

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Youngstown Sheet & Tube Shutdown Project

Ecumenical Coalition

O. H. 239

ROBERT CAMPBELL

Interviewed

by

Philip Bracy

on

April 28, 1981

ROBERT CAMPBELL

Reverend Robert Campbell was born February 29, 1944. He graduated from Warwood High School in Wheeling, West Virginia. In 1962 he received a B.A. from West Liberty State College. He went on to the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where he received a Masters of Divinity in 1970. In 1979 he got a Divinity Minister from the McCormick Theological Seminary.

Since 1976 he has been a pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Youngstown, Ohio.

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INTERVIEWEE: ROBERT CAMPBELL  
INTERVIEWER: Philip Bracy  
SUBJECT: Ecumenical Coalition  
DATE: April 28, 1981

B: This is an interview with Reverend Bert Campbell for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, concerning the shutdown of the Youngstown Sheet & Tube and his participation as a member of the Steering Committee of the Ecumenical Coalition at the First Presbyterian Church on April 28, 1981, at 12:30 p.m.

Reverend Campbell, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, where you grew up, and so forth?

C: I was born in Kingman, Arizona. I grew up in Wheeling, West Virginia, went to West Liberty State College outside of Wheeling, and graduated with a degree in drama and speech. I went to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where I graduated in 1970. I spent six years there developing an ecumenical ministry of some thirty churches and a staff of somewhere in the neighborhood of 45 to 48 people, and worked with those churches in the community.

I came to Youngstown, Ohio, on January 1, 1976, and received my Doctorate of Ministry at McCormick Theological Seminary in 1979. I spent eight years during and the first part of seminary working in steel mills, and served on union grievance committees, and sundried positions.

B: What kind of jobs did you do in the mill?

C: I was a lid man on top of the coke ovens, worked in the blast furnaces, and then was a welder in the fabricating division of Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel.

B: Do you recall where you were, and how you found out about the announcement of the shutdown of Youngstown Sheet & Tube?

C: Where I was that day?

B: Yes, and your first reaction.

C: The first reactions I had to it were those that I had received when I went home and picked up the paper. I really was not too aware of what was going on prior to that. I was aware of a number of the concerns, in fact, the Sunday that the announcement was being made, the First Presbyterian Church entertained Staunton Lynd who spoke to a number of our people during an adult study forum on the concerns of the little man, the average labor member. At that point the average labor member was perhaps not being heard or supported by the international union, nor heard, or supported, or concerned about by corporations. Therefore, because we had been addressing the issues, concerns in the valley and labor management for two Sundays, and because earlier that year, actually in the spring, we had done a four week series on the concerns in the valley and the revitalization of the valley in which Bill Sullivan, Ed Stanton, and a number of other individuals spoke, I was aware of the concerns. The immediate issue, though, I didn't find out about until I read it in the paper.

B: That was in your Church and Society Committee?

C: The Church and Society Committee initiated the concern. It was then passed to the Christian Education Committee that dealt and developed a four-week forum in the spring, and then a two-week follow up forum in the fall. We then received, as a matter of fact, front page coverage of that forum by Attorney Lynd directly underneath the shutdown notice by Lykes Corporation.

B: Where did the phrase "Ecumenical Coalition" come from?

C: To my understanding, when Bishop Burt and Bishop Malone first got together and called a number of individuals together, the discussions around the table at that point was that something must be done and what ought to be done.

There were subsequently two other meetings. I didn't go to the first meeting, but I went to the second meeting. At that point we came to the conclusion we had to do more than pray about the problem. We decided to have at least a confernece in which we would try to get

individuals there, some outstanding speakers, local concerned individuals, and so on. It was at that conference that I recollect the discussions were raised that there needed to be a coalition of individuals on the one hand; all the churches were gathered and this was an ecumenical venture on the other hand. Somewhere in the midst of that those two things flowed together and this body emerged called the Ecumenical Coalition. To my knowledge there was never any designed plan.

