. Have there been times in your own ministry when you've felt a "brownout"?

Wallace. I think all of us have those experiences. We can't live on the mountaintop. We have to live in the valley, partly. When you stop to think of it, everything on the mountaintop has to be grown in the valley, and it's carried up to the mountaintop by someone else. It's not really yours until you bring it up from the valley and let the Lord bless it on the mountaintop, I guess. That's a bit of mysticism (*smiles*).

Soren. You're not going to cite your French or English mystic sources?

Wallace. No (*smiles*). Well, we've seen in our day – not too far distant in the past – the failures of some of God's great saints. And you realize that it's a possibility. Swaggert ... so many others. I don't think we should live with fear of failure in the Christian life. But we should live with the consciousness that there is such a thing, and we ought to watch. "Take heed to yourself, lest your hearts be overcharged. Drunkenness, cares of this life, so on.

Soren. "Put on the armor."

Wallace. Yes. "Put on the armor. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit." I think it's the one *offensive* element in the Christian's armor – the Word of God – the offensive weapon. Yes, "Put on the whole armor of God. The breastplate of righteousness." That protects the heart. That's the most evident piece of the armor – our Christian life, and the righteousness of our behavior. That's what people see is our Christian character. The helmet of salvation.

Soren. I suppose we could draw a connection to the mind – "take every thought captive."

Wallace. Yes, that's right. There's a whole field for investigation, I think: the study of the mind and its place in the Christian life. "Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, that you may prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Soren. Do you mean a study of how the mind is referred to in scripture?

Wallace. Yes. We have a hymn, "Let the Mind of Christ Be in Me." Regeneration has to effect the mind. The mind has to be converted. "Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth."

Soren. "For where your heart is, there is your treasure also."

Wallace. Yes, that's right. But your feet have to walk in the right way, your hands be engaged with what they ought to be engaged with. We used to sing in Sunday school:

*Be careful little eyes what you see
For your Father up above is looking down in love
Be careful little eyes what you see*

And that goes for the whole body. Yes. Is this your Bible?

Soren. Yes, I think it's the same New Revised Standard that you have.

Wallace. This was the text that was used in Wheaton College when Betty was there.

Soren. It includes the apocrypha. Have you ever spent much time reading through the apocrypha?

Wallace. No, that's something that I've neglected. Strange, I've never felt a liking for it, although I've had several copies. Here, I think that's Betty's book. I've read some from it, but I've used other texts.

Soren. You feel most at home in the King James?

Wallace. Well, the American Revised is good. I think when it first came out, they said it was the closest they could possibly come to the original writings in the way of translations and interpretation. If you turn to the book of Job, I think you'll find that Betty has underlined some passages there. I suppose that's what she was studying in school.

Soren. It's interesting how Job curses the day of his birth. The apostolic church father Origen took this to mean that we shouldn't celebrate our birthdays – he referred to his birthday as a cursed day.

Wallace. There's an interesting thing I was reading in the book of Jeremiah the other day. He comes to a place where he cursed the day of this birth, and expressed that feeling of depression – spiritual depression.

Soren. "Cursed be the day on which I was born (20:14)."

Wallace. The verse is often used by pastors who want to lift their congregation somewhat.

Soren. Hardly an encouraging verse, though?

Wallace. Well it shows that things could always be worse, I suppose (*Kirk returns from his errands in Rockford*). Kirk, did you find something interesting? It was a worthy afternoon? Did you buy something?

Kirk. No, out of money.

Wallace. Let's have prayer first. Our gracious God and heavenly Father. Thou hast been in our past up until now, and has blessed us in so many ways and has kept us from evil and we thank thee. Pray thee to guide us through the rest of the way, and keep us faithful to thee, regardless of what may happen. We pray for our loved ones. Bless Derek today, and Tom and Ginger in a special manner. We thank thee for them – their commitment to Christ. Be with Soren and Kirk. Bring them safely on their way home, though we pray that thou wilt take care of them in every way. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. We ask those words in their behalf today. Bless we pray, their future, and give them wisdom and guidance and direction and give them a heart to serve thee and to love thee and to honor thee and to do thy will. In all things guide us and lead us. We thank thee for these days of spiritual refreshment as we have pondered the things of God. They've meant much to us. Bless, we pray, the evening hours. In Jesus name, amen.

Soren. Grandpa, a pleasure as always.

Wallace. Some pleasures are mutual. They are mutual.

Kirk. Thanks for the birthday card, grandpa.

Wallace. Oh, did that come today?

Kirk. Yesterday.

Wallace. Oh, yesterday? Oh good. You're eighteen now. Will they let you drive now?

Kirk. I've been driving for a couple years.

Wallace. I don't know what the rule is today.

Soren. How's that walking stick (*grandpa walks us to the door*)?

Wallace. Oh, that walking stick. I forget it so much of the time. "Walk with the Lord and you'll walk straight." How's that (*smiles*)? Come up again, both of you. So happy to talk to you. An inspiration.

Soren. Some feelings are mutual.

Wallace. Maybe so. Say hi to mother and dad, and Derek, when he comes.

III

August 16, 1998, Afternoon

Soren. I brought coffee for us – with cream.

Wallace. Great, I don't need the sugar. Very good... Do you know Philip Yancey?

Soren. I've heard a lot about him.

Wallace. If you make an acquaintance with him, he'd be a real value to you. He's got so much to offer. He's got a lot of good connections. He's on the staff, I guess, of *Christianity Today*. (The clock chimes four o'clock.) Oh, four o'clock. Betty bought me that clock. See it up there?

Soren. Kirk and I saw a Stephen Spielberg film last night called "Saving Private Ryan." It portrays in gruesome detail the invasion of Normandy.

Wallace. Does dad speak about the war much?

Soren. Very little.

Wallace. Of course he was in the Vietnam War.

Soren. What were your feelings when dad went off to Vietnam?

Wallace. I don't know. We had servicemen all the time. Rachel's brother went to Guadal Canal. That was in World War II. That wasn't Vietnam. There was a lot of agitation about Vietnam. Yes. And a lot of folks didn't like it – that is, that we shouldn't be there. But I'll have to admit I wasn't overly apprehensive about Tom. I knew he loved the Lord, and we prayed constantly for him. Somehow I felt the Lord was going to bring him through. Yes, and the Lord did. He came home to get married – which you're going to celebrate. Thirty years ago. Have another one (cookie), Soren.

Soren. It was a war that split the country.

Wallace. Well the country split all-right.

Soren. You were at Elim Evangelical Free Church during the 60s.

Wallace. Yes.

Soren. Did anyone in your congregation lose children in Vietnam?

Wallace. I don't believe we lost a one. We didn't have young people that age, particularly. Well, that coffee's very good. K-Mart coffee?

Soren. McDonald's coffee.

Wallace. Oh, McDonald's coffee. Good. No, we weren't exactly overly apprehensive. We had been in Hong Kong for ten months, so we were pretty well acquainted with the Orient – the geography. Because we had been there, we weren't too anxious. Was he apprehensive?

Soren. I think so.

Wallace. He was a chaplain's assistant. Did some flying.

Soren. We were talking about ethnic identity the other day. As a first generation American, to what degree do you think of yourself as patriotic?

Wallace. Well, I think my attitude toward my country was colored by my mother and dad. They were so happy to be in America. They were so proud of being Americans. Dad always had a U.S. flag flying from our porch on, well, Flag Day and Fourth of July and so on. Always so proud of being an American. Your dad has, I think, if he still has it, his citizenship papers. It was quite a gift they gave your dad.

Soren. Was the study of American history important to you and your parents?

Wallace. We all got that in school. We always had U.S. history. I was brought up in that—be loyal to your country, loyal to your flag, loyal to your church, loyal to your family. “Loyalty” was a big word in our day, or at least the concept was. I could never understand these younger Americans that rebelled against the country, rebelled against the flag, displayed their rebellion. Some of them went to England. Some of them went to Canada. Some of them even went to Sweden to get away from the draft and the necessity of supporting our country. I can never understand that. I can’t understand the frame of mind that would lead someone to do that. I hope you don’t feel rebellious toward your country.

Soren. Did you ever hear your parents speak of the faith of the founding fathers or American history?

Wallace. No.

Soren. In a sense, we can compare immigration to America with Paul’s discussion of the “engrafted” branch into the early church.

Wallace. I think the “engrafted” word as used in scripture has a far more significant meaning. It means that in God’s plan, God turned to the Gentiles instead of the Jews as the area in which his grace was to be displayed. I’ve never felt “engrafted” in America. It’s my homeland. Maybe if I had citizenship elsewhere...

Soren. In studying, say, the Civil War, I’m continually saying to myself, “None of my ancestors were even on this continent during that war.” It makes identifying with the American experience to some degree an imaginative undertaking.

Wallace. Well, in America you accept your heritage. You accept the past. You have to accept the ancestry – even though it may not be yours. You have to do that. As a Christian, you accept the Church and the Bible, and the cross, and the Savior, not because you were alive at the time, but because you are a partaker of its benefits. I think a man ought to be loyal to his church, and real loyal to the Lord. I don’t understand the rebellion that has seeped into the various young people today.

Soren. We were talking the other day about church and state becoming nearly indistinguishable in Sweden. Do you see the same drift in America?

Wallace. No. You see, in Sweden and in England and much of Europe, you have a state church. The Italians had the Catholic church. Germans are Reformed. Swedes had the Lutheran Church. And the church was a government function. They took care of the statistics, births, marriages, deaths, and so on. But being a Swede meant that you were a Lutheran, because you couldn't be a Swede without being a Lutheran. But we don't have that. That's what's wrapped up in our squabbles today between the church and state. We don't have a state religion. Britain does.

Soren. Do you ever think about the decision your parents' families made to immigrate?

Wallace. I've come a long way. I accepted many years ago the doctrine of God's providential leading in the life of his children. And I believe that these decisions were not made casually, or were without divine direction. I think it was God's will that mother should come to America, that dad should come. That they should meet together as Christian young people in the Roseland church, Chicago area. I think it was God's will that I was born into that family. I've been trying to find God's will and do it ever since. But I had that strong conviction, a strong doctrinal base that God is leading in providential ways. I can't believe that such a text as "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on thine own understanding. But acknowledge him in all thy ways and he shall direct thy path." I don't believe that's put in the Bible with anything else except the sheer divine integrity. So we say, let God lead you. Let God guide you. Believe in his guidance, and put his hand upon your life. Does that help any? See, my deficient faith, patriotism, and all the rest is just rolled into one package. But overall is a belief in God, in the word of God, and in the providences of God.

Soren. You see it all as "one package," as you put it, yet it seems we Americans are adept at compartmentalizing our lives.

Wallace. Compartmentalize?

Soren. To see everything in it's own little box, to lose the unity.

Wallace. I haven't thought that much about it, but I guess that's what it is. To me, it hasn't been that way. My religious faith is my Christian beliefs. My faith was never shadowed. I went to college. It wasn't an educational venture. It was to dwell over the Lord's leadings. Will you excuse me a minute? I don't always put my hearing aid in every day, but today I didn't, and I need it (*smiles*).

Soren. In looking back on the history of the church, do you think we can, as someone put it, stand on the shoulders of giants?

Wallace. That's a common concept. It's been uttered in many different forms, like "We stand on the shoulders of the past." Yes, we do that. There's an accumulation of knowledge. We're growing all the time in our vast store of knowledge. And of course we have the advantage of past discoveries and revelations.

Soren. In your ministry, have you looked back to early church writers to see how they dealt with different issues?

Wallace. Oh, I guess so. I don't. There are some people – modernists perhaps, you might call them – that think of the body of Christianity as a moldable thing, always changing, always getting bigger. I can't view it that way. To me, the Christian faith is a static body of doctrine. "Contend earnestly for the faith" is the way it's put in one of the epistles. "Contend earnestly for the faith." But that means contending for a body of doctrine. The doctrine changes in some ways, but not to the extent in which it loses its original meaning. If that's the way to put it, I don't know.

