

An Interview with the TCC Elders

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TTP Interviews

By Don Green

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Truth Community Church

4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Don Green. Well, I'm hoping that tonight will be an edifying evening for you all. I'm really delighted that you're here. We're doing something a little bit different and a little bit special tonight. I wanted to interview our other two elders so that you would have the opportunity to get to know them better than what you already do, and hopefully if I can get them talking, bring out some things that I know that perhaps you don't know about their lives that I know will be an encouragement to you.

I wanted to read a passage as we start and then just say a couple of words before Dane and Andrew come. If you'd open your Bibles to 1 Peter 5. I really need to teach this entire passage sooner rather than later, but for tonight we're just going to pick one thing out of it that I want to emphasize. Peter said in chapter 5, verse 1,

1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Tonight I just want to focus on that phrase at the end of verse 3 where it says "proving to be examples for the flock or to the flock." An example is just someone to be imitated, someone to notice and observe and then follow in their footsteps. That's part of being an elder is to have a spiritual example that others can follow. It's very important.

Now going back several weeks or months, I think I know who I had this conversation with but I'm not even sure, but a few months ago I had a conversation with someone that was really haunting to me and kind of helped provoke my desire to have an evening like this. They were telling me about their prior church experience before coming to Truth Community Church, they were not speaking of their church in a bad way and I don't think they even meant what I'm about to quote in a negative way at all, but they said this, they

said, "At our former church, we did not even know who our elders were." Now that just frightened me, in one sense, about the whole nature of that mindset. How can an elder be an example to someone who doesn't know who they are? I don't get that and it's really contrary to the biblical pattern that you find in the Apostle Paul.

Look over at 1 Thessalonians 2 in verses 7 and 8. Paul is reminding the Thessalonian church of their experience with him as grounds of enforcing, not in a bad way but improving their obligation and that it's in their best interest to follow after what Paul is teaching them and exhorting them to do. In verses 7 and 8 he says, "we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us." And in the whole surrounding context of that very warm statement, the gentleness of his ministry among them, he appeals to the reality that they know what he is saying is true. They had observed Paul personally in an up-close, intimate way that verified the veracity of everything that he was saying to them. So you look at chapter 2, verse 1, for example, he said, "you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain." Verse 2, "we had suffered, as you know." Verse 5, "we never came with flattering speech, as you know." And then in verse 9 he says, "you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God." Then finally in verse 10 for our purposes tonight, he says, "You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers," verse 11, "just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children."

So there is this deep personal eyewitness account that the church at Thessalonica had of the ministry that Paul had in their midst. He was an example to them because they knew him, they observed him, they had interactions with him, and that, I think, is kind of a fuller idea of what Peter was expressing in chapter 5 about being examples to the flock. And so elders are not intended to be cloistered away from the flock and, you know, doing whatever they do and, you know, the congregation doesn't really know them. Biblical ministry is premised on elder leadership in which there is a mutual interaction and a mutual understanding and a relationship between elders and the people who come to the local church. And so it's in that spirit tonight that I want to be able to ask these men some questions to draw out things that I know that maybe you don't know so that you can know these men better. For those of you that are new to our church, maybe watching over the live stream, there are three elders at Truth Community Church, me and Dane Logan and Andrew Snelling, and I want you to know, it's appropriate for me to tell you that I view these men as my elders as well. You know, when I need counsel, when I'm discouraged about something, I go to these men, you know, early on to get their input, to get their encouragement, to ask them to pray for me, and so they have that role in my life as well as in the rest of the congregation.

So I'm going to ask them questions that in their humility and modesty they're going to wish that I hadn't. They're not going to want to be forthcoming with the things about their lives that I want to ask them about, so if you get the sense that they're holding back on

something, you can hiss or something like that to encourage them to be more outspoken than what they already are, but these are delightful men. Andrew and Dane are both among the most gentle men that I have ever met, and it's a great privilege for me to serve as an elder alongside them. So I'm going to ask them to come up now. I'm going to tell them to come up now. And I just want to thank you guys for coming up so quickly as soon as I gave you that first prompt. That was really a blessing to me.

So I'm going to have to go a little bit back and forth here, one to the other. And Dane, you're the elder chairman so I'm going to start with you, if that's all right? And let me just kind of set the stage here by asking you this: do you remember when you and I first met for the very first time?

Dane Logan. I do.

Don. Would you just tell the others a little bit about the...this is going to be a really long night the way this is shaping up.