- B: But what I was getting at, was it a creature of the press? Did they dub you the Ecumenical Coalition, or did you just kind of assume that title yourself?
- C: I think we assumed that title ourselves by means of descriptive phrase, not as a title, it was the easiest thing to then become a title.
- B: How were you first made aware of the attempt by Bishop Burt and Bishop Malone actually pulling you into this structure?
- C: They called several individuals, bishops types such as John Sharick who is our Executive Presbyter, but they also called several pastors. Gene Bay who was my former partner here was called because of the location of this institution and because of a number of the things that we had already been doing in this kind of an arena. Gene and I talked about the issue, and because he was a Senior Pastor at that point I said, "Why don't you go?" He went to the first meeting, came back, and suggested that I too ought to be going because of history and expertise. By the second meeting then, I got called in. The question though of how did we first get in was that Burt or Malone, one of the two, contacted this institution.
- B: You mentioned the second meeting, do you recall when it was approximately?
- C: It was approximately the second week after the closing, somewhere during that week. My guess is along about Wednesday or so of that week.
- B: In the interim between the Steel Crisis Conference in October and the announcement of the shutdown there was the formation of the Steering Committee of which you were a part I understand.
- C: No, the Steering Committee grew out the the Steel Conference. What happened was that during the conference

certain agendas were set and there needed to be mechanisms to begin to carry out those agendas. During those discussions it was determined that the bishop types, Sharick, Malone, Burt, and so on should sit down in a room and determine what they were going to be able to do to help move in any kind of direction.

At that point national representatives helped advise, and the bottom line was that each one committed so much money to begin to make this thing move. They, in turn, wanted their representatives because obviously they were busy individuals who couldn't work day in and day out on the project.

Out of that, when we came back to the meeting, the recommendation was made that we go with this coalition, and that there then be a Steering Committee to assist the bishop types. At that point four of us were named: Ed Stanton, Father Stanton, who represented the Roman Catholic interest, myself to represent the United Presbyterian interest, Don Walton to represent the United Methodist, and Chuck Rawlings to represent the Episcopal interest. That group was expanded somewhere towards the spring of the next year.

- B: Just to kind of clarify this point, there was kind of a two-chaired system. There was the Executive committee which was policy making and the Steering Committee kind of . . .
- C: Nuts and bolts.
- B: Nuts and bolts?
- C: A nuts and bolts group that guided policy making because we were there looking at the particular issues as they came down.
- B: In the interim between the announcement of the shutdown and the actual conference in October, what took place, two meetings?
- C: There were several other planning meetings. At that point, I suppose you could say there began to emerge a loose steering group of which Gene and myself, Ed Stanton, Lonny Simon at a couple of points, Don Walton, and Chuck Rawlings emerged as helping that to move along. we were really not there out of any kind of official capacity, it was a matter of, okay we've met, now we've got some jobs to do. Who's going to do the next job, and so on.

I would say at that point, even that early on, Ed Stanton and Chuck Rawlings began to lead more than anyone else did mainly because they had the time to do it. They could be freed up by their respective bishops to go and do some jobs. It wasn't until after being named to that committee that this church determined that 20 percent of my time could be spent working in that capacity. That's kind of how it developed.

B: Were there any specific individuals responsible for the agenda that evolved from the October 28th and 29th meetings?

C: I would say that those individuals whom I've just mentioned probably designed it more than anyone else did because we had contacts of individuals or could make contacts with individuals of the likes that we wanted to have there. Getting the individuals there really began to determine the nature of the agenda. It wasn't that we had an agenda and then looked for people, it was kind of a both-and situation.

B: Was there any reason that the politicians were left out of that particular conference?

C: Very definitely. It appeared that in that interim period that all the politicians, political individuals, were raising concerns and making statements, but it also appeared that none of them were taking any decisive leadership roles. Therefore, not to make it a political football or a political plum, and determining that rhetoric would not allow us to get any work done, we decided that it would not include anyone who received any political gain from it.

