

**History 310: Public History
Spring 2004**

**Oral History Interview with Victor Janzen
by
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Abstract of February 18, 2004, interview with Victor Janzen

In this February 18, 2004, interview, Trinity Western University students Travis Hill and Wesley Boonstra question Victor Janzen about his experiences as a student of Trinity Junior College in its founding year, 1962-63. Conducted in the Norma Alloway Library, this interview lasts for approximately thirty-one minutes.

Janzen begins by discussing his life before coming to Trinity—including his family background and his high school years. He mentions several factors for deciding to come to Trinity: the recruiting efforts of the faculty, the quality of the staff, and also the fact that he was dating one of the enrolled students, Claudia Huesken.

Since Janzen attended the University of British Columbia after his one year at Trinity, his comparative perspective is useful to assess some of Trinity's efforts to achieve academic credibility in its fledgling years. He describes the cautionary attitude taken by UBC towards his transcripts but explains that the education he received at Trinity was more than adequate academically to prepare him for his following years at UBC.

In terms of the student life and campus atmosphere, Janzen notes that in some ways, it was similar to a "Bible camp" atmosphere. He spends time describing the activities of a typical day as well as the usual recreational activities. He discusses the "barnasium"—the barn which was converted into a gym, as well as the choir.

Towards the end of the interview, when asked about the course of his life since having left Trinity, and how his one year at Trinity might have influenced him, if at all, he indicates that though the teaching was good, he still finds the main significance of his time to be found in the "Bible-camp" atmosphere of the school. Through this discussion he raises some concerns about the sheltering effect which Trinity's conservative environment might have had on some of the students' views of the secular; in this context, he brings up the old motto of Trinity Junior College: "If Christ is Lord, nothing else is secular."

Transcript

TH= Travis Hill (interviewer)

WB= Wes Boonstra (interviewer)

VJ= Victor Janzen (interviewee)

Time: [0:00]

[recurring sound of tape winding in the background throughout]

TH: This is Travis Hill and Wes Boonstra. We're doing a History 310 project interview. Oral history of Trinity Western, was like back—oh, Trinity Junior College back in 1962 and '63. We're here at the Norma Alloway Library on February 18th, 2004.

WB: (pages shuffling) Okay.

TH: We're interviewing Victor Janzen—Right?

VJ: Right.

TH: Okay, before we begin discussing your experience at Trinity Junior College, could you describe where you grew up and your family background?

VJ: Oh, yeah, I was raised in the Yukon in my early childhood. Um, at the beginning of junior high and, um in Vancouver for a couple of years—I lived in Greendale in the Mennonite ghetto before all of that, um family background were Mennonites, ethnic Mennonites, parents born in Russia—Siberia actually. Um, did my high school all in North Delta [British Columbia], which is where I met Claudia who's also one of the students—that's probably a question that will come up. We met in, in grade nine there, and uh, I followed her to Trinity after graduating from North Delta. I guess that's—

TH: That's basically what our other question was. Um, what were some of the reasons that made you decide to atten, attend Trinity Junior College.

VJ: Well, there are two—two or three. I, I had decided to attend grade thirteen for my first year of university work because it was cheap, you know, cost nothing, uh well it cost the same as going to high school but, uh, my high school didn't have grade thirteen so I had to go to a neighbouring high school, Queen Elizabeth, in uh, in Surrey and we were treated more like children there than we had been treated in my previous high school in grade twelve, where we had been celebrated—we had our own lounge in there; we weren't allowed to stand within so many metres of girls lockers, and foolishness like this. And the teaching staff that I had, with one exception were, were lousy teachers, really poor teachers. And so I went out to Trinity's kickoff thing my, my sort of girlfriend—we were on and off again, Claudia and I, oh going together in those years, right through high school. We'd go together for a while and then split up and go together for a while. Anyways, she conned me into coming out (laughter) for the opening ceremonies of the—of the school itself, like for the students arriving and so on, in about mid September and uh, while I was there Dr. Mattson, she introduced me to Dr. Mattson, they were starving for students. I mean, oh they had like fifteen at that—on that particular day and I guess I made number sixteen, or, seventeen. So anyway I said: "Oh I cannot afford your tuition". It was the highest in the country at the time at two hundred and fifty per semester or five hundred bucks a year. And UBC [University of British Columbia] at that time it was about two—three