Dane. As I recall, you were teaching "Trusting God in Trying Times" at Answers in Genesis and we were invited by one of the workers at Answers in Genesis who attended our former church, and my wife was struggling with her mom having dementia and being in a nursing home, and so we thought our pastor at that time was on vacation so we thought this would be a good time to slip away. So far I'm right, right?

Don. Yeah. Yeah, that's what I'm remembering. I remember distinctly coming over to introduce myself to you and you told me that you were a dentist and it kind of all went from, it went from there.

Dane. Yes. We thought it was just a teaching time, you know, but we thought it was strange when we first arrived, people at the door welcoming us and wanting contact information and we're going, "Why do you need our contact information?" But we gave it to them and we had no idea that it was, you'd been called to be a pastor in northern Kentucky. And so we sat through the service and we met you before it started, and we were very impressed with your teaching and that was the first lure of pulling us away from our former church.

I had been kind of getting dry at my former church. I say that meaning that I had done, I had been an elder there, I had been a deacon there, I had been a Sunday school superintendent, I had taught Sunday school, I had done a lot of things there, and I was just getting started going to Mexico, the Mexican Indian Training Center, and that really got my juices flowing to be on the mission field, and I would come home from that week visit down there and I would go through, you know, a spiritual high when you're there and then you'd come down after you were back for a couple of weeks, and then always looking forward to the next trip. I usually went down every six months, sometimes three times a year but typically twice. And so I was really seeing myself, I wouldn't call it burnout, I was just seeing that I needed something different.

And so when we heard that this other church was going to be started, Truth, I went to my fellow elders and asked them. We had tried to start, Bible Chapel had tried to start a work in northern Kentucky several times, a sister church, and it takes a lot of energy to start a church and we had so many people that lived in northern Kentucky that were driving to Delhi, we thought it would be good to start a church over there. We tried a couple of times and just couldn't get the inertia to make it go, and so when the opportunity came to think about starting a church in northern Kentucky with Truth, I went to my elders and I asked them, I said, "I think I could be better used at another location." And of course, they all with mixed feelings said, "Sure, yeah, go ahead, and you've been here 40 years so it's time to go somewhere else and see what you can do there."

Don. So did they say, like, something like, "Here, let me get the door for you"?

Dane. Yeah, here's your hat. What's your hurry? No. I had no idea that I was going to come here and serve in any capacity. I just thought, you know, I'll just be a warm body in a seat, show, you know, that, hey, somebody else is interested, there's initial growth and one thing led to another and here I am.

Don. In fact, I'm glad you mentioned that because that's one of the things that I wanted to bring out. When you came to Truth, you had no designs on leadership whatsoever. In some ways it was the furthest thing from your mind.

Dane. Right. Yeah.

Don. And what I remember as I got to know Dane a little bit, we had a meal at LaRosa's in Greendale and after having been here for a few months or so, and I don't remember the full context of the conversation but I said, "We need someone like you. We need you at Truth." And you responded well and I'm grateful to the Lord that you did. But one of the things, kind of a couple of things that I want to accent here is that you may not have realized is that while you're used to seeing Dane here in his elder capacity, he's been in church leadership in one capacity or another for 40 years, and that's a real blessing from God to have someone of that much experience to be with us and, Dane, we're all grateful that the Lord's brought you here.

I've got more to ask you but I probably ought to pivot to our brother, Andrew, here. Andrew, you joined the elder board in 2016 and you had been here, you've been here pretty much from the start also, that same start that Dane mentioned. I don't remember the first time that you and I met but just talk a little bit about your remembrances of the early days just to kind of set a context going forward.

Andrew Snelling. Well, we moved here to the US in June of 2011. I'd been commuting for many years back and forwards, but we came because Ken Ham wanted me onsite to work with Answers in Genesis, although I'd been working from Brisbane, Australia. The kids had grown up and left home. We came over June, 2011 and we settled into our house and started to look around at churches. We had to go back to Australia in August, 2011 to close on our house in Australia, and then we came back to settle in for the winter. And in

the course of that, in looking around at churches, we heard about the new fellowship that was starting at Legacy Hall in the Creation Museum, and it was in January of 2012 and I think it was only about the third meeting, that we came. And I'm one of those people, for reasons that you'll no doubt drag out of me later, but when I hear God's word preached with clarity, it immediately brings joy and, you know, connection. And so, you know, we purposed right from the start to be involved and were involved from 2012 before you even moved here, so we were in the congregation when you were commuting, when you were telly, internet, via internet and then when you moved over we were here.

Don. Yeah. Now do you have any idea why it took us so long to recognize you as an elder, because that was almost like, that was like four years. I don't know what the delay was.

