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Occupation: Director of non-profit agency

INTERVIEWER: When did you first hear about the Three Mile Island incident?

NARRATOR: Probably the same day everybody else did, Martha, and I can't honestly remember what the date was. It just was, you know, boom, here it was in the paper, on the radio, TV. So it was about the same time as everybody, I think. Same time the public heard, you know?

INT: So do you remember if it was the end of the week?

NAR: Martha, I honestly can't recall.

INT: Okay.

NAR: I truly can't. I know, boom, every so often it was in the news and that's all we heard.

INT: Did you know the reactor was there before the incident?

NAR: Yes. We moved here from Coshocton, Ohio, and having passed them on the Turnpike, commented on them several times, never thought much about it truly. I knew they were there, yes.

INT: How far is TMI from us?

NAR: Oh I think we're in the area of twenty-some miles. That's a close guess.

INT: Going back to when you first heard about it, what did you think about then?

NAR: Truly, I'm trying to, let me think for just a minute... My first response was – human. *[Laughs.]* You know, man-made mistakes, we make mistakes. I really didn't think much about it because I didn't fully understand what it was all about. I guess my first reaction was, the press maybe is off on another wild tangent again, you know. Sometimes we get such a distorted picture of things simply because somebody wants to make a name for themselves in the news. I guess maybe that's sort of a cold, hard point of view, but I think so many I we get such a distorted picture of things. I really didn't know, I guess I wanted to sit and wait a minute and find out if it was really true. Are we in real danger or was there really a problem? But the first thought that came to my mind was, it's just another human mistake. We're prone to make errors, and it just happened.

INT: Were you very concerned about it?

NAR: To be truly honest with you, no. *[Laughs.]* I really wasn't. I'm not a person to panic, I sit back and watch what's happening. I know we live in danger; you know, I could fall in the bathtub and kill myself. I narrowly – you know, somebody misses me driving down the highway, I could be just as dead that way as by any accident. But I really wasn't that much concerned. I was in a sense of awe and amazement that others were so, you know... flustered by the whole thing, panic, panic, panic, that's all you heard. I just, I really couldn't put it all together. I'm not a person to panic. If there was a need, say, for instance to house people here, we offered that. And if that was an emergency need we were willing to do it, because the Army is based upon offering help to people if there's a need. Not being that close to TMI, we felt that if there was something we could do, we would do it. Personally being afraid, no. No.

INT: Were you ever afraid?

NAR: No. Of course you have to consider who you are interviewing, you know, as a Christian, I really don't get that worried about life or death, because as far as I'm concerned, I'm prepared to meet God and face God no matter what vehicle transports me there. I mean, that's not a silly approach. That's my basic belief, and... not necessarily quoting Scripture but the apostle Paul said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, I guess it's my faith, I'm saying. Really didn't call me to any kind of fear. I was still trying to figure the thing out, but I wasn't really afraid personally. We didn't panic and I never – I don't think I gave a second thought to moving anybody away, my family.

INT: Even though you didn't panic, did you ever think it became a serious situation?

NAR: Let me think for a moment here. Don't want to wear out your tape. I think it was serious... Nobody can be, you know, everybody can't be wrong and everybody can't be right. There's a lot of ilidity [?] to the problem. And too many people were concerned about this for me to say it's nothing serious. When you asked me was I afraid, I'm talking from a personal standpoint. Here again from a personal standpoint, I think there was a lot of things to be concerned about. We're concerned about people, we're concerned about life, we only have on life to live, let's protect it, let's take care of it. I'm concerned that we could work this thing out. Nuclear energy, I think is a great thing, I think this country has always advanced by the hard way, the way of the mistake, the way of the human error. It's like in a ball game, you know, if a fellow hits two home-runs he's a hero, if he strikes out then everybody starts to boo him. I think it's very unfair. It's like when some people look to the space program, they thought it was great until the three astronauts were burned alive in that capsule. Then everybody said, well we shouldn't be tampering with this. You know, and then we say about TMI, well we have no right to be involved in nuclear energy. You know, it's okay, we cry wolf as soon as something goes wrong. I think we're concerned to find out the answer, I think I'm concerned to see that it works. You know, I'd like to feel that this is a great thing that could benefit mankind. Vaccines, people have taken them and have died to prove that in the final analysis it will work. And I think experimentation, you know – knowledge,

experimentation, knowledge, experimentation; it keeps going until we can perfect something. To the best of man's ability.

INT: So now we're really learning by our mistakes?

NAR: I think so. It's a shame that we have to come down so hard, and we have so many radical groups – who make everybody else look stupid. And these people are geniuses to be able to conceive this, I don't have that kind of ability. They might not be able to understand the Bible, and certain areas of social work that I do. But I give them credit and pray for them that they come up with the right answers. Because I think there's a lot of good and a lot of benefit to mankind. Let's face it, God gave us the ability and God put all this there, for us to discover and use and to be sensible in our use of it. My opinion.

INT: When you first heard about it, going back then again, did you seek out more information?

NAR: Well, I really, I read as much as I could, I must confess it didn't really ease all the questions that I had because I really don't understand all this. I did a lot of checking and listening and watching with agencies and groups that were concerned about evacuation because I suppose that was my big concern, if there were people that could be helped, you know, then we would do that on a physical basis. In an educational sense, I really didn't know what to tell people because I didn't fully understand it myself. So I really can't respond too much more in that area.

INT: Did you talk about it with your friends?

NAR: Yes. We... Course, in some of the civic groups that I meet with, it was a point of discussion. Most of it was immediate decision, you know, "his is wrong" or "this is right", you know – "Let's close this down, let's give this guy a break," you know, "we be tampering in this area", or to contrast – it was from one extreme to the other. *[Phone rings.]* It was from one extreme to another. And it really wasn't any real decisive facts that we were talking on, it was simply – just kind of an immediate decision, it was a response, more than it was finally come up with any solution.

INT: How about with your family? Did you discuss it with them?

NAR: Of course the children didn't understand, and they came home saying, "are we going to evacuate," "are we moving out", etc., etc. *[laughing]* I said no we're not. We'll wait and we'll see. The news media at this point, when I said at the beginning you wonder if there really, is it really valid or is it just panic. But I said we would simply wait and see what would happen, that was it. My wife and I of course are so involved here, simply offered service to people. I wasn't about to move to any other location.

