The Rev. William H. Donaldson

An Oral Interview

1016 S. Frank Drive
Champaign, Illinois
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Interviewers:
Melinda Roundtree
Patrick Tyler

Verbatim Transcription

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Introduction

This interview is with the Reverend W.H. Donaldson, Pastor Emeritus of the Salem Baptist Church, Champaign. At the time of the interview, Reverend Donaldson was one of the Directors of the Empty Tomb, Inc., and he was very active at Salem and many other churches. He was born in 1902 in Arkansas.

The interview was conducted on August 3, 1983, at his home, 1016 S. Frank Dr., Champaign. The interviewers are Patrick Tyler and Melinda Roundtree, representing the Urbana Free Library Archives.

Patrick Tyler: Reverend Donaldson, would you give us some of your early life history, like your place of birth and your family background?

William Donaldson: Gladly. I was born in a family of 12 children in the state of Arkansas, Prairie County. My father was a minister in the _____. I recall very well my paternal grandparents, William Donaldson and McKissie Donaldson, my grandparents when I was about ten years old. We grew up in a rural area where my mother, Caroline Johnson Donaldson, taught school, rural school, for about 25 or 30 years. My father pastored at churches in Brinkley, Arkansas, and Wheatley, Arkansas, Palestine, and several her places I don't recall. I was born the second child of that couple in 1902, so I go back quite a few years. I recall very vividly World War I when the men were going to World War I. I was 16 years old two days before the war was over in 1918. I lived, as I said, in a large family with four brothers and eight sisters. Four of them were half, the older ones. But we grew up and lived of course with Mother and Dad in a very strict family. I'm happy to say that five of us brothers and sisters still remain living. It was a very happy life, very poor, but we were happy as it was, walking two to three miles, four miles, to school, two miles to church and back. We farmed cotton, corn, et cetera, large garden, so it was a happy life. Then when we finished the eighth grade, my brother and I went to East St. Louis to live with an aunt and attend high school, Rankin High School, in East St. Louis. Then we went back to Arkansas, where we finished. My father lost his sight and he was blind for about eight years, but we moved to Michigan in the early 1920's. That's when I finished growing up. Now is that sufficient?

Patrick Tyler: Yeah. Could you give us the names of your brothers and sisters?

William Donaldson: Yes. I had three half sisters: Louise, Florence, Irene; they were my half sisters. And a half brother that passed, I don't have his name, he was passed before I was born. After that was my mother's children, Pretha, then myself, Bill Howe, then Clarence, my sisters Bertha, Bessie, Joella, Sarah, and Alameda. Of that group, the latter group, three of them are still alive. They live in Michigan. And I would like to say, too, that after embracing the Christian faith in 1918, in 1923 I went to Michigan where I began to serving as a youngster. The churches there — Macedonia Baptist Church, _____ Trinity Baptist Church, where I began my ministry in 1931. I had previously served as a deacon, the youngest deacon on the board at Trinity Baptist Church, until I began my ministry. Then I was fortunate to pastor the church from 1931 until 1935. Then they sent me to school. I went back to Tennessee to school. I obtained my degree at the American Baptist Seminary, _____ of the Bible, then did other work at the A and I State University. After moving back, I did work at Bradley. _____. I've pastored now eight churches, beginning with my home church in Pontiac. Then, I sort of with a very small church in Rossville, Ohio, for about a year and a half. Then I pulled up and went to school. While I was there, I was pastor of the Roger Heights Baptist Church, which was kind of a student church, just about two blocks from campus. Upon graduation, I was called to pastorage of the First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where I remained for eight years, under the plan that we built a new church, rebuilt it. And on the strength of that, I was recommended to Salem. In '49, I was called to Salem. I was at Salem for four years. Then I resigned and went to Peoria. I was in Peoria for 10 and a half years, broke ground for the new church there, and then I went from there to the Quad Cities, where we pastored the Mt. Zion Baptist Church for five years. In '48 to pardon me — were recalled to Salem, so we've been back here 15 years. How's that?