Andrew. Well, the delay is very purposeful. I was involved in church leadership in Australia when I was, well, the church I grew up, a Bible-believing church, I was a deacon when I turned 21. Then we left for work when we went to Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia and I was a deacon there in the Baptist church in Darwin, but when we moved to Brisbane at the end of 1983, I was moving into ministry and, of course, Answers in Genesis is a controversial ministry with Christians who were compromising, and so I purposed right from the start because I'd seen it happen in churches where people had their hobbyhorses and they're always speaking up about their thing, and it can become divisive, and so I purposed right from the start that I would allow people to get to know me first and then if I asked questions or talked, and if they chose to ask me to do anything, they knew what they were getting. And I also didn't want to put the leadership or the church in a difficult position because, you know, there are many churches where there are scientists and others who don't stand on the authority of God's word but they're still in the congregation and they can have sway, and you can come along and cause division and tension in the church.

So it's better to be careful and so the same here with the church. I mean, I wasn't looking for any leadership role at all, being involved in ministry and traveling, not being able to be around all the time, you need continuity in leadership, not people who are sort of coming and going, and also similarly because the church had started there at Answers in Genesis at Legacy Hall but that was an arrangement that was only for a time until the church was established and this facility was purchased, and obviously what was in view was not a church that was Answers in Genesis' property or that, it was distinct, had its own distinctives, had its own stand, and therefore I was caution because, again, because of my profile, it was not a case of wanting to put the church in a difficult position, and so it was basically you had to come and twist my arm and kicking and screaming.

Don. Yeah, and what he just said, you said a couple of things there that I want to follow-up on that are just really really important. But he said we had to draw him kicking and screaming and that's a little bit of hyperbole but when we asked Andrew to consider being on the elder board, I was really hopeful and I really wanted this to happen because I knew it would be strategic for the future of our church because I'd come to respect Andrew so much. And he sent an email response outlining his thoughts about it, and I

wish I'd thought to bring it but this is just the nature of the spontaneity of what we're doing here tonight, as I recall, Andrew, you listed about a page and a half of reasons why you should not do it and why we would not want you to be an elder and why you didn't want to be an elder, so to speak. And my heart, I'm reading this and my heart is just sinking by the minute and I'm thinking, "Oh, no, this is terrible." And you know, I just knew this was perfect. I don't understand. Then the last paragraph, like the last paragraph he says, "But if you guys are okay with all of that, then, yes, I'll be happy to be an elder." I still kind of hold that against you.

Andrew. Fair enough.

Don. But, yeah, so that was a great start. But you said and, you know, Andrew does have a very high profile as a teacher in the Christian church across the country and across the world, really, and yet, friends, tonight I want to emphasize a couple of things that he said just now.

You heard how important it was for him not to be divisive. If he comes to a church, he did not want to be a divisive influence, and so you see that there was, you know, that he was putting the flock, putting the church of Christ ahead of himself, number 1. And then also you talked about the importance of continuity in leadership and, you know, we've had the same elder board now for going on five years, I think, and the continuity is really important. Andrew, talk just a little bit for the benefit of the people that are here about the nature, your perceptions of our relationships on the board, you know, how we work together and just the general spirit of the elder board because I think that's important for people to know.

Andrew. Well, like a lot of Australians, I'm the sort of person is what you see is what you get, and if you ask me what I think, I'll tell you. But, I mean, that's crucial. I mean, that's one of the things that we've built in our elder board is trust, openness, honesty. We listen to one another, we consider what one another has to say, and then together we work through, if there's any variance of thought, we work through the reasons and we, you know, we can see where we need to, and it's all based on transparency with integrity, openness, and that's the only way to move forward. I mean, how can we walk together in leadership without being in total agreement with one another and deferring to one another in a sense, and listening to one another? And so we've built, deliberately built this trust based on integrity and openness, openness particularly. It's very important.

Don. Yeah, and the thing that strikes me after so many years together building on what you just said, Andrew, is that there's a real, there is a genuine harmony amongst the three of us that there has never been a cross word between the three of us in five years. True?

Andrew. Absolutely true.

Don. Yeah, and so it makes it really sweet to serve in leadership and, you know, sooner or later that kind of flows over into the congregation as well. Anything you want to add to that, Dane?

Dane. Just amen to what Andrew said. It's not like, it is really strange how this board operates. We've never had an issue that we were too far apart. It's all just been nuance of things, it's never, there's never ever been issues that had to be dealt with more than 5 or 10 minutes. I mean, it's just a wonderful thing. Having been on the other side of some of board meetings in other places, you know, this is a true blessing and I just take it, you know, God's blessing.

