

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Alan Travers (CN 190, T1)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words which were recorded are omitted. In a very few cases, the transcribers could not understand what was said, in which case [unclear] was inserted. Also, grunts and verbal hesitations such as “ah” or “um” are usually omitted. Readers of this transcript should remember that this is a transcript of spoken English, which follows a different rhythm and even rule than written English.

. . . Three dots indicate an interruption or break in the train of thought within the sentence of the speaker.

. . . . Four dots indicate what the transcriber believes to be the end of an incomplete sentence.

() Word in parentheses are asides made by the speaker.

[] Words in brackets are comments made by the transcriber.

This transcript was created by Paul Bartow and Katherine Graber and was completed in November 2017.

Please note: This oral history interview expresses the personal memories and opinions of the interviewee and does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Billy Graham Center Archives or Wheaton College.



Collection 191, Tape 1. Oral history interview with Alan Travers by Galen Wilson on October 23, 1981.

WILSON: This is October 23rd, 1981, and we are at the Billy Graham Center Archives, conducting an interview for the Archives. I'm Galen Wilson, and I'm here with Alan Travers of Trans World Radio. First, I guess I'd like you to tell me what your job is for Trans World Radio and what your jobs have been from the time you started up till now.

TRAVERS: Well in 1959, I came with Trans World Radio as deputation secretary. In those days, it was called the Voice of Tangier. It had begun in 1954, and in April of 1959, I joined the organization. In May of 1959, we received the fatal phone call from the director of communications of the country of Morocco telling us that we had only the rest of that year. And I was scheduled to go to Tangier at that time...

WILSON: The rest of the year for what?

TRAVERS: To...to broadcast from Morocco. They had nationalized all industry and they just took over radio as well. And they said we're not going to have any commercial or foreign broadcasters here at all. We at that time [train passing in background] had begun negotiations with Radio Monte Carlo. The negotiations had been going along on a low-key basis because we were very happy with what was taking place in Tangier. But of course the pace of the negotiations accelerated. I came home from Tangier at that time then to...to begin raising the funds that were necessary, acquainting the Christian public of the United States with the facts of the opportunity which was before us, because we were going to be allowed at that time to go to Monte Carlo, and install, and utilize the largest missionary transmitter in Christian service. That was going to be 100,000 watts from the city of Monte Carlo. That transmitter, by the way, is still in operation. We began then using that transmitter in October of 1960. I had to take a short leave of absence and then came back to Trans World Radio in 1970 as a New England representative. In 1976...

WILSON: What did the New England representative do?

TRAVERS: Well the New England representative basically assists appointees on deputation, with arranging their meetings, with getting themselves prepared for the field, and then utilizes his knowledge of the work to acquaint the various churches with what is taking place in missionary radio around the world. And so I spoke at Bible conferences and churches and did that sort of representation work that is common to most mission agencies. In 1976, I was asked to become director of public relations, which I did until 1980. In 1980, I don't know whether it was age [laughs] or just the fact that I had been around long enough to know a little bit about the work, I was asked to resume the title of minister-at-large. And now I represent Trans World Radio with...at intermission gatherings, leadership conferences, I substitute for Dr. Freed whenever he's unavailable. And we have a series of banquets across the country which acquaint the people with our work, and either Dr. Freed or I or sometimes both of us are in attendance at those banquets. I serve now on the executive council, the president's executive council of Trans World and, of course, in that council, the highest level we're dealing with—policy, long range planning, and all

the things that are germane to the operation.

WILSON: Are you being groomed to take Dr. Freed's place? Is that the idea?

TRAVERS: Well no, I...I don't think...I don't think that would be an adequate description of what's taking place [Wilson laughs]. But anyway, there are about five of us on that council. And each of us brings his own strength and his own knowledge of the work to the council and that's why we're...we're what we are. There are some men who are...who are anchored to a desk. And just because I'm out in public doesn't mean I'm being groomed any more than they.

WILSON: Right. What...what then do all your duties consist of? Being at a somewhat of desk job myself, you see [laughs], when the desk is there I know what I'm doing.

TRAVERS: Well, I'm invited very frequently. For example, the first week of November, I'll be in Spokane, Washington at a missionary conference for one of the largest churches in the city. And I'll be...I have been asked to be the main Bible teacher for the Biblical Basis of Missions, for example. I do that frequently. I do that maybe ten or twelve times a year at various missionary conferences. Of course, I still...and then as I say, I represent the work at the intermission gatherings. I do from time to time, a couple of times a year, go overseas, preach in the target areas, minister to our own missionaries. I've spent two summers as the pastor for the staff on Monte Carlo. Because they require this. I try to take the blessings from one field to another. You see, we have six different transmission sites. And five of them are staffed with...with a fairly large staff. And at one site, you will have a particular blessing taking place at one...one given time. For instance, in Sri Lanka right now, you have...India is providing us with...without a doubt, the most outstanding response to missionary broadcasting that we've experienced in all the years of Trans World Radio since 1954. We know of at least a thousand, some say thousands, but at least a thousand house churches that have been formed as a result of the broadcasting alone. And this is a very exciting thing for the staff that...

WILSON: Sure.

TRAVERS: ...Dr. Freed is going there next week. And in the course of his travel, he will carry that blessing and the excitement of it to a couple of our other fields. But I do that also. And I'm more fortunate than he in many ways that I can spend more time in certain areas than he can. He'll be going around the world in...in four weeks. And I will go oftentimes spend four to six weeks in one location. And then six or seven months later go to another location and do the same thing.

WILSON: You mentioned sometimes serving as a pastor "for the missionary group." Do your mission staffs in your stations around the world tend to...to form a church as it were...

TRAVERS: No.

WILSON: ...there or do they go to various churches in the area?

TRIVERS: In...in two locations, they do sort of form a church. On the island of Bonaire in the Caribbean where the population is so small. There's only 9,500 people on the island. See the island is twenty-seven miles long and seven and a half miles wide at its widest spot, three miles at its most narrow spot. There are 9,500 people. There are 5,000 flamingoes. There are 40,000 goats [Wilson laughs]. And some will tell you there are millions of lizards. But because the population is small, because it speaks...it's Papiamento-speaking and Dutch-speaking, even though our people do learn those languages, The Evangelical Alliance Mission is working in Rincon which is a town to the north end of the island, and our people all live in Kralendijk. Their children are going to have to come back to the United States to school. And so they retain an English service for them. They do participate in the other church functions, but they do have their own Sunday school and that sort of thing there. In Monte Carlo, to go to church anywhere would be to have to leave the city. You'd have to leave the country, and go into France. Most of our people there speak French and participate in French-speaking churches in various areas. But by nature of our agreement with the government, they cannot participate in the French-speaking church in Monte Carlo, but they are allowed to have their own English speaking service. And so we utilize the French church which...which is right alongside of our studio building to...to have our morning services. And then they...they dissipate and go outside the country to France for other services.

WILSON: Now do you think that government restriction will change with the new government [unclear]?

TRIVERS: It's unlikely. Monte Carlo of course is independent. And it's just the nature of the agreement. We're not there to evangelize Monte Carlo, and we're...we're there as missionary broadcasters and not as a missionary organization in the country. And therefore we have to observe, very carefully, the agreement. And we do. Our people going into France is no problem. But in Monte Carlo, we're careful. Personal evangelism of course takes place everywhere just by living the life. But we're very careful to observe that which...with which we've contracted. Now in Swaziland and in Guam and in Sri Lanka, our people participate in the church life that surrounds them. In Guam of course it's an American church. There are dozens of churches, and our people have a very viable ministry there. In Swaziland, they have a very joyous ministry as well. In Sri Lanka, it's a little more difficult, but there are some...there are some excellent churches there and our people are helping out a great deal with those.

WILSON: One thing I wanted to ask you was how you first heard about Trans World Radio when you were a young man and how you got involved in it in the first place.

TRIVERS: Well, I was pastoring in a church on Cape Cod, which everybody has heard about. That little peninsula that juts out of Massachusetts into...into the Atlantic.