Patrick Tyler: Tell us about — did you have any outstanding things that happened as a child, as you was growin' up?

William Donaldson: Well, uh, not really. As I said, we were quite sheltered by Mother and Dad, and the South end was, you know, Jim Crow everywhere. So, mother was very careful with us. But we didn't run into any trouble with other people, you know. I did have some experiences with white people working saw mills, but that was just a brief experience. I was working with a white gentleman who was stacking lumber. I dropped one end of the lumber, and he cursed me. I was quite high-tempered, so I cursed him back. So that night, they rumored it around. I was about 7 to 8 miles from home, down the river, you know. We were living in a tent, we were camping. They said they were going to string me up. And one white brother — he was a very wonderful fellow — he called me to his place, and he told me, he said, "You don't have to be afraid. If there is anything that happens, all you black boys have to do is stand behind me. I'll kill the last damn one of them." But, anyway, I left the next morning. I told them, I said, "Well, I want to go home and get my Dad's team." We were hauling, you know, lumber, head bolts out of the _____. He said to me, he said, "Bill, you don't want to do this. You just want to get away from here." I said, "No, I'll be back." So he paid me. And I left, walking. I walked up 7 to 8 miles. I didn't go back! Haven't been back since!

Patrick Tyler: Why did you go into the ministry?

William Donaldson: Well, from a child, it was my calling, and I felt that. I recall, it was about the seventh grade — and, by the way, seventh grade was not what it

is now — because in seventh grade then, you had boys and girls 15 to 16 years old. A lot of 'em missed school. Some of 'em had three months school in the winter, and in the spring we had three months. So six months. Unfortunate for us, we had a nine month school. But that didn't matter — if the spring came and you had to work in the field, why you just had to get an excuse to go and work in the field. So we did that. But I recall the morning that my principal — we had a two-teacher school — Professor Moore, he asked that all the kids take a piece of paper and write on it what they hoped to be in life. I remember writing minister. And the kids teased me all the while about it. They called me "Preacher." I was about 15 years old. But that was my calling, definitely. I fooled with the idea, and in 1931 I knew. And by the way, the sermon that I gave for my initial service, I had prepared eight years before. I did. It was very effective. I recall one white able Methodist minister who came to my initial service, said, "I've never heard an initial sermon of that type." And then my pastor at the time said, "I've pastored 30 years without a break, and I've never heard anyone give their first sermon on the manner that you did here." So, it was just a matter of called to it. Knowing that, I still believe that. Even though you are not as knowledgeable about it as you know you should be, you have it in mind to grasp for it, to reach for it, whatever way is possible, to acquire the knowledge that you need. I don't think anyone ever acquires enough. So, I went back to school in four years. I hadn't finished high school yet. So I went to preparatory school at Roger Williams College, and I went there and got my high school diploma. Then I went on — I did that simultaneously — but I was working in theology. Then when I finished that, I went over to A and I State University, and worked toward a bachelor of science. So that's the story up to now.

Melinda Roundtree: What brought you to Champaign?

William Donaldson: Well, as I stated previously, I was serving at the First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We had a great ministry there, a great youth program, and in our Sunday school at that time we had a 350 enrollment. But I was recommended here by the pastor who was here at the time and was leaving: Reverend Doctor Lillard. He had been called back to Fulton, Missouri. Even though he was an alumnus of mine, it was several years after I graduated. But he had a cousin in Murfreesboro, and he went to visit that cousin. He saw the church. We had just completed the church and had completed the educational building, _____ and the library. It was quite an institution. And on the strength of that, he recommended me here. He wrote me. I'd never heard of Salem, you know. But I recall one Sunday morning, when my late wife, Clara, was, our apartment was next to the church. She came — and at that time, they delivered special deliveries on Sunday — so when she came into the church, she brought me a letter. When I opened it was from Champaign. It was from Reverend Robert Lillard. And the letter went something like this: "God has called me back to Calvary in Fulton, Missouri, and the officers here have asked me to recommend someone. I've been praying, and even though I've never heard you preach, I've seen your work. And God has shown me you," and he asked me to come the next Sunday. Well, the next Sunday, I had a wedding, a large, outdoor wedding. And I called him that Monday, and told him I just couldn't come the next Sunday. I asked if I could come the fourth Sunday. He said, "That's the Sunday I'm giving my farewell sermon." Well, the third Sunday was Easter, and I said, "Well, I can't come on Easter." He said, "Why not?" So he insisted. And it was difficult for me to face my officers and tell them that I couldn't be there on Easter Sunday. But that was good. And I came to Champaign on Easter Sunday. Well, I came on Saturday, and at that time, we had Interurban — you