INT: So you never had any plan for evacuation, for yourself personally?

NAR: No, if it had, in my mind, my wife and I had talked, if it had gotten to the point where, you know, the federal authorities were saying to us or the state governmental office were saying, “Go, because there is that real danger”, then we would have simply gotten in the car, taken some clothes and gone, you know. Maybe gone out to visit my father in Ohio. If this thing just blows out of proportion, people were talking about going up to Wilkes-Barre, well, I have a brother in-law and sister-in-law in Wilkes-Barre who were in a sense more panicked than we were here. Simply because the local authorities there were telling them things like, you know, “move out”. Now that’s three hours from us, and if we had gone there and they weren’t there it wouldn’t have made too much sense. If we had any plans it would have been simply, probably drive to Ohio. And I would have simply enjoyed the visit.

INT: Do you think you would have come back then, eventually?

NAR: Oh sure. Right. My responsibility with my position here, with, you know, our work, is that I’m really under orders to make sure that I’m here to do a job. So that if there was a need I would be the last one to leave simply because I’m committed to the people. I probably would have sent my wife and the children and stayed here. Personally.

INT: Okay. So you thought the media blew everything out of proportion?

NAR: No, I didn’t *think* that, I wondered at the beginning, I have no proof of that, Martha, I just...

INT: Okay.

NAR: That was my first reaction when I heard this, and it sounded like, oh we hear so many things that, it’s like the magazines that you read and the things that you hear. You know, one’s man’s point of view, is this as big in my mind, is this as big, is it as bad as what they’re making it sound, are the panicking? And according to some of the things I heard on TV it sounded like they wanted everybody to pack up and zoom out of the country. And the same with the radio, and it just didn’t seem to me that we were getting it straight enough. And I thank God because there were some other people who said, you know, hey folks just relax. Take it easy and we’ll give you the facts as they come out. And then you feel a little relaxed. You hear three or four people on the TV saying, it’s live the War of the Worlds with Orson Wells, and that broadcast years ago, he panicked everybody who didn’t get the whole facts. I was simply saying, “Tell us the whole fact,” you know. From one broadcast to the other, you know, one was saying this another was saying this another was saying something else. Here we are listening to all this and being subject to somebody’s point of view without really knowing *[laughs]* the whole story. I’m not condemning the press. I condemn – I *question* a few people, I don’t condemn anyone. I question a few people who like to spread confusion, and I don’t think at this point we need to be over-emotional, I think we need to be calm. Calm.

INT: How did you think about the way the government handled it?

NAR: *[Laughs.]* I honestly don't know how to respond to that, Martha. I think, um... they got in as soon as they could, and I think they're very concerned. I think they'll be in serious trouble if they give us, the American people, the continued feeling that they don't care. I think they were there investigating and trying to find out what was happening, and from all that I heard and what I saw on TV they were there – you know, prompt, and were questioning and trying to find out what the real problem was.

INT: What did you think about the way Metropolitan Edison handled it?

NAR: I really can't say, Martha, I am not up and it and I don't really know.

INT: All right.

NAR: I hope that they were there, you know, trying to resolve everything as everybody else, I just don't know.

INT: Looking back over it, was there anyone you particularly trusted, that you found were reliable more than anyone else?

NAR: Yes, God. *[Laughs.]* I think when there's a problem, the first one I consult is God. And I hope that some of the other folk as well, now that's not to mean that we don't, you know, make some steps of action, I'm not falling on my knees and saying "God help us and we'll wait for you to resolve the problem". First person I consulted was God. I guess I really said, "Lord, You know – You made all these things, You gave us the mind, now help us to find the answer." And I like to feel that if we could put out trust in God, number one – number two, we would use a sensible approach in every area. To developing out potential and to helping us with our mistakes. Secondly I guess I just simply looked to the people at TMI there who were under such heavy pressure. I prayed for them, that they might really resolve the problem as quickly as possible. When in two areas, God and man. And not knowing people directly, and not knowing the Governor and not really having any personal contact with the President, or the Nuclear Commission, I really couldn't be specific to anyone. Just generally those who know, praying for those folk.

INT: Did you feel that the people heading the TMI were in control of the situation?

NAR: Well that's a – you know, they were in control of it before the error, and before mistakes and before problems came up. I guess when a problem you just don't, you know, you just – *[laughs]* the sense of panic is such a pressure thing, in a person's mind. I think so. It's just like when I make a mistake, I think I'm in control, I just have to regulate the mistake. You know, I have to find it and take care of it. I'd hate to have somebody come rushing up to me and call me an idiot or stupid, and all that does is put me under such pressure that I can't respond to what I know I oughtta do anyway. I think so, I'd like to feel that way anyway. Yeah I think so.

INT: Do you think they're in control of it right now?

NAR: If they're not they're working hard at it. I'm going to listen to a man speak at our civic club this next week about TMI, so I'll be interested to hear what he has to say. I think we're all interested in what's happened. I think we're trying to keep up to date and find out where things are.

INT: Okay. Did you have any mental pictures, in your mind of what was going on at TMI?

NAR: Mentally? My wife and I saw that movie, you know, if I'm allowed to mention it, the one about, um... *The China Syndrome*?

INT: Mm-hm. Yeah.

NAR: Interesting – it's [*laughs*], it's just a paradox, you know, to see that and then of course to come to that point where the scientist said, it could destroy a whole state the size of Pennsylvania, which is unbelievable, and of course people in the audience clapped, you kind of sit there and your mouth drops open, you think to yourself, you know, "Wow! It's life," you know – the irony of things. I probably pictured, in my mind, in that control room, men drinking a cup of coffee, taking some aspirin, running around, making phone calls, just about going absolutely crazy, and the sweat just pouring from their brow, and I think to myself, "God help those people," because, you know, it would be like somebody saying to me, "there's a bomb in your building", you know, and we're running around trying to find the thing. And then I see the, *phwoom!*, the whole plant going up in a great big blast, the whole countryside's shaken, and... We're talking about about mental pictures?

INT: Yeah, yeah.