Don. Yeah. Now moving on a little bit, Dane, you mentioned your experience in Mexico. You've been to Mexico probably 30-40 times or more. What is it about that place, about the Mexican Indian Training Center, the people there, what is it that makes you keep going back again and again and again and again and again?

Dane. I used to have a red flag would go up when I ever heard someone talking about short-term mission trips where they would go in and do a little ministry and then leave and never go back, but if you do consecutive short-term ministry in the same place and build relationship, that's totally different and that's what I have experienced.

I started going down to the Mexican Indian Training Center in 2002. I had always desired after graduating dental school, I'd always desired to do some mission work but started my practice and thought, okay, I have to get that up and running. Got married at the same time, okay, get used to being married. And then the first son came and, okay, and then the second son came and got to get them up and moving through school and sports and all the activities that they're in, and before you know it 20 years went by. And so I always wanted to do it and the opportunity happened and so I went down and it was my first trip down, it was just amazing the relationships that you can build in a short period of time. The Hispanic people are very warm and relational and it was just a wonderful feeling. A lot of long hours, a lot of hard work in the clinic but a true blessing.

Don. Yeah, just expand on just a moment what you did when you went down there so people know.

Dane. They have a dental clinic on campus and so I take care of, there's about 40 or 50 people that live on campus. There's 12-13 families with, you know, their children, and then there's two local churches in the area, and I'll take care of the needs of the instructors and their families, and some of the work that needs to be done in the dental clinic with those two local churches, plus we take care of all the student body also.

Don. Yeah. Now you're a pretty even-keeled guy, anybody that knows you I think would agree with that. I have....

Dane. My wife's not here tonight.

Don. Yeah, that made it easier for me to say that. Karen's not here tonight. But you know, you have a sense of humor that I have come to really enjoy but the place where when you start talking about Mexico, there's a whole different kind of passion that comes over you

and you just, it just comes out and I love that, I love that about you. Tell us, we were talking just before the service began about a woman, just to kind of illustrate what you were talking about, the Hispanic culture, the relationships you can build, the spiritual opportunity down there, tell us the story about the woman who got a Bible for the first time.

Dane. This was in Solandero where Pastor Moises started a ministry there because of the flood that happened in 2007. This is down near the Gulf of Mexico and there's a little tributary that comes and it snakes around and this little village is kind of like in the peninsula of that river. And it flooded and those people were in four hours the river rose 27 feet and encompassed the village and they couldn't get in or out for six weeks, and so they were literally starving to death in there and Moises' church, Beilin in Corbeda, had a first aid, you know, they put together staples and rented a truck and drove it into there six weeks later and the people kind of rioted because no one was there to help them, you know, and they rioted and started ready to dump the truck and grab the stuff and run, and somebody yelled out, you know, "Why are you here? What is going on?" And Moises had his Bible on the dash of the truck and he picks it up and he says, "I have food for you but I come in the name of Jesus Christ." And he told me, he said, "Dane, you would not believe as soon as I said that and held up the Bible, the rioting just stopped.

Anyway, that's the how the Solandero work started. They've got a church there now that started out just as a Bible study and now it's a church. Moises had brought a Bible with him, it was after a three hour drive to Solandero, seven hours on the ground there just going door to door to door ministering to people, and then having a church service, a meal and then we would drive home. And so it's like 8 o'clock at night and it's hot and it's been a long hot day, and I see Moises standing over on the side and he's with this lady and I can tell it's a very intimate, you know, conversation that they're having. She is bent over and he hands her a Bible and I don't know what's going on, I just see it and I stayed back because, you know, this is too personal for me to just walk up on. And she's just heaving, just tears are flowing down her face, just incredible. I think, you know, did somebody die? What has happened here? And this woman is weeping. This is why Don wanted to do this. This woman is weeping and she's, you know, Moises flags me over and he tells me what she's saying and she's saying, "I never thought I would own a Bible." The strange thing is that she wasn't even a believer at that time. She was in the church, active, participating, helping, cooking, preparing for three years after that, but that Bible was the greatest possession she'd ever had and it's things like that that happen just about every trip down there that just is so moving.

Don. So whatever happened to her?