don't remember those, do you? Streetcars, running from Danville to Champaign on to Decatur and Springfield. It was just an old streetcar. And I got off the train in Danville and got this old Interurban, and came on to Champaign on a Saturday. The station for the Interurban was — if you notice the crossing on Neil Street, you'll see that old boxcar sitting there, a caboose. But the station was just up there. And Reverend Lillard met me. And even though it was the third Sunday in April, we had snow, and I stayed overnight for Sunday morning and Sunday evenings. There was a large crowd at Sunday night services then. And Reverend Lillard got up and said, "Well, you asked me to pray for someone, and I prayed. This is the man that the Lord showed me. I'm not telling you to call him. I'm just telling you what the Lord showed me." And Monday morning, I got up and went on back to Nashville. And I didn't hear any more. It was June and I was in school, taking some work, and when I got home, there was a telephone call for me. And I answered the call. And they said, "Salem has unanimously called you to be its pastor." They wanted me to come. So I came up here in July. And I came back _____ to the church in _____. I went back and prepared to move. So I moved here by the first of August.

Melinda Roundtree: What year?

William Donaldson: August of '49. And I started work, you know. Because Salem was not what it is now. You don't remember when Salem was just a one-room church in the basement. All that in the annex building, that was built since that time. When I came, we began talking about a new church there. We had a little miniature church, and I would set it on the table on Sunday and ask anyone who wanted to give money toward the new church, to just drop money in there. And they did. And I recall when I left there, that I'd raised $5,000 towards that.

But I left, and Reverend Anderson followed me, from Lafayette, Indiana. He followed me. He was here about four years. Then, Reverend Williams came from Quincy, and he completed the building. He put up the annex, the classrooms and all that back there. And when he left, that's about four years, Reverend Rowan came and paid off the debt. When I came back and gave the sermon — I was in Peoria then — and I came back, and Reverend Williams came and preached in the morning, 'cause he had been going to Iowa, Dubuque, Iowa, I believe it was. And he and I both came back the same day to dedicate the church. And now why I came back the second time? After 15 years — I was gone 15 years — 15 and a half years — but after the church had a little trouble and it split up, they asked me if I'd come back. They called me. And I came down and preached. So they decided they definitely wanted me to return. So in '68, I came back and I've been here ever since, until I retired, as you know. I retired from Salem two years ago. At the time, I'm just pastor emeritus and working with the church. So it's been a very long, rewarding — I'd say rewarding — life with the ministry. Now, other questions?

Patrick Tyler: Yes. When you first came here back in '49, where did you stay?

William Donaldson: Well, the church had purchased a parsonage at 304 North Third Street, so I moved into that house — 304 North Third. Anyway, between Hill — yeah, between Hill and Church Street. And I moved into that house and stayed there until I left. By the way, when I came back in '68, I moved back into that house. Then, in the spring of '69, we purchased the property on South Prospect. That's where the parsonage is now. For about — I think it was around 35 to 36,000 dollars. So that's where the minister is housed now. There's

another piece of property. In the process, we've put up a parking lot adjacent to Church Street. I don't know if you recall Willard School?

Melinda Roundtree: Willard? I've heard of it.

William Donaldson: Willard and — Lawhead and Willard. Those were practically — well, I guess they were all black schools with black teachers. There was Mr. McMurray. Do you know Mr. McMurray?

Patrick Tyler: Uh . . .

