

A SMALL INTERVIEW

Interview with Gary Smalley

Midwest Director,
Basic Youth Conflicts
Interviewed February 1973

Door: I don't want to take too much of your time...if there are any questions you don't want to answer, just yell.

Smalley: Okay.

Door: On the first page of the organization's brochure, it talked a little bit about Bill's early ministry and I wondered if you could amplify this a little - where he served. Did he serve in churches or....

Smalley: Yes, he served in several churches.

Door: I see.

Smalley: Plus he worked with several youth directors.

Door: He went to Wheaton College, right?

Smalley: Right.

Door: What was his major there?

Smalley: Christian Ed., I think.

Door: Did he go to Grad School too?

Smalley: I think that's where he went to get his masters.

Door: I heard a rumor that he's married now. Is that true or false?

Smalley: That was false. (heh, heh)

Door: That's false.

Smalley: That got started in Dallas, I think.

Door: It did, huh.

Smalley: A lot of people just took that as a matter of fact.

Door: Yeah, we heard that floating around and I didn't think it was true.

Smalley: Some people are shocked when they find out because they just figured it was fact.

Door: I was interested in how his insights gradually came to him as he was studying the Word. Was it through a lot of prayer and getting down with the Bible for long periods of time - do you have any idea how that came about?

Smalley: When he was in high school and college working with gangs in Chicago and so on, a lot of the kids he worked with washed out. And it was real discouraging to him. Then he began to go into the homes. He went right into the home and began to see cause and effect. He'd see a certain kid doing these few things and see the effect in his life. So he began to hook the cause and effect with the Biblical principles and found out that they were consistent. He found out that if a person was really bitter and resentful toward their mother and father, certain things would happen in their life. He found that evidenced in Scripture too. And then he began to see that a lot of these things hooked up.

It was around 1963 or 1964, somewhere around in there, he went up to a camp in the wintertime for about six weeks and kind of fasted and read and studied. He began to write material - write all these things up he'd been learning. And what came out of it was the beginning of the basic seminar.

Door: It was kind of a combination of personal experience and time in the Word and prayer and fasting and that sort of thing.

Smalley: Right. Then he spent this one special time out and away. Just a special time to get away from everything and write down his thoughts.

Door: Is it too personal to ask how old he is now?

Smalley: I think he's thirty-eight.

Door: He must have thousands of demands on his time. How does he budget his time?

Smalley: He makes a list of all the things that are priorities. And then he just lives by that list.

Door: I see.

Smalley: And then, of course, certain things will put pressure on him and he'll have to take care of it, but he pretty much lives by those lists. But he doesn't have any time schedule. He gets up early in the morning and works until he falls asleep. He doesn't have the eight to five deal. It's just all the time.

Door: With no family he's free to do that.

Smalley: Seven days a week, except Sunday. He pretty much takes Sunday away. He goes to church in the morning at his church here in the city and then he takes the rest of the day just kind of reading and thinking through what he's going to do and what he's been doing....

Door: In other words, time for evaluation and planning.

Smalley: Right. When he was in high school and college, I guess he memorized - it seems to me that he's memorized so much of the Old and New Testament - that was when he did most of his memorizing. He still does, but he really got it down then when he memorized whole books of the Bible.

Door: You guys who are close to him on the staff, are you all involved in Scripture memory and reviewing priorities and this sort of thing with him too?

Smalley: Right. In fact the whole staff meets every day for about a half hour and works on either memory or some new material. We all help him develop it. We bat these ideas around in staff meetings.

Door: Do the secretaries and everyone all meet for that too?

Smalley: All meet together.

Door: That's great.

Smalley: Like today we memorized a few verses in James 3. We have a new way of memorizing Scriptures as staff. It's really kind of exciting. We read the verse out loud real slow and we read it two or three times. Then each person takes a word and we go around the circle. And it's amazing how fast you can memorize Scripture when you do it in a group.

Door: How many people are back there at the headquarters?

Smalley: Oh, about twenty-five of us.

Door: I heard a rumor that Larry Coy also helped write the Basic Youth Conflicts elementary material. Was this correct?

Smalley: Not the Basic. Larry took the basic seminar in 1965 when it was fully developed. And Larry did help, as all of us have helped, with some of the advanced material.