B: Most of the persons at that particular meeting were clergy except perhaps the resource people? Is that the way I'm reading that?

C: Yes, and each church was asked to bring one lay representative, one lay person.

B: A couple of people, at least from the locals, were on the list, but could you tell me what efforts were made in contacting the steelworkers as far as trying to get participation?

C: Frank Leseganich was contacted, as I understand, by Ed Stanton. The steelworkers had as their primary concern making sure that benefits and those kinds of needs were covered. A number of local steelworkers

representing at least one of the locals began to say, "Look, that isn't all we want. We want to see if there isn't something else that can be done." I and a number of others met with those individuals in St. John's Episcopal Church the night preceeding the kick off of the conference.

B: The 27th?

C: Yes. We sat around the table there and introduced ourselves. Several things happened there, one was that I don't think the workers were taking the clerics too seriously, they thought they were nice do-gooders, but what the hell could they do? At one point where I personally really felt things switched was when we stood around and introduced ourselves. Staunton Lynd interrupted and asked me to say a couple of more words about myself, and prefaced it by saying, "Here is an individual who is pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Youngstown," which had a particular image in the mind-set of workers, I believe, in this community. It was an old, rich establishment. It used to be the steel baron church. When the ball got thrown back to me for further introduction, Staunton asked me to tell them a bit about my steelworking background at which point it appeared to me that a new level of credibility was inserted and those discussions began to get a bit more serious, not because of me, but because the workers present in the midst of their frustration with not only concern, but maybe some potentials of understanding and some power. That emerged out of that meeting.

Then we went into the conference the next day. Those workers, a lot more were represented that night, heard spokesmen such as Philip Nule from the National Presbyterian Offices talking about potential money that could be available to do some things and they began to see hope. The next day we limited numbers of representatives simply to be able to have control over the situation.

B: The meeting before that you mentioned, approximately how many people attended that meeting?

C: I guess it would be somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty-five or thirty. I would say there were no more than six clergymen at that meeting, the total would be more than six. There were probably seven or eight counting national staff kinds of persons. Then you had individuals like Staunton Lynd and some people like that. The rest would have been workers.



B: At the conference itself were specific proposals set forth by any of the speakers as far as what direction to take?

C: I would not say that they were specific in the sense of laid out proposals. I would say that there were specific suggestions on how to go that range from one that would be more conservative talking about diversification and those kinds of things by Bill Sullivan, to one talking about some extreme kinds of concerns which weren't directed to solutions then were directed to the problems done by Marcus Raskin. Then Alpervitz's really emerged at that point of talking about what can happen in local communities if people begin to take control of their own destiny.

At one point Gerald Dickey stood up and asked the question, "Can't we try to take over a mill by ourselves?" That was one piece that eventually got in there.

Concerns were raised by Bishop Thomas of the Methodist Church, who had a history of social action dealing with blacks, that helped carry that message to say we have to issue some statements of indignation of what has happened, the ethical questions. That eventually was refined into one of our directions.

A question was raised if we needed to investigate what the possibilities are further and if we needed to hire some people to do that investigation. So the idea of going out and getting consultants and so on began to emerge. Those kinds of pieces grew.

B: But the thrust of the meeting was not specifically to focus on a consultant, but strictly to see what the policy option was?

C: To gather information, it was an information-gathering and sharing situation. If there was a hidden agenda, I would say the hidden agenda was to have the kind of persons there the caliber of which would speak of the dramatic, that it wasn't a bunch of do-gooder preachers just gathering, but in fact, we could bring together some very notable individuals to raise concern on the issue.

B: How did you feel coming from that conference? Did you feel there was a solid direction you were taking? Do you think there was a kind of clear consensus that there was hope that you should go forth?