William Donaldson: He's very elderly now. He lived at the corner of Hill and Third. He belongs to Bethel. And he was the principal of — was it Lawhead? — Willard, he was a principal of Willard. I had a girl, Ann, went to Willard under him. But after the school closed, the church bought that property. Anyway, you know where the parking lot is in back of there? Well, that was the school. You don't remember that?

Patrick Tyler: No.

William Donaldson: Oh, boy! It seems to me it was just yesterday when the school was there. Now, how's that?

Melinda Roundtree: I want to ask you how did the community appear to you — had people changed?

William Donaldson: Yes. Well, I mean, that would be expected for a new pastor, you know. It may be a little different for just an ordinary person coming into town, but with a new pastor coming, people get excited. I feel like if you want something done in your new church, do it in your first few months. Do it, because after that, the honeymoon's about over! It's really shifted to the pastor. And you begin to get the knocks and the criticisms and things. That's inevitable. They come. But I'd have to say they were very friendly. The community as a whole at that time, was segregated, even the campus. You can visualize a time when black students could not be housed on the campus. Well, that's the way it was. They didn't want any black students housed on the campus or in the dormitories — none. And they stayed out in the community. I know a lot of people who kept black students, like Mrs. Ida Mills. She was an old _____. She kept men. And _____. Mrs. _____ on the corner of Church and Hill Street. Most of the people there — that was a business there — keep black students, finding a place to stay. They could not stay on the campus. There were no accommodations on the campus. All of this has changed. There were no black faculty members. That was out. So you're living in a different world. An altogether different world. And all of this out here, where I lived, on Prospect, that was corn field. There was Kirby here, but nothing beyond Kirby. That was corn. And you can see it now, there's Kirby and Mattis, no corn field or bean field, but that's what it was all the way back, this was, too. People used to hunt out here. So we've seen a lot of changes. You couldn't buy a house in a white neighborhood. For instance, when my wife — she came here to teach, you know — she was Miss Charity then, and she had a contract to teach at Washington School. She didn't have a place to live, but they couldn't find her one. So she was about to give up her contract and go back to Mount Vernon, when Mrs. Foxwell, a very prominent black figure, she had some houses and she

got her a place to stay. When they finally moved out here and bought this house. We didn't have open houses. If you wanted to buy a house, they'd take you down to the north end somewhere and sell you a lot and a house. Oh, it's so different now. It's different. You're really living in paradise now. That's for real. And there wasn't a place downtown where you could go in and sit down and have a meal. Or if you work there, you could even relax. That was the real world. And I'm appalled at the advancements that have been made, 'cause when we came, it was prominent that Negroes were servants. I came from a community down in Murfreesboro where we had doctors, lawyers, and in Nashville, you know, that Nashville, Tennessee, _____ of the South. I never had a white doctor when I was in Nashville, nothing but black doctors. And totally outstanding surgeons — black. But when I came here, no black doctors. No lawyers — we have one lawyer — I was going to say no lawyers. No dentists, but we have one now. So the big people were the people who worked on the campus in the frat houses. That was it. And sorority houses. They were cooks. They even had — black women had a club known as the "Cooks' Club." You were somebody if you belonged to the "Cooks' Club." Some of them are still living. If they were having a meeting, someone would say, "I can't do it. I can't meet with you. I still have to cook for the family." They had a big family. That was it. I think locally there was one person in our church who was attending the university at that time, as I recall. But we had some students who would come in, but I mean locally. There was Mrs. Walden — do you remember Mrs. Walden? She teaches out in Urbana now. Her husband, Fred, works or was working at Carle Hospital. But she was the only one in our church who was a local person who attended the University. So you see, we've made big strides. Great strides. Next question?

Patrick Tyler: Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about your education? The dates and years that you went to college?