WILSON: What church?

TRIVERS: I was pastor of the Osterville Baptist church which is four and a half miles west on the south coast of Hyannisport. And everybody knows Hyannisport. We had...we had a missionary conference regularly every year. We had a Bible...we had a Bible conference

annually. We had a radio broadcast. And John Hallett who was a well-known composer and song writer and, who at that time was one of the founders with Dr. Charles Anderson of what is now the Northeastern Bible College in New Jersey in Essex Fells, would come annually to our missionary conference in August and direct our choir and lead the singing. And...and he called me up in 1958, and he said "Alan, I have a young man here in school who is an outstanding student who is...who is going to be a very good missionary, and he's going to the mission field with the Voice of Tangier." And I said "What's that?" And he said "Well, it's a new radio station that started a few years ago. And I think he would make a great candidate for your missionary conference." We prayed about it, and we decided to have him come. We'd always been interested in missionary radio. When I graduated from college, I thought I was going to go...during...during my college years, I thought I was going to be going to South America with HCJB.

WILSON: What college was that?

TRAVERS: That is what is now known as Barrington College.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: And then I went to Gordon. But anyway, the...when I graduated from there, I thought I'd be going to Panama with HOXO, but the Lord intervened in that thing, and we didn't go. He put me in the pastorate instead, and I remember thinking at the time and saying to my wife "If we're not going to go to the mission field, then let's by all means be a missionary minded church and missionary minded pastor." And that's what we undertook to do. We undertook to get young people to go. And the exciting thing is that now we can look around and we can see men and women who were kids back then who...who caught the vision and who decided to go and who are doing an exciting and effective job all over the world. We...we always were interested in missionary radio. And so the very fact that this was missionary radio kind of tugged a little bit I think at us, and we invited Bill and Joan to come. They came, and our whole congregation fell in love with them. And sort of adopted them. Took on their support. And when they sailed in October, the church asked me to go to New York to participate in the commissioning service aboard ship and see them off. And unbeknown to me, he had been talking to Dr. Paul Freed. And that was before he had his doctorate. He was Paul Freed then. Who...who had founded the work and had been telling me, "You know you ought to meet this fellow from Massachusetts. I think he could help us a great deal. He's interested in missions, and I think he could help the mission." So when we got to the boat and we had our time and we said goodbye, Paul Freed said to me "Listen, why don't you come back. You're down...you've come this far. Why don't you come back to the office and chat, and we'll chat a while?" And we did. And to make a long story short, the following April, we resigned our church, and we were with Trans World Radio as the deputation secretary at that time.

WILSON: And you went directly to Morocco at that time?

TRAVERS: Well, no, I didn't leave for Morocco until August. And actually then, I was only going to spend a little while down there and then come back. My wife was carrying our second

child at that time. We had had...we had had one boy. And then had had ten years in between in which we'd lost a couple. And she was carrying Debby. And we didn't want to take any chances with her. I was going to go over, spend some time there, and then come back. As it happened because of the change there, I came back permanently [training passing in background]. And we've traveled back and forth since [unclear].

WILSON: But you've never been based overseas since then?

TRIVERS: That's right.

WILSON: I also wanted to ask you, this is kind of changing the tack a little bit here, but if you would describe for me the kind of broadcasting that Trans World Radio does. Are you hitting more toward unbelievers or are you hitting toward believers to...to minister to them? Or is it...is it the message of salvation that you preach totally? Or do you nurture those that are already saved, etcetera, etcetera?

TRIVERS: Okay, it's important to us, and it's important for anyone to understand the very nature of missionary broadcasting. Must by its definition be evangelistic. We have to make a clear presentation of the Gospel in every segment of our broadcast time. We broadcast by block time. In other words, when we're on in the Slavic language we broadcast a block of Slavic. Russian. Polish. Czech. So we have to.... And it's important that we do that . Because most people can understand each other's language. Some years ago, I attended a meeting of the Slavic Union in Ashford, Connecticut. And I was intrigued by the fact that all of these Slavic people were sitting there and they were calling on each other for testimony and report. So they would get up and give their testimony and report in their own language. Everybody understood! They don't speak each other's language but they understand each other's language, and so by having the block it effectively increases the number. Now within that block, we do nurture the Christians. Within that block, we do offer opportunity. Well we broadcast to shut-ins for example. We broadcast to young people. We broadcast to...to those who are struggling with the problems within the church. We encourage them, we teach them the Word. But also within that same block, we will have a period of time in which the message is determinedly evangelistic.

WILSON: Uh-huh.

TRIVERS: For the reason that someone may listen and never...never tune in again. We have a lot of people who write to us to say "I heard your program by accident today." You see, in short wave broadcasting especially people just sit and go up and down the aisle and look for language...the dial and look for a language that they understand.

WILSON: Uh-huh.

TRIVERS: And the vagaries of radio are such that they may never turn it on again. Or they may have turned in the very first time in desperate straits. I think of a young man in Italy who...whose drugs had taken a toll on his body, and life has lost all its meaning for him, and he decided to commit suicide. Put a .38 pistol in his pocket, and he was driving out alone on the

Italian country road and reached out and idly turned on the dial, went down the dial to 1466 on the AM dial, and that's our AM transmitter. That's the AM transmitter we utilize, and they call it medium wave in Europe, in Monte Carlo. That's 1,250,000 watts. It's a pretty clear signal in Italy, especially from Monte Carlo. And for the very first time he heard the gospel. And he pulled over to the side of the road. It was early in the morning, 12:30 AM. Pulled over on the side of the road and listened to the rest of the broadcast. And God touched his heart. Instead of taking out his pistol, he got out of the car and in the mud of that Italian roadside he gave his life to Christ. Today he's serving as a pastor in southern Italy. And so we...we're very conscious of the fact that there are going to be people like that whose lives we must touch.

WILSON: Sure.

TRAVERS: And so there is...there is a very good balance to the broadcasting we do. In some languages we have much better balance than in others. It depends on where you...the country to which you're broadcasting. Are you broadcasting to the Middle East? It's heavily weighed on the side of evangelism. Because there isn't much of a church to nurture. We do recognize our responsibility to nurture those Christians who accept Christ listening to the broadcast and then have no church to attend.

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: I think...for example, in Czechoslovakia, I've been in Eastern Europe on two different occasions and visited several of the countries. And we got a very interesting story from Prague. A Christian was walking down the street, and he saw a young man standing looking in a store window (which in Prague is a national pastime by itself. That's done frequently. They shop...window shop a great deal). And he felt compelled to go up and say something to this young man. Now that's very dangerous. You're not allowed in Eastern Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia, to talk to someone on the street about your faith. You're...see, they...they claim to have religious freedom. And their definition of religious freedom is you're free to do or say anything religious (but be very careful it's not political or can be construed political) but you can do or say anything religious in the church. But you can't do any of it outside of the church. You can't invite your neighbors over and talk with them about the Lord. That's...that would be illegal. They could report you for that. You're not supposed to teach your children the Bible at home because you can be reported, and your children can be taken away, and you can be imprisoned. And you're certainly not allowed to "accost" someone as they would phrase it on the street with religious ideas. But he just felt led to do this. And so he walked up to the young man, and he said "Pardon me, do you know Jesus Christ as your personal savior?" To his amazement, the young fellow said "Yes, I do." And he said "Well that's wonderful. Where do you go to church?" The young man responded "I don't go to church." He said, "I don't even know where there is one. And if I did, my parents would be very unhappy. They would be embarrassed and insulted and I just don't go." So the conversation continued and the original man discovered that the young man to whom he spoken had quite an amazing knowledge of the Bible. And so he asked the inevitable question "Where did you learn all this?"

WILSON: Uh-huh.

