

This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Robert Wesley Brain (CN 252, 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 Christopher Easley and Paul Ericksen and was completed in January 1992.

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.



CN 252, Tape 1. Oral history interview with Robert Wesley Brain by Paul A. Ericksen on June 11, 1983.

ERICKSEN: This is an interview with Robert Wesley Brain by Paul Ericksen for the Missionary Sources Collection of Wheaton College. This interview...interview took place at the Brains' home in Lanham, Maryland on June 11, 1983, at one o'clock p.m. [Pauses] Bob, maybe we could begin by just having you briefly outline sort of your...just a brief sketch of your history...

BRAIN: Um-hmm.

ERICKSEN: ...from birth...

BRAIN: Okay.

ERICKSEN: ...until the present.

BRAIN: My mother and father were saved and then went to a Bible school in Philadelphia (I think it was Philadelphia School of the Bible at that time). And I was born in their senior year. And right after that they took me out as a...just a baby to Angola. This was in 1928. Then [clears throat] I studied. After I grew up they...they took me through the first few years...gram...my grammar school years, and in between there we had a furlough. Then in our second term, they sent me to Sekaji School in what was then Northern Rhodesia. And then in...after that I went to what they call central school at Lubondaie in the Congo. Then in 1945, or '44 rather, they took me down to Capetown [South Africa] and I was able to get on a liberty boat [mass produced freighter for supply transport during World War II] that came across to America. I went to high school and then in 1945 I registered at Gordon College. From there I went on into the Divinity School. Then in 1953, I was married to Joan, and while she was in school finishing off, I taught at Southland Bible Institute in Kentucky for a year. And in 1956, we went out with the Africa Evangelical Fellowship to Lisbon, Portugal for a year of language study. Then in 1957, we went on to Angola where we worked in a Bible institute, set up until 1975. We came home in 1975 for just a six weeks furlough because we wanted to get back as soon as possible to our responsibilities there, but the week that we were to go back, we were informed by the mission that things had gotten real bad around the mission station, which is Catota, and they thought we should not go back with little children. So we waited around for approximately two years hoping that the situation would improve, but it didn't so we were reallocated in Zambia, where we spent the last five years at Luampa mission station in Zambia.

ERICKSEN: Okay, now let's go back to the beginning.

BRAIN: [Laughs] Yeah.

ERICKSEN: Could you tell me a little bit about your parents, the kind of work perhaps they were involved in?

BRAIN: Yeah, Mother and Dad...back in those days you didn't specialize in anything special like today. They were just...shall I refer to them as general missionaries doing evangelistic work and helping to set up the local church. At first we were at a mission station called Muie, really isolated on the western banks of the great Zambezi water system in Angola. And then we were transferred to the Muie mission station. So Dad...he wasn't involved in any kind of translation work. He was always just working with the church, helping them set up church and organizing the church and with the outstations.

ERICKSEN: And what sort of things did your mother do as a part of this mission?

BRAIN: Well, mother was involved with Sunday school work and women's work conferences and this sort of thing. There were two...two small children in the family back in those days, so that kept her pretty busy [laughs, clears throat].

ERICKSEN: Do you have any early...can you remember any early impressions that you had of...of Angola?

BRAIN: Back as a child?

ERICKSEN: As a child.

BRAIN: Yes, I can. I think that some of the things that I think back to when I was a boy was my hunting experiences. When we came home for our first furlough in 1935, (we went back in 1936) Dad took back a small twenty-two rifle with...for me, and I was really wrapped up in shooting birds and ducks down at the river. I remember I had a dugout canoe and we'd go down there, and if we weren't shooting ducks, we were fishing in the river. And I went back to that area in 1972. It'd been the first time that I had ever been back there since we were there in the early thirties. And I could still remember the area and I could see the little lake. We could see the lake from our home and I...I remembered it when I went back in...in 1972 [laughs].

ERICKSEN: Anything else that you remember from those early years, from the time you were small until you left in '44?

