


1972

Interview with Anna Jeanne Moore Price

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Recommended Citation

Harrell, David Jr., "Interview with Anna Jeanne Moore Price" (1972). *Oral Interviews Collection*. 2.
<https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/interviews/2>

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DR. DAVID HARRELL INTERVIEWS ANNA JEANNE MOORE PRICE
7/4/72

PRICE: We went on missionary travels with T. L. Osborne, and I edited his magazine at the time, and Don worked as his assistant. And eventually, we moved to Thailand, and Don became ill there and died, seven years ago. I thought at the time that the mission field was my place, and I really loved it. But there requested that I and the children come home. We had to cross the Mekong every ten weeks and go into Laos because we were unable to get a permanent visa (which is difficult in Thailand) and the American embassy did not want to be responsible for me and the children going out into Laos and coming back, because it's very troubled.

So we came back here to stay with Daddy, to work here, and that is the reason I said that I would really draw from my memory...7 years I've been right here.

HARRELL: I was going to tell you that my opening chapter on Branham, which is the opening of the second chapter...

PRICE: Oh, is it?

HARRELL: I, very early in the chapter, quote something that you wrote in The Voice of Healing about when you first met him, how he had driven up in a Ford car...

PRICE: In his little old car? Oh, really...

HARRELL: I quote that from TVOH.

PRICE: What did you do, get a bound volume?

HARRELL: Oral Roberts has a complete set of TVOH. I've worked all the magazines, nearly complete sets.

PRICE: My goodness, you must have been into just stacks of material.

HARRELL: Oh, I'm sure I've been into this room full.

PRICE: How long have you been on this one subject?

HARRELL: Two years.

PRICE: Is that right? Well, you should have come to us first!

HARRELL: Well, you know, you kind of have to get around as you get there, and you all have been so handy that I keep putting it off. I've gotten a lot of the harder people, but... and then, really, I got to the point where I wanted to write up what I had, and then go and find out what I wanted to know.

PRICE: I'm dying to see your manuscript, if you've been on this two years and you've talked with all these different people.

HARRELL: Yes, I've talked to a lot of people. I've talked to a lot of the young ones, too. You were just a girl, I guess, back when this started. A pretty young girl.

PRICE: Yes, I was in college here in [?] when all of a sudden William Branham just appeared on the scene. Daddy took...well, he made a phone call to Gordon Lindsay out on the West coast, because he had known Gordon as a young man and knew him to be a prolific writer and interested in that type of thing, and journalism. He was a pastor at the time, and he had him to come and be in some of William Branham's meetings, and just immediately he saw such a beautiful thing developing. It was just so exciting.

At my house (at Daddy's house, of course I was just a college girl) we just started this little magazine. I just seemed imminent at the time that something be printed about William Branham and his ministry. I thought that we were just going to do one little issue, and, no need to drop out of school, but just in a few days it took all of my time, because everybody was grabbing for it. I think we printed, maybe 10,000 of that first issue we printed, and then all of a sudden our little house was swamped with requests for this magazine, and we kept reprinting that first issue... anyway, I was 19 and was in college.

HARRELL: And you did, for a good while, a good bit of the office, editing work an everything.

PRICE: Oh yes, for four years, until I married Don. And then, of course, we went on abroad then with his ministry, because he was an evangelist.

At the time that I married, the offices were moved to Dallas, because it had grown to such an extent that we couldn't even get the printing done here, locally. But for four years that was my duty, and I never did get back and finish college.

HARRELL: Now, of course I have a lot of reasons why all of this started, but I wondered, do you ever think about it? Other than, I guess everybody feels that it was a divine kind of thing that it started. Can you account for why the big meetings all of sudden began?