- C: Yes, very definitely. That was evidenced by the fact that the four major denominations contributed \$200,000 to \$250,000 for war chest. When churches start talking about war chests they're taking it very seriously that they have a task out there and they're willing to do it because those kinds of monies don't come very easily.
- B: Four initiatives came out of the conference as a reason for the coalition. The first which was listed was to draft a pastoral letter which would state the moral and ethical issues which was to be distributed, I believe Thanksgiving Advent season. The second was to initiate the study of the feasibility of community-worker takeover of the Campbell Works. The third was to advocate the formulation of the national policy to retain basic steel and associate jobs in communities where steelworkers lived; and finally, to focus national interest on Youngstown as a means of developing a model for retention of basic jobs in severely impacted communities. Was anybody assigned a specific task, you handle this one and somebody handles something else?
- C: No, the Steering Committee was assigned all four tasks and we subsequently worked on each one of those at different times, and called in experts on all of those. No one took any one by itself and ran with it. We took the option of all of us working on all of it and getting up time lines from where there were interplays.
- B: There were no subcommittees and nobody said, "We'll work on this and then we'll report back to the large group?"
- C: Not at the junction, no.
- B: Subsequently, towards the end of December, December 20th as a matter of fact, there was a meeting at the White House, did you attend that meeting?
- C: The first meeting on the 20th?
- B: Yes.
- C: Who do you recall was there?
- B: The release was kind of vague.
- C: No, I was not at that meeting, though I was at the next meeting after that when we went back with our act together. I was also at the meeting when we got our act together.
- B: The Beetle Report was funded by WREDA / Western Reserve Economic Development Association / and it was released

December 16, could you tell me a little bit about that, what the Beetle Report was?

- C: Beetle was essentially hired because of some of the coalition members' relationship to Bill Sullivan. Beetle was already doing a study. He was able to utilize material within Youngstown Sheet & Tube, Lykes Corporation information, and so he was able to give us a brief sketch of what was there and what could happen, whether it was even worth beginning to look at. Fifty percent was financed through Western Reserve Economic Development.
- B: On December 23rd a mailgram was finally mailed to HUD and the Commerce Department saying that the Ecumenical Coalition, in essence, was incorporated and they would serve as the main planning--I believe the term was--agent, that you would get support from Congressman Carney, Mayor Elect Richley, and Frank Lesiganich who also signed, and that--I'm not sure of the exact mechanism--Mr. Alpervitz's organization would do the actual planning. Did you attend the meeting with the Congressman December 22th?
- C: Yes.
- B: Could you relate who was there at the meeting the previous day?
- C: Yes, there was Bishop Malone, Ed Stanton, myself, John Sharick, I believe Frank Leseganich or someone representing the steelworkers, and possibly Jim Smith from the international office. I'm not sure whether Jim was there at that point. Congressman Carney came in with an agenda to take the ball and run with it. Bishop Malone had a couple of introductory remarks, then Congressman Carney gave his speech. Bishop Malone came back and said, "Now, as I was saying . . ." and informed Congressman Carney that, in fact, we were not backing off and the Ecumenical Coalition was not going to give into any kind of political game. That we were going to be the neutral agent, and if political personages didn't like it, we would go public with the fact that they didn't like it for a political purpose.
- B: What was the thrust of Congressman Carney's argument? Do you recall?
- C: That we were good clerics but we didn't know anything about the steel community and the economic issues.

That people who knew much more about that ought to take the ball and run with it now.

B: Given the fact that you had a proposal and that you were ready to incorporate and they had no proposal at that point, it seemed kind of an irrational argument.

C: It was. That's why it didn't go very far.

Another individual who was there was Jim Griffin.

The movement behind the scenes as best I could understand it was that two other organizations within the Mahoning Valley area wanted to get control of those funds because it was a significant amount of dollars. One of them was EDATA, and MVEDC that wanted control of the funds for political reasons and the significant amount of dollars that we were talking about.

B: I'm going to jump back a step because of something you mentioned in the interview. On October 10th Congressman Carney held a meeting in Higbees, was anybody, to the best of your knowledge, invited from the Ecumenical Coalition?

C: No.