TRAVERS: The young man said “Well if you have a little time, I’ll show you.” He took him to his apartment, his little one room apartment up on the second floor of a building, and in the corner there was a table maybe three or four feet long piled high with cassettes. And he said, “You see these, I record every broadcast that comes out of Monte Carlo.” And then he said, “I replay them and replay them and replay them until I have them in my heart.” And then pointed to the table and said “This is my Bible, this is my church, this is my theology.” And that gives us comfort to recognize that there are thousands of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions out there who are relying on us day by day for their teaching and their understanding of the Scriptures once they become Christians. And so we sense that very acutely. And we attempt to...to produce the entire gamut of religious broadcasts. Dramatic presentations. The normal kind of broadcast. You know, three points and a poll. We try to avoid.... Our German friends, our German branch has experimented with something quite unique. They take a tape recorder and put it in the middle of a Bible study. A whole Bible study. And just let it go. And let it go where it will. And then they edit the thing afterwards because in a whole Bible study, you can go in directions that would not be beneficial to the listening audience [Wilson laughs]. And they edit out those things which would be theologically incorrect.

WILSON: And the private jokes in them.

TRAVERS: Right, and then put it on the air. And it’s been very well accepted. Very well received in Germany. So it...it gives us a determination to try to be more creative everywhere.

WILSON: Uh-huh.

TRAVERS: And we try to share each other’s.... Now, we’ve just appointed an international programming consultant, who is conducting seminars and in fact schools, four to six week long sessions for programmers from the indigenous peoples. We...we trust that they will...they’ll learn how to do better programming. They’ll learn the real concept of what broadcasting is. We’re experimenting in different places with what has come to be known as narrow-casting now. And it is not easy because some people just have no concept whatsoever of how to use the radio. But our hope is that as a result of this we will...we will see produced in the various languages in the vernacular better and better programs to reach a wider and wider audience of people.

WILSON: Now you broadcast on just one frequency from Monte Carlo?

TRAVERS: Well, not really. In shortwave, we broadcast on several frequencies because you change them. You can change your transmitter. And on medium wave, you have only one frequency.

WILSON: That’s the fourteen-sixty...

TRAVERS: 1466, yes.

WILSON: Now, on 1466, you change your language from time to time...



TRAVERS: Yes. Yes, you have what is...you have block programming. We utilize that transmitter only at night. We get a better signal. We've got...you get the wave at night which is...which is excellent. And it allows us to really cover much of Europe. Just extreme northern Europe, Scandinavia has some problems getting our signal [train passing in background]. But the rest of the...

WILSON: Southern Scandinavia even or...?

TRAVERS: Yes. Yeah, that's...from Denmark up we have...it's a little bit of a problem getting in there. That's the big areas of radio do that...accomplishes that, but we do get an excellent signal in the Iberian Peninsula for example and in Germany and in France. Even over into some portions of Russia. All of Eastern Europe. But shortwave is the major medium for reaching Europe anyway. You see, in Russia for example, seventy five percent of all the radio sets are shortwave equipped. Shortwave is a way of life around the world. You would not be doing the job adequately for example in Japan if you didn't utilize shortwave because they just...the young people especially are very big on shortwave.

WILSON: Now do you have.... I don't know a whole lot about the technicalities of radio, so I may be asking some rather basic questions, but do you have the capacity then to broadcast several shortwave programs simultaneously...

TRAVERS: Oh yes.

WILSON: And [unclear]

TRAVERS: We utilize twenty-one transmitters.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: Okay. And we can broadcast from any one of the six locations. We have one location in Bonaire, which is in the Netherlands Antilles, fifty miles off the coast of Caracas, Venezuela. And there we have a 50,000 watt and a 250,000 watt shortwave transmitter. And a 500,000 watt medium wave transmitter, which is the largest in the Western Hemisphere in missionary service. And in Monte Carlo, we have four transmitters. Two of them are short wave, one is medium wave, the other is long wave which we don't use much in this country. And we use it very, very...for a very brief time during the day to broadcast across the Mediterranean because it's line of sight. That's as far as it will reach. The thing to remember in radio is that the longer the wave, the shorter the distance. And when you have short wave, it bounces off the ionosphere and it comes back and it can keep bouncing. And therefore with even a small signal, with even a small transmitter, you can reach a considerable distance. The point is that every bounce diminishes the power by half. So the higher the power at the source,

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: ...then the further you can reach with a good signal. And you can change that

signal a little bit by changing the angle of takeoff. If you go up at a steep angle, you'll come down closer to the transmitter. If you come down at a...at a more shallow angle, then it will come down further. The first bounce will be further away. And first bounce capacity is what you're looking for. Second bounce is acceptable sometimes. But to that end then, you see, the sort of exciting thing that has happened, we installed the transmitters in Bonaire in 1963, and it began broadcasting in '64. And at that time, we didn't have China in mind at all. Bonaire was for South America and the Western Hemisphere particularly. We thought the 250,000 watt transmitter would do a good job in Europe, in Eastern Europe. And it does. And we even used it to broadcast to India. And it has a very effective signal...

WILSON: From Bonaire?

TRAVERS: From Bonaire. It has a very effective signal there. Shortwave. But we've just discovered that from Bonaire, it's the only place where you can get a decent signal into China at certain times of day. And so we broadcast around the South pole into China from Bonaire. We install the transmitters in Swaziland in 1974. And even then we did not conceive in November of '74 with our first broadcast that we would be broadcasting into China at all. That was not targeted. And yet between 5:00 and 7:00 AM the best possible signal in China comes from the country of Swaziland in Southeast Africa. It's a completely landlocked little country in Southeast Africa. And then of course our main thrust into China is from the island of Guam. So we can broadcast in many languages at the same time. There's no time during the day in which we are not broadcasting in several languages.

WILSON: So how...how many languages do you broadcast in? Maybe that's....

TRAVERS: Well it's more than 70. It varies from time to time because we are continually adding languages, and in some instances we drop some of them for periods of time for one reason or another. But I think right now, I think the actual figure right now is 76. But it's more than 70 languages in which we're broadcasting. We've received mail from more than 160 countries.

WILSON: Now does the largeness of your missionary staff...what, it's over 150 now?

TRAVERS: Over 600 now. Counting all the nationals. Yes.

WILSON: Oh 600. Okay, counting nationals. I got my figure out of the [unclear] handbook.

TRAVERS: Okay. That's 150 Americans, but...but our missionary staff is not just Americans.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: And we don't view ourselves in that light. We view everybody who's working with us as a missionary.

WILSON: Now is that largely taken up then with people who are busy producing programs in

these languages?

TRAVERS: No, no. No American broadcasts in a foreign language. Some of them produce foreign broadcasts but they don't do the broadcasting themselves. They utilize...

WILSON: Nationals do all of the...

TRAVERS: Yes. It has to be the language of the heart. You have to understand, if you want to minister to someone you have to understand the cultural background into which you're preaching. You have...you have to understand their listening habits. You have to...to use the vernacular, you have to know where they're coming from. And in addition to that, there's no American with the exception of a missionary [pauses] child that's been born overseas and spoke the foreign language before he spoke English who speaks without an accent of some sort.

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: And radio is the purest of all mediums. A missionary can never learn the language adequately. I mean, I shouldn't say that. He can learn the language adequately but never learn it perfectly. And still be accepted by the community because he's there. And they look at it. And they know he loves them because he's there. But when they listen on the radio, they become increasingly more critical. We are much more subject to the charge of imposing a Western religion and a Western culture on a community. And therefore, if it's one of their own who is undeniably one of their own by the pattern of his speech and the process of his thought, then he's much more acceptable.

WILSON: Like no one can play Brahms like the Germans.

TRAVERS: [Laughs] Very well.

WILSON: [Laughs] I wanted to ask you, we were talking about the types of broadcasting and all. Do you do any "secular" broadcasting news, whatever, what have you, anything other than religious?