hundred and forty seven. Which is a little, you know, a little less, but that was a lot of money in those days. Um, a level entry zero-teacher with two years experience took home three hundred and ten dollars a month pay, so that gives you an idea what those dollars mean. So anyway, um so he was recruiting me and I said, "I just haven't got that kind of money," so he says "Well you can work on campus." So I thought, uh, okay that sounds like an idea. And then on the way back, uh, Claudia said, "I wish you were coming." You know, I didn't know- I thought she wished I was coming because she wanted me around. But maybe it was because (chuckles) she, she wanted numbers, as well as an ambassador for the school, and her father had been one of the founding members of the school, so her family were closely tied to it. They were close friends with David and Ruby Enarson for example, um and David Enarson had recruited Dad [Claudia's father] as to be on this sort of- this steering committee and Dad was also an early financier for the thing. And, uh, so I guess a combination of following Claudia, and, and it was kind of magic. I mean there were a handful of students and, and almost as many professors, like eight or whatever. It was almost like a two to one ratio. And, uh, I was impressed with the teachers, they were more personable, they were younger all the guys at, uh, at the high school were, were the old guys close to retirement. Whereas these guys were young, Leland Asa was under thirty, Benno Friesen was thirty-two, you know there—Dick Walters was thirty—thirty-one. So, it was younger staff and it had kind of uh, kind of, uh, like a Bible camp atmosphere (laughs) you know, uh, the school. So that's basically how I ended up getting here in the first place.

TH: Okay, um can you give a sense of what you felt when you first saw the campus of Trinity, obviously you've seen it before?

VJ: Yeah, I, yeah um, just that it just looked like a farm with one new building on it, you know I and thought this—That kind of appealed to me—

TH: Yeah—(speaking at the same time)

VJ: —you know, as an alternative sort of school.

TH: And, um did you live on the [05:00] dorms—(unintelligible)

VJ: No. No we commuted.

TH: Oh, okay, so how far away did you commute from?

VJ: From North Delta. So that was about a forty minute trip, I guess.

TH: Okay—and going on to your area of study.

VJ: I graduated in majors in English Literature and Western European History. We had a double major program in those days at UBC and it was over by the time I graduated. It was only those of us who were grand-fathered in were allowed to take two majors. There weren't such things as majors and minors--

TH: Okay.

VJ: —In the Canadian system at the time, you majored in one thing and took a pile of electives.

TH: So this is after Trinity Junior College— (unintelligible)

VJ: After, right—(speaking at the same time)

TH: After two years and then you went to UBC—

VJ: I just spent one year here.

TH: Just one year?

VJ: I used up all the courses, I, I—

TH: You went to grade thirteen? (speaking at the same time)

VJ: No, No. No, I went here for one year--

TH: Okay.

VJ: But, um, but I used first year courses and second year courses, simply because there wasn't enough offering in my area, so I took all the English and History that was here. And that was— and then I went to UBC and I took a broken—I was there for my second year in which I did some first year courses and some second years courses so that by the end of the second year I had the right number of first and second.

TH: Okay, okay considering that there were only seventeen students, did you and the other students all have classes together?

VJ: No. No, there were three of us in English 200, uh maybe you know twelve of us in English 100, um, Sociology 200 was well-attended; it had about nine, ten, something like that. Psychology, Psych 100 had a half a dozen and I don't know what—Bible—we all had to take Bible, the Bible Survey. First semester we had Old Testament Survey and, and the second semester we did New Testament Survey, logically. And it was a non-credit course. I mean non-credit as far the institutions were concerned. It was a half a credit sort of thing, even for the religious organizations.