William Donaldson: Yes. As I stated before, I was delayed because my father was blind eight years, and we had to quit school. So during that time I took care of him. And after I entered the ministry, I knew it was the time that I had to go back to college, to further my education. So after I had accepted the church in Pontiac and _____, and you know my father had died the year before, I enrolled in the school of religion in Detroit, with Dean _____. _____ had to get some accreditation, you know. In '35, we finally _____ Nashville. _____ and stayed there four years. _____. And I got the job — it was a big _____. And I cooked like that, I'd cook and go to school. I was called a _____. Often it was every other Sunday and often it was not. _____ from Murfreesboro to Nashville to Sunday school. And I was in the midst of that when I was called here. Then left again, and went back down to _____ for year, then left and went to Peoria, _____. _____, so it's really been very rewarding. It paid off, but it was an education that somehow I never completed. You must keep abreast, _____, so you must do it continuously, and I think some of our white don't have the _____ and American _____. Each year, they have a fund for continuing education for the ministry. And it's very good. They have different subjects and projects and some current things that come up, then they go back to their churches. So it's very wise. Okay?

Patrick Tyler: Have there been any other organizations or clubs that you have taken a part in besides the church?

William Donaldson: Yes. The church is always major for me. But I was, for a long time, Masonic. I was really taken in with masonry for a long time, then Knights of Pythias, and then, of course, NAACP. And then I served for about six years on the mayor's commission for human relations. I think my time expired about two weeks ago. And that was rewarding. It was a group that was appointed by the mayor, and I was appointed by the mayor. Let me have the phone book there . . . Wikoff, Mayor Wikoff. And I stayed there even after he left with the state Legislature. We have served with him and have served with the members of the black Urban League, his wife is a supporter, and the Girls Club of Urbana. And during my time in Peoria and East Moline, we set up an extensive unit for the American Baptist Genealogical Center. And when we talked, students put on their birth certificate, _____ the background of a diploma through the center in Nashville. To acquire a diploma, they had to spend about two weeks on campus to get the certificate. And the one in East Moline or the Rock Island area, we call it, is still going. We were there in June or July.

Possibly Mrs. Donaldson in the background: You didn't say anything about that. I thought sure _____. They asked him if the _____ and the meaning of it, you know, _____, and _____. It's really a Quad City area. Well, Davenport, Iowa, includes more than, you know it's a Quad City area and then across the river from there _____ because you didn't say anything about _____. But I thought the most interesting thing now is _____, you know, as well as the men. So, um, then

they spoke of what it meant to them. You know, _____. Well, women don't say _____. But now there are so many religious _____ that often _____ that women, you know, really can get into that even if they _____. And _____ in terms of _____. _____ I'd like to go back to school myself, if it were available, if other blacks _____. Well, I just wanted to interject that, about the fact that two women are among men graduates. They've had a rough year. They said that it's been _____.

William Donaldson: Well, we had some of the older ones who were taking missionary work. Some of them who were there, Mrs. Barber, I think she was one of the first students that we had. We had a missionary set-up, you know, for women.

Mrs. Donaldson?: Yeah, I mean, _____.

William Donaldson: Yeah, like in Theology.

Mrs. Donaldson?: Oh, boy. They were so, they _____. I had no idea _____ setting up your lectureship there. But I had no idea there was so much to it. You know, she just _____. Okay, I'll _____.

William Donaldson: You're being recorded. Ha-ha!!

Mrs. Donaldson?: Oh, well, I didn't say anything about _____.

William Donaldson: Okay. Ha-ha!!

Patrick Tyler: Now, I'd like to know how is the black community changed since you first came here and how it is now?

William Donaldson: Good question. Good question. Well, there have been some miraculous changes. We've moved from the north end _____, and on Market Street where sort of an auto place is now, back in there by the Post Office, that was a black community. All of that right up to Neil Street, all of that was mostly black. And then on the North end. Other than that, you might find, like out on Ells Street, we had friends on Ells Street. That was about it. I didn't even have to have a car when I was first at Salem, 'cause I was just walking around, and most of the members lived at Fifth Street and Fourth Street, you know, up to Bradley and back in there. And you recall, there was nothing beyond Bradley. That was _____ by the Minister's Alliance. You wouldn't remember Reverend Carver, Reverend Taber who used to be at Bethel, Reverend Kilgore, and Reverend Williams — what's his name, Prentice Williams, used to be at Free Will. Reverend Williams, you know, his father and myself, we used to meet in the _____ by the _____. He was a civic-minded person, too. And we contacted Senator Lucas with this project, about the Minister's Alliance workers, that we got the Burch Village. And it was nice, and _____. But beyond that, there wasn't anything on this side.