TRAVERS: From certain locations we do. From other locations we're restricted and not allowed to do that. And we do have some programs that are oriented to helping the population. Those are limited. Because our time is limited. We do not have the luxury of a local radio station that just puts on programs to build an audience. We just...we just cannot afford that kind of luxury. Our transmitters are large, the cost is very steep, our time is limited. And therefore we have to...we have to utilize it for our major purpose as much as we possibly can. Now we do have some programs that are just music to attract an audience. When we start a new language block during the day, often times the first fifteen minutes will be...will be very easy going kind of music that appeals to the population, attracts their attention, draws them to stay tuned. And yet there are some languages in which we climb to the hard hitting approach immediately and try to arrest their attention right away. And then we offer a variety of kinds of things. For instance, in one of the most popular programs that we've ever had in Arabic was a program called "Science of the

Bible” which was done by Adley Fam [?] who was our Arabic broadcaster, and it turned out to be an extremely popular broadcast in the Middle East. Still is. Occasionally we will replay it, the series from time to time. And it seems to attract as many people and as much attention the second and third time around as it did the first time.

WILSON: Now you mentioned music. Do you stick with strictly Christian overtone music or when you say you sometimes...you would have...

TRAVERS: No, we do not. We have classical and...light classical, light popular.

WILSON: How do you know what is in the current taste in a country?

TRAVERS: Well, we depend heavily of course on our national staff for that. We put our studios as close to the target areas as we can. For instance, we have a branch in Germany and in France and in Holland. And in Nairobi, Kenya. And in Sao Paulo, Brazil. And in Buenos Aires, Argentina. And [unclear] England and in [unclear] Australia and in Tokyo and in Hong Kong. And the programs are produced in these various studios and then sent to our transmission sites. They're not all produced at the transmission site. Some languages have to be done at the transmission sites. Naturally, the Eastern Europe broadcasts are done in Western Europe. Some are produced in Germany, some are produced in Monte Carlo. We...we...our missionaries and our national staff frequently visit the target areas and talk to church leaders there to ascertain the mood, the temperament, the needs of the community there, so that we can suit our broadcasting to the current needs as well as tastes. Now there are some tastes to which we don't cater of course [Wilson laughs, "of course"] but we have...we have a limit and a restriction on the kinds of things that we will put on the air, even...even including music. Although we recognize that the musical tastes differ even in the Christian community in different parts of the world [Wilson laughs]. In the different parts of the United States that's true. But we do not apply American tastes and standards because they just don't apply anywhere else.

WILSON: Right. Sometimes they don't even apply here [laughs]. What about copyright? Do you ever get embroiled in trying to figure out...?

TRAVERS: We are...we are continually embroiled in that, and we have to be very, very careful. We have to follow all the rules. We have to apply for permission, and we do all the things that you have to do.

WILSON: Uh-huh. Is it...but do you prefer to use non-copyrighted stuff if possible?

TRAVERS: Well, it's not a matter of preference. We use what we have to use. And we leave the choice to the broad...the producers. We've just computerized our entire musical library in Africa, for example, so that a producer can go to the computer and find whatever he wants and know exactly where it is because they're not all necessarily in one place. And he can get it. Because they're producing that program six weeks ahead of time. We insist that the program be done and in our hands six weeks prior to broadcasting. It makes it a little difficult on some broadcasters. But it does give us time to accumulate the materials. And in the long run, it's better for the

producer.

WILSON: Do you...you said a musical library. This is what? Things that are things recorded that you own?

TRIVERS: Yes.

WILSON: That you have on file there. How big a library would that be?

TRIVERS: Oh my. It's in the...it's in the thousands.

WILSON: Big if it's computerized.

TRIVERS: Right. And of course it's going to increase because we're going to computerize our whole system. We're going to computerize all six...all...in fact we're going to computerize all the studio sites as well. So the main one...

WILSON: So you'll be able to crossover.

TRIVERS: Yes.

WILSON: Sounds like a good idea.

TRIVERS: It's indexed for instrumental and vocal and then the style. It can be broken down into style. And it's intriguing, you know, to see that in certain parts of Africa, country western style Gospel singing is just very much beloved [Wilson laughs]. And we look through our computer and find out that we don't have very many of those. And we're...we're now starting to work on...on building up the kind of thing that would be acceptable both to us and yet well received in the community.

WILSON: Now the country western style, is that the...the style that we know of as country western in an indigenous tongue? Or is it the actual English?

TRIVERS: They like the English. The country western style English. And of course enough of them understand English.

WILSON: That was my next question.

TRIVERS: In the indigenous tongue, we encourage the production of music that is just that. That is indigenous. For instance, our Armenian broadcaster married some years ago now a concert pianist. And she writes music that is strictly Armenian. And he writes new words to the glory of God to those and sings them and performs them. And they are very much beloved by the people in Armenia. They just think this is...this is theirs. It's not...it's not "The Old Rugged Cross" translated into Armenian [Wilson laughs]. It's theirs.



WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: And of course that does away with all of the old fashioned picture, you know. That some people call colonial missions. The imposition of our culture on another [train passing in background]. We...we avoid that as much as possible. And yet we're startled when we go to certain languages to discover that the church in that country has totally adapted and adopted the whole western music thing. And when we want to reach the church community, we have to go that route. When we want to reach the unchurched then we go the other way.

WILSON: Now everything that you've been telling me about trying to adapt yourselves to the indigenous culture, is that something that Trans World Radio has done from the start or has that been a late..?

TRAVERS: Yes, from the very beginning. The first four missionaries we had in Tangier were the mother and father of Dr. Paul Freed, Dr. Ralph and Mildred Freed, who were missionaries for twenty-seven years in Palestine. And then came back to the United States and had semi-retired. He had just accepted the presidency of a Bible school and then he was asked by his son to go back and start a whole new missionary career in something he just didn't know anything about. And the Lord led him to do it. By the way, he went back again twenty more years as a missionary. Very unusual man. He wasn't...he didn't become a Christian until he was twenty-nine. He went to the mission field after he was thirty. And he had two separate, distinct missionary careers, each in excess of twenty years. A very unique man, and a man marvelously used of God, very much beloved around the world. But they were two of the missionaries. The other two were a young couple from Spain, Miguel and Maria [unclear] and so from the very first, our indigenous...our other than English broadcasting was imbued with the culture of Spain. The music, the...everything about it.

WILSON: And those are the days when the Voice of Tangier was primarily broadcasting to Spain?

TRAVERS: Yes. Our primary target was Spain. I don't know how much of the history you know, but Paul Freed had gone in 1948 to Beatenberg, Switzerland with the large Youth for Christ conference which was held then. All the men went. And while he was there, he was encouraged to visit Spain. Which in those days was among the most restricted countries in the world. Equally as restricted as any country today. Why, the evangelical church was comprised less than one percent of the population of Spain in those days. They were not allowed to have buildings with signs on the outside designating them as churches. The buildings couldn't look like churches. They were not allowed to have windows or doors that led directly from the sanctuary to the exterior. They were not allowed to carry their Bibles in public or have weddings or funerals that were public because that was considered the public display of a false religion. They...Christians were oftentimes...the evangelical Christians were oftentimes denied access to the universities, to civic jobs. And it was a very, very difficult country. Paul Freed didn't want to go. But because he had so many things that he had to get back to in the United States. But they prevailed on him and he did. And he was strangely stirred by what he'd seen. He visited down in the Andalusia region in the southern part of Spain. He saw the people living in caves up on the

mountainsides. They whitewashed the exterior of the cave, and they do what they could. But those caves were very unsanitary...

WILSON: Were still caves.

TRAVERS: Sanitation facilities were in the back of the cave and the water would run down through the cave and out the open mouth into a hand dug trench out front. The children would play in that. It was not surprising then that they had [unclear] a great many of them. And the poverty really, really got to him. Not only the poverty but the spiritual dearth. He visited in one—he may tell you about this himself later—he visited in one cave where the mother and father were dying and the little boy, when he told him that God loved him, the little boy said “God doesn’t love me. You’re a liar. That’s not true.” And he got down on his knees and he talked to that little boy face to face, and finally the little fellow accepted Christ. And he said “Why didn’t anybody...why didn’t anybody tell me before?” And Paul Freed came back to the United States then and said “By God’s grace, we’re going to do something about Spain.” He worked assiduously then to try to develop a missionary society that would go back to Spain. He met with the president, Harry Truman, and was told that the government could not endorse any such activity and would not utilize its good offices to try to alleviate the situation in Spain because of our heavy dependence on Spain for military bases at that time.