Take, for instance, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. It's in the New Testament. Christ was the messiah, the son of God. But it wasn't until about 300 that the Council of ... which one was it? The Arians were putting forth the doctrine that there was a time when he was not – not identifying the time, but looking back over the past, that Christ had a beginning. But there was Anastasia [sp] that fought that. And out of it came the Apostle's Creed, and the doctrine was inherent in the scriptures and in the belief of early Christians. I can't say that it changed. I just believe that we came to a clearer knowledge. I know that the word of God has a lot to say about the return of Christ. I can't for the life of me develop a chronological sequence of events from the scriptures, but I do know that Christ is coming. I do know that the things that the Bible predicts will be true. The coming of the son of man. The battle of Armageddon. The apostasy of the church – that is, the falling away from the true doctrine, which I think we're seeing right today. Very much so.

Soren. In what way?

Wallace. Well, I think the process is going on right away – right now. Every cult displays an aberration of Christian doctrine. And they vary – Mormons in one direction, Jehovah's Witnesses in another. They're all aberrations of true faith, and might have a little truth in them too. But then the new doctrine – what do they call it again? I forget. There are so many things. Take "meditation doctrine." It's an aberration of Christian thought – some truth in it.

Soren. What is "meditation doctrine"?

Wallace. It swept over Europe and America a couple generations ago – where through meditation, you can arrive at a higher state of spirituality.

Soren. You mentioned Anthanasius, one of church fathers who wrote passionately in defense of the doctrine of the Trinity. Today it seems that we lack such passionate apologists for the faith.

Wallace. The Church isn't very militant today. It was more so when I was growing up. It was in the fundamentalism at its birth, and modernism, and the two were surge points all the time. And you could expect the pastor of a fundamental church to be very passionate in favor

of his interpretation of the scriptures. But I think we are drifting toward a period of ... well, we lack the passion. Yes. We have come to believe that everything is relative. He's got his interpretation. I've got mine. We have to live with each other, so we must have a good deal of patience with each other. There's a word I'm hunting for but I can't find it right now...

Soren. Tolerance?

Wallace. Tolerance, yes. That's the word. We're becoming so tolerant that we're becoming flat. We don't believe in anything very particular. "He's got his way. I've got mine. So what? We'll all get there." It isn't true. It's one of the greatest enemies of the church today – a tolerance that pervades many pastorates and churches.

It's got a political aspect to it. We've had to take in people from China, India, Latin America, and all. And we've been exposed to tolerance as a principle of living together. But people are afraid to speak out their true beliefs, if they have any. It's very convenient not to have any these days (*smiles*). Yes, it might be heresy to you.

Soren. In what ways do you think this lukewarm attitude or tolerance has made inroads into the church in your lifetime?

Wallace. Everything, in a way. I think the TV has been a big help in diffusing religious thought. And you can't hear, at least I don't hear at all, the true Christian gospel over the radio or the TV. We have a Christian radio station here in Rockford that does very well to stand up to what they believe. It's helping the churches a good deal to see what they've got, and what they don't want. The big word today seems to be integration. We want to integrate nationalities, races, and then ideas. And religious thought.

Soren. Thinking of Athanasius, how do you imagine he'd see the church in America if he were to appear among us today?

Wallace. I don't think he could do that. He belonged to his own age, and his age created him and gave him his arena of life and service, and so on. I don't think he could adjust to present day thought (*smiles*).

The church goes through periods. The Reformation was one, where doctrines are emphasized. One doctrine against another. For myself, I would find it easy to designate myself as a Calvinist.

Soren. When we discussed Luke eight the other day ("For some it is known, and others its to be told in parables"), you gave yourself away as a predestinationalist.

Wallace. Well, I can't be anything other than a predestinationist [*sp*] (*smiles*)! I believe that my eternal security rests upon God's word. I'm sure that Calvin and Luther, too – although they didn't see eye to eye – were both divinely called, empowered, enlightened.

Soren. Have Calvin's *Institute's* helped you in your ministry?

Wallace. I don't know if they've helped. I have a set, but they're up at Dave's. He has my books. I couldn't carry them down here with me. So

I left them with him. He's going to inherit them, I guess (*smiles*). But I had a copy of Calvin's writings. There have been some great books that one can't help but prosper by reading. Luther did a tremendous amount of writing, and left a great heritage. Arminius did the same, so we have Arminian doctrine. I don't know, but I'd think you'd find it. You'd have to go to some theological seminary library to find a copy of Arminius.

Soren. Speaking of Calvin and Luther, how do you see them? Do you see their writings anywhere in a hierarchy of inspired writings?

Wallace. Well, if you take inspiration as a sort of a natural gift, I can't believe that Calvin, for instance, was divinely inspired so that what he writes cancels out everything that anybody else wrote. That isn't the inspiration we're speaking of. Probably that they've been divinely ordained in the sense that they were doing what God meant that they should do. And I've never been able to put one against the other. I'll take them all. Luther was a great man that I have to stand by, and Calvin, and Zwingley, and Knox. Others. Wycliffe.

I long ago came to the conclusion that I don't have to know everything, that it is impossible for me to know everything, that I have to leave some things with God, with the divine author, even though I don't understand what has been written. I believe in the divine providence – the sovereign will of God, that God does what he pleases. But I also have to believe in the free will of man, and I can't for the life of me put them together in my head. They're like two railroad [tracks] running down the road together, and never seem to join. But someday we'll understand what today we can't understand.

But I believe with all my heart that the sovereignty of God is one of our cardinal Christian doctrines, and yet not to the extent that it cancels out man's responsibility or the choices of his life. "Whosoever believeth shall have eternal life." And I believe the verse is true. But you have to believe that God in his sovereign grace will bring you to that point, I think. "Salvation is by grace through faith. Not of yourselves, it's the gift of God, lest any man should boast." But there's a responsibility of choosing, and I've given many invitations in my life believing that God was speaking to the folks through the service. Some are at the point of receiving or rejecting.

Soren. When you gave alter calls, was that part of the service planned or impromptu?

Wallace. Most of the time it's an impromptu decision because you feel that the Holy Spirit is working in the congregation, and the Lord – the Holy Spirit – leads you as you preach. And you say things you never intended to say, never thought of even. And I've had that experience over and over again, which the Holy Spirit brings. And I think most alter calls ... not Billy Graham. He's got it all planned out (*smiles*). But he's not the average. No, he's not an average preacher.

Soren. In your sermon notes, you never seemed to have written down the details.

Wallace. Not very much, no.

Soren. You just wrote the main points. Did you stick to such bare outlines on principle?

Wallace. I've never been able to write my sermons ahead of time. I study them. I memorize a train of thought, and if there are key words or phrases or if the outline progresses mechanically down a certain road, I'd write it out and take it into the pulpit with me. I've preached through so many a message without looking at my notes at all. Just for the simple reason that I got the message in my mind – yes, a train of thought. It doesn't mean I'm speaking extemporaneously, because I can't do that. I've never been able to do that very well.

Soren. Take me through a normal week of your ministry. You must have developed some kind of rhythm over the years.

Wallace. My sermon preparation begins on Tuesday, usually. And I would ponder possibilities of topics and somehow I'd be able to decide on one. I always have to feel that it's the Lord's leading, and all week long, that sermon is on my mind. No matter what I'm doing, it's there in the background. And I keep building it through the week, so that when Friday or Saturday come, I have it pretty well in mind. I've never been able to sit down with a pencil and a piece of paper and write out a sermon particularly. Unless, of course, it's at the end of the week, and I've pondered it a good deal, and I know what I should be saying. I'd be guided by always having a sermon that has to be preached.

Soren. Did you ever discuss the sermon with anyone before preaching it?

Wallace. No. It was always my own (*smiles*), and I very seldom repeated a message, because I just couldn't do that. It had to be fresh for me, and if I was called to preach somewhere, I could preach one of my old sermons. But I had to live it through again till it was fresh in my own mind and heart. The Christian life and the Christian faith – the Christian ministry has always been a living thing to me. It's not dead, mechanical ... like a teacher getting a lesson prepared for next week. That's not sermon preparation. No. And sometimes I'd sweat blood almost (*smiles*) come Saturday night and I still don't have it clear and plain in my mind, and yet I had to preach the next day. So many times I dreaded to go into the pulpit because some of the things I didn't have to say, or because I didn't see things too clearly. Somehow or other, one way or another, it was a difficult thing to preach. But after the sermon has been delivered, then I have a sense of great relief and release. And that goes for the Sunday morning service. Sunday evenings were different. You had what you might call the more consecrated Christians present. And I had a lot more liberty and freedom in the evening, and I could extemporize a little bit.

Soren. So you had two sermons to prepare?

Wallace. Oh yes, and I had one Wednesday night, too. Prayer meeting.

Soren. You began preparing the Sunday sermon on Tuesday, but when did you prepare for the Wednesday message?

Wallace. Oh, different ways. Wednesday night was not a preaching service. It was Bible study, and that's an altogether different kind of presentation. And sometimes I would carry along a theme. Sometimes we'd go through a book on Wednesday evenings. Sometimes a doctrinal theme.

Soren. On Tuesday morning you went to your office and literally, you faced the entire body of scripture, Christian thought, and experience. How did you choose a theme? In churches which have liturgical calendars, the scripture reading is predetermined, which must ease the pressure in finding a theme.

Wallace. It does. I could never work that way. But that's the way a lot of pastors do work.

Soren. So how did you choose?

Wallace. Well, you pray. You read the scriptures. Somehow something comes to you. You feel a dominant theme that the Lord wants you to deal with. It might be the Lord's return. It might be baptism. It might be tithing. It might be faith, hope, fear, anxiety. Oh, you've got so much. But I've found that there's only one theme that comes up from all the rest, and that's the Lord's leading for that Sunday. And time after time I've gone into the pulpit feeling that the Lord's with me in a very special way today because he's given me a text that I know is of the Holy Spirit's renewing. And that sort of becomes a pattern of life for me as a pastor. I can't speak for other pastors.

The dominant motif in my life as I've preached has been always to feed the flock of God, always give them something of spiritual food and nourishment. You don't want to give pabulum. You know what that is? Baby food. Paul writes to the Hebrews and he says "I've wanted to give you something more significant but you haven't been able to take it." I guess he repeats himself on that theme several times in the New Testament. But a congregation will grow spiritually if the pastor will feed them on the word of God. But he has to be committed to that, and he must do it. You can't back off from that pattern of ministry and service, and I think that you can't be a spiritual man ... or that is, you can't have a spiritual congregation without being a spiritual man yourself. Because what you have spills over to the congregation. And you shape the congregation. I think that an awful lot of teaching can be done from the pulpit. It doesn't have to be done in the counseling chamber. No. I think it's better done from the pulpit.

Soren. Because the congregation hears the message together?

Wallace. Yes, and it's impersonal. And you take it out of the life situation... That's right. Well, you'll have some wonderful experiences if you're going to be a pastor, if God calls you to that. But you'd better be sure he calls you, because there are some tough days in the ministry, and every pastor carries around with him so many of his own weak points. If you're tempted to discouragement, you'll have many discouraging days in the ministry. If you're tempted to be an extrovert, you have to be careful, because... The ministry itself will temper a man and you'll know where to go with your own troubles, know how to preach the word of God with wisdom. The Holy Spirit will lead you. The fact is the New Testament tells you that when you're before the court in a persecution day, don't plan a message to give to the court. The Holy Spirit will give you the words to say at the time you need them. The Holy Spirit's leading once again is wrapped up with the great doctrine of the providences of God.

Soren. Persecution and martyrdom always discipline the church, in a sense. Today we're living in the most materially blessed nation on earth, and we're certainly not being persecuted.

Wallace. No, we're not, and we're suffering for it. We've become anemic Christians. We don't have much passion, drive. I know it in my own life, that I don't have what I once had.

Soren. You mean passion?

Wallace. Yes. But one of the signs of the last days is that the church will become apostate. It will drift away from the faith, so to speak, from the body of truth, and from the life of truth. Because there won't be much preaching about deeper Christian life. And there isn't today, I don't think. "When the Lord comes, will he find the faith?" – one of the verses from the book of John. And the admission is there will be not a very large majority of people that will be committed to the Christian faith. A man who's tolerant isn't committed to anything.

Soren. Have there been times in your own life when you felt a sense of urgency akin to that felt by the martyrs of the church?