TH: Okay—um these classes that you mentioned, um can you give us a sense of what the average workload was?—Like, how much, how many hours did you have to spend studying, reading books, and—

VJ: Yeah, um, not many hours. We didn't work real hard. Um, if I studied an average of two hours per academic day that was, that was a heavy day of studying. Two hours max. I would say with reading, writing essays, everything—average two hours, but that's me, you know I'm, I'm a fairly efficient studier (laughs). I never write rough drafts for example. I go to a finished

copy. I didn't have time for, uh, fooling around with rough drafts and so I'm fairly quick and I read fast (chuckles), so, not that I'm overly bright, you know, there were a lot brighter people than me on campus.

TH: Okay, um, do you have any particular memories about the faculty?

VJ: Um, yeah. Well, I remember you know—(unintelligible)

TH: Who had the most profound influence on you, like—

VJ: I would guess Leland Asa. The Psych, I had him for Psychology and Sociology.

TH: Okay.

VJ: And, uh, I guess because you're young and you're, you're—It was my first introduction to the kinds of information where you can analyze the human condition and the psyche, you don't get that stuff in high school. So probably him and, uh, Benno Friesen, mainly because we had a really good time. Benno Friesen's a great humorist, so we had, uh, there were only three of us in the class, in the 200 class, I had him for 100 and 200. Asa—I really basically, those two guys comprised four of my courses, and, uh, uh Dick Walters for Zoology. But I hated Zoology, thankful that I took it, it was handy for industrial first-aid later in my life. Yeah, so those two teachers probably had a similar affect on me, and we became friends in latter years too. I used to visit the Asas until they moved away. And Benno Friesen I have seen off and on in the last forty years. Like in Parliament Hill when I was there I had lunch with him there—in the Parliamentary dining rooms. I, I used to direct, men's retreats up at Stillwood Camp Conference Centre, and I had him come as a speaker at one occasion. So, so we've have kind of an ongoing, uh, occasional, now email connection.

TH: Okay, um—

VJ: Am I being too thorough on this stuff? Probably more than you want to hear. (laughter)

TH: No, you are doing great actually— (both speaking at once)

VJ: Okay. (laughs)

TH: Our last group only went for, like, thirty minutes, so we're happy for you to keep on rattling.

VJ: Okay. (both laughing and speaking at the same time)

TH: —Okay, um, outside the classroom hours how would you describe a typical day in the life at Trinity Junior College?

VJ: Oh, you know, hanging around, singing; we did a lot of singing. Um, you know quartet- the quartet would get together and sing, and the girls' trio and—choir, we were all in choir, all the students were in the choir and we would go on deputation. Um, because I didn't live on campus,

I didn't get in on a lot of—other than lunch, lunch and coffee, coffee time stuff. One of my vivid memories of coffee time was old-man Jenstad. We had an old kitchen here in the old Seal Kap part of the dining room kitchen and we would all, teachers and profs, both would converge on this kitchen and have a big pot of coffee on this stove, you know, and cookies or something baked—(chuckles) he was a wonderful baker-- with this speckled, uh, enameled purple coffee pot, [10:00] boiled coffee. And we would all stand around this sort of kitchen tablely thing where, beside the stove—and that's where we'd have coffee time. You would be standing in this kitchen eating cookies and drinking coffee. And, and the meals too were the same you know, seventeen kids and eight teachers, you know, we always, we all ate our meals in there together, nobody packed a lunch.

TH: So, we are now going to elaborate on a, uh question uh further down, so like, how was their cooking?

VJ: Excellent!

TH: Great.

VJ: Wonderful cooking, yeah.

TH: Awesome.

VJ: It was like home cooking. It was like mother cooking for you only better, because old man Jenstad was a trained chef.

TH: Okay, um, a little lighter question. Um since the campus had previously been on a farm, or is on a farm,

VJ: Um-hmm.

TH: —were there any strange experiences, like farm animals running around or like any other?