PRICE: Well, the big meetings were simply a reaction to something that the Lord had done for this one man. If you could have seen how, just all of a sudden, people... there were just people, people, people following him, and of course, to me, I related it to the days of Christ and how they must have followed Christ. Because there was just a magic about this little man. 'Of course, now I can look back on it in... what is it, retrogression, you're looking backward, I can see that, probably he wasn't nearly as supernatural as it seemed to us, because later I came to know him just as a friend, a very human person. But, I think God must have invested in him this marvelous formula in order to call attention to Himself, to God, to call attention to God. Because that's what it did, it caused people. all of a sudden, to be so God-conscious. I don't remember what I wrote, exactly, but I might have mentioned how what, whereas we had lived in such a sense-bound existence of getting a new outfit for Sunday and just keeping up with the materialistic world. All of a sudden, it seems like that just collapsed, that world, and we were in a ... well, to me, it was just like transferring back to the days of Christ. I compared myself to a follower like Mary or Martha that was just so intrigued by the presence of God with this man that all other things just

fell aside. You just couldn't even think about them. And of course, for a 19 or 20 year old girl (and I guess that's the most glamorous of ages, you know), it was something. And all my friends were the same way, all my girlfriends. They quit jobs, they left college, they just sort of 'let go' of life as it was in order to take advantage of this beautiful atmosphere that you could get into in these meetings.

HARRELL: Did you go to some of the campaigns, like in other places, with your father?

PRICE: Yes, in fact...of course as it developed, after we started the magazine, that kept me there at the office, because all of a sudden I was... I had 30 employees in an old warehouse, with offices set up with address-o-graph machines and all the machinery (of course we didn't do our own printing), but, I mean, just the necessary offices all of a sudden had me tied down. But before we started the magazine, we traveled a good deal with William Branham, because he was a person that was so...so unprofessional, he just almost needed to be guided wherever he went.

HARRELL: Yes, I got that picture. Did you know any of the...now, a lot of other fellows, then, came after Branham. Did you know any of the others pretty well?

PRICE: Oh yes, I knew them all, because of, I don't know if you had a chance to look through many issues of TVOH, but there for four years (as I was editor) there were, oh, dozens and dozens of ministers who all of a sudden surfaced. And, naturally, I was writing up their meetings and helping them with their own books.

HARRELL: What would they do? Would they send you, just send you the information, kind of, and you'd have to write it up, reports on their meetings.

PRICE: Yes, I remember the first page I got in from T.L. Osborne. He was just a young man that wore a... I called it a barber's jacket, and his wife wore a little nurse's dress. They were such a unique little couple that all of a sudden were just going everywhere, having the most marvelous things happen. I'd never heard of him, but I remember one day this double-page spread came in from him, and it was the neatest I'd ever received from anybody. It reflected his personality, which I later learned to know. But just so factual, all these miracles and things that had happened, just very neatly written up.

Of course, some of the evangelists would send in big spreads that, you could tell it was a big effort to make themselves look spectacular...

HARRELL: Yeah, that's right.

PRICE: And then I had the tendency to play all that down and try to whittle it down to basics, because I had this thing about exaggerating, and it all sounded so exaggerated.

HARRELL: Well, that's been one of the problems in the movement, hasn't it?

You remember, I'm sure you've read, though I guess you were in Thailand when Montgomery published his articles in Mr. Coe's "Christian Challenge," criticizing... this was in the 60s. That was the first, that was one of the issues I had to look

at, was the internal criticism. And one of the internal criticisms was the exaggeration that obviously.... Everybody wanted to be the biggest.

PRICE: And then too, there was a real, pure motivation there with some of them. They wanted their Lord to be so magnified that in order to do so they wanted to magnify His work. But then, in turn, that involved a person, and it promote a person at the same time, or at least it seemed that it did. But I think that more than anybody, T.L. Osborne was just so very modest and basic, and he didn't want any more said than just exactly what was done. It was just already peeled done to nothing, whereas some of the reports would come in just so blown up.

There was one man named O.L.Jaggers...

HARRELL: I know him.

PRICE: Oh, do you? Have you...?

HARRELL: Well, I asked your dad about his work. No, I've not met him.