Mrs. Donaldson: Suppose the _____ from the housing projects. Are you interested in all that _____? _____ education _____.

William Donaldson: We touched on that when we talked about the school. What was it — Lawhead and Willard? That's resolved. Then we finally came up with Washington.

Mrs. Donaldson: Did you discuss the campus, too?

William Donaldson: Yeah. We discussed the campus, because we were brought from, you know, from housing.

Mrs. Donaldson: _____

_____

_____equal opportunity

_____.

William Donaldson: Oh, no. That wasn't even dreamed about then. To see a black girl in the bank? Or a store? Anywhere. You didn't dream of it unless she had a mop or a broom. That was it. And I am very concerned now that young blacks will forget this, or forget, you know, the strides that have been made. And you don't remember that, you say you don't remember. When we talk about Willard and Lawhead and the schools, you just heard of them. Overnight, you _____.

Mrs. Donaldson: Well, I feel like I'm _____. Children now _____ but I don't know that the problem _____ in Illinois.

William Donaldson: You know, to go to the University, to go to the bank, and that the trouble was that if you were going south on the train, on the Illinois Central, when you hit Cairo, you had to go on the colored car.

Inaudible comments in background.

William Donaldson: So we made strides, but I don't want us to forget. I really don't. I don't want us to forget. Because just as we have acquired a few things they can slip away from us, they can slip out of our hands. So we have to be so grateful for the strides that have been made, the progress. And speaking of jobs — at the time when I came over there were two roundhouses. The one out in Urbana was the Big Four. Do you remember that? On the North end, there was the IC Roundhouse. Yeah, you remember that. Miss Johnson's husband — Ethel Johnson's husband — there was a big man out at the Big Four roundhouse. And some of the older men worked at the North end roundhouse. There was coal in it and water in the engine where they had the steammaker there. And people would go up on the track and pick up coal for the winter, would fall off the tender. And now you don't even see it. They don't have any coal chutes. They'd put coal on the end of the shovel, in the engine while the train was running. Those were the old days. But that's all gone. So what we are thinking about now — we're thinking in terms of black people and the changes. What I'm concerned about now is that blacks haven't kept pace educationally with the changing times. For instance, we didn't have to have any training to put coal on the engine or to

drive spikes on the railroad. We didn't have to have any training, we'd just do it. But things have changed so technically, that now you are required to have training and a lot of people don't have it. We are fearful to think that a lot of young blacks are not getting it now. There are so many things against them now. Number One: There are people who don't want you to have it. They know what you need, but they don't want you to have it. And they will say, "Well, but you're not capable of this type of thing." This is wrong. Far from being the truth. So that's against them. And they say, "Well, we're going to weed out the students." And they'll take it for granted that blacks don't have a brain. The sad thing is, a lot of blacks accept this. They accept it. And they go ahead and try to get on dope and try to make it by stealing and having a good time. But that's not it. You can't build a race like that. Think of the percentage of young blacks in our prisons today. I made two visits to Centralia when it was a new prison, and my son — stepson, my wife's son — he used to be one of the stars at Central years ago. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame about two years ago. At Champaign, basketball was a big sport. He was _____ by the Giants in baseball. But he got married and taught and was principal at the school _____. _____. And he gave up the principalship at the school in Centralia to take this job at this new prison in the education department. And we went there with him two years ago. And this year we went back. This prison is minimum security, but it's just jammed with close to 750 people. And I think it had been open less than two years and it was then over 500. And you know that over 80 percent of black, young men. That hurt. And they have a school program. You go to their library, and it's like a city library — books and everything. And he's over that department. They paint, they learn auto mechanics, everything. And a lot of them, as soon as they get out they go right back to it. This hurts. So we were there Easter Sunday, and they had a service