VJ: No.—Uh, there were no farm animals nearby. Uh, they burnt down the old farm house while we were here and that was kind of dramatic. And you know the story of converting the barn into a gymnasium, I think.

TH: It's a later question. (unintelligible)

VJ: Okay. Yeah, no, no, nothing particular—agricultural--

TH: Okay

VJ: --that I remember anyways. People living here might of done, you know—

TH: Um, we heard mention of, like a typhoon. Do you remember—

VJ: Yes (speaking at the same time).

TH: —something like that?

VJ: Yeah, It was Hurricane Freda I think. I'm not dead certain and I'll have to check the accuracy. Yeah, that, was a major hurricane—that year [1962] and it uprooted big trees and stuff, but I do not remember it vividly, I just remember it happened, uh, yeah—

TH: Okay, um, let's go to recreation. What did you and the other students do for fun or recreation?

VJ: Well, let's see—

TH: Um, we saw a pool (unintelligible; talking at the same time)

VJ: Basketball was big. You know I don't ever—I remember that question in, in the stuff that you guys sent me. I don't remember anybody ever swimming in it, but then it was the wrong time of year. You know, mid-September to mid, early May, or late April. Um, I don't recall any students ever swimming in it, but that doesn't mean that it didn't happen. Maybe other people you've interviewed remembered swimming in? Does somebody remember swimming in it? Have you interviewed— (unintelligible)

TH: Um, somebody mentioned somebody throwing somebody in the pool.

VJ: I don't think that it was really a pool, I think it was a water cistern for feeding cat- (cattle??), yeah, you know, supplying water and all—

TH: Okay. (both speaking at once)

VJ: —to the house or something.

TH: And—the, the barnasium— might be--

VJ: Yeah, we cleaned—we shoveled out all the garbage and laid a hardwood—What was it? I think it was a fir floor, and varnished it. And my main contribution is I painted the logo in the middle of the floor, you know, where you face off, sort of thing. I painted the big—there was a big T, TJC logo which I drew and painted. That was my contribution to the whole (laughs) effort.

TH: And do you know how it became called the “barnasium”? Did anybody coin that phrase, or—

VJ: Nobody in particular. I, I that, that I don't remember. We called it that immediately upon building it (Travis laughs). And I—it's one of things that it probably just happened at coffee time. I think. You know, I don't think anybody formally called it that. I think that it kind of grew out of hanging around, working on it (unintelligible)

[tape paused]

[Wes Boonstra takes over as interviewer]

WB: Okay, so going back to the um, student life, do you think, would you say there was a prevalent Christian atmosphere—

VJ: Oh yeah—

WB: —on campus? (speaking at the same time)

VJ: Oh yeah, everybody on campus was born again Christian, mostly Evangelical Free Church types, I think I was almost the only non-Free Church guy here.

WB: Okay, so you'd say as far as you'd know—

VJ: They were all, were all Christians.

WB: —they were all Christians? (speaking at the same time)

VJ: Yeah—

WB: Okay.

VJ: Us guys all had to take turns preaching, for example, in the morning chapels, and stuff like that.

WB: Oh really—

VJ: We had visiting smart guys but everybody—a lot of us cut our teeth on preaching in those days.

WB: Um-hmm. So how extensive, like, did your turn have to be then?

VJ: Oh I—then twice a year is about it, by the time the professors all preached and we'd get, the—some of the local pastors would come in, the United Church guy from Milner, you know, came and, um, you know people that like.

WB: Hmm. Was there anything like community standards?

VJ: Unh-uh—

WB: That's what we have—

VJ: Nothing formalized. Um--It's just assumed that we would behave in an ethical and moral manner, I think, I don't remember anything written down anyways. Dress code, or, you know, you could go out with members of the opposite sex, it, it wasn't closely monitored; we had a Dean of Students, like, uh, Leland Asa was the dean, but, you know, people went out on dates and stuff like that pretty liberally if I recall. But then I lived off campus so there was nobody restricting my dating life.