WILSON: Now he got a personal interview with Truman?

TRAVERS: Yes. And in 1952, he founded what is known as International Evangelism in Greensboro, North Carolina. And at that point, because of several visits back to Spain and having gone across to the city of Tangier, a missionary invited him up on the top of a mountain in Tangier, pointed across the Straits of Gibraltar, and you could see the beautiful southern coast of Spain glistening there in the sun. It’s only twenty-three miles across. He said “Paul, I’ve often thought ‘Wouldn’t it be great if we could broadcast from Spain to here?’” And that launched the germ of the idea. And he came back to this country, made several trips, made the arrangements to begin the broadcast and on February 22nd, 1954, the first broadcast went from that mountaintop on Tangier. Prior to that, he had produced a movie called *Vandallia* [?] which was...and well before that, “The Tangier Story”. But *Vandallia* [?] was the best accepted. It won a prize at an international festival for the documentation of difficulty...dramatization of the difficulty in Spain. He took it personally day after day, week after week, month after month to churches all over the United States to help raise the funds to help raise the funds to start that first station. And so we used a little 2,500 watt used surplus transmitter and began broadcasting in two languages with four missionaries. And God began to bless. Other young people came along, he helped them raise their support. They went to the field. By 1959, we had more than twenty missionaries, more than twenty languages, and we had added two more transmitters, 10,000 watts each, and we had 22,500 watts of power. And it looked as though God was richly blessing. We were broadcasting in the Middle East. We were broadcasting to all of Europe. We were broadcasting across Northern Africa. We were broadcasting into Eastern Europe, Russia was getting a good signal from our 10,000 watt transmitter. And we...we could not really believe that the thing was coming to an end in Tangier. The intriguing thing was though that no missionary in Tangier threw up his hands and said “Well, it’s all over. We go to go home,” and began writing

back for...for jobs in the United States. In fact, every single one just knew that somehow, God was going to do something. We were...we were going to go somewhere and keep broadcasting. I remember they used to play little games in those days in Tangier. We wrote down a list of cities that were likely locations in...in Europe. Because we were, after all, we the only ones in Europe. And...and others had come, had tried to go into Europe, but it didn't work. We weren't on the Continent of course, we were just right across the straits, but we just felt that was our target. And then we'd cross them off. The least likely first, you know? Leaving just a handful of possibles.

WILSON: The semi-finalists.

TRAVERS: And the intriguing thing was the first one we crossed off every time was Monte Carlo. Because it just didn't seem that the city renowned for its gambling, you know, and being the playground of princes would be the place where God would put a missionary transmitter. But I've told church audiences in the United States "When God wants to do something great, it begins with a difficulty. When he wants to do something very great, it begins with an impossibility." And in October, October 16th...October 21st, 1960 was our first broadcast from Monte Carlo. With a 100,000 watt transmitter. And that was an exciting thing in itself.

WILSON: Now that's the transmitter that you didn't own or...?

TRAVERS: Well, we...we purchased it, installed it, and then turned it over to Radio Monte Carlo.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: And they maintain it and operate it for us. It's an agreement that we have with the station. It's the only possible way to be there. In fact, all of the transmitters there are under the same agreement. They...they maintain them. Which...which is a wonderful thing for us because it means that we do not have to have that extra number of highly sophisticated, highly trained engineers to maintain and operate that equipment. We have to do that in other places, in Bonaire, in Swaziland, in Guam, in Sri Lanka, but we don't have to do it there. And it's...it's a savings of God's money. And it has been very effective. In fact...now, see, when we began there, we began simply by leasing twelve of their frequencies and this transmitter. They have...they hold the title to those. The only way it can operate. Radio Monte Carlo has...has the monopoly for all the frequencies assigned by international agreement to Monte Carlo, to the principality. And they were not about to divide their frequencies and give them away and allow another organization come in alongside them. But they were willing on the basis of the reputation of the job we'd done in only five years, they were willing to assign certain frequencies to us for shortwave transmission. Now they've turned over the entire shortwave operation [unclear]. We are...we are Monte Carlo's shortwave service now. And....

WILSON: Now what does Monte Carlo gain from that? I mean, political Monte Carlo.

TRAVERS: Political Monte Carlo has no concern in it at all because political Monte Carlo is gaining heavy taxes from Radio Monte Carlo which is a private corporation headed up by men



from France. Businessmen. They have a seven man board. Political Monte Carlo just did not want to be bothered with operating a propaganda machine as is done in some of the other countries in...in Europe. And so for a while, there were only two major commercial stations in...in that sense of the word. One was Luxembourg, the other was Monte Carlo. There was a time when you could buy religious time on Radio Luxembourg. Right about that same time, however, right around '59, '60, '61, they began to phase out all religious programming up there, you just couldn't buy time on...in Europe at all. And it was a marvelous thing that God raised up this opportunity for Trans World just at the time that everything else was being phased out.

WILSON: You mentioned of course the fact that you could not in the 50s broadcast to Spain from Spain. And then of course the fact that almost nowhere in Europe could you broadcast within in the system. That is obviously still true today in the communist bloc countries. Have you ever encountered official opposition from any of those countries in trying to block signals or jam signals?

TRAVERS: Yes, very little of it. Very little of it. But we have had some. Some countries have done. We had quite an interest in an experiment that was conducted by two mayors in one of the eastern bloc countries. They turned off the electricity during our broadcasting times. But it didn't take very long to discover that transistor radios don't require electricity and that experiment terminated very rapidly. We have had from time to time some jamming in some countries, but by and large we've been manifestly free of it. We attribute that to several things. Primarily that we do not politicize at all. We are absolutely nonpolitical. We try to be in our broadcasting nonpolitical and noncontroversial. We do not permit political references, we do not permit controversial subjects. Subjects that divide the body of Christ. We would not allow paedobaptists to attack Baptists or Baptists to attack paedobaptists for whatever reasons.

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: There's no profit to that. There are too many people who need to hear the message that we all share for us to allow an engagement of that sort.

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: And as a result of that, because we will allow no politics, I think we have gained to some degree the respect of countries that might otherwise be antagonistic. And I think also we've eliminated their excuse for jamming us. What do they say to their people? "Religion is effective and therefore we're not going to let you hear it?" Or what they would like to be able to say is "Well see, they're not really religious, they're political. And we're jamming them on that basis." We just eliminate that. We do not...we're not anti-communist in our broadcasting, we're not anti-anything. We're...we're for the gospel of Christ. And we promote the needs of men and the needs of men are common everywhere. It doesn't make any difference whether you live in Russia or Saudi Arabia or Zimbabwe or Brazil or Tokyo or the United States. The needs of men. Men are lonely, men are alienated, men need to face the problems of everyday life. Death is a specter that...that lies on the horizon of every life. And men don't know how to cope with that. And there's only one hope. Every other religion tells man do your best, pull yourself up by your own

bootstraps, find your way to God, and only in the Christian gospel do we say “God has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” And only in the relationship that we call Christianity, the relationship to God, does God seek man. And the...the thrilling thing about that is that...that’s an acceptable view all around the world, that people flock to that as soon as they recognize it. We’re amazed at the numbers and numbers and numbers of Muslims that are coming to Christ today, when you consider the history of Muslim missions. I’m sure Dr. Freed will tell you later that he was with his mom and dad on the borders of Arabia and they worked there for twenty-seven years, and that faithful, day-by-day, hut-by-hut, tent-by-tent communication of the gospel. But it was slow going and very little response. The cultural, the ethnic...ethnic, the religious obstruction to the...to the gospel, the barriers that were encountered were...were very, very difficult to bridge. Suddenly, we’re finding amazing acceptance in the Arab world. One half of all the letters that come to our...as a result of our broadcasts from the island of Cyprus are Arabs who are receiving Christ. And the major portion of them from Egypt incidentally. It’s a very encouraging picture there at the moment.