BRAIN: No. I had...I had one experience that really [pauses] almost cost me my life. When we were coming back from our second furlough in...in 1937, I believe it was, Mother and Dad stopped off at Silva Porta for a years language study because when they first went out in those early days, they weren't required to learn the Portuguese language as they were or as they are today. So they didn't have an opportunity to learn the Portuguese language. So that when they went back for their second term, they decided to stay in a Portuguese town along the railroad to study Portuguese. Well, it was at that time my sister Helen was born at the Camundongo hospital. Then we drove in on two old trucks to the...to the Muie mission station. And on the way we passed a...a trader, (a very isolated trader with just a little trading store, some bolts of cloth and salt and so on on his...on the shelves), because the driver of the truck told us he had a pet lion there, and he wanted us to see this lion. So we stopped to look at this lion. And the trader and Dad told me to get lined up with the lion. Daddy wanted to take a picture of me. Well just like a flash of lightning, that lion reached out



and with one claw caught my shoe and pulled me in and just wrapped it's claws around me. I had twenty-eight claw marks on my body. Well, the men rushed and Dad put his arm around me and he was beating the lioness on the face to let me go, and she just held on until she was good and ready. It was quite similar to what you see when a cat claws a tree or something like that. But boy, I really suffered. The sores became infected. What they did was they had a bottle of iodine there that was...somehow they got a hold of from equipment that was used in the First World War, like first aid equipment. And this bottle of iodine had been sealed all those years. And they took wads of cotton...cotton and dipped them into this iodine and dabbed the iodine onto all my sores. I had twenty-eight of them. Well, the iodine hurt and burned me more than the sores did from...from the lioness, but perhaps it saved me from getting infection like gangrene, because that's really dangerous from any kind of a leopard or lion claw. Even a cat is very dangerous. But, I remember that. I still have the scars on my body today [laughs].

ERICKSEN: What kind of living situation were your...was your family in? Were you in a compound?

BRAIN: When we first went there the mission station was, like, on the side of a hill overlooking a river. All of our homes were just made out of sun dried brick and the grass thatched roof. They were small but very comfortable and Mother was very handy at making a place homey. We had a fireplace. And over the years we were able to get in like pipe and so on, and we would fill a drum with water and then we'd have running water in the house. Nothing, no pumps or anything like that, just fed by gravity into our home.

ERICKSEN: Did you have Angolan playmates?

BRAIN: Oh yes, yes. One man, we've been friends down through the years. I played with him as a boy back at Ninda, and lost track of him. But when we came to Angola as missionaries and I was teaching in the Bible institute, this man (his name is Augusto Letwei), he came over and took the course in the Bible institute. It's an interesting story with him, just five weeks before he was suppose to graduate, the Portuguese secret police picked him up, and they were trying to get something on me so that they could expel me from the country. But Augusto remained loyal and told the truth, so that they couldn't get anything on me and he was released. But of course, then he'd missed his graduation. And he was afraid then to hang around any longer so then he trekked across Angola about four hundred miles and fled into Zambia. And then in 1978, when we went to Zambia, he was one of the first men to greet us there at Luampa. And when we started our Bible institute there in Luampa, he was one of the first students there to come in and take the course all over again [laughs]. It just shows how interested some of them are in learning and studying the Word of God.

ERICKSEN: What about your education as a child? Do you...you mentioned [unclear]....

BRAIN: It was...

ERICKSEN: ...on furloughs.

BRAIN: Yeah, my education was a [pauses] very slipshod sort of thing. Mother and Dad taught me my first grammar years, and of course, every time we came on...home on furlough I would be put in the public school systems. I never graduated from grammar school and I never graduated from high school, as such. I applied to Gordon College and they accepted me on the condition that I take some special courses there in summer school, which I did. So I got into college also without graduating from high school.

ERICKSEN: Do you have any impressions of furloughs when you were growing up?