B: Approximately February of 1978, Reverend Fernandez was appointed as director of Save Our Valley, who helped him on board or was he on board already? What was his expertise that he was chosen as director of that campaign?

C: The Steering Committee had interviewed a number of individuals, I think three or four, and we had looked at a number of resumes. On that particular day Chuck Rawlings brought Fernandez to town and we were introduced to him. Fernandez had been head of the Vietnam Clergy and Lay Concerned so he had national organizing abilities. Most of us had known Dick in one capacity or another and knew his capacity to organize. Because he was available and because he had these talents, we agreed to hire him.

I think there were some hidden agendas going on at that point because there was always in the coalition the debate of whether this was a national cause in which we would try to work on a local solution or whether this was a local battle that needed to be won and in turn affect the national cause. That was always a debate, and Fernandez was a piece of that from the very beginning.

- B: Was he screened? I mean was there a committee that reviewed applicants?
- C: The Steering Committee reviewed the applicants and interviewed Frenandez and, subsequently, hired him. He didn't get word of that until a couple of days later.
- B: Who else do you recall was interviewed?
- C: A fellow by the name of White from Akron, and there was an individual who I cannot tell you his name now, but he was from the Southern United Presbyterian Church out of Atlanta, Georgia. There was a number of other names.
- B: You interviewed quite a number of people then?
- C: I wouldn't say quite a number. I would say we looked at a number of resumes and we actually interviewed, as I can best recall, maybe four individuals directly.
- B: What was the purpose of the Save Our Valley Campaign?
- C: I think it's important to say how it emerged first. We were looking for a mechanism to demonstrate local support that would be far more effective than signing names on a petition. By the same token, if we were to move to any kind of investment, we needed to have some indications of potential investment to get people interested on a national investor's level. Because of tax laws we could not solicit any kind of pro forma to request investment or interest in investment, that's really kind of the rock in the hard place.

At a particular breakfast meeting at Stanton's, I had been in dialogue with a number of the bankers and suggested could there not be a way to create Christmas Club type accounts where an individual could put money into a Christmas Club, whether they ever spent that money on Christmas presents or not was immaterial. They had at least suggested an intention. As a matter of fact, Jack Klincky, vice-president of Mahoning Bank, and I had talked about this idea and in turn I made the suggestion. Alpervitz did some refining of that ad and we came up with these accounts that did not have to be geared to any particular time of the year, Christmas, but it could be of like nature.

Then we moved to the idea of what we could call it and we came up with the idea of Save Our Valley. The

final point was how we would monitor it. I took charge of the meeting with the bankers and selling the product and soliciting from them the mechanism of how to do it. That's the whole story.

B: The other purpose of the Save Our Valley Campaign would also have been public relations would it not?

C: Yes.

B: In terms of getting the message out, if you will?

C: That's right, and getting commitment there. When someone puts their dollars on the line, they have the tendency to have a little more commitment than just saying, "Oh yes, I know about that."

B: Was part of the plan to use the funds as part of a community-worker buy out? Was that the main purpose or was it just to show that people in Mahoning Valley were committed to their city or whatever?

C: I think it was both and of equal importance. Obviously, those people were not making any final commitment to put those monies in. However, I think it's reasonable to say that probably seventy percent of those dollars would have gone into investment had the thing gone.

B: I understand that there were a series of luncheons held at the Youngstown Club.

C: That's correct.

B: Could you tell me who set them up and the thrust of the meetings?

C: I set them up. The primary thrust of the meetings was to try to help educate the business community to what was going on because there was a lot of reactionaryism going on there, there was a lot of misconception and misunderstanding and not very much accurate information. We tried to set that up with those kind of individuals who might be future investors, but certainly who were power brokers in this community to meet with the persons like Alpervitz and others to get a handle on what was going on.

B: Could you tell us about the Committee of 100?

C: The Committee of 100 in my opinion was a colossal flop. The intention was to get 100 or so individuals of

stature in this community to put their names on the line and say, "We have questions. We don't know if this thing will work, but we'll be somewhat supportive of the adventure."