NAR: And I'd see fallout going across the country, I'd see people panicking, running... I remember when I was a little boy, there was a fire in the theater, I went, you know, Cowboy Day every Saturday. The man came down and said, "don't panic", and well everybody panicked. You know, ran out. Couple people were really injured, broken jaws, broken arms, broken legs, that kind of thing. And there wasn't that much of a crowd, and if people simply had been, you know... responsive to his request, they could've walked right out. We went out an exit that was no problem. But people panicked. And I could, you know, in my mind I could see people panicking, you know, cars running off cliffs, children getting stomped, and, and – people panicking. I've been in some places where people have panicked, and people were injured unnecessarily. And those mental pictures were probably the only ones I really had, of the panic, the human reaction to the situation. So I felt to myself, you know, "why panic, why cause..." You know. But I had two pictures, one of those people, under such pressure there... and I really gave them my sympathy, my heartfelt sympathy, because, you know, I wanted them to work the problem out for the benefit of their own error and frustration, and for

the benefit of society. And I could see people on the other hand just causing all kind of grief for themselves. Those were the two things, the mental pictures that I had.

INT: Had you seen *China Syndrome* before or after?

NAR: I saw it after. *[Laughing.]* Probably my reaction to it before was... it could always happen. I like to feel I have an open mind. I'm not looking for disaster. But I know human beings, I know that human – it's like saying, "I don't want to see an accident." And yet we've seen so many unreal accidents from day to day that we say everything's possible. If I had seen *The China Syndrome* before TMI I'd probably... It would never have left an affect on me as it did afterwards. Because... And then of course when they mentioned Pennsylvania, I live right in the center of Pennsylvania, I'm right close to it. I think, you know, "Wow! Here we are!" *[Laughs.]* People clapped, and people laughed, and I thought, you know, "it's not funny!" It's a serious thing. We're right smack in the middle of life with all of its problems, and with all the real heavy realities of life. So it gave me kind of a cold, chilly feeling. And the sad thing about the movie was that, to think that – I felt sorry for the Jack Lemmon, the fellow who played the part of the man who really was trying to be as honorable and as honest about the whole thing... Um... It's like with Watergate, you know, if a man who is really caught up in the thing, and he tried to be honest enough, you know, he was just as guilty as anybody else, and he gets slaughtered. In the midst of any situation I might feel bad in the real TMI situation, for one or two or three who'll get slaughtered. Emotionally, and mentally, and maybe spiritually, because of a mistake. And they really are being honest, who knows? Who of us really will truly know? Who of us will know? And sooner or later, in ten years from now, like all the commissions that come out, we may get something, and we may have a follow up move about TMI. A little more direct. I'm sure there'll be something that'll come out. Or some program on TV, and... and somebody will get crucified. You know? Sadly enough. American people have a way; I think any people have a way of... It's like we're the umpire, you know, we want everything to be just perfect. We're not perfect, but we want everything to be just right for us. Kinda sad.

INT: Yeah.

NAR: I just feel sorry for the people that get hurt, you know. And they really didn't mean it, you know – the guy can do his job. In the movie, the guy was simply trying to do his job, and being totally honest about it. Here again, you know, you're protecting big companies, and you're... some real heavy repercussions. And there's a time when a man just can't keep quiet anymore, you know? If he feels there's something right, that should be brought out to protect the total American people. When radical groups pick up this kind of thing as depicted in the, not necessarily radical, the news media in the movie, you know, they have a right to do that. If there's wrong, I think we need to right the wrong. On the other hand let's not create problems if we can resolve them, and life can go on. Radical Pacifist. *[Laughs; MT laughs too.]*

INT: You mentioned that it reminded you of an incident when you were a boy. Did it remind you of anything else specifically?

NAR: No, not really, I guess just about that human error, the frailty of human mind and spirit, attitude. No, I don't think it reminded me of anything else. Just that one incident really – came to my mind.

INT: Did you think of anything in history?

NAR: *[laughing]* It's just like the yellow fever, I suppose, you know... Man has sacrificed a few of them *[?]* to, to... get the right answer. The whole history of man... like with the space travel, we criticize that, we've made a lot of mistakes... Everything that we do, somebody suffers in order to perfect it, you know? There were people that said, man doesn't need to be sailing, you know, he should stay on land. And so people sink into the depths of the ocean proving that we can do it. And that – it's a benefit, We can't live without ships. We go to the airplane, we can't live without that. Now we say we can't live without a certain amount of space travel. There's something within man that God gave us, to project our thinking, to continue, you know, the scientific mind, to explore, to explore, to create, to create, you know – to succeed in. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it would be the greatest insult to God if we didn't use and to try to develop, simply all the – He's that God of nuclear energy. If we're going to blame anybody I guess we have to blame God. We go back to the beginning. I mean, God created all this, and He put it here for us to use, and he simply wants us to use it wisely, and I guess that's what we're after. And in order to find the right answer, you know – it's like, Thomas Edison, he failed in thousands, twenty thousand experiments, and his philosophy was, at least he found twenty thousand things that will not work. Now, if you call that failure, I call it success. But we're in the, we like to feel we're in the, not the China Syndrome, the success syndrome. If man succeeds, fine, if he fails – he's a bum. And maybe a little bit of that applies to the TMI situation. Because we fail, we feel that we ought not to be in that area. It's easy for the grandstanders in the bleachers to call the shots, and they really are not playing the game. I'm really not qualified to speak for those men of great scientific minds; I think it's terrific what they can do. And I just hope that God gives them the grace, and that they consult God enough to be able get His background and His blessing as well.

INT: Did you think that anything that happened at TMI might have affected your health?

NAR: No, I think that probably drinking a cold drink that has saccharin will affect me worse than TMI. I mean, it causes cancer in rats, and here I am drinking that diet simply to keep my body in shape which it really is, you know – isn't so much, I just don't like a lot of sugar. But sometimes I think we gag at an ant and swallow a camel. *[Laughs; MT laughs.]* I have haven't had any bad effects, and this has been several months, and I don't know of anything that, you know my family's been – you know. There only thing we've notices is the sniffles. *[Both laugh.]* No, Martha, I haven't had any bad effects.

INT: Do you think it might affect you in the future?