PRICE: Well, in recent years, say the last 10 or 15 years, I've not met him or read anything about him. I've only heard that he has some kind of 'world church' out in California. What sounds like him, that he would have the 'world church.' The biggest, you know.

HARRELL: I've got some of his claims in it, about the world church, that are fantastic.

PRICE: That's one, now I don't know how far this is going and I probably shouldn't even mention it...

HARRELL: No, that's all right. I already have that nailed down anyhow.

PRICE: His reports would come in and I finally told Gordon Lindsay, I said, "I'm sorry, but I just can't write up Jaggers' reports. If you want them in the magazine, somebody else will have to do it. I just feel that I'm falsifying to write what he sends in.

HARRELL: Lindsay told me a couple of stories about it, too. He told me a story about Jaggers claiming to be on television, when he was at The Voice of Healing convention. Claimed that he was supernaturally on television.

PRICE: Oh yes, I was there. I remember. He had a charisma about him...

HARRELL: Well, he was a great preacher, I understand.

PRICE: He was, and a singer and a musician. And of course, I'm sure just a real magnetic person. Although, personally, I was never taken by him, because there was just something about his effort to be the most spectacular. And some of these men were so humble and so real and so sweet. But, of course...

HARRELL: Branham, I guess, had the inside on that. Everybody thought that Branham was such a humble, meek man.

PRICE: Well, that was the main impression that people got, and that's the main feeling that they got, that here was humility personified. He was so humble. And, of course, as I got to know him better I realized that (I don't know how to put this) he was very, very human, and that he had his temptations towards taking advantage of all this adulation too. And I really feel that in the later years of his life that got to him.

HARRELL: Yeah, I talked with your dad about that some, too. I believe it did, too. Now, he... of course, the whole movement began to fragment about '54, '55, '56. By '58, at any rate, the days of the big auditorium meetings and the tent revivals had come on hard times, for a lot of different reasons. I mean, the churches had backed off, the competition had become so fierce, there were obvious problems of individual fraud, and so forth, that had gotten involved in there. Also, the doctrinal thing began to come back up, too, didn't it? And Branham, Branham was criticized, one, because the whole 'oneness - trinitarian issue' once again got inserted. And the second place, it seems to me that maybe his personal ambition led him to accept some strange teachings, didn't it?

PRICE: Well, you have a pretty good insight, then, on what really developed, I guess. Now, by that time, we were out of the country and I wasn't with him - wasn't even around - during the last two years of his life. But, from what I hear, he became more extreme and more extreme in his preaching on some, some real controversial issues and lines.

HARRELL: Well now, he pretty clearly had this...believed this 'Elijah' teaching about himself, didn't he, that he was Elijah?

PRICE: Now, I never got that impression. I got the impression that he said he came in the spirit of Elijah, with the anointing or the mantle of Elijah upon him. But the writings that people have out about him now, and they say some of his tapes, that he seems to insert that...

HARRELL: Well, it seems to me, some of the things that I've read, that they've sent me.

PRICE: But you know, I have really (the last two or three years) just fought off an impulse (or it may be a leading, I don't know) to write about William Branham, the man as I knew him. And the reason, I guess, that I don't (of course, among other things I'm just so busy I'm a year behind in everything now), but there are people that I believe would just about fight me if I put in writing my knowledge of William Branham as a person. Of course, it would be not only mine, but mine and Daddy's together.

HARRELL: Yeah, right.

PRICE: Because I remember the last time I ever saw him alive. We were getting ready to go to Thailand, and , of course nobody ever dreamed what the developments would be that when we would get back he would be gone and Don would be gone. But I remember that I had gone to Birmingham (incidentally, that's where we were). We were in Dallas at the time, we were living in Dallas, and Don, my husband, was managing the printing plant there, for a time. And someone in William Branham's party called and just insisted that I write his books. All of a sudden, then said that there must be books put out of his sermons, and I just didn't have the time. I had two little babies, and didn't feel

that I could take it on, and yet they were so insistent (this was Pearry Green).