It was a flop for a number of reasons. I think it was too long in getting started in the first place and too many misconceptions had grown up. We had a very small number of individuals as a core and energies were being drained in a lot of different directions. They couldn't cover all those bases. Those are the primary reasons why I don't think it went.

B: Was it basically to get business and labor?

C: More than business and labor, I would say to get people who had recognizable names in the community. Then that could have had political effects in Washington, but it could also have effect here as far as creating a snowball of support.

B: That committee, however, sprung out of the Save Our Valley Campaign?

C: That's correct.

B: Allegedly, Edgar Spears was distributing anti-coalition material or material saying that the so-called community worker buy out was communist.

C: That's right.

B: What kind of effort was that? Was that xerox material that was sent out?

C: No, it was essentially public speaking engagements and then newspaper coverage, media coverage, which then carried that message. I have never been aware of anything that was printed by United States Steel or Edgar Spears or any other individual to that effect.

B: He was allegedly behind the effort in part. He may or may not have been.

C: He spoke very strongly against the effort for a number of reasons. I knew Mr. Spears before I ever came to Youngstown. He was committed to a very hard-line steel policy. He believed in growth and development through private capital. For many of the same reasons the international steelworkers were against the buyout. I don't think there was a lot of education going on or could go on at that point as to what was really being talked about.

You were talking with loaded terms like community, worker, and ownership, which smacks of socialism and communism.

B: On September 28th and 29th there was a second convocation or gathering. The day before there was a meeting at the White House, did you attend that meeting?

C: Yes, I did.

B: Could you tell me approximately how many persons were there, and if you can remember who was there and what was discussed at that particular meeting?

C: At that meeting, persons from here that were there, as I recall, were John Greenman, Fernandez, Rawlings, myself, Stanton, and Walton. I believe Walton was still alive at that point. Sharick, I believe, was there. Malone and Burt were there. I believe that's all from here, possibly Lynd, I'm not sure of that.

Alpervitz and company were there, and then various representatives of the departments. HUD was there, secretary of HUD, Leslie Wexler, was there. Watson convened the meeting. Commerce and Energy were there and they had two or three representatives of each. Also, Calderone came to us with a proposal to do a continuous caster and those kinds of things.

The intention of that meeting was to be a dialogue and get final specifics of where we were and what we were doing, and get down to the final steps of refinement. At that meeting the most significant thing that I recall was the television recorded interview, taped interview, of Jack Watson saying publicly that two million dollars was no problem. It was a statement which he later categorically denied that he had ever made. It was when they said that they would be happy to fund us, but there was only one million dollars available. We were put in a catch-22 situation.

B: Were any of the meetings that you attended, either at the White House or in Washington, taped for the record?

C: I believe they were all taped. I know that we taped some of them. I don't know what ever happened to those tapes. I'm sure that they were taped by individuals down there because we saw tape recorders sitting around. They may have convenient eighteen minute vacancies in them. (Laughter)



B: Did you fly back in time for either the Thursday or Friday meetings that were taken?

C: Yes.

B: What, in essence, did you see as the purpose of that particular gathering?

C: That essentially was more of a media nature than it was anything else. I think the most important thing to remember about this adventure was that it was an incredible media hype. I mean that in the best sense, not the worst sense. When you stop to think that the average kind of situation like this gets one day, two days press maximum, and the fact that we were able to keep this in the press, in the front pages on an average of at least one day a week locally for almost two years, and the fact that we kept it in national news, everything from Fortune Magazine to the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Sun, and on and on and on, for over two years, says to me that it was a significant media kind of issue. In dealing in this kind of an arena that's the only club that you've got. The primary attention of that meeting a year later was to say, hey we are still alive and we're fighting and we need to celebrate that.

B: At that particular meeting there were a couple politicians addressing the group. Even though at that point it seemed like the Coalition, through Father Stanton and possibly others, were serving on the so-called MVEDC Committee, was anybody then invited from the MVEDC?