NAR: I don't know. Who knows? Who knows. We've got problems with drinking water they tell us; we're having problems with that. We've got all kinda problems with



things that were in the air long before we got into this area. You know. And they've been telling us, for many years, that pollution is going to kill us, and all kinda problems are coming, and hitting us, and will come in the future. And, if anything... this is only one of many. I don't think we can, you know – Here again, if we could pinpoint one problem, we'd blame it on one thing if we could. *[Laughs.]* But we can't; how can we? Cancer has always been with us, call it what you will. Most scientists or doctors who work on this say that everybody has the potential of cancer, it just takes on thing to ignite it within us. It has to be that way, because one many gets a cancer in one area, and another one has some inward cancer, another has a skin cancer, lung cancer... It's just, you know, it's hard to tell. No, I'm really not too concerned about that one way or the other. I've made it to almost 44, I'm really not too concerned about TMI and the affect that it has physically on us. I haven't heard anything or seen any real proof of it yet, you know. If somebody comes out and says to me that definitely I've lost my hair because of TMI, or my teeth are falling out, or this and that, then we'll do some serious thinking. But as far as I know, unless I'm missing some of the information, I haven't heard anything.

INT: Do you think any other aspects of your life were changed?

NAR: No. Nope. Maybe I pray more. That certainly can't hurt, can it? *[Laughs.]*

INT: No.

NAR: No. No, nothing's really changed.

INT: Were you afraid to eat the food or drink the milk form the area?

NAR: No. Martha, here again, I never though a thing about it, truly. I never saw anything which really proved to me that this was going to have adverse affects upon us physically so it never really changed any habits.

INT: So it didn't – all right. Did you picture in your mind any affects of radiation on life around you?

NAR: Well here again, like that picture in my mind of people panicking, and that, you know, the room, the control room of all these people. When somebody says, "what would be the affect of it?", in my mind, there was a picture of everybody losing their hair, their teeth falling out, ahhh... the land being barren, and all the green gone, the water so totally polluted. But that was a flash, you know, just an instant kind of thing, a snap picture, a mental picture, and I thought to myself, "Whoa, get this out of my mind", you know? At this point it was rather silly. And unfounded. But this was that *mental* picture, you know. I had that mental picture when we watched the movie, *The China Syndrome*. Because, you know, the thing I like about movies, and we don't go to the movies that much. Very very seldom. And I suppose I went to that simply because of the TMI thing, okay? That was the only reason. I like the emotional drama, I like to be caught up, it's like – you know, I've acted in plays, and you like to feel that, in being a

minister, a certain amount of drama is part of your preaching. That you like to be caught up in the emotion; you like to get the feeling. It wasn't a real dramatic movie, except for the fact that you were being caught up in the anxiousness of the thing, and during this, and these anxious moments of the frustration of Jack Lemmon, who was the man who was really getting the pressure... a certain amount of pressure, you know, you could feel, and, you know, you were right there with him. All the time, your sympathy was with him. And these mental pictures kept coming and going, as an outcome of that pressure. After the movie was over, we talked about it; I thought to myself, it's kind of silly to be swayed by things that I'm really not sure about. So all these mental pictures are really unfounded. Movies have a way of simply stirring up your emotion, then when you have to think about them, you know... It's like, if we believe all that we see pictured in the movies, it's just like with a flash of the popcorn thing across the movie, *[laughing]*, they're there to affect our thinking, whether it's a secular film or religious film, it's made to affect people's feelings. And that's what we have to realize, and then when you - here again, you sit down rationally, and talk about this and think it out, you know - our mental pictures are simply an outcome of the pressure we felt being caught up with the other person. You know, if the Indian's after the cowboy, you feel a certain amount of pressure, if the cowboy's after the Indian you feel a certain amount of pressure and sympathy and when it's over you think, yeah how silly. *[Both laugh.]* You know, it's just emotion.

INT: Did you think of any other books, or movies or stories during the incident?

NAR: No, I really didn't, Martha, I'd have to think about that, probably after the interview is over something will come to my mind. But I really didn't. Like I say, the only reason I went to see the movie was because of TMI. I might never have gone otherwise. I heard some people talk about it, and said it was, you know, it was really something to think about. Well it was, you know. So many good, you know, there are some good stories to think about that have to do with people in pressure and problems. I would certainly rather go to something that had a possibility of life-time - or, you know, life affect, rather to go to something which is just garbage, has no affect at all. Then this affected our emotions, but it also had to do with people with a real problem. And that's why we wanted to see it. But I can't think of any other book, or any other article, or any other story that, you know...

INT: Did you think of any songs?

NAR: Songs? *[Pause.]* No. No, it never... No. Nothing.

INT: Okay. Did you have any ideas about how it would be best to behave in such a situation?

NAR: Well I think...

INT: Just, were you using yourself as an example to be calm to others?

NAR: Well people, you know, I talked to some, and of course the reason I talked to those who were in authority – like, locally here – was simply to let them know that we would use our facility if... you know, they talked about people coming from that area, moving this way. And I offered to them our facility, we have a couple of lodges that we could have housed people all over and used the kitchen facility. We would have used the whole building, you know, taken in as many people as possible. That was the only thing that I really... was concerned with.

INT: Did you have any conflicts in your mind, over your responsibilities?

NAR: No. Things would have had to develop to the extreme measures for me to have suggested to my wife that she take the children. And I would have gone simply if... we heard, you know, reports that Harrisburg's gonna make a statement, they're gonna make a statement about evacuating the area. Well if they had said that, fine, I would have felt then, that's the point, then they must *know* that there's extreme danger. Then I would have moved them off, and I think I would have said, "you go and I'll stay here." Unless they would have said, you know, "everybody go", and that's the way it has to be. Except those who are in positions of authority, you know, civil defense, firemen, that sort of thing, you know, police.

INT: Did you think this situation was any worse than another panic or crisis situation like a flood or a hurricane or something like that, or that it wasn't as bad as something like that?

NAR: Well, with a flood or a hurricane, you know most of the facts. I don't think there's the mental pressure. I think there's the physical stress – there's certain mental stress, but at least you know – a flood, we have a flood. We have a flood. It's a hurricane, we have a hurricane, you know; it's a tornado, we have a tornado. It's a great fire, an earthquake, we know what it is. And we know the basic outcome, and so you're simply involved perhaps a more physical work. With this we were never quite sure. You were never quite sure. So you had a lot of mental stress and strain... that people were feeling. And there was a lot of strain, and people were calling me, asking me what I thought they oughtta do. And I simply said to them – these are people I'm involved in, and pastoring over – that they should wait. You know, *if* they felt they wanted to go and use the opportunity as a visit of someone, fine, go, and get out of the pressure, but at this point we really didn't know, and no one said to us, "go". If we can – you know, I'm staying here simply to help, like I said. But I think the difference is, there was a lot of mental pressure because we were hearing a lot of stories that really didn't jell. There were conflicting stories. If there is a flood – you know, it's a flood. And we have two choices, you can stay and get washed out or you can run. And then when it's over, you come back and try to help, and clean up, and do whatever you can. I've worked in floods before with the Army, and working on the canteens, and the feeding, and – you know. It really wasn't any... heavy mental pressure. The thing is we simply didn't know the whole story. So we were dealing with people on the verge of running who didn't really know.