Dane. She's still there. She got baptized and saved. And I, you know, because of the language barrier and I'm horrible with...I can hardly speak English, you know, I can't communicate at all down there. And so, you know, it is what it is. I could not understand because I assumed that she was a believer and when I found out she was baptized, you know, I went up to her and I just said, "Why? Por que? How did this happen? Why?" And she just shook her head and just, you know, said it was God's timing, when he wanted to

save her, he saved her. But the fact that she got that Bible was a means of grace to her, you know. It's just very special to witness things like that.

Don. Yeah. Well, Dane has hundreds of stories like that and I know he'd be happy to interact with any of you privately if you asked him about that. What's the time schedule for being able to go back? They were really hit harder than we were, even, by COVID.

Dane. Yeah, the school is still closed. The students are doing online classes. It's very difficult. They just had one of the staff members, Juan Garcia, succumb to COVID on campus. He was about 80-82 years old. He had gone, they had sequestered everyone on campus but he had gone to his brother's funeral, his elderly brother's funeral and they think that that's where he contracted COVID, and so it was a great loss because he was a pillar of faith. He was a man that had been, you know, in the ministry 50 years and pastored at several different villages and then came on staff at the Mexican Indian Training Center.

Don. So there's no timetable for you to go back right now.

Dane. Yeah. Yeah, there's no timetable. We're, you know, waiting and they told me if I got vaccinated, it would help. I got my second vaccination just the other day and so we're just waiting for the opportunity to go down and see what happens.

Don. Well, I love your passion for Mexico. As most of you know, it's a privilege of our church to frequently support the ministries down there. There's multiple ministries down there. It's more than just MITC. I think you had a word that you wanted to say about the gifts from Truth to Mexico.

Dane. I never got to relay the conversations that I had with some of the staff down there with your gift that you gave in December. I think it was about \$7,500 that you graciously gave to the ministry down there and I looked at the need, I also asked Dan Hall, the field director, if he knew of any special need and he said, "Anything that can be done, anything that you could send would be such a help because we've been hit so hard down in Mexico." A lot of people are laid off from their jobs and, you know, when your job only makes \$3 a day, every dollar counts. And so we were able to divide that money up and bless I think five pastors and five different churches, and two evangelistic ministries, one in the mountains and one in the valley. So that was...and I got several emails back from those men and just, "Make sure you tell your church thank you. It gave us, you know, hope to make it." You know, so a little, you know.... Again, when you live in abject poverty, when you get any type of money, it is profoundly blessing. And they, I told Don, I said it's not like they store the money and say we'll wait for a need because need is in their face every single day, and so that money, you know, is taken directly to those churches and dispersed and given to families that are in dire straits.

Don. So what I hear you saying is that it's about time for us to do another designated offering?

Dane. That would be wonderful.

Don. So what we'll do, this is being decided on the fly here, so, Catherine, what we'll do is we'll set up the opportunity for you to give again to Mexico. We'll make this an Easter offering that will be, we'll cut it off on Monday, the Monday after Easter, April 5, and so you'll have an opportunity to respond to Dane's passion by supporting again the ministry down there. We've really kind of developed a sister ministry relationship with them that's very sweet. So we'll plan on that. Catherine will send out a link for you to give and if you want to designate anything on your way out tonight, you can do that. Believe me, that was completely spontaneous but it's a good follow-up to what you're saying.

So you see Dane's passion for Mexico. Andrew, you've got your own passion of a different sort. I think everyone knows your expertise in geology. You've got a PhD from....

Andrew. The University of Sydney.

Don. Sydney in geology. You worked in the secular mining for a number of years before moving into your creation ministry. Tell us, I know the answer to this question but tell us what the early start in your life and how old you were when you took an interest in geology for the first time.

Andrew. Well, chronologically you've got to get the sequence correct because it tells the story. I was born and raised in a Christian family in a Bible-believing church and I was eight years old when I went off to a holiday camp and, you know, I had heard the gospel previously but on that occasion the Lord really spoke to me and I remember distinctly on the Friday evening, the last evening of the camp, I knelt by my bedside and committed my life to Christ.

Don. Eight years old.

Andrew. Eight years old. Fast forward a year, we went on a family vacation to Tasmania which is quite an expedition, you've got to roll on, roll off ferry, you drive your car on overnight to get across the strait because it's off the south coast of Australia and we did some touring around, and went to the west coast where there are these very famous copper gold mines, and because my parents had a connection with someone there, we got let into certain areas of the mine that most people don't normally get to and so, of course, I started seeing these bright shiny crystals and everything and I started picking things up and, you know, when you go to school and you give a show-and-tell and you start to know more about the subject than your peers and your teachers, then it sort of escalates. But seriously, it was a God-given passion. There's no question about that because then I went on in high school. By the time I got to high school, I was convinced I was going to be a geologist but, of course, in a Bible-believing church, I understood what the Scriptures taught and so in my teens I had this tension to work through. And so by the time I got to university, that had been dealt with because I read the book, "The Genesis

Flood," by Drs. Whitcomb and Morris, and so I was convinced. I was also convinced that the Lord had given me that burden for a reason.