C: We attempted constantly not to be in the lead which was a very frustrating position. I think all the cleric individuals recognized that it was our job to facilitate and support, and someone else's job to lead. We could never, frankly, trust anyone else leading. We were constantly forced into the leadership role. We did, however, keep working to try to bring those groups on board because obviously we couldn't do it.

B: Could you tell us about a November 2, 1978 meeting at 3:00 p.m. in the Metropolitan Bank boardroom, who attended, the purpose of the meeting, and the results of that meeting?

C: The purpose of the meeting was to have representatives from all the lending institutions in the area sit down with myself and Mr. Janisac of Mental Health, an officer out here, I can't recall the place that he runs

now--and to investigate what the financial conditions of individuals in the Mahoning Valley might well be, to see if there were any signs of severe hardship, financial hardship, which might move to foreclosure on homes and what have you. If that were the case we would determine how we might move then to create extended mortgages, second mortgages, extended payments or whatever, to ensure that those individuals weren't undergoing undue hardship, to ensure the base of the Youngstown community in the sense of private home ownership, taxes coming in, and those kinds of things.

The result of that meeting from all of the banking individuals seemed to indicate that they were not experiencing individuals who were undergoing extreme hardship. There was an agreement on their part that if we discovered factual information indicating that, or if they discovered information indicating that, a number of payments not being made or whatever, that we would be in touch with one another of our concern in the community. That was the intention of that meeting and the result seemed to indicate that that really never arose as an extreme problem. People gave up owning other things, but kept their house payments.

B: Approximately how many bankers or savings and loan people attended?

C: At that meeting, as I recall, we only dealt with the Youngstown Community area, it was all the presidents or loan officers or highest individuals in the area of loan of all the banks in the area, which includes the Farmers out on Market Street.

B: Was there any follow-up meeting related to that?

C: Not related to that specific purpose, simply because we left it with the agreement and it never arose.

B: The first public, at least, announcement of the formation of the Steelworkers United for Employment was March 5, 1979, was the effort assisted by the Coalition and why?

C: The Coalition was still going through some traumas at that point. We had essentially been turned down.

B: The turndown was May 24th.

- C: We had been turned down once and we were in the rewrite phase. This was the group that emerged out at Central Christian.
- C: That group was part of the efforts to then say, very factually, "What kinds of responses can we expect if we can open this plant?" That was the response to the government's question, how are you going to do it when somebody else couldn't. This then began to demonstrate on the worker's part, finally, in an organized mechanism, saying we can reduce corporate cost even in spite of contract by the following amounts of money; and we can begin to look at some of the issues if we go back to work, what seniority is going to be and those kinds of questions.
- B: Were there any meetings, to your knowledge, prior to that public meeting of the Steelworkers that was announced in the press and through releases? Were you aware of any prior meetings to the March 5th meeting?
- C: Oh yes, there were a number of small meetings of groups of individuals to get that meeting to begin to move. One of the biggest frustrations that the Coalition carried the whole time was being able to get steelworkers together in any kind of united front where they would begin to take the ball and run with it out of their own frustration, out of divide and conquer strategy of the steel industry of saying, "At least we've got a job and they don't!" There was always the fear of not wanting to muddy up the water, that you were going to lose something yourself and so on. There were a number of meetings of smaller groups. McNickel, Ballack, and Gerald Dickey constantly began to work in small cadres of individuals trying to organize the workers.
- B: Was there a given reason for the Carter administration saying, in it's final position, that three million dollars was too much when there had been a HUD release in December of 1977 by Secretary Harris saying that three million dollars was no problem?
- C: It was political. It was no longer politically advantageous to fund this situation from the Carter administration's perspective. There was significant pressure on the part of the larger corporate community to not be supportive of this. We had finally solicited the support of the International Steelworker's Union, but I think it came really too late. In the final analysis, the biggest problem that I saw in the Carter administration from the very beginning was an inability to

coordinate their own action; therefore, there was a lot of internal bureaucratic fighting that was not advantageous to the Chamber of Commerce to fund this proposal. Commerce finally got the upper hand.