WB: Right.

VJ: And of course same sex relationships hadn't become popular yet, so it--

WB: Um-hmm. (speaking at the same time; laughs)

VJ: --(unintelligible) that type of issue. (laughs)

WB: Um, well, were there specific ways in which the students contributed to missionary orientated events or projects?

VJ: Not that I recall, no. It wasn't a missions oriented-- they were really emphasizing the secular side of it, like, you know, [15:00] we--they were really looking for credibility in the academic community, 'cause there was no credibility. I don't know if this is-- where to mention it, but they monitored us when we left very closely (shuffling sound) because, uh--

TH: Who was 'they'?

VJ: --the uh, the administration, because uh-- and they repeated this ov--when I would run into, uh, Dr. Hanson in latter years (shuffling sound) um, because the deal with the, with the University, University of B.C. which was the only school that I think we articulated with in Canada at the time. There weren't--like of course SFU hadn't been invented yet, and Victoria was across the big water, so I don't remember it coming up in discussion. But UBC said, We will accept your students, uh, but we will only give them credit once they are successful here, before their transcripts are--become (thudding noise) transcripts.

WB: Um-hmm.

VJ: So we left here with transcripts (thudding noise) that were in, in effect worthless. None transferable other than to Trinity in Chicago--like, you know, (thudding noise) which is a Free Church seminary.

WB: Pre-Church-- (speaking at the same time)

VJ: So, uh, they kept tabs on us, you know we'd get a phone call, How are things going with your studies? You passing everything? What kind of grades are you getting? You know that kind of thing. So they were quite nervous about the first student body achieving academic, you know, uh, credibility.

WB: So would you say it was a good adjustment going to UBC afterwards?

VJ: Yeah, it was cinchy. We had so much individual attention, and we had so much self-confidence that, uh, it was a shock, you know, I went from a sociology class of half a dozen to history classes of five hundred, Shakespeare classes of six hundred, stuff like that. Huge lecture halls, no contact with the professors. Maybe once a year you might, you know, get an interview with the prof to—

WB: Um-hmm. (speaking at the same time)

VJ: —help you with an essay. But here it was quite intimate and (takes a breath), and we worked together. So for me it wasn't a big deal. I of course, I was mostly doing stuff I was already good at, like, because I was doing History and English, and uh, I already could write well. I had excellent um, English teachers in high school, I knew how to write and that was, that was key to everything. So the alienation was a bit weird you know, like, uh, I went there and I didn't know anybody, whereas I had a gang of people here. Well, there were fourteen thousand students there at the time, now it's more than double that. So you go from seventeen to fourteen thousand it's, it's a shock to the system that way, but—

WB: Um-hmm.

VJ: —but I never found, never struggled with the academics there—and I was never a first class student, I mean I was just an indifferent second class average type student.

WB: So then I would guess they had no problems honouring your transcript afterwards?

VJ: No, no. I never had any problems. My second—once I got my second year, those transcripts became attached to my UBC, UBC transcripts. There weren't very many of us went to UBC from that group uh, myself and Ken Wilson are the only ones that ended up there. [Note from archivist: David Moore also transferred to UBC] The rest went to the States or dropped out entirely. They weren't an academic group. (shuffling sound) A lot of these people were—you had a question about part-timers (thudding noise) and non academics later—

WB: Um-hmm.

[At this point, VJ requested that the tape be paused so he could speak off-record about the academic qualifications of some of his classmates]

VJ: —just not that people were indifferent students, you know. (laughs) Yeah, so I keep in contact with him and with his, his wife.

TH: Can you mention that again—his name?

VJ: Uh, Ken Wilson. And he taught Acting and English in Nelson [British Columbia] his entire career and retired about five years ago, and his wife continues to teach, and she's a big union boss. I think she attended here, but I'm not sure in subsequent years. And the only other one is

um, Gloria Goertz. Uh, we maintained a relationship with her and her husband, he worked for me when I was in log house construction, for example, and we've stayed sort of in touch off and on, and that's about it I guess.