WILSON: To what to you attribute that?

TRIVERS: Well, I suppose one has to...to say that it’s God’s time. You know, one of the favorite phrases of the New Testament is “In the fullness of time.” God has a plan for the Arab. And it just seems to be God’s time. But there seems to be another interesting reason for the acceptance of radio. The Arab mind is very logical. Also, the Arab is a natural born debater. This is...he [Wilson laughs] he seems to be born with an ability in mathematics and an ability to debate. And if you sit to talk to him, he will find one means or another to sidetrack you, to get you going in this direction or that direction. He loves to rebut. He knows his Quran well enough that he can lead you down a great many paths that you don’t want to go. But when he sits in front of the radio, he can’t do that [Wilson laughs]. He has to listen to the entirety of a logical presentation of the gospel. And his logical mind responds to that logical presentation. And I...I kind of think that perhaps this is happening. There’s another factor of course too. When a man is alone or a woman is alone with a radio, there are not the same cultural, social pressures on him that there are for instance against his going into a church or standing in a crowd, listening to a missionary preach. Or even talking to a Christian on the street or inviting him into his home.

WILSON: Sure.

TRIVERS: And he can do this in private. And the interesting thing is that when they accept Christ in secret, they’re an amazing and wonderful people. They’ll...they’ll express it openly. They seem to become fearless about their faith. And it’s an exciting thing that’s happening there.

WILSON: Do you ever get any feedback from...from the state in Egypt? I mean, would they just assume that...that you weren’t broadcasting?

TRIVERS: No, they’ve done some interesting things. Egypt, for example, has launched a program called *The Quran and Science* [both laugh]. But there has been no...never an official reaction.

WILSON: Another I wanted to ask you about was what your relations are with...with other radio stations, both secular and Christian, with churches. I guess we've kind of covered with governments. You're in a variety of places around the world, and I'm sure you've got to tread eggshells in very different ways with different situations.

TRAVERS: Yes. With...with radio stations, we have to be very careful in certain areas. Well, of course, by international agreement, you cannot overspread your...your meter band. You can't...you can't let your signal destroy someone else's signal. And we...we're are very careful about that. In fact, that's a very interesting story. Dr. [Louis Miles] Muggleton is the head of our propagation department in Trans World Radio. Dr. Muggleton was professor of propagation and engineering studies in Edinburgh University. And came to be known...he then went to what is known as the University of Rhodesia and established their entire engineering department. Then came back, was invited to come back to Edinburgh but instead he came to the United States. I'm sorry, he came to Trans World Radio in our London office full time with Trans World. Dr. Muggleton is known today as the outstanding authority on propagation in the world. Propagation is that science that determines what frequency you should use at what time of day from what spot in the world to broadcast to any other spot in the world.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: At any time of year.

WILSON: Very exacting.

TRAVERS: I'm trying...I'm trying to...I'm trying to encompass it all [coughs]. Yes, it's a very exacting science. Of course, the computer has assisted it tremendously lately but you can project for years ahead. What time of day at what location will receive which frequency best from any other location. And Dr. Muggleton has devised the method to do this to the degree that it's called...it's registered in Geneva as the Muggleton Method. The intriguing thing is that we were, years ago, we were trying to find someone who could do this or some organization, some company that could do this for us because we were starting to increase our languages and utilize more transmitters. We were praying very seriously about it. When suddenly, out of nowhere came a letter from Dr. Muggleton, saying "I understand that you're in the process of researching someone who could help you with this. And if I could be of any help, I'd be glad to." We discovered that he was a...he was a very dedicated Christian man. And he volunteered his time until he came with us full time. He volunteered his time to do many of these propagation studies for us. And here God had...had put at our disposal the outstanding authority in the world to achieve this. And it's been that way all along. That's been the exciting thing. Well, we'll get into that later. You asked me a question I want to answer. But perhaps we can talk about it a little bit...well perhaps you'll ask Dr. Freed the history of the thing.

WILSON: Well no, keep...keep going. It's an interesting tack you're on.

TRAVERS: Well, we've seen God do this on more than one occasion. Bring the right person at the right time to do the job that we never anticipated, that we never expected in the very same

way that miracles have...have come about in the...in the raising of funds. You don't know...we...we're not a fund-raising outfit. We've...we've never done that. From back there in 1959, we deliberately and definitely had to say to God's people "Look, if this thing is going to become a reality in Europe, we have to have \$500,000, and we have to have it in the next seven months." That was the schedule of payments that was required. And \$500,000 that looked like all the money in the world to us those days. It's still a lot of money!

WILSON: I was going to say to some of us it still is!

TRIVERS: It's still a lot of money. But when you consider that a transmitter installation today is four times that...\$500,000 was the entire thing. That was the antennas [sic], the transmitters, the whole bit. Today it would be nearer two million. But we had a regular schedule of payments, and I remember one schedule that I think was in February of 1960, one payment had...was coming due, and we didn't have the money for it. In fact we were considerably short, like \$20,000. \$20,000 is a whale of a lot of money when you don't have it. And our people in Monte Carlo (Dr. Freed was there in those days) checked with the...

WILSON: Paul or Ralph?

TRIVERS: Paul. Checked with Barclays Bank Branch Manager there in Monte Carlo, new man who had just come three months earlier, and asked him "Do we have the money?" And he said "No, according to our accounts, you're \$20,000 short." And they said "Oh, we don't know where we're going to get it. We've exhausted what resources we have." "Well," he said "Let's just pray about it for the next couple of days." They were amazed to realize that this man was a believer. That God had put him in Barclays branch right at that moment. And as he prayed about it, the Lord led him to contact other branch banks around and other banks in Monte Carlo. Because in those days, money used to get misdirected sometimes. It would take a long period of time before it got where it was supposed to go. And lo and behold, he discovered \$18,500 that had been thus misdirected. But \$1,500 is a lot of money when you don't have it. And so on the day that the payment was due, our man arrived, sat in his office, and they were discussing what they were going to do. And Dr. Freed was wondering "Should I ask for a loan? What do we do here?" And yet he felt constrained not to do it. The branch manager later testified that he was...he felt compelled to say "I'll give you the money." Because he wanted to see it happen. And you see, if we didn't meet any one payment, we could lose the whole contract. But again, it seemed that God's hand was restraining him from doing it. And so he called in his assistant and asked him what the up-to-the moment account was, and he said \$1,500 short. He said, "Well, is that yesterday's rate of exchange or today's?" And his assistant said, "It doesn't make any difference, you know. They may even lose money if we...if we put it in today's rate of exchange." That was from yesterday's. But that's a lot of money. And he said "Well, go figure it anyway." A little while later, the man came back in smiling. He said, "I really don't understand this." He said, "A little while ago most of their money was put into German marks." He said, "Last night the German mark went up." And everybody began to smile when they asked, "And how much did it go up?" And he said "Well the amount of money they have went up \$1,500 [Wilson laughs]. And it's just been that sort of thing all down the line. God has...God has meet the needs on time, put the people in the right place at the right time from unexpected resources. You should ask Dr.



Freed, for example, about the...the Sri Lanka contract.

WILSON: Okay.

TRAVERS: Which seemed like it was just gone. A death took place, and Dr. Freed felt led to go to the funeral. And as a result of that moment of compassion, Sri Lanka became a reality. And he could...he should tell you the story.

WILSON: All right, since he was there.

TRAVERS: It's a moving personal story. And...

WILSON: I'll be sure to ask him.