BRAIN: Yes. I really enjoyed them. You know living out in the woods out there, completely isolated...when we were back at Ninda, we never saw a vehicle for the five years we were there. Never saw a single car for five years. And when we first...when we came home there for that first furlough, boy, I tell you, I was all eyes [laughs] and would stand at the...at the window and just watch the cars and so on. This really was an amazing thing to me. Then on our second furlough is when at a Bible conference up on Lake Michigan, I dedicated my life to the Lord and felt that the Lord was calling me into...into missionary work. [Pauses] What is hard sometimes on furlough is when people that have known you, you know, come up and...and they ask you, "Oh, don't you know me?" and "Oh, how you've grown up" and so on. It's kind of embarrassing to a [laughs]...a boy.

ERICKSEN: Did your folks have to do deputation work? Were you traveling around...

BRAIN: Yes.

ERICKSEN: ...the country?

BRAIN: Yes, yes. Some of their contacts were made through, you know, fellow students at Bible school, and they went out into the pastorate. Mother and Dad's home church which is Madison Avenue Baptist Church in Paterson [New Jersey], assumed part of their support. But here again in those days, it wasn't...wasn't very much that was required. So they did some deputation work but I can't ever remembering it being, you know, a real problem like some people today really face problems raising support.

ERICKSEN: How was the decision made for you to do you high school work back here in the United States?

BRAIN: Well, I had gone to this school up in the Congo, and [pauses] I think the part of it was the timing. Mother and Dad had a vacation, where they could leave the mission, and here again the mission station is really isolated. You have to [pauses] get a ride on one of the trucks that came in monthly in order to get out. And they met me in Northern Rhodesia and we went down to Cape Town. And I think they just decided that, you know, it was a good thing to send me home. And I had an uncle that took me into his home that year, and then Mother and Dad were coming home soon after that. I believe they came home after the war was over, and that's when Dad got me into Gordon College.

ERICKSEN: Any...any remembran...remembrance of what it was like in...living [pauses]...living in the United States and any impressions of America back [unclear]...?

BRAIN: No, I don't have anything that, you know, stands out in my mind. I know that we never lived in the same house. Each furlough was in a different house. But other than that, and of course I never went to one school more than a year at a time. We were always...each furlough was in a different place, and therefore in a different school too, so.... No, I don't have to many memories about...about that.

ERICKSEN: What if...do you have any recollections of [pauses] say worldwide events that were going on while you were growing up? Of course there was World War II.

BRAIN: Yeah. Well, of course, I was in school. When we came over on that liberty boat we really had a scare. They reported...well first of all, every week they would have gunnery practice. There was a bunch of Marines on the boat. It was a freighter, and I think there was about fifteen or twenty Marines on the boat. And they [clears throat]...they had [pauses]...I can't remember, big [pauses] big automatic machine guns, and I think they had two three-inch guns, one mounted at each end. And they'd have gunnery practice. Well, boy that was really something for me to hear these big guns being shot off. And they let out a balloon of some type and were shooting at the balloon, and it was just like fireworks. They had tracer bullets and everything. It was really something for me to see and hear all of that. Then we had a scare. Somebody thought that they'd sighted a submarine, and it was really...we were really frightened because the boat was very heavily-laden with manganese ore from Africa and they were bringing it over and we docked right here in Baltimore [unclear].

ERICKSEN: Was there...were there any political developments in Africa that...that you can remember?

BRAIN: Not back at that time. No. No, the...the developments...the political developments came more when we were out there as...as missionaries in the early sixties. Back in those days we...we were very isolated in Angola and there was never ever talk or...or dream, nor was it even dreamt that Angola would ever be independent.

ERICKSEN: You mentioned [pauses] that quite early on, you had decided you wanted to be a missionary. What sort of things contributed to that?