there. We went out there and the minister gave a message. There must have been at least 200 of them in this chapel, a new chapel. There's some fine looking _____. And you see some white ones, but most of them are black. And, yes, when I came here the first time, you didn't hear of dope, you didn't hear of murder, you just didn't hear of it. We have just a nice group of blacks, you know, who are fatherless, and the mothers have to take care of them. The mothers have to work, and the kids are in the street. And this, to me, is a terrible thing. They need training. So here's where we are. I think that in one sense, we have made progress; in another, we haven't. We have a lot to do. That's the way I look at it. It's going to take young people like you who are dedicated. We can't go through this away. I am today what I am, because of my mother and father's training. That's what it is — my mother. She was a stalwart, but so was dad. But the things that she gave us was the things that she put in us. And that's what mothers have to do today. If we're going to build a race, we have to do it. Was that satisfactory? Now, the next person?

Patrick Tyler: Yes. I have one more question. How would you like to see the community, the black community in Champaign-Urbana, ten years from now?

William Donaldson: Oh, boy. Well, to be truthful about it, I would like to see the black community more united than it is. _____. I would like to see blacks with more businesses. We can do it. I mean, without antagonizing other people. But we can do it just by patronizing our own and standing together. This is quite a job. I'd like all blacks to stick together. I talked with a young businessman who has a gas station. What was his name? Andy's enterprise up there on Market Street.

Melinda Roundtree: The Andy Davis?

William Donaldson: Yeah. I talked with him. I go over there and buy most of my gas from him because he's black, and I like to see that. His help is black. And I think blacks should support him. He said something to me, he said, "Most of my trade comes from other people. Blacks don't come by here to buy anything. Blacks _____." And he's the only one of black in the community who has a gas station. There are enough blacks to patronize him, just to give him 10 percent of what I do, he could build, he could have what he wants, he could have _____. But I'm not going to bother him. And you find _____. The same thing with our little grocery uptown, the Quik Stop on Fourth Street, it could be made beautiful. We don't have to make any noise about it, either. But if just 10 percent would just go there once in awhile and buy something, it would help him. It would help him and it would help us. I'd like to see a better understanding among blacks, more togetherness among blacks, even in the church. Our churches are so old, fragmentized, we can't do anything. And I'm a church man. But we spend so much time because we can't get along, splitting up our little churches, a little group here, a little group there. Now I retired, as I said, over two years ago. I could have gone right down and gotten me a house and started another little church. And I would have had about 20 people, and then finally gotten some more, just to be called "pastor." And I could have called it the "Donaldson Baptist Church." Anything you want to call it. And this is what's hurting us. If you go up there on Fourth Street at Tremont, you can see a new church there. Macedonia. We don't need it. We don't need most of them. We don't need it. Then we split up and then we start competing with one another. And we don't have enough people here to do it. Now do you realize, and I can talk about Baptists because I'm a Baptist, but do you realize that when I came to

this town, there were three Baptist churches? We didn't need them then. There was Salem, Mt. Olive, Pilgrim, we didn't need but one, maybe one, at least two, that's all we need. For strength, I'm talking about the strength. Because we put the strength together. And we use an old cliche: Together we stand, and divided we fall. We know that. We know that. But instead of supporting one strong institution, we'll have 10 or 12 spread all out there, with a handful of people, and we can't survive, we can't support it. So then we've got to have all kinds of programs. Unnecessary program. We've got to have chicken dinners, all to try to raise money to support the _____. If we had, this is dreaming, if you had Salem and Mt. Olive in one church, you'd have an institution. You could have scholarships. But, you see, it's one against the other. And Salem, Mt. Olive, Pilgrim, Canaan, Macedonia, Jericho, the one up there on Market Street, Rising Star, I'm just talking about Baptist. And the new Free Will out there. There's about seven or eight Free, Missionary, and some else starting. That's eight. And we just don't need that. We need to be together. And we could plan for this. We need to _____. That's indicative of division. Actually, there's no strength in this church. And the world sees this division. It's a divine way of _____. And I invite you to come over here, bring your people over here, to help me raise money for my _____. _____. It's a joke. Are we in touch with people? Yeah, but I would like to see us sit down with some hard, common sense, and get together and do things together. Not out of envy, not out of our selfishness, but for the kingdom's sake, the race's sake. Our young people — we go down to the church on Sunday, each one of us has our little service, and we go out, and there are kids all in the street. There are men out there at the taverns gambling, and sit in our little church. We have our little service, and we shout, and we sing, and _____. Then we go home and we don't do anything. We're not making