B: Was it, perhaps, related also to the fact that Congressman Carney was up for reelection in that time frame?

C: That's why there was continued support. After that fact there was no longer the need for continued support; therefore, it was not a front burner item anymore.

B: I'm given to understand, and I don't know if you've seen the material or not, that some of the material released through the Freedom of Information Act stipulated that early in 1978 the decision was made not to fund the proposal, have you seen any of that data?

C: I have not seen any of that data. It would not surprise me. That's when I say that when the International Steelworkers finally came on, it was probably after the fact. I do not try to throw blame. I think the blame was as much ours as theirs. Had we gotten them on at that kind of a point earlier, I think we may have been able to keep the options open.

B: There was a May 15th, 1979, labor-management conference held here at First Presbyterian, could you kind of tell me what the agenda was basically geared for?

C: Essentially that agenda grew out of two concerns. One was that we continue to deal with some of the larger issues even as the problems were beginning to die on the Campbell Works Project. It was recognized by almost everyone in the community that the Ecumenical Coalition had been a strong power, that if no one else could do it, we could act as a neutral body to begin to address some of the issues, one of which is labor strikes and management problems in the valley.

At the urging of a number of members of this church, Gene Bay and I took the lead and sought to develop this labor-management conference. We had gathered some information of what had happened in Jamestown, New York, and similar kinds of ventures until we set this up. We determined that the meeting would have only the presidents of local corporations and representatives of equal caliber from labor. As it turned out, there were a couple of outside owned corporations, but essentially we held to that.

- B: Is there anything that I probably overlooked or that you think is important to understand concerning the events that we've just gone through that you think should be said?
- C: I think I would take it from the point of that labor-management conference and what happened out of that. There were very positive commitments on the part of labor and management with top individuals in this community including Thronton Beegley, Tom Travers, Commercial Shearing, and a number of those kinds of individuals from that caliber to begin to work on the issue. A steering committee was formed. I ran with that ball for a number of months, but then no longer could because my partner left here and I had to take over running the operation. The ball was passed to a representative in the management community and the ball was dropped and never was picked up.

I think it's important to understand that in this community the underlying problem rests in people's inability to have a vision of what the future can be, and an unwillingness to take the ball and run with it to make it happen. They always would rather someone else do it. There are a lot of people with great concern but no willingness to agree to work together. They have a great desire to criticize and an inability to create alternatives. It's always easy to take shots, but there is never the willingness to say, "I disagree with your way, but here's an alternative. Let's work together on how to create a final goal which we do agree."

- B: After the May 24th announcement in 1979 that the Carter Administration would not fund the effort, did the Coalition shut down office immediately?
- C: No, there was the constant debate that still lingered, which was if this was a national cause or a local issue? There was the desire to keep going on a national cause, to get involved in a number of other things, including the shutdown of the United States Steel plants. We finally forged the agreement that we had done our job, that we could spring up and help in other ways.

The good news about the venture of the United States Steel plants then were that the workers formed an organization and came to us for assistance, not the leadership role. That was a positive that had grown out of it.

I do not think that the venture was a failure. I think people saw a vision of what they could have. The issue was probably best stated by a Youngstown State University person who said, "Whether people agreed or disagreed with the Coalition's efforts, when a community didn't take the opportunity to take it's own future in its hands, that's when it lost a chance for a new tomorrow."

I think that a lot of the winds were that the church did get involved. The church has a different kind of credibility with the poor and oppressed people now than it had before. I think other communities, including some of the things that have happened with Chrysler and the fact that the International Steelworker's Union is now more concerned with rebuilding old plants rather than building new ones, were direct and definite results of that adventure. I think, finally, that none of our lives will be the same because of it.

B: I would like to thank you for taking time this afternoon for this interview.

C: It was a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW