

Father, Make Them One

Exactly eight years after the textbooks were formally adopted I interviewed in Charleston three protest leaders and a member of the school district's central staff. I was mainly concerned to hear what protesters said in their own words, but for perspective I wanted the view of at least one person on the other side and of a different cast of mind.

To the three antitextbook people—the Rev. Ezra Graley, Elmer Fike, and the Rev. Avis Hill—I gave my real name and purpose. I did not volunteer to say that I was one of the textbook coauthors, but I was prepared to say so if they asked. Graley did in fact ask, when I said I was in education, “You didn’t put out any of them dirty books we had here, did you?” I said I did produce some of the books, but they weren’t dirty. He didn’t seem inclined to pursue that, and so we both just dropped it for good.

Hill, Graley, and Fike have all been on CBS’s “Sixty Minutes” and the “Phil Donahue Show” as well as other talk shows and have given countless interviews to newspeople including the BBC and other foreign media. They were veterans by the time I got to them and readily made themselves available.

Alice Moore had moved away by the time I visited there, and the Rev. Marvin Horan, who had long since finished his prison sentence, told me he did not have time for an interview. I think their views are well represented by the remarks of their cohorts. Another important figure had moved away, James Lewis, the rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Charleston, whose articulate and persistent opposition to the protesters generated a pastoral duel. All three of the protesters I interviewed talked about him with anything but indifference. He clearly had got under their skin. Surely, the fact that a Christian minister could support such books, not to mention other causes they regarded as equally unsavory, accounts for much of their intense and somewhat puzzled feeling about him. His words deserve sampling. In a feature article that ran in many newspapers around the country he wrote:

Steeped in the belief that there is only one way to salvation, these Christians also maintain that there is only one way to education. Unhappy with a

language-arts program which develops verbal skills by utilizing role-playing and open-end discussion, the opposition demands a rigid system of education by mechanical learning. To them, education is not a process of drawing a student out, but of pouring facts in.

The antitextbook people of Kanawha County are confused and angry about everything from marijuana to Watergate. Feeling helpless and left out, they are looking for a scapegoat. They are eager to exorcise all that is evil and foul, cleanse or burn all that is strange and foreign. In this religious war, spiced with overtones of race and class, the books are an accessible target.

For people who are fearful of the fire of hell and ready for a fire which cleanses and purifies, the clean white pages of the now-famous books make good fuel. What they forget is that the smoke from such a blaze will linger for a long time in this valley. The pollutants of nearby chemical plants, which hover over the Kanawha River, may do harmful things to the body, but the fumes of burning books are capable of destroying a man's soul, the very soul the people want so desperately and passionately to save.¹

I visited Ezra Graley in his home just off Dupont Lane outside the town of Nitro. (The names tell their own story!) This is a pleasant backwater, a lane's end on the Kanawha facing St. Albans on the opposite shore. These two towns in the Upper Valley played a big role in the controversy. Graley runs his roofing business out of his home with the aid of two strapping sons. His machines and vehicles line the lane leading to his house, which is a cut above the neighbors' frame cottages—a larger, newer, and more substantial brick house opening out in back onto a spacious lawn spreading down to the Kanawha. It's quiet around here except for the occasional crowing of a rooster.

A burly man in his mid-fifties then, the Rev. Graley was the pastor of the Summit Ridge Church of God, a part-time pastor like virtually all of the unaffiliated fundamentalist preachers of that area. He was easy to talk with, and we were both comfortable. He spoke quietly and deliberately in the semi-Southern accent of Appalachia. I have quoted him at length in order to capture as much as possible the personality and the movements of mind of this very representative personage.

GRALEY: We had a lot of people come in that we didn't invite in like the KKK and the NAACP. They come in. When we started off it was just a couple ministers, or three ministers trying to get good textbooks in our schools, and it growed and growed and finally it went nationwide and probably news of it, I know, went worldwide, but it grew into a big thing and then some of the more radical groups got into it, see. A lot of them didn't pretend to be Christians, but they was interested in their school, their children's education, and there's none of us in West Virginia, and still I don't know of *anybody*, that really thinks them four-letter words

and all that cussing belongs in a classroom, or in textbooks. . . . They haven't give them any education. It's taught them anti-everything. Just about everything in the textbooks was *anti*—anti-authority, government, parents, or any kind of authority. So we was against that 100 per cent, and still are.