an impact on anybody. We, as a church, should go into the world. We need to come together and study the _____, the teaching, the fellowship, and then at that we go out to make an impact on our society. That's what we need to do. So this is what I'd like to see. Oh, can I dream. I can dream of seeing Negroes independently use some of their money. I was saying this morning as I drove to town that you could pool your money. And you don't have to make no big noise about it, if they don't like what you're doing. And the white men don't think you've done it. And the man said, "Well, you can't do it." Well, don't argue with him about it. He that fights with a sword will perish with a sword. Just do it. As a race, we should have some secrets among ourselves. I don't mean for evil, but for our own benefit. We don't tell Mr. Charlie everything we're going to do. We can _____, we have _____ right now. Burch Village — not Burch Village — Carver Park. You know where Carver Park is. Okay, I remember when there wasn't anything but a field. But one man, _____ Phipps, he's dead now, got a group of men together. And they got this thing with Mr. Taylor. Well, they got together and they built that thing 25 to 30 years ago. And it's beautiful. But some of us will go in and try to tear it up, you know. Well, we've got to deal with those people too, you know. The people who don't know anything but to tear up. But they're our people, too. They're still ours. If they don't know what to do, then we've got to help them somehow. We've got to find a way to help them. Don't take no for an answer. We've just got to find a way to help them. These two men got together and they put up Carver Park. It's an honor to those men to have that and try to keep it up, you know. Nice homes, everything, keep the yard. We can do it. We can do it. We've got to prepare to live for one another.

Patrick Tyler: This tape is the continued interview of Reverend William H.Donaldson. This tape is part two of a two-part series.

William Donaldson: What do we expect ten years from today in our black community? I guess we're thinking about Champaign-Urbana and the black community. I repeat what I said, that there will have to be togetherness if we are going to make the proper impact on society and on our own people who haven't had the opportunity that some of us have had, you know. This type of thing. And I don't know if I brought the church in for your tape. Did I?

Patrick Tyler: Yes.

William Donaldson: But, I'm saying that I hope that tomorrow the dreams of those of us who have been here today will be fulfilled in this way that there will be togetherness among blacks, that blacks will learn to trust blacks, that they won't just put down one another, that they will have to have faith and confidence in one another, and above all love that will bind them together. I think I've said that they should have some secrets, not for evil but for good. A real good, that even the white man doesn't know about. I think our Jewish people have it. They have their secrets, their codes and traditions. And wherever they go, whatever part of the world you find them, they stick by this. And this we don't have. Oh, boy, this is hard on us. We don't have anything to hold to, you see. As blacks, you know. A Jew, he comes from Israel or from Russia or wherever in the world. He knows he's a Jew. There are certain things he must stand by and honor, and certain things he will die for, because he's been taught that. We don't have anything to die for. This is where we are. And I want to see this change. And my prayer is that ten years from today, in 1993, there will be such a change. You know, great movements as they move slowly but surely. To use another cliche: The gods, the mills of the gods, grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine. And to be a

part of this now, like you young people, to be a part of it, to have the most minute part in it, is going to be a blessing. It's going to be a blessing. What we do here today will give us our mark. In ten years in the future, on into the year 2000, we're going to have to do it together. We can't do it pulling apart. And I say this as I close: I think that the pattern of this should be set by the church. If the church can't get along, if the church can't unite, if the church can't work together, if the church can't have some ideals for the future, then don't expect it to come from any other source. Schools can't do it, the state can't do it. It's the church's job, the church's role, to unite people and to dignify people in society. Thank you.

Patrick Tyler: Thank you.