HARRELL: Now Pearry Green, was this his later manager?

PRICE: He is sort of his successor now.

HARRELL: Does he do the radio? Or, I guess they just play tapes.

PRICE: Just play tapes. But, Pearry Green is the head man of the Branham movement, and he lives out in Tucson.

HARRELL: I tried to contact Billy Paul.

PRICE: You haven't met any of them?

HARRELL: No, I've not. I've had a hard time making connections with them. I've written them and written them.

PRICE: It's just as well, because they are very, very...

HARRELL: I've got a lot of their literature.

PRICE: Oh, have you. Well now, actually, I've never read any, and I was suppose to have written, or put together for publishing, all of this. And that's what they were trying to get me to do at the time. They went ahead and sent me the manuscript, which were his sermons, which had been taped and typed up, and that's what I was doing in Birmingham. I was living in Dallas there, and I was looking at these manuscripts which, absolutely, you could not make heads nor tails of...

HARRELL: That's right.

PRICE: And so I just.... He was going to have a meeting in Birmingham, and so Mother and Daddy and I flew to Birmingham and I took the manuscripts to return to them and tell them that I just couldn't do it. There was just too much to be done to them. And you see, they insisted that they not be changed, that every word that he said....

HARRELL: That's the way that they've printed them.

PRICE: Have they?

HARRELL: Actually, what they've done is break it down into verses, just like the Bible.

PRICE: Oh, I see. Well, I haven't seen...

HARRELL: But, much of it is absolutely incoherent.

PRICE: Well, then they left it like it was. Well, that's what I told them. I couldn't put out something like that, you know, I didn't want to be involved or associated with it. But they said that it had to be just like it came from his mouth, as if it were divine utterances....

HARRELL: That's right. I mean, they've treated it almost as if it's Scripture.

PRICE: My goodness. Well, I cannot imagine, knowing what a shape those manuscripts were in, I can't imagine anyone putting it out. Well, anyway, we went to Birmingham, and Daddy and I went to the motel where Brother Branham was. I just wanted to tell him personally, you know, that I suggest that somebody in his party that could travel with him and be along with him (which he had quite an entourage at the time, just people that had just left home and everything just to go along with him), and I said I couldn't do that, and wouldn't it be better for someone to take on the writing that was right with him because they could, maybe, have access to him everyday and say, "Now Brother Branham, here is sentence that is incomplete. What did you mean to say?"

And I remember how he just sat there so sweetly and humbly, and he said, "Oh, Anna Jeanne and Brother Jack, I don't want to have books. This is the wrong thing. These little sermons that I've preached were... they were for that time, and they're not be preserved." He said, "This is a mistake. I'm not supposed to have books." And he said, "Please, would you just please do this? Would you just loose those manuscripts somewhere. And Brother Jack, you and Anna Jeanne, write a book telling what we believe. Everything is so mixed up. All these crowds of people that are crowding around me, they even have me mixed up."

He said, "They'll ask me something, and I'll start to answer, and they somebody else asks something, and I try to answer that." And he said, "They've taped all of my words, and it's all so mixed up and God doesn't want it." And he said, "Please, write a book like it should be written about me and what I believe, because," he said, "Brother Jack, you and Anna Jeanne know me better than anybody else." And he said, "This is going to cause a big confusion if they put this out in books.

And we didn't know what to do, and we didn't do anything. I just turned the manuscripts back over to them...."

HARRELL: Well, you ought to do it, sometime.

PRICE: But you see, the people, the followers now, they wouldn't accept it, and he's not here to vindicate my words, you see. We didn't tape all that. But he even went further and he said, he told us right there in that little room about some of the people that were surrounding him and how wrong they were. He said, "I've even had visions of the hearts of some of them, and," he said, "they're so black." And he said, "They're the ones that are promoting this ministry, and they're the ones that are wanting these books out." And he said, "Oh, if you don't do something, it's going to be a big mess."

And so that's my last words with him. That the last time I ever saw him.