BRAIN: [Clears throat] Maybe just the fact that, you know, I was born of missionary parents. This particular conference was, I believe it was up at Lake Maranatha or is there a conference at...at Maranatha on Lake Michigan, I believe it is, where missionaries are invited for a conference. And we were there for the whole week, and the last meeting the missionaries were all going to give their testimony. I think there were about forty of them. And each missionary was given three minutes to give their testimony. Then the chairman of the missionary conference gave a closing meth...message on Isaiah chapter six [chapter in book of the Bible]. Well I...I had been given all kinds of toys and tops, and I was outside spinning my tops until I heard them singing. I heard them sing three times and I thought, "Well, now the service is over and I'll go and meet Mother and

Dad." And when I came into the auditorium I found myself to be in...to be in on the last part of the service...of the service. And the chairman of the missionary conference brought a message on Isaiah chapter six, and he really brought home, you know, the...the question, "Whom shall I send?" [Isaiah 6:8] and it just seemed that the Spirit of God pushed me away from the back wall there where I was standing, and Mother and Dad caught me up in their arms when I got up to the platform, and that's how I dedicated my life to the Lord.

ERICKSEN: And so part of that was also committing yourself to...to missionary work.

BRAIN: Yes. Yes, I had accepted my...the Lord as my Savior before then...

ERICKSEN: Oh I see, okay.

BRAIN: ...in Angola, yeah.

BRAIN: Dad had led me to Christ in Angola, but this was a dedication to missionary service.

ERICKSEN: And how old were you then?

BRAIN: I believe I was about six or seven, when I gave my heart to the Lord, and then this...the dedication would be on our second furlough [laughs].

ERICKSEN: Can you recall different things as you were growing up after that that sort of confirmed [pauses] that decision?

BRAIN: No. In fact the...the [pauses]...the reverse is more...more...more...conforms more to the truth. I really got...kind of got away from the Lord and interested in other things. And I think one of the main things that interested me was the fact that two of my cousins opened an airport, just side...just outside of Paterson, New Jersey. And I worked with them up there summers, and got into building the airport, which means leveling the ground and planting grass, and we had to build a bridge over a small stream. Then they started bringing airplanes, and it was building the hanger and this sort of thing. And I...I really had big ideas of becoming a pilot and doing, you know, different things in that area, connected with an airport. So from that standpoint I really, you know, forgot my calling and commitment to the Lord. But I'm so happy the Lord didn't forget me or...or let me go on in my own way. And then I think the...the thing that brought me back to realizing that the Lord had called me and I had given my life to Him was my experience at Gordon...Gordon College.

ERICKSEN: I have some questions I want to ask about Gordon. Just one more question during your earlier years. What...what sort of roles were the Angolans playing in the church structure...

BRAIN: Well...

ERICKSEN: ...at that time?

BRAIN: Well, back in those years, I don't...I'm not...you know, I don't remember too well exactly what the situation was, but I think that they would pick out some of the Angolans that were more spiritual and dedicated to the Lord, and they would be like deacons in the church. And back in those days we didn't have a pastor as such. They would invite different Africans to speak in the services and, of course, all the missionaries would take turns. Then during the week there would be Bible classes with the men and with the women and children and so on. So there was no really...no real organization. There was no...nothing like we have today like a church constitution or anything like that.

ERICKSEN: Okay.

BRAIN: Gradually, they would begin to take offerings and then they would teach the Africans to reach out and send evangelists to the surrounding villages, and try to impress upon them the need to reach out to their own people.

ERICKSEN: Now was there a particular tribe that your parents were working with?

BRAIN: Yes. Originally, down there at the Muie, we were working with the...at the Ninda, I should say, we were working with the Mbunda people. And then when we moved to the Muie, it's a mixed area there where we have the Luchazi and the Mbunda both together. These languages however are very, very similar, almost like brother and sister languages.

ERICKSEN: Did you learn those languages as a child?

BRAIN: Oh yes, I learned how to speak those languages. Mother and Dad said that I spoke them before I spoke English, and would talk to them, you know, at...at meal times in the...in the Mbunda language [laughs, pauses], much to their chagrin. They were really fighting trying to get the language and here I was talking it [laughs] to them, talking with them. It was really my first language [laughs].

ERICKSEN: You mentioned studying at Gordon. Could you describe your education there?