WB: Okay, well moving on, do you mind giving a sense of your life since having left Trinity?

VJ: Uh, like what I did, basically?

WB: Uh, yeah, how you took your education and—

VJ: Well, yeah, it's a—I became a teacher, I taught elementary school, um, after my second year, 'cause that's what you could do those days, you could take a year (thudding noise) plus a year of teacher training, and the world was your oyster, 'cause I was born at the end of the war, 1944, and so there weren't very many of us, and education was just becoming affordable for working class people, like-- I came from (thudding noise) a relatively poor family and so, uh government loans and that type of thing were just instituted in '62, '63, probably '63 and uh-- which is when I started at UBC. So, but I immediately became a teacher, got married within a year of becoming a teacher and then quit, taught on an army base, uh, and then I quit, and went back and did some more education, then I quit again. And then I taught in a one room school up north out of Prince George, [British Columbia] grades one [20:00] through seven in an isolated little community. Then I came back and finished my degree and then I taught junior high for six or eight years, taught English and History there, Social Studies, and I started to teach Acting there as well. Then I packed it in and I went into log house construction for um, oh what, about five years I guess, and, uh, finished up being the cheap instructor at a log building school up in the Prince George area, and I came back and took a year off to write a book, and uh, I brought the book with me actually—

TH: Alright. (speaking at the same time)

VJ: —for Sylvia for the archives. I took a year off to, to write a book on log house construction. It's sort of a basically (flipping of pages) a how-to manual.

WB: Um-hmm.

VJ: Um, and this is the most recent edition. It's only a couple of months old, it's, this fourth edition. So I took a year off to write the book, um, moved onto a farm, a 160 acre farm in Columbia Valley, that I rented for a cheap place to be while writing the book and looking after cattle there for my father-in-law, who rented the land for his farming operation in the Columbia Valley. Then, um, while I was casting around to start uh, log building again, I got offered a job as head of the English department at a junior high in, in Chilliwack area, Rosedale [British Columbia]. Um, because the teacher had transferred, it was mid August and they wanted somebody right away and they didn't want to go through a big interviewing process. So I taught English there for six months and then I moved into a, a forestry program, and I taught forestry for ten years which, which was a grade eleven and twelve program. A semester in the bush which I and my partner did, and then the kids came in for a semester for the academics. So I did that for quite a few years, for about ten. And then I left. They cancelled that program, as the

logging went kind of crazy in the province for awhile, and then I went back to teaching. I taught senior high Acting for about four years and then I taught bonehead English for the last eight years of my career, while-- I was ranching by then, so I, uh, worked every other day, so I'd teach a day and then I would uh, raise cattle the other day, and trades English, which is basically Communications. You guys, you guys get educated in British Columbia? Both of you? Are you from—

WB: Uh, Yep— (speaking at the same time; unintelligible)

JV: You are, so you know about Communications 12, all those bonehead subjects. 'Cause I did that for awhile—

WB: Yeah, Okay. (speaking at the same time)

VJ: Yeah, and then I've been basically retired and, uh renovating for the last five years. I've been renovating houses, and building barns and fire halls and stuff like that.

WB: Wow, so it's, uh, sounds like you've had quite a few experiences, and then-- just a question about tying it back to Trinity—

VJ: Um-hmm.

WB: —do you feel like that has had a lasting impression?

VJ: No, not one year. I was only there for a year, it was like Bible camp. Um, it was a unique experience, um, it was, uh, it was—the Evangelical Free Church very, very much impacted Trinity in those days, I don't know if it does anymore, and it's a, it's a narrower brand of uh, Evangelicalism than I'm used to as a Mennonite. Um, so I wouldn't say it impacted me, you know particularly, other than I remember it fondly as this, this kind of wonderful experience of hanging out and being treated well and loved to pieces and going on deputation all over the States as a choir, you—flogging the school, and, and working on campus. Ken Wilson and I both worked on campus in maintenance so we, we drove the dump truck around and fixed stuff and—

WB: Uh-hmm.