And I want to make this perfectly clear: if I wasn't obedient to what God, well, he gave me the gifting, if I wasn't obedient to use that gifting, he could have gone and got someone else to do these things. So in a sense there's nothing special about me because he can choose anyone and, you know, the talents, some were given five, some were given two, but they got the same reward. So it's not a matter of whether you have talents or not, it's what are you doing with your talents.

So I studied at university with the purpose of, you know, I was convinced, I wasn't aware of any full-time creation ministry until later on when I graduated with my first degree. I had a choice, I had a scholarship, a government scholarship to do a PhD or I had a job offer to go into the industry because I'd been working in summer vacations with a mining company in various locations around Australia. But I spoke with some people I respected and they said to me, "Look, if you feel the Lord has burdened you about speaking about these issues, you know, defending the Scriptures like that, then you really need to get higher training because obviously once you get that qualification, then you've earned a platform to speak." And so I took the scholarship, the government scholarship to do the PhD at the University of Sydney which, by the way, is Australia's oldest university and is currently ranked about 55 in the world for its research and teaching. So it's not a slouch as far as that's concerned.

So that's how I got my start, but I also realized that, well, it was during when I was doing my PhD at the University of Sydney that, first of all, I was introduced to Dwayne Gish. He came from the Institute for Creation Research who with Henry Morris started the Institute for Creation Research. He came to speak at the Christian fellowship. It was July, 1975 on campus, and I went along and I was speaking on the lawn afterwards with him and that's when I learned more about the Institute for Creation Research. Unbeknownst to me, of course, where I was standing was underneath the windows of the geology building and some of my fellow students saw me down there talking and they reported it to my supervisor. Within an hour of getting back to my desk, I was called up by my supervisor and quizzed about what I was doing at that meeting.

So yes, so that's how I got my start and not long afterwards, I heard about Ken Ham and the beginning of Creation Ministry in Australia, and yes, we had a long history and that's how I've come to be involved in this ministry.

Don. Now somewhere along the line you did some secular work that was pretty significant.

Andrew. Well, yeah, I did my research on a uranium deposit in the Northern Territory of Australia. If you've ever heard of the Kakadu National Park, it's a World Heritage area. It's spectacular country. It's about 2 ½ – 3 hours east of Darwin in Australia's tropical north and, you know, I had to fly in, although the roads are in there now. So I did my research there. That project never became a mine because it was on aboriginal traditional

land and it was declared a national park and it still hasn't been mined to this day. However, when I finished at the university, I still had to finish writing up some of my research. I had a job offer with a mining company and so I took that and we went to Darwin to live for a couple of years where I worked for one mining company. I was involved in field exploration right throughout northern Australia, various programs, and then I changed to another company that had bought that project and wanted me to be the project geologist for that potentially developing mine.

Well, in the course of that, the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization, which does research in nuclear energy and does research in that area, they got a grant from the US Department of Energy because the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission wanted to know how, they had the problem of burying nuclear waste and how do you know how nuclear waste will behave in the ground. Well, yeah, you can study certain things in the laboratory but the best place to do it is out in the ground because that's where you want to bury the waste, and the closest approximation is a high grade uranium ore deposit because it's giving off all the nasty elements and all the rest of it. And so they zeroed in on this deposit because it was isolated from the beaten track and so I became a consultant to this project that involved scientists here in the US, Britain, in Europe, Japan, and they were all chemists and physicists and I was the geologist, and so I would give them advice, help them with their sampling, we'd have workshops and they would present their results and I'd tell them if they made sense with the geology and everything like that. It was quite fascinating because most of them didn't know I was a creationist, although some did.

And I was doing this even after I started in full-time creation ministry. I remember one occasion I was in the Grand Canyon for the Institute for Creation Research, they wanted to do a sampling trip up to the Northern Territory to get more samples for this research project. I literally flew back from the Grand Canyon, my parents exchanged suitcases at Sydney Airport and I got on a plane to Darwin all in one hop, jet-lagged that night and the next day we were out in the bush out in this remote site doing the sampling. But, yeah, that went on for over a decade and produced a number of reports that are on file.