INT: Did you notice any other changes in people, besides panic?

NAR: No, some were at the verge of panic, I think. Some that I know actually sent their families away. What was odd, was that *[laughs]* – one man told me he sent his family up near Wilkes-Barre. Well, according to my brother-in-law, they were more concerned up there, the local authorities, that we were here. So that didn't make too much sense.

INT: Why were they more concerned? Do you know?

NAR: I honestly can't tell you. It's just that – I guess they were expecting a great onslaught of people coming from this area. Now, if they'd have been forewarned from local authorities in Harrisburg, then I don't know, maybe they contacted some of the cities they felt were a safe distance. But according to what we understood, you know, they were telling people there maybe they'd would be wise to – move out. Now that may not be a valid statement, quote on quote.

INT: Do you think it changed anybody in a lasting way?

NAR: You know, it's like going, when we – I was back in Ohio, in East Liverpool, Ohio, when the business on space, you know, walking, and them going to the moon, floating around the earth and all that, do we belong on the moon... and of course people said we'll never recover from this. After a while we don't talk about it. It's when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, it was a sorrowful event. Any president, any, you know, person that you really know, it's sad. People said, we'll never recover from this. But it's amazing, within a few weeks, months, the human being goes on. I think God has given us a great gift to accept a certain amount of sorrow and simply go on. Those who don't go on end up committing suicide, or becoming mental incompetent people... and I think we have a tremendous ability to bounce back. It's a good thing. After every war this country has ever endured, we would have simply *died* had we not had this fighting ability within our spirit. You see God is an eternal spirit and He's created within us a mind, soul, and spirit, so that there's something that has a – constant moving on, and I think that that's the strength of man. I don't think it's left any great sorrow that'll be upon the hearts of people. I think the negative groups and the positive groups will keep it, you know, kind of in an imbalance or balance in front of us, but I think we have a way of accepting sorrow and going on. When those three astronauts were burned alive, you know – Everybody thinks, "should we go on, is this God's way of saying, 'hey, *stop!*'" But we've gone on to other successes. We adjust to this. We accept the sorrow and we adjust to it. We accept the frustration and we adjust to it. We accept the negatives and we try to find positives. It's a good thing we're the way we are, because otherwise we would just simply die out. And people who simply sit on the sidelines and never want to be involved – are really dead people. Not physically, but mentally, morally, and spiritually. Sad.

INT: Yeah. All right, you seemed pretty calm during the whole thing?

NAR: Right.

INT: It's like you took it all in your stride.

NAR: I don't know any other way to go, Martha [*laughing*]. It's just – Like I say, I've never been given over to panic. I get excited about things. My first response is, what can I do to help? And of course being told, just wait and see. So we waited and were ready when the time came. We could have housed, we could have fed. You know. If somebody said to me, “you're in heavy danger, and your family's in danger”, I would have responded to that. But I never heard that, that message never came across to me, so I simply did not respond that way.

INT: Did you hear any jokes about it? About radiation or Three Mile Island?

NAR: Oddly enough – happily enough, no. I don't like to joke about issues that, um... You know, you – I was trying to think of something specific that I can recall, but normally, I'm not one for some of these talk shows on TV; I'm sure because of commercialization, the T-shirt kind of thing, I don't like that sort of stuff myself. “I survived TMI”. And of course, to people in Ohio, for instance, where we came from, they called us because they were concerned about us. And I told them, you know, thank you for the concern and we really, you know, we're not in any great danger. Of course from what they heard we were about ready to be *phew*, dissolved, you know – blown up. And they could foresee radiation being blown out *their* way. That's how they saw it. California people called here for some of their relatives in our center, you know, because they were concerned about TMI. But I know there were some jokes. And I have heard some but I can't recall what they were. But not as much as some – you know, I think maybe people are... becoming less prone to criticize human error than they used to be. Maybe that's a good sign. Maybe it's a sign we're a little more concerned. Maybe it's a sign that we're becoming a little more serious about some things, I hope so. I don't think TMI is anything to joke about. And as far as the T-shirts, and the badges, and all this garbage, that's what it is to me. I think – I don't see making money on the misery of other people. Or the concern. Or the failure of other people. That seems to be the American Way – you know, with a certain group. But to me I think it's kind of silly.

INT: Have you heard joking from other crises? [*Pause.*] Is it unusual that they...

NAR: The crises, if you're talking of a hurricane, or a disaster...

INT: Or just anything major.

NAR: ...or a flood, or a fire. No, because you're dealing with human suffering. You're dealing now with mental anguish. I think there's a difference. I don't think, if there had been an explosion, I think you'd have been dealing with a different thing. I think now, the joke of TMI is, you know, of what never happened but what could have happened. If we look on the TV, and we see people driving down the street fleeing from TMI situation, we would have a tendency to joke about those people, and their rashness or their plight... more than we would about a family who's sitting in the edge of their roof

with ten feet of water around them. Because we relate to human tragedy, because we've all been touched by human tragedy. The mental pressure thing is totally different. We would joke about that. Some people might joke about it simply because the relief is over. You know. And when the pressure goes, you just kind of take a deep sigh, and you say, *whew!* – glad that's over, and we might joke about it from that standpoint. It depends, when you talk about a joke, you know – Some jokes are funny, some are really sick. If we can laugh about our own mistakes, then I think we're on the right track. If we're putting somebody down – you know...that's not a joke. If we're making light of a heavy situation, that's not a joke either.

INT: Okay, now I'm going, there's one more page of questions on religion.

NAR: Sure. Okay.

INT: So... [*unintelligible, both talking at the same time; both stop.*]

NAR: I'll take a drink of coffee and you ask. [*MT laughs.*]

INT: Did you think of any biblical stories or events or sayings?