Wallace. I haven't felt in my ministry that I'm responsible for society, or for even my community in the sense that I feel responsible for my congregation. That's a different responsibility. And our congregation ... I've been very conscious of them, and my preaching has been with this in mind – that I may help them to grow in grace and draw closer to the Lord. I can't feel with the modern drive toward mega-churches, that I have to, or that is, [accept that the] duty of the pastor is to minister to a lot of unsaved people as though they were Christians, and think of them as the body of Christ, which they are not – if they haven't been converted.

I believe in the "New Birth." There comes a time in the life of the believer when he accepts God and Christ and the Bible and all the rest of it. When you join a political party, you have to accept the party's

platform. When you join the Communist Party, you have to be a communist. There's a body of teaching that you have to accept. And I don't think you can be a communist and a Christian at the same time, because I think the two bodies of doctrine contradict each other. But I think that when you become a Christian, there's a commitment that you make. And though you may not understand it all, it's there, and you have to acquaint yourself with it, grow into it, and live accordingly.

Soren. You mentioned Communism. For seventy years the church was nearly extinguished in the Soviet Union. In America it seems we take so much for granted.

Wallace. Well, I know. Someone once said lately that what America needs is a period of great persecution of Christians or it needs a war to bring us to a sense of dependence upon God. I don't know how true that is. War is hell. I can't think we need one, but it might be a purging element in the society. It's done much for Germany, cleansing the nation I think of a lot of elements in it that fostered the war.

Soren. In the case of WWII, what type of purging do you have in mind?

Wallace. Well, antisemitism for one thing. Nazism. I think there were a lot of Christians in Germany, but they were not very vibrant Christians, and just let things go on until they went too far. Then they couldn't do anything more except go with the tide, as it were. I think we ought to have a stronger opposition to social ills, social problems, and stronger doctrinal resistance to a lot of things that are being taught today as gospel truth. In other words, it's the opposite of tolerance (*smiles*).

Soren. Speaking of racism, how did you view your responsibility to your community and congregation during the Civil Rights Movement?

Wallace. I'll have to admit that they didn't affect us. I wasn't living in a diversified community. I was in Oak Lawn, and it was all white. The same was true in Beresford – it was all white. When I went to Seattle, some black(s) were there but they weren't in our church. I think if colored had come to our church, I could have accepted them. But I don't think my people could. Not all of them. It takes only a few to make them feel uncomfortable.

Soren. Was it a more racist time?

Wallace. As I've pondered it down through the years, I haven't been convinced in my own mind that we should mingle the races, diffuse the differences. I can't accept that yet. I'm no racist, but I can't... When you go through human history, and you go to Bible history, I think you'll find that in God's plan, so often it wasn't the melting together that was being taught, but rather the opposite. "Come yourselves apart and beith ye separate" said the Lord. And that was the gospel of the Old Testament and also the New. The Church is an entity in itself which is separated from world controls, world culture, world aspirations. You can't be a Christian and absorb all that's being offered today. The Lord God has made us as entities which start as an individual, and then we go on to

marry and we start a family. But it's one family amongst many others, and you don't try to mingle them together. "It takes a village to raise a family." Well, you've got some doctrine in there that isn't very Christian.

Soren. In what way?

Wallace. Well, you want to bring the family under the domain of a body of people that want to raise your family, whatever it might be, and in whatever way. But, it's not thinking of the family as an entity in itself that demands commitments, results. And then you go from the family, and we are all members of a city, and our city is unique in that it's not like other cities. And we govern ourselves. Schools are separated from one another. We have our states which are separate from each other. And then we go up to the country level, and we have our country. And why does our president want to develop a global concept, where our country makes all the decisions for everybody else? They've all got to be democracies (*smiles*). Why? I guess perhaps the democratic form of government is one of the most precarious – although that's the style these days.

But the tower of Babel – we are divided by language. We are divided by Christian convictions of one kind or another. We're divided by nationalities. We are not all men. Fifty percent of us are women. You see, I can't get the feeling that God wants us to get together and diffuse all of our differences so that a black and a white can intermarry and try to raise a family and so on and so forth. I can't accept that. The negatives are too great for me to swallow. You'll think of granddad as an ultra-conservative after awhile (*smiles*).

IV

August 22, 1998, Afternoon

Soren. Uncle Dave brought the book *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* down from St. Paul.

Wallace. Have you started anything on it? How'd you find it?

Soren. I've been reading about the revival movement in Sweden during the 1830s and 1840s. The author has a lot to say about the *lasare*.

Wallace. Yes, the word really means "readers".

Soren. Were they were looked down upon by the Lutherans?

Wallace. Well, it's always that way. I don't know about the whole of society, but there was the aristocracy in Sweden. And then there were the common people. And if you weren't in the aristocracy, life was rather hard for you. And that's why my mother and her sister came over – because there wasn't enough money to feed them on the other side. Yes.

Soren. Did your parents speak negatively of the aristocracy?

Wallace. No, they didn't talk about it, but it bubbled up in their conversation. Even in our little town of Kenosha, there were people with money and the people that worked (*smiles*).

Soren. You're speaking of the Swedish community?

Wallace. They did have a little Swedish community there, but it wasn't very large. And it was centered in two Swedish churches. One was the Lutheran, and then the Swedish Baptist, to which our folks belonged.

Soren. Did the wealthier Swedish immigrants usually end up in the Lutheran Church?

Wallace. Well, the Lutheran church was the state church over in Sweden and everybody belonged, but when you came over here, you didn't belong to any church. You were free until you joined some church. So the Swedish Lutheran people had their missionaries that established their church, and Baptist missionaries and others. So there were about five Swedish-speaking churches that developed: one was the Lutheran, one was the Baptist, one was the Mission Covenant, and then there was the Free Church. Is that five?

Soren. The Mission Friends?

Wallace. Yes, on this side of the water, it's turned into the Mission Covenant church. They didn't belong to the main Lutheran church. They were tended by people who wanted a little freedom of expression. But I think you'll get more out of that book than I can give you.

Soren. Lina Sandell is referred to as the "greatest hymnologist" of the *lasare* movement. "She preferred to remain anonymous, so the editor ... appended the initials 'L.S.,' and for more than forty years over this signature appeared winsome, appealing songs that brought comfort to thousands of homes in Sweden and America."

Wallace. Yes, they did. We still sing them. “Children of the Heavenly Father.”

Soren. Did your mother or father come from the province of Smaland?

Wallace. I don’t know whether mother was from Smaland or not. I kind of think she was. I’m sure she told me, but it didn’t really register.

Soren. Stephenson writes about Smaland: “The province in question, Smaland, is reputed to contain the poorest soil and the most versatile and energetic people in the entire kingdom. Perhaps Providence has endowed the Smalanning with a spirit that enables him to overcome the obstacles that nature has thrown in his way; or perhaps his will has been rendered indomitable and his wit sharpened as a result of a constant contest with rocks and stones that defy his hoe and dull his scythe and with late and early frosts that blight his crops. Perhaps his religious nature, his fondness for mystical scriptural passages, his ability to dream and to see visions were given to him as a solace for disappointments, periodical famines, and a table bare of everything but mere necessities except on extraordinary occasions, such as marriage or death of a member of his family. The industry, resourcefulness, and ambition of the Smalanning, combined with a ready tongue, a superstitious nature, and a delight in the mystical and the wonderful, is proverbial (*Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration*, p. 29).”

Wallace. They had to survive. Yes, I think it’s true that right from the central part of Sweden, where Smaland is, contributed so many immigrants to the American shores. I don’t know if we should let so many immigrants come in these days – like the Spanish and the Chinese and so on. But that’s the way my folks came in (*smiles*). When the doors were wide open, they came in and settled. America was know in those days as the “melting pot.”

Soren. It’s interesting how the revival in Sweden—led by George Scott—was closely linked to the temperance movement.

Wallace. Yes, I think he was a Methodist and anti-drink. I don’t know why, but for northern Europeans and all Europeans, I guess, drinking has always been a problem. We settled it on this side of the ocean with prohibition law, the eighteenth amendment, but it really didn’t last very long.

Soren. Do you think Prohibition was effective?

Wallace. I think it was. I don’t think it ever really had a chance because so much of the population was against it. So much money against it. No, I don’t think Prohibition ever really had a chance.

Soren. What have you been reading today? Are you still in Jeremiah?

Wallace. Yes, I read a couple chapters in Jeremiah this morning. I tried to. I don’t find it too relevant. That is, the society of that day was so different.

Soren. And you’re also reading Luke?

Wallace. Well, I was in the thirteenth chapter of Luke today.

Soren. I came to the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew this morning.

Wallace. There are several of the parables that have the wedding feast woven into the thought pattern. Was the one in the Matthew the one where a lot of folks didn't want to come?

Soren. Yes.

Wallace. "Go out into the highways and byways."

Soren. Yes, but earlier in the parable, the king destroyed the cities of the people who wouldn't attend his feast. Rather spiteful.

Wallace. The parable is told to present a truth, principle. And you have to read it that way. Try to get the main point of the parable.

Soren. "The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city... But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless (Mt. 22:7, 11-12)." Why would the king expect the poor whom he invited from the "highways and byways" to come in wedding garments?

Wallace. Somewhere there's an explanation. I don't know what it would be. I've heard some preachers say that at the oriental feasts, the host would give garments to his guests so they were all dressed alike. But whether that's true or not, I don't know. This man didn't have one on, for whatever reason. Even after they're invited from off the street, there's still a lot of preparation that you have to make.

Soren. How do you reconcile that with "For many are called but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14)"?

Wallace. Well, if you believe in the Calvin doctrine, than the invitation is open to all. It's what we can't possibly put together in our minds – the answers to all of these. By the way, *The Jesus I Never Knew* spends a lot of time in answering some of these problems.

Soren. How have you understood the verse – "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives... But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind (Lk. 14:12-13)"?

Wallace. I don't think you should take them literally. Rather, spoken in general terms. But I think it's very true that the poor are forgotten and ignored and disowned. And our Lord would help us to solve our social problems by reminding us that the poor are needy and they are worthy of our support.

Soren. Poor in the economic sense?

Wallace. Yes, needy in the spiritual sense.

Soren. These verses remind me of some books I've read on liberation theology.

Wallace. Yes, that's been a great movement in South America and up here in some churches. It's not considered exactly correct if your viewpoint is that of *our* orthodoxy.

Soren. During that debate, did you ever feel sympathetic to the cause of the liberation theologians?

Wallace. Well, I've not been exposed to the debates, but I'm sure that in my reading, I feel that they're emphasizing something that needs to be emphasized. But I think they go too far by revising their theology to...

Soren. They believe that the Catholic church should show "a preferential treatment to the poor."

Wallace. So many of the Catholic faithful are severely poor, particularly in South America and some other Third World states. I think you can probably use it as a guide to note that movements that are seemingly one-sided usually develop because the main doctrine of the church doesn't meet the need. I think that could be true of Pentecostalism. There was a long time when the Holy Spirit seemed to be ignored in our teaching and preaching, and Christian experience. Pentecostals took it up by emphasizing something that hadn't been emphasized ... been subdued, kind of like. I suppose with the theology we were speaking of, you could say the same, and that when one sees such a great need amongst the common people, you go out to meet them and do what you can, and arrange your theology to suit what you're doing.

Soren. Overcompensation, in that sense?

Wallace. Yes. I think in the Reformation, salvation was so much by works, but salvation by faith was preached in opposition to it or next to it. But the Reformation prospered because it had uncovered one of the main doctrines of the New Testament.

Soren. And was the doctrine then overemphasized?

Wallace. No, I don't think so. You can't overcompensate that, because it's at the heart of the Gospel message.

Soren. Do you think you can over-rationalize it?

Wallace. I don't think so. The Catholic Church says that they preach faith – salvation by faith, but it has to be a salvation that expresses itself in good works. So they untie the cord that way. I think many of our Protestant people are drifting away from salvation by faith and going to emphasizing works once again. I think that. So many programs in so many churches emphasize the fact that as Christians, we have to go out and work (*smiles*).

Soren. Instead of emphasizing a personal faith?

Wallace. Well to me, like I said once before to you, the big problem in Protestantism to me seems to be in the area of life. Excuse me a minute, I'll get that phone... Oh, there you've got it (hearing aid). Thank you. Let's see if fits here. I don't know if the battery is still alive. Oh, I think it is. Sure it is. Oh, that's good. Now I can hear better (*smiles*).

I think that's our weak spot is in not producing the quality of Christianity that would withstand the tests of martyrdom or withstand the encroachment of the world upon our personal lives. I remember when I was growing up that we had a lot of no-nos, but I think perhaps our parents went overboard in the negative aspects. But I think on the whole, they and their generation were correct on the matter of intuition. They had a feeling that some things were not right, and they held to their convictions. I don't know that anybody has that feeling. One generalization is this – that all things are right, all things are lawful. You can do anything that you please. And there is no such thing as “wrong.” If I'm feeling the pulse rightly in modern thought, which I can't claim to do...

Soren. Well, you've got your pulse on your family, and I suppose we're part of modern thought.

Wallace. Well, I thank God for my family. They've not gone down the road of indulgence and partaking of a lot of worldly amusements. But each member of the family has to accept Christian faith for themselves, and I can't do it for them, though I wish I could. (*Clock rings four o'clock.*) Four o'clock. Oh dear, how the time goes.

Soren. I had a friend in St. Petersburg who collected clocks. He said he collected them in order to remind himself that “there's so little time left.”

Wallace. Spends it all winding them up (*smiles*)? Well, I could think of better ways of keeping the mind alert.

Soren. How did you become interested in assembling clocks?

Wallace. We lived up in St. Paul at the time. I've always for a long time thought I would like to make a clock. So one day I just decided, I guess. They are not made from scratch. We get a kit, and the lumber is received rather rough-hewed. But there's a lot of carpentry in it, where you put the pieces together. And then you buy the works. They're not cheap. It costs about a thousand dollars to make one of them. But you've got a piece of furniture that you'll keep for a long time, if you've done good work on it. Yes.

Soren. Grandfather clocks.

Wallace. Yes, that's what they call them (*smiles*).

Soren. Besides the clocks, did you do other things in the workshop?

Wallace. Oh, I did a lot of little things, yes. Nothing as ambitious as this. Paul thought that instead of having a big grandfather's clock, he would like to have a clock that hangs on the wall. A winding clock. So I made him one of those. They were very nice. If I could have kept at it, I could have made another one or two.

Soren. How long did it take you to make each one?

Wallace. Oh, I don't know. You work on it till it's done, I guess. Hours don't mean much then. I don't think I ever enjoyed doing anything quite as much as I did enjoy making those grandfather clocks.

Soren. When you were raising the family, did you have any hobbies?

Wallace. No. It wasn't till I got up to Minnesota and had our home up there that I really had the time and the place for kind of a hobby – craft. But there I had the time and the place. It was just so ideal for me. I hated to leave it. But we do leave things, don't we?

Soren. My clearest memories of Minnesota are the walks we took together.

Wallace. Oh, we did have some walks, didn't we? Yes, we had some lakes up there that we could walk beside. I used to do a lot of walking up there.

Soren. Henry David Thoreau said he did his best thinking when he went on walks. Would you say the same is true for yourself?

Wallace. So many times I would use the time in prayer, quoting scripture to myself, nourishing my own spiritual life that way. Creative thinking ... I don't know. My sermons were always on my mind, so I know I must have thought of them much of the time. Up there, they built up around us so much that we were in a village all the time – couldn't escape it.

Soren. You mentioned last week that you didn't want grandma taking a leadership position in the church. You also said that your domain was the Sunday service and its preparation. How did that affect your relationship with grandma and the way you raised your family?

Wallace. I think really when it came to the work of the church, it was a long project with me. The children were not brought into it. I never brought up any church problems at home. But Betty was just saying the other day, though I didn't realize at the time, that I was spending more time at the church than I was at the home with the family. I'm sorry for that now, but that was her evaluation. Yes. We had too many meetings at night and so on. But I was always home for breakfast, and I was usually home for the evening meal. I remember once one of the men of the church wanted to talk to me about something and he tried to set up a supper date with me. How I warded him off (*smiles*). I didn't want to go to a restaurant to eat supper when the family was having dinner at home. So very seldom did I miss any of the meals.

Soren. Did you have family devotions at each meal?

Wallace. We always had prayer at the meals. I tried morning devotions through the years, but I don't know, I don't think I was very successful.

Soren. I remember having devotions from *Our Daily Bread* at the kitchen table with you and grandma in Kenosha.

Wallace. Yes, that was one of them. We carried on daily devotions, but I don't know that any of the children have carried on. Their programs have been so different than mine. But if it's in the heart, you'll have it at the table.

Soren. During the course of your ministry, did you have special family friends in your congregations whom you invited over to the home? How did you extend hospitality without having “favorites”?

Wallace. Mostly, I think, by not inviting regularly the church families. There were occasions when they would come in. Sometimes we’d have a committee in our home and serve coffee and such. But I never felt the tension between members of the church. Somehow we treated them all alike and gave the impression that they were all alike to us.

Soren. In Oakland, it seems that your home was very open to the servicemen.

Wallace. Yes, the servicemen coming through. Yes, we had so many of them. Many times they’d come in on Sunday unannounced, and then it’s so easy to invite them in for a meal. And Rachel always worked it. I think her favorite meal on Sunday—or her best one—was pot-roast. She’d put it in the oven before church began or Sunday school, and it would be ready to eat when we came home. You adjust yourself to the needs of the program, I guess I’d say. Rachel was wonderful in hospitality. So many were invited over to her house. And it wasn’t the elite of the church – of which there wasn’t too much. Mostly all just common ordinary people. I remember once, we were going to have a New Year’s Eve service. We always had those—a New Year’s Eve church service. One year we had – was it a storm? I think maybe an earthquake, but we couldn’t have our meeting in the church because there wasn’t any power. So we got some candles, and lit them all around our parsonage living room and had the service there (*smiles*). Yes.

We experienced quite a few little earthquakes, tremors. Nothing big while we were there. We had a couple visiting us from Kenosha at the time, and they were with us. They said they wanted to experience an earthquake (*smiles*), and we had one. And they wanted to experience a blackout, and they got one of those when they were visiting us.

Soren. Looking back, do you have a happiest time of your ministry?

Wallace. No, I think I’ve enjoyed all of our churches. There isn’t any that I’d choose.

Soren. That’s very diplomatic of you, grandpa.

Wallace. Well, we had the church in Oakland, then we had the church in Beresford. I think that’s where the children were happiest. Then we had the church in Oak Lawn. I was there thirteen years as pastor, so I think that would be the church that I would say we maybe enjoyed most or felt more a sense of achievement there than otherwheres. Then we went to Seattle, and that was not the happiest church for us.

Soren. In what way?

Wallace. Well, in the first place, the church was not as united as it could be. It was a combination of the Swedish Free Church and the Norwegian Free Church. They decided at the time when the denominations merged that they should merge. So in Seattle there was

the United Free Church. We were mostly united in name (*smiles*). It's hard to overcome those nationality things.

Soren. How did the disunity manifest itself in church life?

Wallace. Well, I don't know. You'd just feel it in the air. Rachel was downtown one day and what was ... the store was the Frederick Nelson, which was the subsidiary of Marshall Fields. And she was just walking past the store, and she heard a thumping behind her. A girl had jumped out from the third or fourth story and killed herself on the sidewalk right behind Rachel. It affected her a great deal. She didn't seem to get over it very quickly. There were little incidents in Seattle that made it not the happiest church. We didn't have the unity that we did in our other churches and the congregations.

Soren. Was grandma depressed after witnessing this suicide?

Wallace. Oh, I don't know if depression was the word. She was nervous, and thought about it. Anxious. It affected her. I tried to make nothing of it just to relieve her mind, but it affected her badly.

Soren. She brought it up often in conversations?

Wallace. Oh yes. And I could tell many times that she was thinking of it. I miss her a great deal. I think of her over and over through the day and night. But that's the way it goes – doesn't it?

Soren. How did you and grandma date?

Wallace. In the usual term of the word, we didn't date each other because we weren't living in the same locality. She was living in St. Paul and I was up in north Minnesota. We wrote to each other every day. Never missed a day.

Soren. For how long?

Wallace. Until we got married.

Soren. And that was how long?

Wallace. A year. It was a pleasure to write to her. I think perhaps I was able to visit the Twin Cities maybe half-a-dozen times during our waiting period. But we never had many dates. I can't say that we knew each other very well.

Soren. Where and when did you first meet?

Wallace. We had a church conference in the United St. Paul Church. She was a member there. Her family was. And I saw her singing in the choir. She impressed me a great deal (*smiles*). So I made a visit over at the bank where she worked.

Soren. You approached her after the service?

Wallace. No, really she was working in the bank close to the church. She was a secretary to the president. Of course, it wasn't a big bank. It was a state bank, I think. She was taking a teller's window one day (*smiles*), and I just went in. I had a check to cash, so it was easy to go for that window (*smiles*). And we recognized each other, and maybe I asked her for a date at that time before I went back to northern Minnesota.

Soren. And she said yes to your invitation?

Wallace. Well, she was ready. We got to know each other by writing letters to each other. I've got a big box of her letters here.

Soren. Did she save your letters?

Wallace. She did, but I don't know just where her letters are now that I sent her.

Soren. Was it love at first sight?

Wallace. Definitely. Yes.

Soren. You're a romantic.

Wallace. I know. I know *(smiles)*.

Soren. How does a romantic survive in a country full of pragmatists?

Wallace. Well, I guess they'd have a hard time. I don't know *(smiles)*. I've never seen a country full of pragmatics, though. When a man and a woman get together and they feel attracted to each other, there's just something that takes place. It's a universal experience. Everybody has the experience, though the romantic flair doesn't always continue to burn brightly. When they say that half of the marriages in this country end up in divorce, that's a terrible commentary on our social life, on our character as persons. We don't feel committed to anything in particular. Yes.

Soren. The divorce rate must have been much lower in the thirties.

Wallace. Oh yes, much lower. But we were all different individuals in those days. The Depression came, and we weathered it. Whether the present generation has the fortitude to weather a depression, I don't know. It took a lot of character, and a lot of commitment.

Soren. When you look back at the Depression, what stands out as the most trying aspect of it?

Wallace. I don't know. You can read some book on the Depression and you'll know all the answers. I don't know what to say. For me and my family... My dad was working at the auto factory. And they were hard-pressed, because there was a consumer product that not everybody could afford to buy. So his working days were very few during the Depression days. But somehow or other they managed too. I wasn't home at the time.

Soren. How often did you see your parents during the Depression?

Wallace. I'd see them quite often. I'd visit them, surely.

Soren. Was alcoholism a big problem during the Depression?

Wallace. We never used alcohol. No, it wasn't quite the social problem that it is now. Young people drinking – we never heard of that. There are some things that one ought never to touch. We never went to the theater. We didn't spend any money on the theater. I remember I used to preach against it, too. The pictures on the billboard outside the theater – when I'd refer to them, I'd say, "If that's what it is on the outside, what is it on the inside?" So there was a feeling that it wasn't a

place where one should sit and indulge their thoughts and minds and fantasies. Even today I don't attend them.

Soren. Have you ever been to a movie theater?

Wallace. Oh yes, there have been times. But I mean it isn't habitual. "Chariots of Fire" – we were living in St. Paul at the time. We went to that. Of course that was a sanctified film (*smiles*).

Soren. Do you remember a feeling of relief when the country came out of the Depression?

Wallace. The country never really came out of the Depression. There were a lot of things that we tried. But I remember the Depression lasting up until the War began. The War pulled us out of the Depression. That's what did it. It wasn't any particular program, although some programs were very good and helped people to secure a paycheck once in a while.

Soren. The WPA?

Wallace. Yes. But it was really the coming of the war that brought everybody back to work again and began the age of prosperity.

Soren. During the war years, did you ever preach on the topic of war?

Wallace. No. Somehow we were so wrapped up in our own way of life that we didn't think much... But there were several in our congregation that had men in the war and I know that they would go down to the picture show. I think maybe it was the government, but I'm not sure. But they would have films – war films, we called them. And our people went down to see the films to see if they could see their relatives in it.

We had one of our young men in the Oakland church. He was in the army, and he was in the Battle of the Bulge. He never wanted to talk much about it. He said it was terrible, and of course it was. But he survived and came back home. And when I read about the Battle of the Bulge, I realize how difficult it was because I think that was one of the low spots in the war for the Allied side and German side both. They were both exhausted, I think. But we had a good Air Force coming up, and I think that saved the day for us. Yes. Two wars I've lived through – both of them called World Wars.

Soren. In your reading of scripture, have you found any reason to be pacifist?

Wallace. I guess I've never made up my mind because I haven't had to. I know there was a lot of discussion, and a lot of fellows went to Canada. Went to Sweden, many of them did. Just any place to escape. AWOL.

Soren. The Mennonites are pacifists.

Wallace. The Mennonites and Hutterites and many liberals, like President Clinton (*smiles*).

Soren. What do you think of the US attacks of Sudan and Afghanistan last week?

Wallace. I'm troubled about it. It doesn't seem to me that it was necessary. But maybe it was. I'll have to believe that he had a lot more information than I did, that he did the right thing. But there's a lot of things that Clinton did that I don't think were the right thing.

Well, we'll be sitting in the dark here pretty soon (*turns the light on*). The sky is clouding up again, but I hope it doesn't mean another storm tonight.

Soren. Was it difficult making transitions from one church assignment to another?

Wallace. I can't say I've had transition problems. I do know I've had to change in so many ways. I think the change hasn't been good for me.

Soren. In what way?

Wallace. Shaping my character, you might say. My outside vision, visage. I've found that being a pastor has been difficult for me socially because I always feel that there's a barrier there. Always. And even here, I'm the pastor, and the rest of the people ... there isn't the looseness of living that one would desire sometimes.

Soren. And why is that?

Wallace. Well, they put you on a little pedestal. They do the same with the other people – politicians, police, and so on.

Soren. So how do you get off the pedestal?

Wallace. I guess you can't. You put yourself up there. But on the other hand, that's a good thing because we have the well wishes of a lot of people.

Soren. Do you think people are inhibited by the pastor in social situations?

Wallace. Well, take a pastor and put him on the golf course – and it's not his environment (*smiles*). And yet, there are many pastors that spend a lot of time on the golf course.

Soren. What about close friendships with men in your congregations?

Wallace. Very hard for me. But other men don't seem to have any conflicts.

Soren. How about friendships with other pastors?

Wallace. Well, some of them have it harder and some of them have less. I think the pastorate is a hard place for many pastor's wives. They feel inhibited. But I don't know that Rachel ever felt it because she was always so good to get in with the ladies of the church. Always so friendly with all of them. Once again the Seattle church was our hardest church in this respect.

Soren. I was thinking about the role of confession in the Catholic and Protestant churches. Protestants don't have confession, but I've seen it take other less-formal forms in church small groups, youth groups, and, as you mentioned, talks in the "counseling chamber."

Wallace. You see, in the Catholic confession, the priest acts in God's behalf to give absolution or whatever. That certainly is not our

Protestant doctrine. There's one mediator between God and man – the man Christ Jesus. And we come to the Father through the Son, not through the priest. The priest is the minister of God to preach the word, but he isn't a confessor. And we don't have the confession as a sacrament. There are seven sacraments in the Catholic church, and they're supposed to be aids in our coming to the Father and they're supposed to have a spiritual unction, power in them. Like marriage, last rites, and so on. We don't practice these things. We do have the Lord's supper and Baptism, but we don't come to them as aids to salvation. Rather, they are an expression of our salvation. So we don't have any go-between. We've got the Father on our own.

Soren. What about the verse, "Confess your sins one to another"?

Wallace. Yes, that's the way the book of James puts it. "Confess your faults one to another. Pray one for another that he may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." There are two things that are very important in prayer. One is the quality and character of the prayer, and the second thing is the quality of his praying. The effectual fervent prayer is the prayer that really generates the relationship. Of a righteous man – not any man, but the man who's right with God. These are the two. "Effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Soren. How do you understand Paul's exhortation to "pray without ceasing"?

Wallace. Well, the older I get, the more of it I do. We pray so that almost our inner life is constant prayer. We think of loved ones and pray for them. If we have problems – "Lord help me with this one." I pray everyday that I don't fall – without ceasing (*smiles*). I don't think we should take it as an absolute command. Rather, as a generality, a general acceptance of the Christian life and general way.

Soren. Many in the Eastern Orthodox church have taken Paul's exhortation to pray incessantly to mean repetition of the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner."

Wallace. Is this good Christian psychology, though? I think after praying for certain things, we shall entrust for faith. I ask the Lord to help me because I do feel the need for support as I walk. But after I've prayed it in the morning, I don't think of it the rest of the day. You leave it with the Lord, and faith comes in to give you peace. Which, if you're always praying for your sin, when will you ever have it finished?

Will you ever get peace that way? Paul seems to deal with it in Philipians: "Bring all your anxieties to the Lord, and the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." So peace is promised when we live a life of communion with the Lord, when we take our burdens to the Lord, and leave them there, like we sing.

I don't think that the verse in James "Confess your faults one to another" is practiced today as much as it should be, probably. I think

you ought to be able to go to most any Christian and say, “Pray for me, I’m having a hard day.” Or, “I’ve got this burden and I’d appreciate your remembering us in prayer.” I think that’s what it means. Nothing ritualistic about it. It’s just good prayer.

It seems as though the Christian life should be lived on the plane of everyday living. It should be so much a part of our everyday life that it isn’t something attached to us or something apart from us. It ought to be so natural. But I can’t say that’s been that way for me. There are some things I still have to attain to, like Paul (*smiles*).

Soren. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”

Wallace. There are some hymns ... “This is my Father’s World.” I find it a little difficult to sing them.

Soren. Why?

Wallace. Well, I’m affected by certain passages of scripture. It says “The whole world lieth in the lap of the wicked one. Love not the world or things that are in the world.” I realize that one has to differentiate by what we have in nature – God gives us. And this is beautiful. But one has to put aside, I think, worldly culture.

Soren. Are you talking about overemphasizing nature in one’s spiritual walk?

Wallace. No, I think it’s perfectly valid. Take the nineteenth Psalm: “The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament.” But in the New Testament: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any men love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, lusts of this and that, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lusts thereof.”

The word is used to cover that – cosmos. One fellow said, “You’ve got too much ego in your cosmos (*smiles*).” But worldly position and worldly possessions and worldly interests, entertainments, lusts of the body and so on ... that’s where we have to fight our spiritual battles. At least I’ve had to fight mine in that area. I’ve never been tempted to some of the other things that people are tempted to.

Soren. “This is my Father’s world. I rest me in the thought of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, His hand the wonders wrought.”

Wallace. Perfectly legitimate. “The cattle of a thousand hills are his.” Somebody will ask if the Lord has nature in control. Why tornadoes? Why avalanches?

Soren. And the answer in the book of Job: “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Thanks be to the name of God.”

Wallace. Well, you have to put your faith in something. You can’t live without faith, without some answers to the questions of the heart. And even though there are some things that are difficult – that continue to be a dichotomy to us – you have to accept both. And when you get passages like Paul in Phillipians, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of

Christ Jesus, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.” What does that mean if you don’t have any sufferings in your life that you can refer to the text? There’s something missing. A lot of things to think about. I think that, at least. I hope the Lord permits us to keep our minds when we get to heaven (*smiles*), to be able to think and act rationally and understand a little better than we do. Yes.

There’s a strain in religious thought that looks with hesitancy on intellectual pursuits. It comes from over in Corinthians where Paul says “Not many wise, not many mighty are called. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.” I’ve never felt, however, that one should put one’s mind in neutral and slide along in life. God has given us our minds to use. I’ve tried to use mine all my life long. I’ve got a lot of peace about the problems in the Bible. The more I can’t understand, the more I can allow the Lord in the few things he hasn’t told us yet.

Soren. The early heretic Marcion was probably one of the first to represent this anti-intellectual tradition in the church. He couldn’t accept the God of the Old Testament, so he urged the church to dismiss the Old Testament from Christian worship. But since Marcion raised this concern, the church was forced to canonize the Old Testament. In a way, we can thank the heretic Marcion for being one of the factors which prompted the canonization of the scriptures.

Wallace. Yes, [one of the] negative factors (*smiles*)? Yes, that’s true. I think that every false doctrine forces us to think our way through and to rest in something more adequate and more complete.

Soren. Grandpa, how do you think our society treats the elderly?

Wallace. Well, I think within my lifetime I’ve seen quite a change. Retirement homes have been springing up all over the country. So they are available. If you have money, you can get into the nice ones. But otherwise the state takes care of many who are indigent. But this is a modern phenomenon. Because when I was growing up, my grandpa and grandpa lived with us. Not very long, because they didn’t live long. But they shared our home.

When it came to my dad passing away, my mother had to find a place. She lived with us ever since my father’s death. I felt myself responsible for her, acted responsibly as best I could. We took her into our home. For a lot of the time my sister had her in her home. So they shared the responsibility. Mother got a little social security. It amounted to fifty dollars a month when she first got it. It was always then that you took care of your family. And I know it was hard for Rachel to have Nanny in the house. But we did it. The Lord gave us grace.

Soren. Could you ever have put your mother in a retirement home?

Wallace. My present frame of mind has been made up for so long that I can't change it. The New Testament speaks about children taking care of their parents.

Soren. "Defend the orphan, plead for the widow (Isa. 1:17)."

Wallace. Yes. The Lord had a lot to say about that, too. But it's different. We had a family in St. Paul. There were eight children in the family, and they were all prospering. Yet when (their) mother needed to be put in a home, they brought her to a retirement home. And it was said by so many, "There are eight children. She could take care of eight children, but the eight children couldn't take care of her." That's the way that folks looked at it up there. But now it's taken as a person's right to live without the burden of a parent on their mind and heart. The government should take care of all of our problems (*smiles*).

Soren. You're being facetious?

Wallace. Yes I am. It takes a village to raise a child. It takes a village to care for an older person (*laughs*). No, I had often wished that Rachel and I could have bought a little ranch house or farm house where we could invite the children in, and their children, and make it more of a traditional grandma and grandpa's house. Something in that order, but it never was made possible for us. It just seemed as though Rachel and I were following the Lord's leading when we came down to Fairhaven. She had care. She was so ill.

But it's a little difficult. Sometimes it gets into your moods that you're living amongst a people here – we're three hundred – all of them living here to die, none of them expecting to recover their youth and get out into the world again. But that's all-right. If you know the Lord, you don't mind the dying experience. At least I don't think you should. "To depart and to be with Christ is the better part of the way" Paul put it in the Philipian's letter.

Well, look who's coming (*Kirk arrives from his Rockford errands*). Hi ya. Did you spend all your money? Did you get some things here that you wanted? I was suprised this morning. I was listening to something about the "digital age." We're just entering it. It's beyond my comprehension. I don't know what it all means. But they spoke about digital economy. What it means, I don't know. Well, you'll want to get going, I would guess. Let's pray.

Our gracious heavenly Father, we're so thankful that thou art our God and from so early a time in life we were able to know thee and to follow thee. We thank thee for the way thou hast led us and guided. Thank thee for thy forgiving grace for the many times we feel that we have faltered. But we thank thee also that thou dost enable us to follow thee, and we pray that thou wilt continue so to do. Bless Soren and Kirk and Derek, each in their special ways. Their roads will not be identical, but Lord, lead them each to the place where you'd have them. Keep them from evil, and give them grace to follow thee wholly and

completely. Let their love be unconscious of the many temptations along the way. Be with their mother and dad. We thank thee for them, and for Henrietta. We ask thee Lord to bless them richly. Keep them close to thyself and give them grace to be a great blessing to many others. We commit all to thee now. In Jesus name, amen.

V

August 30, 1998, Evening

Wallace. I was listening to Swindall one day, and he brought up something that I hadn't thought of before – that was that there's a sort of a psychological situation where the person is inclined to back off without getting into a socially prominent position. And he gave some examples: Peter sitting by the fire on the periphery at Jesus' trial. The women doing the same. You have it where two of the disciples are approached by the Greeks, or one of the disciples rather, who would see Jesus, and he goes and gets his brother. He said, "Let's go and tell Jesus." He didn't want to go alone. If you stop to think, there's many instances of that kind. Social engagements have never been easy for me.

Soren. You're speaking of backing away at the moment when you need to take a leadership role? You had so much social interaction at Moody.

Wallace. I know. I've spent my whole life in the ministry dealing with people, but you know, there were many many many Sundays when I found it so hard to go into the pulpit. I remember saying to Rachel many times, "I'd rather die than preach today (*smiles*)." Because to get in front of people and preach was not natural to me, I guess. But I did it. And I never backed off of a duty. But there were many other times when I could have pushed through with things. Well, what's on your mind tonight, Soren? Everything's going well?

Soren. I'm still waiting to hear back from the seminary in New York.

Wallace. This is the Orthodox? Greek Orthodox? Why are you drawn to that?

Soren. I think it will be a good place to spend a year of study, especially of the biblical languages.

Wallace. Do you intend to use the knowledge of the Biblical languages sometime? Any teaching? You're leaning rather to teaching than preaching?

Soren. I have a hard time distinguishing the two.

Wallace. I've noted it lately that so many of our pastors will repeat scripture, but they have to somehow feel constrained to give the location and the Greek meaning of the word. Which means nothing much to the congregation, I don't think. You don't have to display a knowledge of Greek in the pulpit every Sunday, do you? Well, the Lord leads in

devious ways, Soren, to guide us on our way. If you have it in your heart to do his will, he'll reveal it to you.

Soren. Was there a distinct moment when you felt the call to preach?

Wallace. Well, that came like the rising of the sun in the morning. It was a light that grew brighter until I realized this was what the Lord would have me do. But I came out of Moody without any place to fill. So I went back and worked in the factory for the good part of a year – from the fall around to springtime. But then a colleague of mine from Moody days wrote me. It was Depression days, and everyone was down, sort of like. But he felt led to go up to northern Minnesota and do some missionary work. So he asked if I would go with him, and I did. And from that time, I was busy in the Lord's work.

Soren. What was his name?

Wallace. His name was Bjurlin. He's dead now. He came from around Alexandria, Minnesota, area. He left a wife and a son. His son went to teaching art in Cornell University, New York. I don't know whether he was a blessing to his dad or not.

Soren. Does he still teach at Cornell?

Wallace. Yes. I guess he was pretty good at art and pottery and this kind of thing.

So I can't speak of any particular call. Not like Abraham or Moses.

Soren. You quit the factory job to go to join Al Bjurlin?

Wallace. I quit Nash to go to Moody, and when I finished, I didn't have any place to fill. My pastor was a Swedish Baptist pastor and never showed any interest in me because I didn't go to Bethel. I went to Moody. It was the wrong thing to do as far as he was concerned, so I never got any encouragement or advice or support from him. Then, after working for about a few months, I got this letter from Al up in Minnesota. Such novices ... we just learned church work by doing it.

Soren. How long had Al Bjurlin been up in northern Minnesota?

Wallace. Well, he grew in the Alexandria area. That was the western part of the state, but this was in the central part. He hadn't been up there – except just to sort of reconnoitre. But we settled on a place where we would locate. Then we had summer Bible school with the children, and that turned into Sunday schools and preaching services, and these were held in the schoolhouses up there.

Soren. In Walker and Whippolt?

Wallace. Yes, they're thirteen miles apart. Walker was sort of a county seat, and Whippolt was just a sort of a vacation center. There was a post office there. It was thirteen miles to the east of Whippolt along the south shore of Leach Lake.

Soren. How did Al Bjurlin choose those towns?

Wallace. Well, he was friendly with the superintendent of the district churches. And he knew of the area, so he gave Al the guidance that he needed. Then Al left the field, went to take a church in the state of

Washington. Before I knew it, he had married and gone off to Venezuela on the missions board. He was there the rest of his life – missionary work in Venezuela. And I carried on up there. There was no one else to do it. Until '38, when I married Rachel. I held a call to another Minnesota church at the time, but never felt led to go there.

When we came home from our honeymoon, we found that the church in Walker – that is, the congregation there – had dug a hole in the ground on a piece of property that was given to them. And they were going to build a church. I didn't feel I could leave them then. So I stayed on another two years. We built a church and dedicated it. And then I went to California from there. The call from California was just a letter that I had received from the church wondering whether I'd come and be their pastor. The salary was a hundred dollars a month.

Soren. How had the Oakland church heard about you?

Wallace. Well, a friend of mine had recommended us. That's seemingly the way the Lord leads. I got a letter from them. I had never visited the church, and they had never seen me. But they offered me a pastorate.

Soren. Those were the worst years of the Depression.

Wallace. Yes. Depression years. Very difficult years. They didn't have any pastor up there. No church, no nothing. So we had to organize Sunday schools, prayer meetings, and Sunday services. We did it in the homes and in the schoolhouses until finally a group was found which would become the nucleus of a new church. So we had a church in Whippolt, and finally one in Walker. The church in Walker has grown so well. I guess within the last year or two they built a new church up there, which I've never seen. By all authorities, it's going well.

Soren. What was the main occupation of the people in Walker and Whippolt?

Wallace. Most of them were resort people. Some of the men guided on the boats. There was WPA work. The government came in and let the men make a road or two. Things of that order. But there were no factories up there. It was hard. Very hard for the folks up there. Primitive living.

Soren. What were their ethnic backgrounds?

Wallace. Well, just about everything. A few Swedes ended up there. There were quite a few Indians in the area, but they never came to the services. Some Finlanders. The Lutherans were there. They had a church. It was real missionary work. I'm glad I did it then, because I could not have done it later in my life.

Soren. I imagine that you learned a lot about organization during those first few years of ministry.

Wallace. No, no. I think the main thing was this: that you saw something that needed to be done, so you did it. Just whatever it might be. And that meant for manual labor. It meant for church work and

such like. We built the church there – the men of the church built it. And we built it as the people who came contributed. And we had some wonderful girls from the State TB sanitarium who came to the services. But that church was dedicated without a cent of debt. The people had paid for it as we went along. They laid the foundation, and all the rest. We had a couple good carpenters in the church – so committed.

Soren. Were you receiving a monthly salary?

Wallace. No, no. We didn't have any organized church. That came late in our stay there. We would take an offering.

Soren. How much did you get on a usual Sunday?

Wallace. Not very much. Well sometimes it was less than a dollar. Sometimes a little better.

Soren. What could you buy with a dollar?

Wallace. Well, a Hershey bar at that time was a nickel. Now it's fifty-some cents.

Soren. How did you travel back and forth between Walker and Whippolt?

Wallace. Al had a car. When he left, I made an arrangement with him to buy it from him. Which I did. And that was the start of my motorizing. That was a Model A Ford. Then I bought a second-hand car – a '35 Ford. There were V-8 engines then. Then after that I got a '39 Chevrolet. And after that I got a Plymouth. Then I bought another car...

Soren. How much did Al charge you for his Model A?

Wallace. It was maybe between one and two-hundred dollars. I don't remember. But cars were selling then for six, seven-hundred dollars. Prices were so different then.

Soren. What were the prayer meetings like during those Depression years? I would imagine that prayer centered around the bare essentials of life.

Wallace. The people lived quite closely together, so they were really a united group of people. It wasn't hard to have public meetings. And they would share, sing together. If they had testimonies, they would give them.

Soren. What about the musical life of those churches? Did you play the violin?

Wallace. Yes, many times we didn't have a piano or an organ. Nobody could play, so I'd lead the service with a violin and would lead the singing. I did a lot of that. We didn't have any really accomplished musicians – not in either of the churches while I was there. But some folks could play a hymn. We had two or three girls that could do that. I lived in Whippolt at the time, and I remember two or three men that were struggling in their Christian life. One man particularly – he was husband to the post mistress. He seemed to have a pretty-awake spiritual life. But he would come in so often just to have prayer.

Soren. Would people bring food instead of money as an offering?

Wallace. Sometimes they would. There were some of the families where I felt so much at home. I could go in at mealtime and not feel self-conscious about it at all – sit down with the family.

Soren. When and how was the Walker—Whippolt ministry begun?

Wallace. 1932, I guess. Some girls came up from Northwestern Bible Institute to teach. So we arranged Bible schools in two or three locations. One in Whippolt. One elsewhere. So we had several Bible schools and teachers from Northwestern. Then we also had at the same time started morning services, afternoon services, evening services in Whippolt. In Walker, the work developed a little later.

Soren. How were those services different from one other?

Wallace. Oh, we didn't have much liturgy. We got up and led the songs, prayed, read scripture, preached the message, sang another hymn or two. The people were nourished. But we had so many then that found the Lord in those days. The young people were so spiritually alive. They carried their Bibles with them. There were quite a few young people from the two churches up there that ended up in the Christian service.

Soren. Do you remember any of their names?

Wallace. Oh yes. Clifford Emory went to Free Church school and became a Free Church pastor. He was in the Seattle area when Rachel and I were there, so we saw him quite often. Dwight Fuller and his wife Lorraine were raised up there. He went into Christian work – pastor and missionary work. They went to Japan for a couple years, but they couldn't get the language, I guess. They never stayed. But then they came home. He was a teacher at Trinity for a little while. Ambrose Collins and his wife Cecilia – they came to the Lord up there. Ambrose went into the ministry. Passed away a while ago. I was up there for some special meeting. I guess it was a wedding anniversary that they celebrated. I was back to share the time with them. He was a pastor in a little church outside of Rochester, Minnesota.

Soren. Al went to Seattle?

Wallace. Well, he went to a little church in the Seattle area. The church was called Harper. It was on the other side of the bay. Have you ever been in Seattle? Lovely place.

Soren. What was the social life like in the evenings during the Depression years? Did church families visit each other for meals?

Wallace. I don't know that we had too much of that. People just didn't have it to do with.

Soren. During the evenings, were you at home studying?

Wallace. Probably, or visiting, calling. No, it wasn't an organized work in that sense. But the Holy Spirit just seemed to fall on the communities up there. And folks would get saved, and we wouldn't even know that they were saved yet. They found the Lord, and the Lord blessed us all.

Soren. I remember my dad telling me about the bats in the Whippolt church.

Wallace. They came in through the chimney. I remember I went up there once and I put on a pair of gloves and I pulled them away from the chimney and put them in a glass jar. And Rachel held the glass jar for me while I picked off the bats and put them in the glass. That's a story Rachel used to like to tell (*smiles*). Bats in the belfry.

Soren. That church had already been built?

Wallace. Well, we weren't so wise. There came up one or two other men that wanted to help us, and one of the men was a carpenter. So he built a building that was really in the shape of a house, thinking that we could use the dining room and the living room for services. It wasn't the best thing. It led to some controversy.

Soren. In what way?

Wallace. Well who was going to live in it? Rachel and I lived in it for the last two years we were there. But that work has died out now. There is no work in Whippolt. The Walker work has really prospered.

I just learned a short time ago that the district had sold it [the Whippolt church building] for ten-thousand dollars. But it was very run down. It hadn't been used for quite a long time.

Soren. In the Walker—Whippolt years, to whom were you accountable?

Wallace. Really we were working under the district [Minnesota district, EFCA]. They had tents. We had tent meetings for a number of summers. They were interesting and helpful. Oh, I get so stiff that I ... like a pretzel you can't bend it. You'll break it if you do (*gets up to find a book about Walker*). I think you'll find a section given over to churches in there.

Soren. The book is dedicated "those in our past." That would be you, grandpa.

Wallace. Well, some folks settled down in that country – Hackensack and Backus and Nevis. Communities up there.

Soren. Calvary Evangelical Free church?

Wallace. That's right.

Soren. "Any account of the beginnings of Calvary Free Church can not help but be sketchy, because few records were kept. Jeannette Johnson, who came to Walker in 1937, wrote, 'From what I hear, Grandma Emory was instrumental in getting both the Whippolt and Walker groups started.'"

Wallace. Oh, yes. She was one of the older ladies. She and her husband settled up in Whippolt. She was a very godly woman and prayed that the Lord would somehow send some Christian workers or some pastor or something. Eventually we thought ourselves to be the answer to her prayers. It was her son that entered the ministry and served out on the West Coast.

Soren. "The first meetings of the Walker group were held in homes and later in the Patrick Henry hotel. When the Free Church was

organized in 1934, it was called the Walker Gospel Center.” How did you decide on that name for the church?