Don. And that's one of the things that I wanted all of you to be able to hear is the very high level of secular work that Andrew did in the midst of his developing career in defending Scripture as a creation, do you call yourself a creation geologist?

Andrew. Yes.

Don. Now another reason that I wanted to, or another thing that I wanted to do tonight, maybe some of you know this, maybe all of you do, but in case you don't, Andrew has published this amazing two volume work called "Earth's Catastrophic Past." And this was published back in 2009. I'm going to hold it up for the sake of the camera for just a moment there. It's available on Amazon. Andrew, I'm going to try to simplify the division of the book. In the first volume of this, you defend the biblical record of the flood and creation and all of that and deal with some of the biblical issues and respond to critics of biblical teaching. And the second volume is kind of a scientific defense and an

integration showing how biblical teaching can be, explains the geologic record that we find in observation. Did I do a decent job on that?

Andrew. Yeah, that's a pretty good summation. That book was, well, a lot of things went into it over the years but it came to pass, Dr. Henry Morris, I first visited the Institute for Creation Research in 1990. I was invited to participate in their Grand Canyon trips and I visited their headquarters which was then in Santee, California, and he was wanting someone to work on an update to his book, "The Genesis Flood."

Don. Which was published in '61, I believe.

Andrew. 1961.

Don. Yeah.

Andrew. And a lot had happened since then, I mean, radiometric dating, radioactive dating of rocks was really only came into fruition after that, the idea of plate tectonics in geology and it happened in the '60s and '70s. And so he said, you know, this book needs to be updated and it needs to have someone who's got the professional background. Anyhow, [unintelligible] about it and, of course, others I thought might have done it but nobody took it on, and so it was only at the end of the '90s when I started working full-time for a while with the Institute for Creation Research that I had the opportunity to work on that book and prepare it. And it's an outflow, the reason why I gave it a different title, you know, people, he wanted it to be a sequel to his book and I purposely chose not to give it the same title because I didn't want to take away from the original work because it's a classic. And so that's why I chose the title, the subtitle is, "Geology, Creation and the Flood." And so as Pastor Don has just said, it's a thorough treatment of the Scriptures and what they say about the issue of creation and the flood, and then defending the biblical from the critics, and then looking at the geological evidence and how it screams what the Bible has said, of course. And so, you know, that was published in 2009. It's due for a second edition but I haven't got the time yet and I'm still doing research that will go into a second edition, the trouble is that's 1,100 pages already, if I keep on adding to it, there will be a volume 3.

Don. Well, I'm sure that would be all right by those that appreciate your work. You know, just the very structure of these two volumes tells you something about the magnitude and the diversity of the challenge to biblical truth and defending a creation worldview, a biblical creation worldview. There are, you have to respond to the critics of biblical teaching, you have to respond to what you might say, the internal critics of the Bible that distort the teaching of the Bible and, you know, try to get it to fit with billions of years as opposed to a young earth creation, you've got that internal biblical exegetical issue to deal with, and then you've got the external outside issues of not even professing Christians teaching a geological view of things that would undermine the biblical account as well. So it's undermined internally in Scripture and there are external attacks as well, and you had to deal with both of them to produce this volume.

Andrew. Yes, twice there was, twice there were attempts to take my PhD from me.

Don. Wow. How long ago was that?

Andrew. Both of those occurred in the '90s. The first attempt was early on because I wrote a technical paper which referred to a particular scientist's results and I was framing them within a biblical perspective, and he approached the professor of geology at the University of Sydney, you know, saying that my PhD should be taken from me, and he was shown the door. I was told, you know, the head of the department said he didn't want another Galileo incident. And then subsequently a group of scientists in the mid '90s approached the university governing body to do the same thing, and they were rebuffed on the basis that my PhD thesis was reviewed internationally. In Australia, what you have is not just internal review, I had a professor of geology in Canada and a lead scientist in the US Geological Survey who reviewed my PhD and they said, "Look, you know, it was reviewed, it was approved. No, thank you very much." And so there have been those battles.

Don. Yeah. Well, I know I speak for people throughout the world that are grateful for your commitment to Scripture and the skill and expertise that you bring to these issues. A lot of people have found refuge in your teaching and you've taught all over the world. Speak just a little bit about the kind of response you get when believers who perhaps have struggled with these issues find that there is a coherent defense to be made of the biblical account.

Andrew. Well, it's very important, in fact, it's crucial and I often say to people you can convince someone by the evidence that there was a flood, or you can convince people that there was a Creator or an intelligent designer, but unless you use it as a means to present the gospel to them, what's the point? It's not about winning a scientific argument, it's ultimately about pointing them to the truth and the truth sets them free, and it's the truth that is the gospel.