NAR: I know that from my spiritual feeling as a Christian, that I thought of the verse of Scripture, "cast your care upon him for he careth for you." As I've said before, I'm not afraid of what man does or man can do, because our faith is in God, through Christ, so we really don't... [*End of Side A; Side B begins.*]

NAR: Um... As I was saying... the Bible says "the elements shall melt with fervent heat", you know – Nuclear energy. Atomic war. Of course we're talking about prophecy, this is something that is my own personal belief, and it's something that I don't want to get into; we're talking about things that I believe will happen and the Bible foretells. I really didn't think of any great passage of Scripture. It's hard to relate this accident, except that man is... You know, we're made a little lower than the angels and we're prone to mistakes. And I think, sadly enough, so many times we launch out in areas... without ever consulting God. Here again, man's great plight is, *we blame* God. For everything that goes wrong... God gives us minds to use and think, and if we make a mistake with them, we blame God. He gives us the body, we distort it, we disfigure it, we take everything into it except what ought to be there, and then when we have sickness we blame God. So you see, we – [*laughs*] we're really fouled up, and the Bible is really there to give us insight to our own need, from the very beginning to the end, to give us a sense of responsibility to God, and we go out on our own – we try to use what God had given, as I've said before... which is, if we use it wisely, it's an honor to God, but when it goes wrong we blame Him. So poor God doesn't have a chance, okay? At this point, He takes what we give Him as leftovers. This is still His world, and no matter what we do to disfigure it – He will have the final say.

INT: Well do you think God worked through – It was man's error, but do you think God worked through the error to instruct mankind in any way?

NAR: I think God can work through any error. If man takes time to examine his weakness... It's like laying on the bed of affliction; a man who goes in the hospital who curses God because of his sickness. I believe that, I've seen so many men, and women, people, laying on the bed of affliction. When you lay down flat you look up, you see. And when you're at the point of sickness, whatever reason brought you in there or what your attitude was, in 99% of the cases that I've dealt with, people begin to think positively about their own relationship to God at that point. Because when they're ill, they look up. And I think, you know, God can use any situation. God can use the worst sinner to prove a point. And I think a lot of things happen, of course my personal feelings... some of the earthquakes, and all the natural disaster that are happening to us... if you want to call them natural. I'd like to think of them as supernatural, because we don't always create them and they come as something beyond our power because if we could stop them we would. I think maybe God uses these things, and allows them to happen, and maybe He even sends certain things to make man wake up. See, that's my own personal feeling. The Bible is God's revelation to man. God is our father; He's our creator, preserver, and our governor. And man is estranged with God until he gets back and he simply says: "Father, your will be done." It's amazing, we pray, "Thy will be done" – and then we go out and do just what we want. *[Laughs.]* Kind of foolish. I've heard people blame God for TMI. *[Pause.]* And, you know, it's just like, I have a little girl, who... she's nine years old, and this is just a silly illustration, but – you know, it means something to me because I'm her father. We went fishing the other night, down near our house at the crick. And I threw her line out, and on the way in, she got a tangled up in my line, and I said, "Laura!" She said "Well, Dad, it's your fault, you threw it out." Really wasn't my fault; she was winding it in, and she got it caught in my line, but her way of getting out of it was saying to me, "Dad, well you threw it out." And so because God offers all this wonderful things – all this wonderful stuff to the world – you know, atomic energy, nuclear fission... ah... *all* of this, that's available to us. The work, the handiwork, sitting in this office, you know, all this that man can do, his mind, his creativity; God has given it to us. And then when something goes wrong, we say "well, God made it." Why don't we just start at the beginning and say, "God you made us, let's start giving ourselves to you" – and then we'll take it from there. We'd get the blessing of God. I don't know whether God blesses all this stuff, I really don't know. I'm saying that if we use it positively and rightly to benefit man I don't see how God would be distressed with that. But we can use it for man and then take all the credit. *[Laughs.]*

INT: Do you think Satan was involved or could he just be another fall guy for human error?

NAR: Satan? Satan is involved from the word go! He's doing everything he possibly can to make God look bad and to exalt man as against God. Sure, he's involved in everything we do, he and all his legions of angels... And, uh... Satan is our adversary, he's a roaring lion, he goes about looking whom he may devour. Satan is in human error; you know, it's like we say, of some things we say, well this is a – to God it's a sin, we say well it's a mistake. Certain things are mistakes, and God doesn't hold that accountable as a sin. If I pick a wrong gift for my wife and she doesn't really appreciate

it, it can be a mistake on my judgment. But, you know, Satan likes to come as an angel of light, he likes to make us feel that anything we do is simply a mistake, and that God doesn't hold us accountable, that's not true. Because we're judging it in the light of what we'd *like* God to think. We're judging it in the light of what we'd *like* God to feel. We're judging it in the light of what we'd like God to *do*. Not what He really thinks, sees, and will do. And so, we've taken ourself off the hook. Satan is a – he's a deceiver of man. Sure, I think he's involved in everything that goes wrong. I remember a professor saying to me at the very beginning of my studies, that, you know, there at the beginning was a great circle, and there was God, and Adam and Eve, our first parents, were in the center of that. And so nothing could go wrong. Because we were in the center – *in* the center of God. But as soon as man sinned, and he disobeyed God – the center of God is there, you know? The world is Christ-a-centric, now, or God-a-centric, you know, perfect. With God. But man is on the out. And so man is subject to everything that goes wrong, and Satan is right there. Sure, he's there. He's the great deceiver of man. And he is out today trying to do everything he possibly can to create problems for us. The morality of our country. TMI has a lot to do – has something to do with the morality, sure. I visit men in the jail. Many of them have tattoos on them saying, "born to lose." "Born to die." You know – "I hate myself", "I love the devil", "God is dead". TMI to them is just a cheap escape from reality. And they could easily say, "well it doesn't mean anything anyway" – you know, life has no value, no meaning. And if they use it as an excuse, you know – another way of just saying, "Well, if we get blown to bits, it's all right." Life is not cheap. My life is not cheap. My life is a gift from God. And I want it to be used as a gift of God, and I want to send it back to God in everything I do properly and right. Because I know – My faith tells me that I have to stand before God someday. I can stand before the President, and fear no... You know, I'd have a sense of awe, because he's the President, I respect him from that standpoint. I could stand before the Governor and be very conscious of the fact that he's the Governor. But they don't scare me. But I am concerned that my life stands for something before God. The Governor really isn't concerned about my personal moral being; the President isn't either. But God is. And I'm accountable to Him.