HARRELL: I think he probably saw what was coming, all right. But now, what I would say is: It seems to me that if he had a problem, it is that he was not exempt from this weakness of so many of them. And in fact, he may have been subject to it more than anybody else, of wanting to be unique and different. And I'd be interested in your reaction to that. But it seems to me that in a lot of ways that Branham felt at each turn that.... well, if you put it in a Spiritual

way, I'd think that he started this thing, and then others came along and kinda...the momentum went to others, and then he was looking for something else that would make him unique.

PRICE: That is a very real possibility, and actually I saw that development all along, because as we added other ministers and publicized them in this magazine....

HARRELL: Right...

PRICE: He reacted very strong to that, and he wanted no part of it, then.

HARRELL: I'm sure.

PRICE: Because he felt that he was one that was definitely set apart and in a class by himself - which he probably was. Now, I think that everybody really recognized that...

HARRELL: Well, I... there's a very strong feeling of that, and yet...

PRICE: Because I never saw anybody like him.

HARRELL: Yeah, I think a lot of people would say that. And yet the crowds soon went to other people maybe more than they did to him. Well, maybe it was three or four years before that happened, but I mean, pretty soon.... And other people were just more skillful organizers than that.

PRICE: Probably so, and then too, there's this thing that, you know, God does not want glory to go to man anyway. And then, God's Word, the Bible, is much important than the word of any one individual, and so it would only seem right that it should be disseminated among many rather than all just invested into one person. One person can't get to everybody anyway, and whereas other of these men did not have the same - I keep using the word 'magic' which isn't quite right - charisma or he had something....

HARRELL: And it was different. Now some of the others were more showman...

PRICE: Oh definitely, and much better organized.

HARRELL: Right, right, but he had a...

PRICE: And then, also, they had results, because many of them got so inspired in his meetings...now this is T.L. Osborne's testimony, you know, that he went to a meeting where William Branham was ministering. And what happened to him, as he sat there in that meeting, was eventually just to thrust him out to the whole world. It was an inspiration that he received there. But his inspiration in this regard - not to be so awed by the man, himself, but he was drawn to the truth of the Bible, the truth in God's Word. He began to see the ministry of Jesus in a way that he had never seen it before, and he began to be inspired to accept the Lord's words that...that 'greater works than these shall ye do,' and he began to feel that was a responsibility of all believers to pray for the sick, cast out devils, to go to all the world, and he did this. And yet, he claimed no gift. I heard T.L. Osborne so many times say, "If I have a gift of the spirit, I don't know it." He claimed no gifts, he just claimed a faith in that

written Word. And I have sat in Japan and Thailand, and I can't remember the other countries that we were in, but in each cast the theme was the same. This one man standing up there before all.....

- 2nd side of tape -

...that seems to be like it should be. Whereas William Branham had all these unique and different experiences, that were so dramatic, you know. And, of course, that had its place. That was real, real beautiful...

HARRELL: But it wore thin, after that.

PRICE: Yes, an it took away from the beauty of the Bible itself. Whereas the ministry of some of these other men was pointing straight to that New Testament, you know, Gospels, what happened in the book of Acts. So, William Branham was, I'm sure, sent as a forerunner of the Second Coming of Christ. I don't know how familiar you are with some of those 'vocal' gifts of the spirit - the gifts of prophesy and of tongues and interpretation. In city after, San Antonio, Tulsa, Shreveport and Dallas and Miami and other cities as well, we would be in meetings (this is early in Brother Branham's ministry, when we first met him) and all of a sudden someone would burst forth with a message in tongues, or a prophesy, and the interpretation would be the same as one that came in the last meeting, in some other city. And I noted how coincidental that was, you know, and the these of the message was always the same: "As I sent John the Baptist as a forerunner of my first coming, so I'm sending this man, with the anointing of John the Baptist, with the spirit of John the Baptist, as a forerunner of my second coming."

I still believe that was valid. With all that has happened, I believe that's what he was sent to do.