TRAVERS: Ok, now going back to our relationships. We...we try to be very sensitive in our relationships with other radio stations. And our relationships with other Christian missionary stations of course is cooperative. We share information, we share experiences, we...we examine their target areas and the times in which we broadcast, so that we don't overlap. When they're going north, we're going south. When we're going south, they're going north. And we've had a very happy and cooperative relationship with all the major missionary radio stations around the world. Notably, of course, HCJB, World Radio Missionary Fellowship, and Far East Broadcasting. ELWA in Monrovia and Liberia. Those three I suppose are the best known. There are some others. But those three would...would encompass the major missionary effort with multiplicity of languages and a...and a considerable size as far as power is concerned. None of them are in AM broadcasting, medium wave broadcasting, to the degree in which we are. See we...we have a 500,000 watt medium wave station on Bonaire. We're utilizing that 1,250,000 watt transmitter in Monte Carlo. We're utilizing the 600,000 watt transmitter on Cyprus. We have a 400,000 watt transmitter in Sri Lanka. We just installed a 50,000 watt transmitter in Swaziland, and we're going to upgrade that one, Lord willing, to 150,000. And medium wave of course is on every radio. No matter what else they have, they have medium wave. And it's closer to the people, and it's...if you can use it, it's good. The problem is that if you have to throw long distances, then you have to get super power, and it becomes exceedingly expensive. So we do have excellent relationships with the other radio stations. With the churches in the...within the country, we try as much as possible to work with the churches that could be turned evangelical, that adhere to the authority, inerrancy, infallibility of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection. We...we're an interdenominational agency, and therefore we work with a broad spectrum of people in the various countries. We are happy that we have been used of God in some areas to draw churches together. That they come together.... They've never been able to find a common purpose before. They've each done their own thing, and now all of the sudden, they want to reach people by radio. And so they cooperate to get it done. And that is an exciting thing. We're finding individuals in the various countries who...who have a broad and acceptable ministry in their own community to their own people. And we...we utilize them to broadcast. Some American broadcasters are being translated in many languages. Vernon McGee most notably is being broad...is being translated in about fourteen languages now, maybe sixteen. Of course when that happens, if it were translated back

into English, Vernon McGee wouldn't recognize his own message [Wilson laughs]. And that's necessarily so. He understands that and approves of it heartily. Because what happens is, our broadcaster takes his message and reads it, studies the Scriptures with relationship to it, thoroughly digests it, then takes his message and makes an outline from it. And utilizes the background and biblical knowledge and biblical training and biblical research that Vernon McGee has done. And then removes from it all the cultural accretion of the United States. And then redoes the message with...within their own cultural context. For example, in India, the idea of a group of teenagers running down and jumping in an automobile and going uptown for an ice cream soda is just [Wilson laughs] totally unacceptable. And you...if that appears in a broadcast, it...it is soon deleted. I remember our check broadcasters saying to me one day, "Oh, I do love Dr. McGee. He blesses my soul. I learn so much Scripture from him. But tell me, what is this where the rubber hits the road?" [Both laugh] Which is a term that Vernon McGee uses frequently and in his Texas...American jargon. And he's...he laughed heartily when he heard that because he realizes that he's talking to an American audience, and if he's going to reach the world, the Bible is the same, the teaching is the same, the moral is the same, but the cultural encasement of it has to be different.

WILSON: Sure. You...you folks sell time to other religious bodies then?

TRAVERS: We've steadfastly avoided the idea of selling time. Among other things, we...we don't...we're nonprofit and selling time is...is not the adequate word. We do ask American broadcasters to share the cost of the actual broadcast. If they were to buy the time, they couldn't afford it. Because you see, on these huge transmitters, the cost that they [train passing in background]...the charge that we have to make or that is made to us in many cases for the electricity and just for the operation of the transmitter is considerable. But it's still less than most of them pay for a major city in the United States. The reason is that our missionaries are all supported. They don't have to pay salaries and so forth. But we do suggest to them that they have constituencies that we do not have. They have resources that we do not have. And so we ask them to share with us the cost of the time. All who are with us recognize the value of it, recognize what comes of it. Vernon McGee wouldn't be in sixteen languages if he didn't see the results coming back. He's getting the letters from...from all over the world. He reads them regularly in his program. If you've ever listened to him, you know that it's...it's...he's continuously reading letters from all over the world. And he's thrilled at...at how the money that he's putting out for the...the broadcasts is profiting and blessing. They're getting more results overseas with a dollar spent than he gets in the United States with a dollar spent. And so we...we do not like to use the term and in fact refuse to use the term that time is "being sold." We do ask them to share it. There are many times when...

WILSON: At below cost?

TRAVERS: Oh yeah.

WILSON: Basically?

TRAVERS: We...we just recognize that there's no way that we can get into the general fund

enough resources to do the kind of job we want to do. You do have to remember though that when you consider the whole world, the English language programming is a very small percentage of our time. And therefore, if a broadcaster wants to come on only in English, it's not really doing the total job. He's...he's in English, and we...we will carry...we will carry people who have only English programming. But their ministry is very restricted, very limited, they're best in the Western Hemisphere. The minute you use them in Europe, there is that aspect of the personality of the European that rejects the American accent. And so his...his...his ministry becomes more limited. If he's willing however to do what Vernon McGee has done, then his ministry can really soar beyond anything that he had anticipated before. And then the dollar he spends becomes valuable both to him and to us. Because we can then take some local Bible teacher and use him to translate the messages. And therefore have a viable ministry with his own people. And then that enhances our...our national vernacular programming which is valuable to us. But in the vernacular programming, we have to bear the brunt of that whole operation.

WILSON: Where does the money come from then?

TRAVERS: It comes from people in churches all around the world. It comes from churches in the United States who support missionaries, individual businessmen who contribute to the work, the general fund who support broadcasts. And it comes even from people in Eastern Europe who, although they can't send money to the west, find one way or another to support the broadcast by sending in, for instance, in some instances from Hungary, they send clothing, they send woodcarvings, they send all kinds of things to the west...to us in Monte Carlo and Wetzlar, Germany. And they say "Here, take these, sell them, use the money to send back more broadcasts." The most moving of all of those was back a few years ago, we got a letter in our German offices, and it simply said "Please use the enclosed for more broadcasts." And when we opened the inside envelope, there were the gold fillings of teeth that people had had removed just at that time that gold soared, and they said "Please use this." That's how much the broadcast mean to them.

WILSON: Do you remember how much that netted you?

TRAVERS: No. That was all handled in Germany, and I just don't know what the figures were. But I know...I appreciated it because I had just left Prague. And the last words that were said to me by one of the pastors in the city, he took my hand and he said "Thank you for coming." He said "Please, don't ever cut back on the broadcasts. They are our lifeline." And I appreciated it all the more because having heard him say that, having looked into his eyes, then receiving this tremendous gift, I realized that...that he wasn't alone. This was on the part of all the people. They're all saying, "Yes, we believe in this work, and we believe that God is going to win people to Christ." And that's happening everywhere. In India, just last year a large group of churches got together, and they handed out little boxes, little banks. They're...they're meal banks and they put money in every time they eat. They just put a tiny coin, but in a country where the...where the per capita...annual per capita income is \$190 a year, they gave thousands of dollars for the broadcasts. And, you know, you're humbled in the...in the light of that, and you realize that God is saying to you through his children "Yes, keep it up. This is my work, and I want it done."

WILSON: You mentioned a fellow who said “Don’t ever cut back.” But you mentioned earlier in the broadcast that from time to time you will drop a language. What...what’s the criteria on which you do that?

TRAVERS: Well, unfortunately sometimes economic necessity. But other times, and much more happily, we will drop a language because it has become possible to broadcast within that country. To buy time on local radio stations.

WILSON: Oh, okay.

TRAVERS: And we encourage the mission agencies that are working there or the church that’s there to go ahead. We’ll provide them with the programs if they want. We’ll make them available and make our research material available to them. We’ll encourage them to buy the time right there if they’re...if they can and broadcast because that’s the best way to do it.

WILSON: Sure.

TRAVERS: To be available to the people.

WILSON: Right to the source.

TRAVERS: And, you know, if you could have a radio station in every city in the world....

WILSON: Wouldn’t it be wonderful?