INT: Did the idea of the Last Judgment or the end of the world cross your mind?

NAR: Yes, because I thought about the elements melting with fervent heat, and I know that – I believe that there's a day coming soon that's going to be a crisis coming back. The Bible is – you know, the old Testament foretells the history of the Jewish people, God's people, foretells the coming of the redeemer, which is Christ. The gospels tell the life of Christ and from that point on simply describes the power of the Christian Church – the church is simply people and not buildings – and then from that point on it predicts the Coming, and Revelation speaks about Christ coming back, He is coming back. And there will be a judgment. And Christ, you know, there's gonna be a great tribulation upon this earth. I think the beginnings of it are now, because if we want to talk about tribulation, you know, the worry and the frustration of TMI could be a tribulation, in a sense. You know, I think we're in the age of tribulation. But there is a *time* in the Bible, a span of seven years of tribulation, that will be really severe and God will judge this earth by way of *many* judgments upon this earth. God is giving man all kind of time now to –



straighten up – spiritually, and morally, to straighten up. But we’re still turning our back on God, and He’s going to come, through Christ, to redeem the Church; and according to the Bible, they’re gonna be taken, and at that point there will be loosed such tribulations and judgments of God upon this earth that the world has ever seen. So if we think that we’re at the point of tribulation – right now – we don’t know anything. Because the day’s coming when God’s tribulations will be poured out upon this earth, in an unbelievable sense. So, when you asked me about the Judgment or, you know, the end of all things, yeah, that came to my mind. I don’t think it’s far from any Christian’s mind today, because the Christian can see the Word of God all coming true. For instance: A hundred years ago when we talked about the Jewish nation becoming a great nation, they were scattered. Now look at them today. 1948, they become a nation. And they’re a powerful nation. Look at the things that are happening. The Bible predicted knowledge would be increased. We’re the smartest people in the world. Stupid sometimes, but we’re smart, intelligent. Travel shall be increased; we can go anywhere in a few hours. So you see, all these things are coming. The morality of people – Martha, we’re just falling apart. We’re falling apart. The Roman empire lasted hundreds of years, and the same reasons that they fell are the same reasons that we’re... becoming, ahhh... you know, Woody King at the Harmonals. [?] Family life, divorce, and the disobedience of children... armament, taxes, decline of family life, immorality, the lack of obedience to God. [Pause.] That’s great sermon material, isn’t it?

INT: Yeah. [Both laugh.] Why?

NAR: I preach it.

INT: Um... Now, you were away during that weekend weren’t you? [Doorbell rings.]

INT: Let me get that. [Tape stops, then resumes.]

INT: Okay, now you were away during part of that weekend, weren’t you? Wasn’t there some sort of religious retreat? I remember Jean Newcomer saying something.

NAR: Martha, what was the exact date, can you give me – I *really*, like I said before I can’t recall, what was the exact date when the TMI...?

INT: I’m not even sure myself. The end of – end of March.

NAR: Yeah, I think there was a... it was a soldiers’ retreat, um... I was here, but I think my wife and some of the others were gone, it was a group meeting up at our camp. They were gone.

INT: Do you remember anything about the service here then? Was any mention made of TMI?

NAR: No, I don’t think so. I don’t think I mentioned anything from the preaching... No I don’t think any comment was made by me on anything pertaining to TMI, with the

exception of... direct response to questions, you know, maybe in the office or... A lot of our seniors, of course we have a membership of four hundred and some seniors here at the Center. And a lot of them were concerned because they – here again, they didn't understand. Many of them were distressed because they heard conflicting reports, like I mentioned. One newscaster said you should plan to leave, and the other one said just hold. Because one of them – in fact, some of them came in to me one day, and I remembered them saying they were thinking of leaving, and I said, "leaving!" I said, "Where are you going?" And they said, you know, "newscasters said we should get our bags packed, or something, and get ready to go" and I said "where did you hear this?" They quoted something about it, I couldn't recall and I don't think they even recalled, I think it was just something... You know, and with older people sometimes they have a tendency to – you know, if they don't get the whole story. It's amazing, as we get older the noise factor goes up and our hearing gets – lower! *[Both laugh.]* I think maybe that's good with the modern music, but *[MT laughs]* as far as facts are concerned it doesn't help. But... many of them were very concerned. Very concerned. And they asked my advice, and I simply thought I gave them the best advice by kind of standing stationary and wait until – you know, because I would be the first one to tell them, if I thought there was a real danger and that's why I simply went by the CD and the emergency folk, and the word I got was simply, you know, we were ready to go – we're just waiting for the final word but it never happened. Once they had given me the word I would have passed the word quickly, you know. For the sake of those who were anxious. Not changing my position because I would have stayed because there were very few people.

INT: Back to the service, just the Center here in general, do you think there were any more or less people coming around? In attendance?

NAR: No we've had great attendances, that hasn't altered a thing. That's never changed anything. I think we are living in such a day and time when I was a boy we read about Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon and some of the old-timers thought we were silly children because we read that kind of garbage. Now and we have men going on the moon, you know. So we really have Flash Gordons and Buck Rogers, you know? All those things that we grew up dreaming about, we see happening on TV now. And I think people... it's like my grandmother's been dead since 1952; were she to come back she couldn't – she couldn't survive. The changes in these years, you know, I think we've become such accustomed to tragedy, accustomed to change, accustomed to climatic events happening... That we don't have an appreciation for greater tragic when they do happen. I think we've become immune. Thousands of people die every day but if it doesn't happen next door we don't even feel it. It's kind of sad isn't it? The family down the block gets burned out and – if it doesn't happen to us we don't really become sensitive. I think the human being is becoming more insensitive to other people all the time. I see a change every year, and it's not of the best. We just came from New York City a week, two weeks ago we were there with a group of young people. Of course going to Times Square is – you know, an appalling site. We blame the New Yorkers, but most New Yorkers who love New York aren't even in Times Square – it's the people who've just moved in the last twenty years who – and the visitors, who are there, but – The appalling like a world of monstrous robots walking down the street who just would knock you out