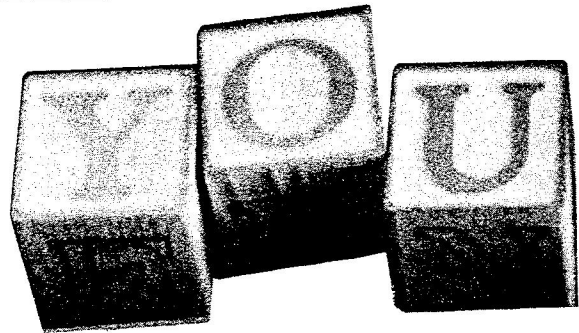
Door: He was on the staff then?

Smalley: Right. He got on staff about 1968. Larry would be the first to admit that he didn't have anything to do with the Basic. It was some of the advanced material.

Door: I was trying to figure out some of the long range strategy and goals for

your organization from reading through the brochure and it seems to me that you want to reach the world primarily through the church and through men in the church.

Smalley: Right, that's it.



Door: Have you set any goals as to how many families you hope to reach in how many cities by a certain date?

Smalley: This is not my area.

Door: I heard one time that you had about sixteen or seventeen key cities that you were planning on really gearing to. I notice that you have about twelve or thirteen on that brochure that you hit all the time. Is this out of plan or because these cities seem to be the best ones?

Smalley: Actually, some of this would be better to get right from him, but I think that since we only grow one way and that's through alumni, it's where the alumni are. If there are no alumni

in Tampa, Florida, then we don't go to Tampa, Florida.

Door: You have an advanced seminar. I noticed that the first 3000 men that sign up can go. Are women allowed at these advanced seminars at all?

Smalley: No. In these initial years we want to give this information to the husband.

Door: You're full time, I imagine.

Smalley: Uh huh.

Door: Are all the other area reps full time?

Smalley: No, some are and some aren't. There are area representatives - four of us, I think, and then there are area directors. I don't know that any of them are full time now. Maybe one or two, but most of them are just people around the community who have full time jobs.

Door: Do you have committees in each of these large cities?

Smalley: Each one of the cities has its own committee.

Door: What is your role basically with the organization? I noticed that you head up the Chicago seminar when they have it, but I think you do more than that.

Smalley: I just basically assist where I can here. But I take care of the Chicago seminars and the Midwest seminars.

Door: Now Steve Gothard works there too. Is he the only other Gothard involved?

Smalley: Right.

Door: And is he in the business end of it or something?

Smalley: Right.

Door: Some people have leveled the criticism that the seminars seem to be overly simplistic with their five steps here and their ten insights there and so forth. I just wondered what your reaction is to that, or do you pay any attention to it?

Smalley: I think that we're always sensitive to any kind of criticism or suggestions. So when ever these come, he weighs them and writes each person a special letter thanking them. The seminars are a growing experience in learning how to say things that would be

effective and life-changing and lasting. So if something is too simple, then we want to change it if it can be more effective.

Door: Do you issue a financial statement every year that people are able to see or is that pretty much kept within the group?

Smalley: Whenever a person is interested, they let us know and then we give them any information they want here.

Door: I notice that you have a program for widows and I wondered how that works.

Smalley: That works through the church. We're always batting this around - the best way to start this. And we want to start it through the qualifying churches.

Door: How long have you worked there?

Smalley: Two years.

Door: How would you characterize a person that works so much with grave responsibilities as Bill? How would you characterize him?

Smalley: Well, I'm a little biased, I'm sure. But I don't know that I would be because I think each person on the staff has a fantastic admiration for him. Of all the men I know, he's the most gracious, loving, selfless, considerate, giving - you name those things. He communicates that selfless, considerate, giving to all of us. And he never communicates to any one of us that he doesn't have the time for us. He'd give you his clothes right on him, you know, if you needed it. He has often said that his ministry with the seminars is a reflection of what goes on in the office. And we would all agree with that - his life adds up in the office to what he says out there.

Door: He's in the office probably half the time, right?

Smalley: Right. He's either here or there.

Door: Does he ever take a vacation?

Smalley: We did take one in January. Well, it was a vacation to him. Four or five of us went up to a cabin to develop fifty new pages of material. That to him is a vacation. **I**