So the defense of the biblical is so important and so when we speak and we show people that they can believe God's word, they can trust it for obvious reasons, then and that the scientific evidence supports what God's word says, it just releases them from chains. It takes burdens off their shoulders and people get excited and they get empowered because now they can give a reasoned defense of their faith and they're more willing to share their faith because they know they can provide the answer even if they don't remember all the details, they know where they can send the people to get the answers to their questions.

Don. Yeah, that's great. We're about to run out of time here. Dane, let's just kind of bring it back to Truth Community Church, the local church here as the elder chairman here, talk just a little bit about your hopes, your prayers for the future of our church and what makes you optimistic about what lies ahead for us.

Dane. In what time allotment?

Don. Let's keep it under 30 seconds.

Dane. We're always amazed with every board meeting we talk about the growth that we've been seeing. Every Sunday it seems like there's new families, visitors coming in and it's hard for us to keep up with names and faces a lot of times, but we see the hand of God working, you know, in different ways bringing families from all across the country here. We, you know, feel the weight of that. We, you know, we want to be good under-shepherds. We need help from the Holy Spirit definitely to continue a good work here. We realize that this is, you know, Christ's church. He will build his kingdom. He is building this church and it's his to do what he wants and we try to lean into him as much as possible and just try to stay out of the way of the Holy Spirit. It's just an amazing work and we just, we give our pastor, I was having a conversation with him texting this morning, and I was encouraging him on the number of hours that he puts into his sermons and I told him, I said nothing of value is gotten easy, and that's certainly true in the general sense of life and that is especially true in a spiritual sense. And so when we're fed on Sundays and Tuesdays, we have to realize that there's many many man hours going into that and we have a pastor that is passionate about his study time and he's protective over that, and I appreciate that and I just wanted you to know that also.

Don. Andrew, I'm going to give you the final word here. There are, I mean, our church is just blessed with so many sweet, Christian, humble believers and I know you and Dane, like I, we feel the support and draw a lot of encouragement from who all of you are, and as they pray for us, Andrew, how would you encourage them in prayer as they think about their leadership?

Andrew. Well, first of all, that we maintain our focus. Our focus is preaching God's word, preaching God's word, preaching God's word. We cannot stray from that focus. Man's opinions come and go, God's word has been established forever. That's number 1, secondly, I'm also, you know, while I'm optimistic and excited about what's happening, I'm also concerned because it's all too easy to be complacent and feel proud of where we've come but the very next verses after those you read this evening, the devil is a roaring lion, and in my experience, I have seen ministries and churches that they think they've got it all together and Satan comes and we have to be on our guard and it starts with leadership being on their guard. And so we cannot rest, we cannot lose our focus, and I should add here we need to also, which is what we've built, I said at the last membership meeting, I'm so glad that there's no politics. We're not in this for any gain or any political power or anything like that, spare the thought. We're servants. We're here to serve you. We answer to Christ and we have a burden for you and therefore, you know, you need to pray that we will continue to have that burden to keep that focus on the preaching of God's word, the preaching of God's word and guarding the flock. That's why we value the unity so much and while we're on our guard all the time because we know how Satan can easily get in and he can cause division, he can cause dissension, and we have to model that in our leadership that we are, maintain that unity so that you see that we work in unison together.

Don. Well, that's a great note to end on. I hope and trust that you've enjoyed this time and I really encourage you, I get all kinds of encouragement from all kinds of places, I'd just encourage you to approach Andrew, to approach Dane not only tonight but throughout, you know, the coming days and just thank them and encourage them for the work that they do because truly our church would not be what it is and could not become what lies in store without what these men are and what they do.

So thank you both. It's a privilege for me to serve as a fellow elder with you. I'm going to close this section very quickly in prayer and then David will come and lead us in a closing hymn.

Father, we're just grateful for the time here to get to know our elders. I trust that it's been an encouragement. As Andrew said, help us to stay focused on Your word, focused on the gospel, focused on the Lord Jesus Christ. And Father, as Dane has spoken, Father, give us that deep passion to be able to spread the ministry beyond our own walls to those, some whom have never even held a Bible in their hands. Father, we pray that You would take the ministry of Truth Community Church to people like that and that they would turn from darkness to light, from Satan to Christ, and find the forgiveness of sin and the eternal life freely available in our crucified and risen Lord. So we thank You for this time and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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