VJ: —that kind of thing. But yeah I wasn't here long enough for the academics of it to particular—I mean I remember stuff from all of my, my, you know the courses I took, I uh, the sociology is still kind of at my fingertips. When sociological scenarios arise to talk about, I can, I can get through a discussion of counseling, psychotherapy because, you know, because I have that course in psychology. I have a few more of them at UBC as well as electives, but—but there, you know, so there was that—It was kind of like those people going off to those imitation Bible schools in Europe, like the Capernwray schools, you know, it's this-- You got to go off to Capernwray, there's not much theology worth mentioning there, but you have a good time, it's a safe place to be if you're going to spend that year in Europe. So it was good, or like going to Bible school, it was a good safe place to meet other kids, and uh—

WB: Right. Um, did I understand correctly that you mentioned you went on choir trip tours?

VJ: Um-hmm. Benno Friesen was the choir director—

WB: Okay. (speaking at the same time)

VJ: —and his wife, Marge was the pianist, yeah.

WB: Could you give a sense, describe what, um, the choir was like?

VJ: Well, it wasn't very good because—There were some really good singers and musicians, like my wife is a very accomplished singer/musician. George Ney, Dwight Enarson, Morris Johnson, and Dale Winder, the president guy here [indicating photo of Student Body President Dale Winder in the 1962 Pillar yearbook], um, were, you know, good. They were a quartet. I sang base (chuckles), obviously. And yeah, so it wasn't bad, and Benno wasn't a musician either, um, but he was the closest thing to somebody who could kind of lead a choir, but he leaned very heavily on his wife. And so he, like I said, being a ethnic Mennonite, Benno Freisen, all Mennonites can sing, all Mennonites [25:00] of his age group have been in a choir, it's compulsory, you know, it's the only way-- choirs were youth groups. Like, there was no youth group in the early Mennonite days in Canada or in Russia, so when you got old enough, thirteen or fourteen, you went to choir practice, 'cause that's where the, that's where the young people were. So he will have had that experience, being raised in that world many many years ago. Yeah, it, it wasn't bad. Like I said, the quartets, the quartet and the trio, the girls' trio were quite good.

WB: Okay, well the way you mentioned it just as uh a good experience, as a safe place—

VJ: Um-hmm. (speaking at the same time)

WB: —would you make the choice all over again if you had to do it?

VJ: Oh, gee. You make choices when you're young you know. I don't think so. Um—you know, I think that a person should get thrown into the secular academic world first and, uh, and then maybe do seminary or something or maybe do graduate work in, in academics. I'm quite involved with clergy types. I hire clergy, fire them in my position as chairman of the board at the church that I attend, and I find the best ones are the ones that have, uh-- lived in that—the academic world, not the protected world of, uh, cradle to the grave. I mean, I know people who went to the MEI [Mennonite Educational Institute, Abbotsford, British Columbia] for high school, then to Columbia Bible College for Bible school and then to our seminary or here to ACTS, never having set foot in a secular school and, and their experience is far too narrow. I tried to get my son to come, he would have gotten a scholarship because of his marks and stuff like that, but he, um, you know, he didn't come. Um, I would have liked him to come, because by then of course, the standard is much higher here to—

WB: Okay. (speaking at the same time)

VJ: I think, I think that's the thing—I would choose it now in terms of academic excellence; not likely the um—the theological underpinnings wouldn't be as important to me. I think it's because I remember one professor in the philosophy department here, who was fired um, from Trinity, who's an excellent philosophy prof. And she was fired just because she couldn't, she couldn't toe that line and uh, a Dean of Students who was a good friend of mine as well got basically turfed because he wasn't rigid enough in his Evangelicalism I guess. In philosophy how can you be, you have to go all over the place with it.

WB: Um-hmm.