of the way for no reason, you know – Lack of feeling, :Lack of compassion, lack of concern. And I think with so many of our people – you know, they don't even know it! And until they become aware, and until we sit own and say, don't you even *know* about this problem, or that problem? It isn't that they're not good people. But I think so many changes, and so many problems, have come on us in these last few years that we've become immune. Now the country, they tell me that when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated the country mourned for a year or so. But you see we're over something like that in a few hours for some people. *[Pause.]* I'm appalled by... the loss of so many things that – you know, maybe have an affect upon TMI, for instance, in the parade here just recently, what did we have, the Memorial Day Parade, wasn't it? Yeah. I was taught that when the American flag came by, not a small little, you know, two-foot flag, but the big flags, when they came by you always stood at attention and put your hand over your heart and you saluted. If I was in official uniform I would salute with a hand salute. But, you know – I look down the street, left and right – hundreds of people, no one puts their hand over their heart, no one stands at attention, no one takes the hat off when the flag goes by. And so I see all these things creeping in, and I – the, the apathy, of respect, and response... It's not there. It's not there. And it really is, it's a sad, sad thing, nobody cares, you know. Nobody cares. Twenty-five years ago to go to college was a great honor; to go to college today is, to some people it's just a burden. High school teachers used to be able to discipline children when they needed it. I got yanked out of class and spanked a number of times, and I got it when I got it when I got home, because my teacher was the first one there. And yet I stand up today and praise those teachers, because after I grew up and laid aside childish things, I realized that they were my best friends. But if a teacher tries to discipline today – right or wrong, you know, to really develop – the parent, the first thing the parent says is, “my kids would never do that.” I deal with people, and young people here, and if I go to a parent about a problem, and in confidence say that I'm trying to help this person, and I say please don't tell the child, or try to get something in confidence, nothing is held in confidence. And, um... then I'm at odds with the child, and I don't get any backing up from the parents because the parents will defend the child over me. There was a day when the minister was the, probably the strongest person in any community. Now as far as power and affect, he's one of the weakest. Because he gets his power shaken and distorted and tampered with by every parent. And it's a sad thing. So we talk about TMI – TMI is really just a small symptom, you know. It isn't the China Syndrome, it's... society... as a whole.

INT: Well do you think religious institutions and persons should take a public stance, on let's say something like nuclear power?

NAR: I think... despite... who we represent... I think we ought to have a right to speak our mind and, whether you're speaking for a denomination or organization or whatever you should have a right to think for yourself, I think it's a shame when you, every time you quote something, you're being misquoted or you're being quoted as representing your congregation or your group... I think some of the major problems come because... these people of strong position... are weak. The people who have strength and who have power don't even recognize it. And then we have the tendency to say, well what can one man do? When you got fifteen thousand “one men”... people... around... if they could

just realize that there are a lot of those “one men” who are trying to do something, it would really give some rejuvenation and some vitality and power into the area of right. So many times we feel that when we, you know, say something that we don’t have any power, nobody will listen, and that – what can one man do. But there’s a lot of one men who are really working hard to accomplish something, and I think, you know, there’s a lot of good to accomplish. I think it’s a shame when we sit back and say, the Church shouldn’t take a stance on this. Anytime we do that, we lose something. Used to be the time when, like I say, when the minister – the Church was the most powerful part of the community. But now it’s a weak sister. To a certain degree, you know – to a certain degree. Depends on the congregation, it depends on the pastor. Depends on whether they really want to get involved in the social issues. You have one church that wants to hit all social issues, and the gospel seems to be watered down; and then you have another segment who preach that we should just speak about Christ crucified and we should not get involved in social issues and yet, Jesus said, “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God that are God’s.” You know. Most spiritual issues start in social issues, and as they move along, they get stronger and stronger. If their inception is basically in God. When Jesus said, render to Caesar, and He put that first, He wasn’t saying that God wasn’t first – He left the real foundation with God. Because He said, get things started with your obligation, take care of things, because if you take care of things to God you’ll follow with your responsibility to man. But I like the way He put that. Because I see us getting involved with the daily issues on the foundation of God. You know? And I think that’s one of our weaknesses today. That happens with congregations and it happens with people. You can’t preach just Christ and no issues, and you can’t take just issues and no gospel, you’ve got to combine both of them – left and right. And I think you’ll find where they’re – and I won’t quote this, but there was just, last night on TV I saw a minister taking hold of an issue that, um... I thought was commendable, because he at least lost out, he felt this was wrong, and he felt he had a right for complaint, and he did. And he didn’t say that his congregation was behind him, he simply said, you know – “I think this is wrong, and I think I have a right to voice my opinion and we’re gonna do something about it.” God bless the man. Because at least he was using his constitutional prerogative *[laughing]*. The Constitution can work as much for churches and spiritual things as it can against them.

INT: Is there anything else you’d like to add?

NAR: Oh! Gosh, Martha, I think I’ve preached a dozen sermons there. *[MT laughs.]* It’s all my own personal opinion, I – Like I said, I think TMI is a perhaps a sign of the time, and that is to escape reality and responsibility. I think we have problems, I think we make mistakes, you know... The shame of it is, and I hope it can be corrected, I hope we can find the answer to all of these problems, because mankind needs as much spiritual benefit as he can get, God is willing to do that if man will respond. I think mankind needs all the scientific benefit that he can get, because we have one life to live, and with all of the problems that are around us, and nature, and pollution problems, we need all the answer, you know, all of the – we’re losing our natural resources, they tell us, because of the oil, and coal, and all these other things, and I think we need all the benefit we can get.

And I just hope and pray that we can come up with the right answers to give us the full benefit. I thank God for those people that are willing to at least try. And I think we need to give people the benefit. I think we need to give those people who make errors our support, to let them know we're not really here to, to condemn them every time they make a mistake, but we're in support to try to help them. We have a right to complain. But if, you know, the people who do too much complaining do so little work sometimes, you know. So if we're gonna complain, let's get behind them in knowing our complaints are trying to be positive, you know, and *not* just negative... and I think there are many groups that simply get on the bandwagon to gripe about every little thing, simply because someone else is doing it. It gives them the opportunity to get that frustration out. If we could only work out our frustration, by some hard work and directed efforts... I think we could make some great success in the future. God help us, that's all I can say.