MOFFETT: You felt free in your struggle, though, to resist authority too didn't you, in the sense that you didn't accept the decision of the School Board and you did break some injunctions and so on. I'm not saying it was wrong, I'm saying you felt that there are times when you're right in challenging authority.

GRALEY: Oh yes, there's times that you're right. You know, a lot of people say that it says in the Bible, "Obey the laws of your land," but I never found that in the Bible and I'm a minister of twenty-five years. I've never found where it said, "Obey the laws of your land," because in the old Bible, Moses he defied the king, and Daniel defied the king's decree, and the Hebrew children did, and then you come on down into the New Testament, Paul, when they tried to get him not to speak, that it was against their law, he said, "What's better—for me to mind God or man?" And I think that we are to obey laws as long as them laws don't conflict with our worship of God or try to do away with our God.

MOFFETT: I think there are a lot of people who would accept that principle of obeying a spiritual law over a human law. The problem comes that equally sincere people have different notions of spiritual law, and then you get into conflict. This is what concerns me.

GRALEY: Yeah now, I think though it's people more or less don't know what the Bible says. They're good Christian people, seem like, but they said, "Well we'll do ours a-praying, we'll pray about ours, we'll pray about our problems and let *God* work them out." Well I'm sure Joshua prayed about his problem, but he had to march around Jericho seven times, you know, and Gideon prayed about his problems, but he also went then. . . .

MOFFETT: Well, Christians can agree that the Bible is an inspired work of God, but they go to it and they come back with different things. I can see it's partly maybe because people are at different stages of their development.

GRALEY: I think it's just a lack of understanding really, cause I know a lot of things that I stood for or against back when I first started out for God, I have studied more deeply in the Bible and I've changed my mind on a lot of things, you know, that I would have died for back then.

MOFFETT: A lot of people have said this, that the reason that they do Bible study year after year is the Bible deepens in meaning as they mature and as they study and they grow, but what it means is that people are going to interpret it differently at different times. It seems to me the

practical problem is what do we do about this? Is there something we should learn from the book controversy about how to get along with people who interpret the Bible differently?

GRALEY: I really believe that if everybody that's truly been borned again—like Jesus said, "You must be borned again"—I believe if they're truly borned again, I think they'll see the word of God just about the same, because I don't think that it was written to cause divisions; it was written to—and Jesus prayed in his prayer, "Father, make them one, even as you and I are one." And I think these people don't want to see it, or don't see it in a holy light, is just people who don't want to live a good life, just wants to play around the banks, you know. [Laughs.]

MOFFETT: You're saying then that if the interpretation is different that they're not being really serious?

GRALEY: I don't believe that they're really serious if their interpretation—now, I know some of these people up here that was against us and fought, stood up against us, they went along and blessed homosexuals and everything else. He said he didn't marry them, but he blessed their relationship. [The Episcopalian minister, the Rev. James Lewis.]

MOFFETT: Were there, say, a number of people who opposed you who were just ordinary Christians?

GRALEY: Yes, now the Methodists, you know, they belong to the World Council of Churches and they go along with a lot of this stuff, and some of the Presbyterians, but even in our own church I had a lot of conflict there. People thought I had no business out there, standing up for what I felt was definitely right and others thought it was right.

MOFFETT: Well, that's a different thing, whether to be activist or stay out of it. I mean a different interpretation, understanding. How did you account for the fact that there were other sincere Christians who didn't feel the same about the books? Did that bother you?

GRALEY: No, no, at that time, you see, the news media gave it on the liberal side, we feel, and they made us—they tried to make us look as though we was people that didn't believe in education, to start with, we was book burners. But you turn it right around and the same news media didn't say a word and tell the public about them burning truck loads of Bibles that they confiscated in our schools, took them out to the incinerator and burned them.

MOFFETT: Who did that?

GRALEY: The Board of Education gathered them up and took them out there. Alice Moore found some of the books—some of the Bibles, partially burnt, where they was there when they dumped them in the incinerator. All right, now who—.

MOFFETT: Where did they get the Bibles? They weren't supposed to be *in* the schools, were they?

GRALEY: Oh yes, they was Bibles in schools till Madalyn O'Hair got the Supreme Court to rule against prayer and Bible reading in schools.

MOFFETT: Were there other ways in which you felt some of the real stories that you know of the controversy did not come out through the press?

GRALEY: This was the main thing. Now, good Christian people, they had been taught all their life that they was not to defy the law in any way. They was to obey the law regardless of what the law said, and it wasn't just people out in the country. I heard a minister, one of the prominentest ministers we've got in the U.S. today, and the best man I know of that's against all this stuff and doing more for our country I feel than anybody, is Jerry Falwell, but I heard him make a remark one time that somebody called this Betty Ford a slut (laughs), and he said anybody that was a Christian should never talk about a dignitary or something like that. Well . . . the verse of Scripture come to me right then that Jesus when Herod, Kind Herod, sent and told him to get out of town, he said, "You go tell that old fox I do curse today and tomorrow this city and then I'll leave." But he called Herod a fox, Jesus did, and so people today — it's just a teaching I guess they had that they was not to defy the law regardless, and I brought out to my church at that same time — the Supreme Court sent word down to West Virginia University that the doctors out there would abort upon demand or lose their license, and they said they would not abort even if it meant losing their license. So these doctors defied the Supreme Court, which was the highest court of the land, see? And I asked my church, I said, "Now was they right by saying, 'We're not going to murder them little innocent unborn babies?' Or would they have been right to have went ahead because the Supreme Court told them to and abort them babies?" Of course they agreed they was right by not doing it.

MOFFETT: Some of the objections to the textbooks were that they were part of a Communist conspiracy or plot. Do you believe that?

GRALEY: Yes, I thought it was a Communist conspiracy.

MOFFETT: Can you say any more about that?

GRALEY: Not really, because Eldridge Cleaver wrote a lot of it, a lot of those books, and where was he at? He was in a Communist country, see, at that time. Sure, I felt it was to destroy the family, the morals and the family, and I still believe that that's what it's all about, and our television programs is geared right up with the textbooks.

MOFFETT: Who do you feel was behind that kind of a plan, through the textbooks?

GRALEY: Well, to pinpoint the thing, I don't know. I couldn't — cause you'd go to the U.S. Congress and senators and they'd let on like it's local, and you come to the local officials and they'd say, "Well, we have

nothing to do with it, it's got to go back up—it's federally funded," and all that. You go back up to the federal and they just pass the buck around. Some of them maybe innocently didn't even know what was in the books, and probably didn't bother with finding out.

MOFFETT: Well, the publishers themselves, as you know, are big capitalist corporations. That's kind of a funny thing too, the idea they might be part of a Communist conspiracy. Those are not Mom-and-Pop operations. Do you think they've somehow been made unwitting tools?

GRALEY: Yeah, but maybe they had—maybe Eldridge Cleaver and Malcolm X and all them people had raised so much cain, maybe they had enough power or influence over the federal government that they would threaten these publishing companies with federal fund withdrawal if they didn't print their books or something, I don't know.

MOFFETT: You feel the federal government may have—?

GRALEY: I feel the federal government had the most to do in it, cause at that time our Congress and Senate, I think got full of—if not Communists, socialist people, you know, if there's any difference in that word. (Laughs)

MOFFETT: Wouldn't it bother you though if there were remarks made in the textbooks that blamed our federal government?

GRALEY: No, not the government that was in at that time, no sir, not when we couldn't even fight a war over there against the Communists and when they allow Jane Fonda to go over there and run free in North Vietnam against our troops. To me this was an act of treason and she pulled no bones about what she is.

MOFFETT: Well, if we say it's OK to criticize the government sometimes but not other times, maybe depending on which administration is in, that would really lead to a mess, wouldn't it?

GRALEY: You know right from wrong, and I know right from wrong, and we was all taught right from wrong, and now there is no right and wrong. It's do whatever turns you on, you know, there is no positives or absolutes now. . . .

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MOFFETT: Do you see a difference between whether the author of the book is saying something, or whether a *character* in one of the stories is saying something? Do you feel a difference there?

GRALEY: No, I don't feel that them curse words and four-letter words has any place in the vocabulary, in our school system period. Now if they want to downgrade theirselves or degrade or demoralize theirselves enough to put it in the college books that'd be all right maybe, cause

they're adults. I don't think they should do it with the taxpayers' money, at all.

MOFFETT: Looking at the objections to the selections themselves—and I've been through that book that was put out by the splinter group of the Textbook Review Committee—not even half of those objections were based on the language. There were a lot of different things they objected to. Did you feel that the language was the most serious?

GRALEY: No sir, I felt the anti-family, anti-authority was the main thing because—children, who do they obey now? Nobody. They always say, "Do your thing. Do whatever turns you on." Regardless of what anybody says about it. So they're doing it now.

MOFFETT: I know some of the high school kids, I guess, in Charleston, were quoted as saying—some of them got mad because the books were taken out—that people objected to violence in the books but didn't object to violence in real life, referring to some of the barricades and the blocking and the fire-bombing and so on. In other words, they seemed to be influenced by what I think all kids are influenced by—what adults do, maybe more than what adults say, or what they read in a book.

GRALEY: Probably their parents that stood up for those books, regardless if they was Communist or socialists or what, or some kind of religious group. I feel that them children, if they were borned and raised that way, you know good and well they're going to go along with what Mom and Dad say is, about 90 percent of the time. Sure, my boys, if I told them the governor wasn't any good, then you ask them do they think he is, and they'd say, "No, I don't like him." And you'd ask them why: "Well, Dad said he wasn't no good," see?

MOFFETT: I think what you're saying is true, that the family influence is very powerful. In other words, how strong are books compared to the real people that you grow up among?

GRALEY: I think in school the influence of the textbook is far greater than the influence of the home.

MOFFETT: Really?

GRALEY: Yes sir, because they have them children six or seven hours a day drilling this into them. A parent—if a father works he comes in tired and he may spend 15 or 20 minutes with his child and in devotion or just sitting down telling them the facts of life, and he may not spend any time, but the schools got them every day there. And what I can't understand—now they said, "Well, why fight them in school? You got it on television, you've got these X-rated movies." All right, you've got to be eighteen to go to X-rated movies, and after you become eighteen there's no one that's going to get you by the arm and force you to go, or make you go to a movie, to see a X-rated movie. All right on TV, if it's on there and I'm a parent here and I want my kid to watch it, that's all right,

watch it. But when the compulsory school attendance law *makes* them children come, sit in a classroom under this teaching and all these bad words and indoctrination going on in the classroom—they're forced to do that. So there's a lot of difference in school textbooks and the movies here at the theaters or what they show on television. . . .

MOFFETT: Have you talked with some parents on the other side of the fence who say they *do* want books in there that have, let's say, black stories that have some street language, because they want their kids to know how those people live?

GRALEY: About 90 percent of the people I've talked to that was absolutely against us doing the textbook protest, and even stood up with the other people, the other side, now say, "Boy, we see that you all was right. If we had it to do over we'd be right out there with you."

MOFFETT: You mean if it happened over again there wouldn't be any resistance?

GRALEY: There wouldn't be any resistance, they'd be on our side, yes. Very few have I found—because now we see the fruits of that, our children, you can't even—it's dangerous for a mother or any women, or anybody practically, to be out on the streets. You don't—

MOFFETT: That was true before the books came up, wasn't it?

GRALEY: Oh, no, no we didn't lock up our doors. There wasn't a door locked here until that book protest started—never, never did. You could come to my house and walked in any time you wanted to.

MOFFETT: Do you believe all these negative things like increase in crime and so on are due to the schools?

GRALEY: Yes, definitely so. I believe that crime—because they taught them crime right in them books, yes. And I believe that the crime increase—and you know they'll say, "Well, let's give them—let's appropriate more money for recreation and it'll be a different story." You can stand in one spot up here and count about five baseball fields right here in the Institute. They've got tennis courts, they've got racquet ball courts, they've got everything in the world that's recreation, and crimes keeps increasing. See, you can't—

MOFFETT: I work a lot with teachers around the country, and I know there are good teachers and there are bad teachers and all sorts because it's a huge profession. What I get from them sometimes—they get tremendously frustrated a lot and say, "Well, parents are always blaming us. For everything that goes wrong in life they blame the school." So this is a situation where we're in danger of everybody blaming everybody else. There are a lot of things going on that people don't like in this world, and *nobody* likes the increase in crime, but—

GRALEY: Well, if we'll get back to teaching and allow the parents to

whip the children. They've hollered "child abuse," if you spank the child. It's a funny thing though. If a Christian spanks their child it's child abuse. But if it's these liberals out here drinking all night, come in and cut their child up, they wouldn't much ever be said about that, but you heard all across the country where they confiscate children from parents that tried to bring them up and spank them a little bit once in a while, and I think until we get back to the issue of corporal punishment in schools, and if the parents come and interfere with the teacher, unless the teacher is absolutely picking on that child, you know, and it's evident that they are, but I think if a child needs spanking the teacher ought to be at liberty to spank them. . . . and these little children, I've heard them, no better'n five years old tell their parents they was not going to do something, or just rip out a big oath. All right, then they go to school and the teacher whips that child or spanks it, and then here comes the parents down on the teacher. Back when *you* was in school, if you got a whipping, if you needed it you got it, didn't you? And usually if you went home and told your parents that you got a whipping at school you got another one there at the house.

MOFFETT: Do you feel that most of the problems we're dealing with today come from the school one way or another?

GRALEY: No, I think that parents—but well, it could. I believe that it all stemmed from the school system, or most all of it, because over the period of years these people would go on to college, you know, and maybe when all them riots and everything going on in college, on the college campuses, now these are the parents. See, they did all this, they was corrupted there in the college, in schools, after they got away from the teaching of Mom and Dad, and I believe that now there's a great swinging back, cause you take these same people that when we was in that book protest would defy us to the very bottom, now they see and say, "Well, I know I wasn't brought up that way, but I got away from that." And now these are the people that had been corrupted back in the sixties and around there in the school systems, and now they have their children and they go by Dr. Spock's doctrine that use child psychology see instead of—of whipping the child. . . .

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MOFFETT: Do you think we're in danger of becoming a fascist state?

GRALEY: Yes, I do. Yes. Unless we get good leaders that will bring this thing back. We had a welfare state, and practically one man working kept one that wouldn't work, and we was getting where generations, you know, come up on welfare and that just handed on down to the next gen-

eration. I'm so happy now that I believe if we get it back off where if a man is able he should work, regardless.

MOFFETT: Are you happy with most of the things that Reagan has done now?

GRALEY: I'm *very* happy with him. Yes. Yes sir, I'm very happy that he is standing up and saying, "Boys, we have had this disarmament so long and Russia didn't go along with SALT I or II either, didn't do anything they agreed to do, and just kept building their defense, and offense too, offensive weapons," and yeah, I'm glad that he is man enough to say this thing has gone far enough, and we're going to cut out a lot of these welfare people, and we're going to make people work that's able to work, and I'm 100 percent for just about everything he's done. And I'm a Democrat and raised in a Democrat family, and here been all my life, strong Democrats. I belong to the labor unions. I belong to 128 Carpenters' Union.

MOFFETT: Do you believe teachers should belong to a union?

GRALEY: No. No, I definitely don't. I don't think anybody that is paid by taxpayers' money should belong to the union, because—we see what happens: they shut down the schools and the city garbage and all this. No, I don't think they should. Any private enterprise that can raise a product or something, in order to pay a higher wage, then that's a different story, but every time they strike and get all these raises—I think teachers are paid very adequate for no more work than they do. No more hours than they put in, and I've went to classrooms before and be in there half an hour and never see a teacher, and the kids be throwing erasers and paper wads and books across the classroom. . . . But it's nothing but a madhouse in all the public school classrooms that I've been in, and that's why I'm for getting the school system completely out of the federal and the county and state's hands, get it back into the church's, and then if a Methodist wants to teach his kids some little doctrine or whatever, let him do it, if—

MOFFETT: So you'd be in favor of going to private schools?

GRALEY: I'm in favor of the Christian schools, yes sir.

MOFFETT: Where would the poor people get the money?

GRALEY: Well, the poor people that you talk about being poor will drink up and smoke up a whole lot more than it will take for their children to go to a private school.

MOFFETT: The rich won't have to give up smoking and drinking.

GRALEY: Well sure, the poor men always has it rougher than the rich, it don't matter whether their kids're in school or not. He don't set T-bones on his table every day; he may have to have beans and potatoes, and the rich man get a T-bone or whatever he wants to or just eat out at a nice restaurant. Sure that's always been.

MOFFETT: But I mean if you go to private schools it would tend to discriminate against the poor although certainly not intended to do that.

GRALEY: I think that what we need is a voucher system where we can — that the portion of our tax — it's not fair to the Catholic, it's not fair to the Jewish people, to have to pay their tax to the public schools when they have to finance their own private schools.

MOFFETT: This is a time when federal money has been cut back severely. To run a voucher system wouldn't you have to have a lot of federal money?

GRALEY: No, you could do that with the county portion of your tax. I should be able to pay my tax to the school of my choice . . . the percentage that goes for education — now they're forcing me, you see, to pay for this garbage in these books, they *force* me to do it. They'd sell my home if I don't pay my property taxes.

MOFFETT: The thing is, other parents are furious too, because their kids are forced to go to a school they don't like, and they're forced to pay money for an education they don't like. They don't agree with you, but they *feel* the same way you do for the same reasons. They feel —

GRALEY: These people though that's kicking against the Christian schools, where are they forced to go to a school against their will? They love these public schools.

MOFFETT: No, many of them don't. They're very unhappy, you're not the only ones unhappy. This is what I mean. It's very hard to satisfy the public because they want different —

GRALEY: I never knew of anybody in this book protest that was *for* those books that wasn't wealthy people. They could have sent their children to any private school they wanted to. I never seen a poor man out there —

MOFFETT: Did you feel the textbook controversy was a conflict between the rich and the poor, mostly?

GRALEY: No, I wouldn't think so. I think it was a conflict between the — well, I believe it was all a Communist conspiracy, myself. Still do. And I'll always believe it. That they was behind all that. Sure, they had people that said Rev. so and so, you know, in front of their name, but when that same Rev. goes down here and says he's going to lead the May Day Parade with the Communist party, what do you think that fellow is?

MOFFETT: Why did a lot of parents like the books? Does that mean they were all Communists too?

GRALEY: I think that was parents that was either Communists or some of these parents that had growed up in the sixties when they was burning the colleges and all this and was brainwashed. I think our news media was very very far to the left, and I still think so.

MOFFETT: Some of the textbooks were adopted in the state of New

Mexico, which is a pretty conservative state, and in Oregon, and were adopted in a lot of cities like Baton Rouge, Louisiana, places —

GRALEY: Baton Rouge wanted me to come there and speak against them, see. The only thing is, I found this to be true all over America where I went: they *do not* bring the textbooks in until they get the board of education stacked. They get the deck stacked against the public, and I feel that they're Communists infiltrates to the top and gets in, and they spent millions of dollars, you know. If Castro thought he could get a governor in West Virginia, a Communist government, him and Brezhnev would definitely spend *millions* of dollars to get him in this office. . . .

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MOFFETT: Did you feel that some selections were downright pornographic?

GRALEY: Yes, very much so.

MOFFETT: Can you remember any of them?

GRALEY: That *Souls on Ice*, it was probably a library book, but it was very filthy and pornographic.

MOFFETT: Pornographic means that the whole purpose of it is just to arouse people sexually.

GRALEY: Yes, well, one of the 11th-grade English books, I think, was telling about this little red-headed chick that made so much a night as a prostitute. I think that was advocating prostitution, the way it read. [See chapter 8.]

MOFFETT: You mean, if something bad like that is mentioned it means you're advocating it?

GRALEY: No, but they don't never come on around and tell the bad part of it, see.

MOFFETT: I mean if your newspaper or magazine has a feature article on, let's say, prostitution, do you assume they're advocating it?

GRALEY: If they brag on that little gal and how much she made, yes. . . .

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MOFFETT: What's the main experience when you're born again? Do you feel you were born again?

GRALEY: Yes, sir. I think it's a definite feeling, that you feel the weight of the whole sins of the world is lifted off of you, whereas you had a heavy heart burdened down with sin, and now you feel that them sins is all been pardoned and you're — they're gone and you're just free — just

seem like you could fly through the air almost. It's an experience that anybody'd have to experience theirself.

MOFFETT: How did it happen for you? If you feel like saying.

GRALEY: Yes. Well, I went to an altar when the minister gave the invitation for those who wanted to accept Christ to come forth. And I prayed, but I didn't feel like I was really borned again or converted. My sins I didn't feel like had got a complete job, and then I come home after the church service and prayed, and probably two o'clock in the morning it seemed like the whole weight of the world lifted off of me. The burden of sin was gone, and so then we walked in newness of light. You just get a whole new outlook on life. Now probably before I'd got saved or borned again — the experience — I may have went out there and said, "Boy I want them books," cause I — but there's a lot of difference in religion and salvation. . . .

MOFFETT: Would you accept the principle that the language of the Bible differs from place to place? Some of it is to be taken more literally than other parts of it?

GRALEY: I think that when Christ ever spoke of a grain of wheat abiding by itself he went on to explain too that when we die, as long as we're in ourself, then we abide alone, but when we are dead to self, then we bring forth fruit.

MOFFETT: Right, so it's a symbolic interpretation?

GRALEY: Yes, but he didn't leave us in the dark on anything.

MOFFETT: He did it often because the disciples were a little puzzled and they pressed him for meaning.

GRALEY: These was ignorant and unlearned men too, you must remember that. He knew they understood fish, the fishermen, and he understood that some of them knew about a sheep, and if one sheep was lost they'd go out and find him, search for him.

MOFFETT: Wouldn't it be reasonable to think that some of the rest of the Bible was also written in popular language that people could understand? In a symbolic way?

GRALEY: But I don't think that changes the interpretation, the meaning, regardless of it's a parable or not. I think the word of God never contradicts itself, and I don't see why we'd have so many different interpretations of it.

MOFFETT: I'm sure it doesn't contradict itself. It's just that people get different understandings, because they're at different stages of growth, and each one feels *he's* right because for *him* at that *moment* —

GRALEY: Well at that *moment* he *is* right, see.

MOFFETT: But somebody else who's at another stage, he's sure *he's* right, so they go at loggerheads about it.

GRALEY: That's why your child if he's — my boys, they's a lot of times —

they're good workers but they run across things every day or two — they're right in everything they're doing, usually, on a building or something, and then they come and ask me, "Well, Dad what do we do about this?" and when I explain it to them — maybe when I first start talking to them, they say, "No, that ain't the right way, we don't do it that way," or won't do it, but then they finally see it that way and do it. And then from then on they're up another step. I think you've got to grow in this thing. When a child's born he has to crawl before he walks.

MOFFETT: Can you imagine that there'll be another stage for *you* where you'll feel differently than you do now?

GRALEY: I hope there's a stage that I'll be a lot closer to God than I am now, and I feel very close to Him today, but I always want to reach a more — you have a desire to be more perfect each day because I don't think anybody is perfect, but every day we want to strive to be more perfect. And I don't think anybody will obtain that absolute perfection until this old mortal puts on immortality.

MOFFETT: We've got to keep growing all the time we're here.

GRALEY: But you do have to keep growing, yes, cause there's no stopping place. You're either going forward or backwards, I think. But then Christ said that some of 'em would bring forth 30, some 60, and some 100, see, and he gives a talent to everybody as their ability. He's not going to give me a job out here like he's give to Jerry Falwell or Billy Graham or something because my ability just won't let me do that, and God's not going to give me something beyond my ability. So maybe I'll be the one that in all my lifetime won't bring over 30, in His eyes, 30 bushels in my whole lifetime, where up here's another one that can bring forth 60 and some even 100.

MOFFETT: If we encounter people in this life who *are* more spiritually developed, they might look crazy to us.