VJ: And she—those two people didn't survive and (laughs) that always has given me some disquiet. The school's a bit more conservative, you know, than, than I would really choose. But that's from a vantage point of an age where I'm secure in my faith, and you know, that kind of thing. With a young person-- I don't know if I would have done it again.

WB: Um, well you mentioned your wife Claudia Huesken—

VJ: Claudia, um-hmm. (speaking at the same time)

WB: —was also attending that first year. Um, since we don't have the opportunity to interview her, could you give, uh, could you mention maybe how she had experienced that first time?

VJ: Yeah, um—yeah, I guess so. Uh, well for her it was—because it was, it was all a buzz in her house for years previous to Trinity happening, you know. Her Dad was a wheeler dealer, mover shaker for it, so it was just logical that she would go where her father had been involved. Well they had lots of money, so, so finances weren't a problem. She didn't have to work or anything like that. Her father was easily able to pay all that stuff. So for her it was just kind of logical and she, she was raised in the Evangelical Free Church, besides, and it made sense that, you know, that she would go here. So—

WB: All right, before we end is there anything else you would say of your time at Trinity that might be important?

VJ: You know, I don't know, I think we have probably have covered everything. I, uh, the teaching was good and the stuff has stayed with me, and I don't know if that's a function of the teaching or just the way my brain works, that I tend—I tend to remember the stuff that I, that I get myself educated in. I used to recite most of the poetry in Shakespeare I ever learned, so—

WB: Um-hmm.

VJ: —part of it was a function of the brain, but I certainly didn't struggle academically thereafter. And there was—there was one thing, I would say the single most important I learned—thing that I learned here can be encapsulated into what has become my life's motto since Trinity disposed of this motto. And um, some years ago, uh, Trinity's motto used to be: "If Christ is Lord, nothing is secular." [Note from archivist: Mr. Janzen is quoting Trinity's first

President, Calvin Hanson.] Which means that you (shuffling sound) could—you could read this book on building and you should find redemption in there somewhere. Um, (laughs) uh, or you know that’s stretching it a bit. But take the field of English literature for example, where people are writing poetry and stuff that are soul kinds of things, you will find, uh—because, ‘cause it is a creative piece of work, you can hear the voice of God in secular literature, in secular history, in secular studies. And uh, and I carried that with me through my UBC years. [30:00] And I found it, it didn’t matter what I studied, whoever I was reading, I could find that glimmer and I think it taught me to start to think about everything that’s on those bookshelves can, eh, uh—I don’t go to Christian bookstores for example, because, well partly because Christian books are so badly written that the, uh, the literature offends me. You know, C.S. Lewis is about the best of them, and he’s not a great literary giant either, he’s a great thinker; and so it has helped me in my life in reading novels, in reading history, and studying other stuff—Shakespeare particularly—to hear the voice of God in surprising places, which of course is—is something that Trinity, in spite of its—what I consider its Evangelical narrowness—managed to at least embrace that concept. And uh, I was here speaking at Pioneer Days. I got to preach in chapel here a few years ago. Neil Snider phoned me up and said—you know, us old timers are thin on the ground, you know (laughs)—and they were doing this Pioneer Days thing and they wanted a former student to come and address the chapel and we had a little chat beforehand and I noticed that the motto had changed. Like, what is the motto? Do you guys know what the motto at the school is? They probably have a mission statement now right?

WB: Yeah (speaking at once)

TH: Yeah, it’s a statement (All three speaking)

VJ: Yeah, Anyway, well that motto is gone. I said, “What did you do with that motto?” He says, “Well, you know, we had to move with the times—it’s one of our mottos.” I said, “No it isn’t.” I said, “Henceforth, it’s my motto. I’ve always wanted to own that motto, now it’s mine,” (laughs) you know? Now I—and that’s a fairly significant thing, I think, to come out of your university training with all—yeah, all those sk— (skills).

[End of tape. WB and TH thanked VJ for his time off air.]

[31:32]

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