TRAVERS: ...it would be great. It can’t be done yet. But, you know, you can do it in Spain now. And when I think of the difference in Spain in twenty-one years, twenty-two years from what I saw when I first went there in 1959 to what I saw when I went back in 1978, one of the finest Christian bookstores I’ve ever seen in my life in Barcelona, with a full display of Bibles in the window and titles of the great books that have been written and translated into Spanish. I...I wept unashamedly on that street in Barcelona because I can hardly believe that it had happened. And now today we can buy time on radio stations there. We haven’t cut out time broadcasting in Spanish because the opportunity is so limited. We still broadcast in Spanish from Monte Carlo with the AM. We still broadcast on shortwave. But the exciting thing is that it’s starting to happen. Fifteen minutes here, fifteen minutes there, but it’s...it’s becoming possible. And that’s an exciting and thrilling thing. It’s also possible in Italy now.

WILSON: Italy?

TRAVERS: Yeah, and so we’re...we’re recognizing that our responsibility from day one as we understood it before God was to reach the unreached. Or as some have phrased it “The otherwise unreachable.” You see, two billion people in the world cannot be reached except by superpower missionary radio. If you take all of the missionary methods, church planting, literature, whatever, those apply to half the world’s population. Or just over half the world’s population. Those can be utilized within just a little more than half the world’s population. But for the other half, there is



no other way than by superpower missionary radio. We hear a great deal of talk about hidden peoples. And how you define the hidden peoples is to some degree debated. We don't debate it. We simply say, "There are these people. They can't be touched in other ways. Yes, among them there are churches." We would have to say for example, that by our definition, Russia and China are among those two billion. The populations of Russian and China are among those two billion people, and there are churches there. Of course. But there, they are limited in their capacity. They limited in...they're restricted in their method of operation. And if the job of evangelism, the job of...of witnessing is to be done, then it has to be done from outside on a...on a multiple scale and can be done only by missionary radio. Yet a poll recently done in Russia by the Russian evangelicals there themselves assure us that every time we broadcast in the Russian language, more than ten million people are listening to the broadcast.

WILSON: And what percentage of the population is that?

TRAVERS: Well, there are 265 million people in Russia. So it's not a very large percentage. But...

WILSON: But ten million is ten million.

TRAVERS: But ten million is ten million. And of course that's not always the same ten million.

WILSON: Right.

TRAVERS: So we don't know what percentage of the...of the population we've touched. But we know that it's millions. And we know that they...they encourage us to continue. The letters assure us of the effectiveness. There are hundreds and hundreds of stories that can be told of the changed lives and the...the establishment of churches. We got a letter from a group of people, fifty...fifty of them, about 100 kilometers north of Moscow. And they wrote to say that they have started a little fellowship of believers. It's interesting the way they phrased it. They said, "The Holy Spirit discovered us to each other." Each having come to Christ individually listening to the broadcast and then just sort of finding each other here and there. But they phrased it, I thought, very beautifully in that word: "The Holy Spirit discovered us to each other." And they formed this...this little fellowship. And this is happening everywhere. We're seeing it take place constantly. We had one missionary write to us in South America. And in his reports, he said, "I turned in my report to my denominational headquarters this year and told them that we had *founded* six new churches. And we had *found* six new churches." When they got to the village, there was a group already meeting. So with all of that, we're encouraged to believe that God is using and utilizing missionary radio, the established means of this century in a unique way and in an increasing way. Our responsibility now is to find more people who will dedicate themselves to improve the quality of what we do, to increasing the capacity with which we have to do it. We're adding transmitters in different locations. We're contemplating right now another location that will give us better coverage in a part of the world where we're...we're not covering so well. And that's our aim. Our aim is to give a clear signal so that every person in that area can have at least one opportunity to hear clearly in his own language within his own cultural background a clear presentation of Christ. And with now more than 600 people in all the various locations that

I've talked about, we're seeing...we're seeing the...the development of a second phase. Or perhaps a third or fourth phase. For us it's a second phase. The building phase would have to be number one for us. We're...we were just adding every once in a while, adding a new station, and adding a new studio, and bringing in people. But now our phase is not a consolidation, but a developmental phase in which our...the training of our...of our nationals, the development of better studios better equipped to do a better job. The understanding of broadcasting itself. I think it has taken all these years, fifty years since HCJB was founded. We've done a good job. But now we're beginning to really understand broadcasting. HCJB will tell you the same thing. Far East Broadcasting will say the same thing. We're really beginning to understand broadcasting now. And so we believe that at this point, we can...we can do a better job.

WILSON: Now, we are running out of tape, and I'm also sorry to say we're running out of time.

TRAVERS: Sure.

WILSON: But one thing I wanted to...to get your comment on: when I was doing research, a little background research so that I knew something about Trans World Radio before we got started, I came across a thesis written by a John James Calvin King some years ago. I think 1973 on Missionary Radio in which he studied Trans World Radio and HCJB and Far East Broadcasting. And he made the comment in there that of the three Trans World Radio is the most conservative. And the way he described it was "Fundamentalist religious programs." Now do you find all that a fair assessment? Vis à vis HCJB and FEBC?

TRAVERS: I [pauses]...I would find...I think he should look at it again [Wilson laughs]. It probably...it probably was a fair assessment. And to some degree is probably a fair assessment today. However, I think he...he used a word in our present context, in the context of 1981, the word "fundamentalist" has taken on some connotations and overtones that are unpleasant. I don't like titles anyway, so if somebody says to me, "You're a fundamentalist," I always say, "Well what do you mean by a fundamentalist?" Or if they say, "Well, you're evangelical," I say "Well, what do you mean by that?" Because I refuse to allow us to be squeezed into that box. We have a very broad spectrum. We are not...we are not fundamentalist in the sense that it is used by today's press. We are not in that mentality that isolates us from...from everybody else and that puts us back as the last living dinosaurs. We are fundamentalist in the sense that we adhere to the theology that was originally written in *The Fundamentals*. And we do adhere to that, and we make apology for it. We believe in the inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures. The Bible is the major textbook. We are conservative in that we feel that it's unwise to run risks. I've already said we're not political. We won't run that risk. There are certain broadcasters, certain fundamentalist broadcasters by the way in the United States, whom we will not carry. And who if we were to carry, we would cut huge.... See, we monitor every broadcast. And we would cut huge slices of their broadcasts out because of the political references. Especially now in the Middle East for example.

WILSON: Sure [laughs].

TRAVERS: And we just monitor that very carefully. We just don't permit it. We have to be

conservative by the very nature of our...of our very sensitive relationship, even politically with some of the governments with whom we have to do. We have to be more conservative than...than some of the other stations in that sense and to that degree. Theologically, they're as conservative as we. We have taken a...a position whereby we do not carry charismatic broadcasts. And that may be what he...what he was referring to.

WILSON: Now that was written in '73. Had you made that decision?

TRIVERS: Yes. That decision has been of long standing. And not...

WILSON: And why is that?

TRIVERS: ...not for any reason other than that when you're broadcasting to that huge block of people in Eastern Europe for example, you have to come with one single voice. And they have very definite convictions about it all, and they have had some confusion back there. So in order to avoid that confusion, we've simply taken the position that charismatic churches and preachers have had their outlet. They do have their outlet in IBRA, another radio station in Portugal. And so they broadcast from IBRA and what comes out of Monte Carlo has one, single, consistent theological perspective. And we avoid the confusion that way.

WILSON: Yeah.

TRIVERS: It has been from time to time quite divisive. And we have determined not to have a decisive...or a divisive.... We want a decisive message [Wilson laughs], we want no divisive message.

WILSON: Uh-huh.

TRIVERS: And it was just a decision.... We are... we have very friendly relations with a lot of the people who are in the movement. They just don't broadcast with us.

WILSON: Well, I thank you very much...

TRIVERS: Well, I appreciate the time and the interest you've taken.

WILSON: ...for coming and talking with us. It's a fascinating story. I've learned a lot. So.

END OF TAPE