GRALEY: Yeah.

MOFFETT: So it's hard to imagine — isn't it? — how we might be quarreling with people who are actually more developed than we are, but it would be hard to know it, wouldn't it? Because we haven't reached that stage yet. I think children have this problem — don't they? They haven't been there yet so they can't understand sometimes where we got something.

GRALEY: All right, you take Joshua, the foolish thing in the world to that king and all would have been for a man to stood up against that city and go against the wall of the city and not have anything but a bull horn in his hand. See, that was crazy, to go up against them with nothing but a ram's horn, to blow on. Yeah, I think — but you see, Joshua got crazy enough to do that. To most people and to his men that probably — when he said, "Boys let's go up here and all we're going to take is a ram's horn," and —

MOFFETT: He knew something they didn't know.

GRALEY: You see? To them the man's crazy.

MOFFETT: That's exactly what I mean.

GRALEY: And just like the little Naaman to go down and dip in the Jordan, seven times, see? They thought he was crazy, and *he* thought it was crazy. But finally old Elisha, that had to run from the king and everything else, he's the one that told him to go down there and dip in Jordan seven times. Well, that was the craziest thing ever was. That old man was out of his mind telling him to go down there and dip in Jordan. But it worked. Naaman's men finally convinced him that that was the only way he was going to ever get well, or he had nothing to lose, by going. "Go try."

MOFFETT: This is something that we maybe have to always keep in mind: it's difficult recognizing higher spiritual levels of development. They may look *criminal* to us.

GRALEY: But just in the past month I have seen sugar diabetes healed, through anointing and laying on of hands. Now, this is in my church, this is not somewhere else that I've read about this. These people actually stand up and testify that they've been back to their doctor and that their doctor said that their sugar was normal, back to just right. . . .

MOFFETT: Do you do the laying on of hands yourself?

GRALEY: Oh yes, yes, and of course the church gathers up there. We all — everybody that wants to, and we agree in prayer, because the Bible says, "Where two or more agree touching any one thing it shall be done," see, and we believe that and so we anoint with oil and pray the prayer of faith. "And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord raise them up," James says. . . .

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MOFFETT: Is there anything else that you want to add, anything I didn't ask you? Do you want to ask me something?

GRALEY: No, I think we're on our way to recovery. I really believe it. I believe our book protest broke the whole — if not the whole nation, and part of the world. Because I understand that during that time, that in Paris, France, the headlines of their paper one morning, when they put me in jail up here, was, "Thank God there's still men that'll stand for what's right." We just kept yielding to Communism and these radicals out here hollering around until the silent majority, I thought, had to get up on their feet while we still had a foot to stand on, or be overthrown by Communism.

I gave him several opportunities to end the interview, but each time we started in again. When I referred to the chronic conflicts between Israel

and the Palestinians as a holy war, he said this was not so, for the Israelis were merely defending their country and opposing the Communist PLO. But when I said the Jews had felt in founding Israel that they were fulfilling a Biblical prophecy, he laughed and said, "Can we doubt that when they fought that seven-day war and whipped them in seven days, outnumbered 100 soldiers to one? That sounds like David and Goliath, don't it?"

A torrential summer rain and crashing thunder had been upstaging our conversation. We hovered near the doorway opening on the fine lawn rolling down to the Kanawha River. He had told me earlier, when I praised his grounds, that some townspeople had objected to his filling his edge of the river with scraps from his roofing business. When the authorities tried to stop him, he said, "I told them this ain't Moscow but America—I can do what I want." He gestured to the banks, green now and dotted with young trees.

Somehow, at this last moment, we got onto matters of race. He said he had talked with the local NAACP and they hadn't agreed with him. He said he didn't approve of the racism of the KKK and disowned the connection while admitting that he agreed with "90 percent of their ideas." When I asked if he believed in intermarriage, he said, "Each to his own kind." Moses married an Egyptian, a black, he said, but look what happened: she died of leprosy. Clearly, this was not meant to be. The rain had stopped, and I was preparing to leave. He indicated the lawn with a sweep of his arm. "Birds all peck seeds together, all mixed up, but each mates only its own kind."