Wallace. I don't know (*smiles*). Just grew on it, I guess.

Soren. “Alfred Bjurlin, who was serving the Whippolt church, was asked to serve the Walker group also. When he left, Wallace Johnson was called and he helped organize the new church. About this time, the little group began to feel the need for a real church home and started to gather funds for building. John Borne donated four lots. In 1937, construction got under way. As wages were low and expenses had to be kept to a minimum, many people donated time and materials. John Borne supervised the work and did much of the carpentry himself. The first business was held on January 5, 1938, and on January 2, 1939, the church was formally organized under the name of Calvary Free Church, incorporated with 41 charter members. The new building was dedicated on October 15, 1939. The president of the Evangelical Free Church of America was the guest speaker.” Who was the president at that time?

Wallace. Dr. E.A. Haleen. He had immigrated from Sweden and settled in Minnesota. Good preacher.

Soren. Did he do that often – speak at church dedications?

Wallace. Well, he was pastor. I forget where he was. We just called him to be with us for that Sunday.

Soren. “Wallace Johnson continued to serve until 1940... Although the church has had it's share of internal troubles, the Lord has blessed the work and many of its young people have gone out as missionaries and pastors.” Did you ever meet the pastors of the other churches there – Emmanuel Lutheran or Hope Lutheran?

Wallace. Not the Lutherans. They were pretty separated unto themselves.

Soren. How did grandma adjust – moving from St. Paul to Walker with the bats?

Wallace. Well it was quite a step down socially and financially. She took it in wonderful stride. Of course we went from there to Oakland, California, which was a big-city church. From one extreme to the other. Then back to Beresford. Well, those were good days.

Soren. In visiting small-town churches in Russia and the Ukraine, I feel as if I've experienced a little bit of what you did in the 1930s.

Wallace. Yes, I'm sure. Real life. The Lord works in places like that. If you can pick up any books on revival, I suggest you do it, because they will feed your heart – especially the older books. Revival doesn't mean the same thing today as it did in those days.

Soren. During your Walker—Whippolt stay, was there ever a period of revival?

Wallace. Well, it was steady growth.

Soren. But I suppose you could say that for many of the people in your congregations, the memory of revival was fresh. Their parents might have witnessed revivals in Sweden.

Wallace. Maybe so. Some of them did.

Soren. So it was present, in a way.

Wallace. Yes. I have some books on revival. I have a book on the Revival in Britain by the Wesleys. That's a heartwarming book (*smiles*). I have several books about Evangelical revivals in the East of our country. But they're up with Dave now with the rest of my books. Well, you catch a vision of what Christian life could be, should be.

Soren. How did you find the change from a place of learning like Moody to small-town life?

Wallace. Those were hard years for me spiritually because my heart felt empty so much of the time. And my mind was empty. I didn't have any books.

Soren. Just the Bible?

Wallace. You need other books to prime the pump, kind of like. I looked on them mostly as wasted years, because I was there all alone so much of the time. We didn't have the big meetings and so on. But I don't think they were wasted years. The Lord won so many of those people for himself. Though we never developed a mega-church (*smiles*), we did leave one good strong evangelical church which is going well now.

Soren. Looking back, do you think that if there had been some way you could have fed your intellectual curiosity during those years – that it would have been a help?

Wallace. It would have been a help. I just feel that the Lord in his own way made up to me what I lost in social and intellectual contacts. But they were difficult years because I didn't feel I was growing spiritually. Because working alone – I was alone for several year there. The book says Al Bjurlin led the meetings at Walker, but he really didn't. That was all left to me to do. And being of the melancholy disposition (*smiles*) ... but maybe that's what the Lord could use up there. And he did.

Soren. Later in your years of ministry, did you ever look back to the Minnesota years and speak of lessons you had learned?

Wallace. No, I didn't talk too much about them. They were in the past. I was far removed from it. I have to just believe that somehow God in his mercy and loving kindness took those years and blessed those contacts. And souls were saved. Young people went into the Lord's service. But it was all of the Lord. It wasn't me or my talents or my disposition.

I remember one funeral we had up there. People from South Dakota had moved to Minnesota, and the mother of the home died. They didn't have any money. It was in the middle of the Depression. So I took my car, a trailer behind it, and drove the coffin to South Dakota – the center

part of the state. Took her nearly about five-hundred miles, I guess, in dead winter. And we had the funeral in South Dakota where they wanted mother to be buried. So it was an interesting journey. I was married at the time. This was over in the center of the state, close to the capital, Pierre, South Dakota.

Soren. In those years, did you have access to any literature?

Wallace. No, I didn't. Intellectual life was quite stagnant up there. Maybe if we were in a higher strata of town society, we would perhaps discover something else.

Soren. It's nice that grandma got to see at least the tail-end of your Walker—Whippolt ministry.

Wallace. Yes, Rachel's a wonderful girl. We went up there where we didn't have any indoor plumbing. We didn't even have a well. We did have a suction pump in the basement. We had good water, very good water. It wasn't a well. It was just a point that was driven down to the sand.

She was wonderful. I always told her that I was sure she loved me – coming up to Minnesota to live with me. She was wonderful in so many ways. And she was my wife in Oakland, Oak Lawn, Beresford, Seattle. Together I think we had fifty years of ministry. Well, I think we're gonna go to sleep...

VI

September 1, 1998, Sunday afternoon

Soren. What did you think of the service this morning?

Wallace. It's always good. I liked the singing better than usual, because usually they just take one chorus after the other. This was a good medley today.

Soren. You told me that we were going to the "traditional" service, so I assumed we would sing the old hymns.

Wallace. Yes, I don't know why not, but that's the order of the day, I guess. The sun in your face? We can pull the drapes, if you wish. *(Clock chimes o'clock.)* One o'clock.

Soren. I'm getting a feel for the rhythm of your days.

Wallace. Well, we start the day at seven-thirty with breakfast, and lunch is at twelve, and the evening meal is at five, so in-between there we have something else to do.

Soren. I heard some of your fellow Fairhaven residents complaining a little over lunch.

Wallace. You did? What was that?

Soren. One woman at our table was complaining about her half-melted ice cream. She said she's going to raise the issue at Council.

Wallace. Well I don't know. Whatever you do, you'll find someone of contrary mind. Some people just complain about everything. But I think everything goes so well here. The food is always good. We have heat, we have air conditioning. We have cleaning maids to do our rooms. And we have clean bed linen every week. Excuse me a minute. I've got to put my hearing aid in. I forgot to do it this morning.

Soren. I was talking to grandma VanDerMolen the other day about her husband's death. She told me, "Ask your grandpa about what it was like for him when his wife could no longer communicate with him." Was there any way of communicating with Rachel?

Wallace. No. She finally went into a state of ... she wasn't unconscious, but she wasn't with it enough to respond. Something must have happened to her vocal cords because she couldn't speak. Those were hard days. I'm wondering how it will be for us to go home. I don't know what the day will be like. It will be all-right.

Soren. Did you read to grandma during those years when she couldn't communicate?

Wallace. We had devotions each evening for a while, but then I could see they were having no effect on her, so I didn't carry them on any further. Rachel lost control of her elimination system, and that was hard for her, for me. I was constantly running to the head nurse and telling her that Rachel has to be fixed up. Because many times the nurses – well they weren't nurses – they came in and took care of a certain number of patients each day. They weren't so much on the ball. They did as little as they needed to – most of them.

Soren. Were there any moments when grandma was suddenly more conscious?

Wallace. No. A steady deterioration. One night I was sleeping down here and I got a call from one of the nurses that I should ... that was maybe three o'clock in the morning. Something like that. So I went up and I realized that this was the day of Rachel's home-going. So I called Betty. She came up from Wheaton, so we two were together when Mother passed away. There's a song "My Jesus I love Thee," and one of the verses says:

*I'll love Thee in life
I will love Thee in death
and praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath
And say when the death-dew lies cold on my brow
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

Well, we could see Rachel's body slipping away – could see the progress of the "death dew," as you call it.

Every week there's someone passing away here. So we're all just waiting to go, I guess (*smiles*). I was thinking if the Lord would come back and minister the way he did – then here in our retirement home and many others there would be a resurrection of many hearts and lives. But in our whole family, except for the very old folks, we haven't had any deaths. None of the children have had diseases. The Lord has preserved us in a wonderful way. I think of it often, and thank the Lord he does preserve us from day to day.

Soren. Have you read the end of Ecclesiastes – where it's all about aging?

Wallace. Yes, if you have a good sanctified imagination (*smiles*). You need that for that chapter. It's a remarkable chapter.

Soren. What do you think of Ecclesiastes?

Wallace. It's a very interesting book. You're half-way between heaven and hell all through the book – or heaven and earth, I should say (*smiles*). A lot of wisdom in it. I heard some cassettes preached by a man down in Florida, and they were on the book of Ecclesiastes. They were so valuable – the cassettes. They opened up Ecclesiastes in such a

remarkable way. Ray Nelson – a very energetic man, very strong Christian character.

Soren. The tone in the book is so resigned – “All is vanity” – yet the author is saying “Go and live life fully” with the understanding that ...

Wallace. ...you’re going to leave it. Down toward the end of the book, he says “Well, let’s consider, what’s the end? What should we do?” Well, “Remember Thy Creator in the days of Thy youth, before the evil days come (Eccl.12:1).” And they do come to everybody. Or, your soul shall say, “I have no desire in those things.” When those desires are not of spiritual things, it’s a great danger. Folks who knew the Lord so well in their former years ... now they’re taken up with the world and things of the world. Very interesting phraseology there – how does it go? Eat, drink, and enjoy your wife?

Soren. “Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw nigh when you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’: ...when one is afraid of heights, and terrors are in the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails (Eccl.12:1, 5).” The footnote says that “the difficulties of old age seem to be reflected in vv.4-5.” So I’ll think of your white hair, grandpa, when I see almond tree blossoms.

Wallace. Or the other way [around] (*smiles*). Where do they grow? They grow south, I think. They don’t grow in a temperate climate, I don’t think.

The Psalms are getting more and more meaningful as the days go by. I spend so much time in thought in them.

Soren. Which ones in particular?

Wallace. Oh, I’ve often thought if I could decide on doing one thing in life and only one thing, what would it be? And I’ve thought often that I would like to have been the author of the 23rd Psalm because it’s been such a favorite for all generations since it was written. And what a blessing it’s been to so many hearts. I’ve used it so often, especially at funerals.

Soren. What other passages have you used for funerals?

Wallace. Well, the traditional ones. John fourteen comes in often. Then the passage on heaven in the book of Revelations – very encouraging. “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again ... that where I am, there ye may be also (Jn. 14:2-3).” If there’s one thing in life that’s really comforting, that is to be able to live in the presence your family, your loved ones. They mean a lot to you. And to be amongst them is a great blessing.

Soren. Are there other Psalms which you’ve been rereading?

Wallace. Well, the 37th, 40th, 46th, 51st, 23rd, 64th. Lately a verse from Isaiah has meant much to me – Isaiah 41:10. “Fear thou not; for I am with thee.”

Soren. Do you return to the Proverbs often?

Wallace. No, I haven't. Proverbs is a book which is full of self-evident facts. Maybe we need to be told what those facts are.

Soren. What about the Song of Solomon?

Wallace. It's very interesting.

Soren. Did you preach from it?

Wallace. The earlier days I did. I always took it as referring to the Lord himself, but I'm not so sure that's the case anymore. I guess Hebrew young people were not permitted to read the book until they were much older – twenties or thirties.

Soren. How about the books of the prophets?

Wallace. They were written primarily to the people of Israel at the time – warnings of their unrighteous lives. But I think we can read them to find little bits of harmless spiritual insight – a blessing to our hearts. Take Isaiah from chapter forty to the conclusion of the book, and it's just saturated with beautiful thought. Isaiah chapter 40, 41, 42, 43 – tremendous chapters. And 52 and 53 – referring to our Lord. I don't know that I've preached much from Isaiah.

Soren. And Job?

Wallace. Job's a good book. You have to have some discipline to follow through on it.

Soren. And the Pentateuch?

Wallace. That's the law. I didn't preach much from the Old Testament books. I was in the New Testament all my life. But the law's our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. I've found that people surely need assistance in coming to the Lord, appreciating the Gospel, being able to understand it so they can accept it. When I looked at my outlines, I noticed that I had quite a few more upon the book of John than any other book in the Bible. It seemed to be the book that I needed and that I preached from. I don't know what I'd do with the book of Jonah. What do you think you'd do?

Soren. There's that great moment when Jonah is sitting under the juniper tree looking down with disgust at the city which he didn't even want the Lord to change.

Wallace. Yes, his spiritual lessons are so evident in the book of Jonah. How to understand what is taking place in his life?

Soren. The book of John is definitely the more mystical of the gospels.

Wallace. Well I don't know if I love the book for that reason. I guess my own mind runs to curiosity of mysterious things.

Soren. Yet you also said your mind runs in an analytical track.

Wallace. Right. You need them both, I guess. They're like two wings on a bird. Take a verse like in the book of John, it's in the eighth chapter. "I am the light of the world (Jn. 8:12)." "He that liveth in me, out from his inmost being shall come rivers of living water (Jn. 7:38)." When I read verses like that, I wonder about the realization in your own life of these things of which it speaks. Do I know what it means to have

a heart always full of living water? I don't know. I don't want a self analysis just to give me an affirmative answer. There's another part of me which yearns for spiritual experiences of the saints. Living water means flowing water, I think. Not a stagnant pool, but a brook.

Take Philippians chapter three when Paul speaks autobiographically of his own personal experience. And he says that he wants to "know Christ and the fellowship of his suffering, the power of his resurrection (Phil. 3:10)." What do those terms mean to us? In what area of life can we experience them? Do we experience them like Paul? In the beginning part of the chapter, he speaks about all that he possessed outside of Christ, "but counts them but refuse, that he may know Christ (Phil. 3:8)." But to know him in that way. Yet I think all of us have had experiences where the person of Christ is very real to us.

The book of John – one of the chapters, seventeen, third verse. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." What does it mean? What happens to the new birth? Do you have to be born again? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." What does that mean? There's meditation fodder there for a lifetime. Then the Lord in the high priestly prayer. "I pray for them, that thou will keep them from the evil one. I don't pray for the world, but I pray for those whom thou hast given me out of the world (Jn. 17:9)." You have to fit those into other elements of your theology. Practically, analytically, you accept by faith what you don't understand. Somehow it becomes real in your life.

Soren. "Fear not, for I have overcome the world (Jn. 16:33)."

Wallace. That's in another passage – the sixteenth chapter. Paul says the same thing: "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Rm. 8:37)." I have a great hunger in my mind and heart to experience the Gospel. Not only to preach it or even try to understand it, but to experience it. If you carry your curiosity too far, I think you become very dry spiritually. You lose your warmth and tenderness. You'll have a knowledge of God, but you need to know the power thereof. You have it in your head but you don't have it in your heart. This is what I'm so fearful of – though I preached to others, I myself will be cast away. When the Lord intercepted Paul on the Damascus road, he immediately went into the desert. I think it was three years or so he devoted himself to prayer and study of the word, pondering, letting the Holy Spirit bring the truth. So that's why Paul was able to write a book like Romans. There's no sense of wavering in what he says. Everything is said positively. We gain that in our walk with the Lord. That's what I find these days doing for me. I'm almost entirely tied up with the word of God and things of the Lord.

Soren. In a sense, it's that quiet time of searching in the desert.

Wallace. Yes. He (Paul) says in his message that he didn't get it from man. He got it direct from God. The Gospel message was delivered unto Paul in a very personal way.

The Gospel is not to be argued over or discussed in the sense that it's an intellectual delight to do so. Rather it's to be accepted and therefore the negativisms and questions that people asked are not always mentioned. Peter says "Blessed is the man that has real faith in the Gospel." Man who has *seen* faith and believes. But Paul puts it as, "He that *hasn't* seen but still believes." Lots of things that we have to take on faith and allow to know a few things that he doesn't tell us. (*Clock chimes two o'clock.*) Two bells.

Soren. I Corinthians 4:1: "So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God (4:1)." Are "those entrusted with the secret things" the early church hierarchy?

Wallace. Well, when you read the address in Corinthians, you discover who he has in mind when he writes the letter. And it isn't the clergy only. It's "the Church of Christ that's in Corinth." So I think when Paul writes, he writes for the average Christian. Not primarily for the clergy, because there wasn't much in the way of an organized clergy in those days, I don't think.

Soren. "Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple (I Cor. 3:16-17)." Have you taken this passage as a springboard for teachings on care for the body?

Wallace. One has to consider sexual matters – what sex means. What it does for us. Why do we have the drive? Why are there lusts of the flesh? Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. You ought not desecrate it. The body has a way of wearing out. You have to care for it. I guess eventually you have to let it go.

Soren. Have you found that John's gospel gives the clearest exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity?

Wallace. Once again, the Trinity as the doctrine is given to us not explained. It isn't defined in the Bible. The first verse of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void (Gen. 1:1-2)." And the Spirit of God ... who is the Spirit of God? It's not defined. It's not described. It's just assumed. "The Spirit of God brooded upon the chaos (Gen. 1:2)."

And something else I've wondered so often – what is the fullness of the Holy Spirit? I've prayed for it, longed for it. There have been times when I felt less worldly, more spiritual. I've been meditating on the words of Isaiah 53. "He was despised and rejected of men (Is. 53:3)." Have you ever listened very often to Schuller? Crystal Cathedral? He wouldn't permit those words to be spoken of himself or anybody around him.

"Despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him (Is. 53:3)." That refers to the body of our Lord. He suffered tremendously. And he went

to the cross willingly, accepted the downgrading. He was despised and rejected of men. He took that place deliberately. And the price of our sin was laid upon him. That's a great mystery. Take it at face value, and believe it, but you don't try to explain it. If you do, you take the mystery out of it. I think of some of the great saints of the Middle Ages who really loved the Lord and perished for their faith, counted not their lives dear unto them. What did Paul mean when he said, "I am crucified with Christ. And the life that I now live, and the flesh that is this body belongs to the Lord"? There are some theologians that are pondering these things and writing about them. The Lord said to the rich young ruler, "Go sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and come follow me." One would say that that's rather ridiculous advice. The Lord said it and he said it only once to one man. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Soren. What's the significance of Jesus saying it only once?

Wallace. Because I don't think it's a general rule. I don't think everybody should sell all that they've got, all their resources. That would be communism in a way (*smiles*). Certain people, and that young ruler was one of them, evidently took a great deal of pleasure out of his wealth, his position in society because of it. The Lord sort of told him that he was building his life on the wrong premise. The young man said, "All of the commandments I have kept." He was following the commands – but he hadn't faced up to the last one, "Thou shalt not covet." You can have a lot of wealth without coveting it, I think. The blessings of poverty...

Soren. How have you understood this passage in John? "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father (Jn. 14:12)." What is meant by "greater things"?

Wallace. Our Lord was able to do great works, but he labored under the old covenant. He didn't labor in New Testament times. And I would interpret the text to mean that we in our New Testament heritage have more grace and power of God than our fathers did. We could preach the Gospel which the Old Testament couldn't preach.

Soren. In John chapter fifteen, there's the beautiful reference to the vine and the gardener. Jesus alludes to the vine, which Isaiah frequently uses as a metaphor for the people of Israel.

Wallace. That's right. It's one book. There's a unity running all the way through it. There was an historic connection.

Soren. In terms of teaching from the scriptures, it seems that there are two paths. One is to teach the historic context of the scriptures. The other path seems to be to "translate" the Gospels into contemporary language.

Wallace. I see what you mean. It takes a certain type of mind... (*Grandpa nods off to sleep for a minute, then wakes up and resumes.*) You need a certain type of mind when you read John. There was a

period in our church life when the Gospel of John was given away all the time by certain evangelistic agencies. But it's one of the most demanding of books when it comes to trying to understand. There's the second chapter of John where you have the wedding in Cana down towards the end of the chapter somewhere. It says, "The Lord didn't reveal himself to the average person, because he couldn't understand." He knew what was in man, so he didn't disclose his own heart. And he chose twelve to be with him, to absorb his spirit. But our Lord Jesus on the last day of his life – there were arguments as to who would be the greatest of the Kingdom. He was stern in his rebuke of them. What is it that makes us ourselves? Why do I react like I do? Constantly, day after day, we attempt to draw closer to the Lord.

Soren. Do you think there's significance in that Jesus' first miracle – the turning of the water into wine at Cana – had to do with celebration and wine?

Wallace. I've wondered about it. The Lord seemed to want the wedding feast to progress with joy and gladness. He didn't want the wine to run out and put a damper on the party. And yet what kind of a party was it?

Soren. A wedding feast.

Wallace. Which means? Exuberance, joy, gladness. Where does sex come into it? As an experience of enjoyment? Well, we've got a lot to think about (*smiles*), if you want to think. Let's pray.

We ask that in truth we are in thy hands, that you care for us, and help us, Lord, in our daily life to cast our cares on thee and to learn to walk by faith. Bless Soren. Thank you for him. Let the work of grace in his heart that has already taken place continue to lead him and show him the way you wish for him to move in the days that are ahead. We pray for Tom and Ginger. Thank you for them. We ask thee Lord to keep them in thy way. They are facing temptations. Give them spiritual insight to see and to understand and be strengthened in thy way. Derek, Kirk – bless them richly in their various schools. And we would pray that thou wouldst increase their faith, and may the intellectual titillations, discussions, and agitations somehow lead them closer to thee. And strengthen their faith in thee, Lord Jesus. Again we pray for our country. Thou hast blessed us in years past with revival. Give us grace and strength. And bless thy servants and give them courage and strength to speak out the truth in this world. Be with Henrietta. We thank you for her life. Bless her richly. And keep us living closer and closer to thee. Strengthen us. In thy name, amen.

VII

16 June, 2000

I stopped by Moody the other day to see if they had any copies of *The Beacon*, because I wanted to see some of your articles.

You'd probably have to go to headquarters to see an old copy—that's in Minneapolis. They might have archives at Trinity.

Did you have quite a few articles?

Not too many. I don't remember now. I know that the editor wanted me to write, and I had a pastorate, and I had a family of four children. And I just didn't feel that I had the time. I did take time out to go to school, so I took my seminaries degree at Baptist Seminary on the West coast. But I didn't do the writing that he wanted me to do, and I'm wondering sometimes if I didn't flub it. I could have had a longer life of usefulness if I had done a lot of writing—if anyone would read what a man wrote.

I typed in 'Evangelical Free Church' in the computers. I came up with a Halleen book.

Yea he collected some of his sermons and put out a book.

There was a fifteen-volume set of the history of the E Free church.

Fifteen volumes? Well I'll say.

Then I saw 'What we Believe'.

By A.T. Wilson.

Did you know him?

Oh yes, I knew him very well. He's in a retirement home in Minneapolis now. His wife has passed away. But he was very prominent in Free Church politics in his day. He was chairman of the conference when we had our merger when the Norwegian and the Swedish Free churches joined.

What did you think of his book?

Oh, it wasn't very academic. He wrote several books on Free Church life and works. But he wasn't university graduated I don't think.

I also went to the alumni office and asked for information on the class of 1929. So they're looking for us.

Something that you might want to get sometime is my file up at headquarters. It'll let you know the activities I was engaged in—some papers in there. But you might like them some day, a copy of them. You have a relative up there, Tim Addington. He's at the headquarters working. So if you ever get to Minneapolis, don't fail to talk to Tim Addington. Rachel had a sister—her older sister, who married an Anderson, and the result of their marriage was quite a long list of children. Gordy Addington was married to a daughter of Rachel's sister. And Gordy turned out to be a doctor, and helped to build a hospital in Hong Kong.

Yesterday was your mother's birthday. Were you thinking of her yesterday?

Oh yes, a great deal. So many events that we shared together.

How did you celebrate her birthday—and special traditions?

No not really.

A birthday cake?

Oh, I guess we would have that. Yes, but not to inviting friends and so on. You never got to meet her did you?

Only the vaguest of memories. I was on my mom's lap when she interviewed nanny.

You were? (laughs). I'll say.