BRAIN: Yes. We...I think what I enjoyed the most about Gordon were the classes that we had in Bible subjects. I kept the notes down through the years (until I lost them all) and used them in my Bible institute work in Angola and then...or I should just say Angola. And the dormitory life, I really enjoyed...I made some wonderful friends there that I followed up down through the years. But it was really good. Then, of course, once in a while they'd have evangelistic speakers in and missionary speakers in and we had an Africa prayer band of which I was also a member. We had lots of fun [laughs].

ERICKSEN: Were there any particular faculty members or friends perhaps...

BRAIN: Yes. I think....

ERICKSEN: ...that had a particular influence on you?



BRAIN: Yeah. I think that some of them that I really enjoyed were Edward John Carnell, who became one of the presidents of Fuller Theological Seminary, and also Dr. Roger Nicole, who later became the [pauses]...the head of the Theological Department in Gordon Divinity School. And there were others like Ladd. I think his first name is Edward Ladd [George Eldon Ladd, 1911-1982], who's also on the staff of Fuller Theological Seminary and has written many books. These were some of the men that I enjoyed as professors and had an influence on my life.

ERICKSEN: Can you think of any specific ways that they influenced you?

BRAIN: Well, I really enjoyed Carnell because I...I took a sub-major in philosophy and he was really good. He was working on his doctorates thesis in Harvard at that time, and had just written his book, *Christian Apologetics*. And I really...he was a real challenge to us [laughs] in class.

ERICKSEN: Do you remember anything of Harold Ockenga?

BRAIN: Not necessarily connected with the school, but we did...I did go down to his church quite frequently. In fact, I took out what we call a student...an affiliated student membership in Park Street Church, and we really enjoyed his ministry there. I tried various other churches in...in Boston area out there where...the Gordon...Gordon College was and the Fenway, as well as in downtown Boston. And I...I preferred Park Street. And they had a tremendous missionary emphasis. Once in a while some missionaries from our mission board would come to their conferences and it was good to meet them [laughs].

ERICKSEN: What was the spiritual life like at...at Gordon?

BRAIN: I think it was very good. We had some...some real good professors that, you know, really love the Lord, and [pauses] it was really good. And, of course, the spiritual life of a school is largely what you as a student make it and take advantage of. Yeah, it was a...we had some times were the Spirit of God really worked and...

ERICKSEN: Can you think of an example?

BRAIN: ...students, you know, breaking down and making confessions to sin and so on, cheating. And at missionary conferences, others giving their lives to the...to missionary service.

ERICKSEN: What about the missions emphasis on the campus as a whole?

BRAIN: Back then it was very strong. In fact it was known as Gordon College of Theology and Missions. And it was very strong back in those days. And a lot of the graduates would go on to seminary and then to the mission field.

ERICKSEN: You mentioned prayer bands, the Africa prayer band. Could you describe that a little?

BRAIN: Well, it was a group of students that would meet once a week, and we would try to correspond to different missionaries in Africa, and re...you know, we'd report back on these letters and special prayer requests, and [pauses] we'd meet once a week and pray maybe for an hour or an hour and a half or so.

ERICKSEN: You...you referred a little earlier to how [pauses] your interest in missions or your sense of call to missions was reawakened at Gordon. How did that [pauses]...how did that process come about?

BRAIN: I can't say that it was anything, you know, specific meeting or a conference. I think it was just [pauses]...just the fact that I had, you know, I'd had that background, being bor...not born but brought up on the mission field, and had had that exposure. And I think that, when I...I settled down in school, I always had a tremendous desire to teach, to become a teacher. And I feel that this is what the Lord has gifted me in, and I think it was just a gradual realization that this is what the Lord would have me do and I just worked at that in...in college and seminary.

ERICKSEN: What about the process of deciding to work with AEF [Africa Evangelical Fellowship], having grown up in an AEF family?

BRAIN: [laughs] Yeah, that was more or less natural. I didn't even consider any other mission board. Perhaps one of the factors there would be the fact that there was no other missionaries or mission boards working with that particular language group, and it was just logical for me, in view of my training and background in Angola and the languages there that I had learned from the time that I was a child, for me to go back there, because then I...I wouldn't face the language problem.

ERICKSEN: So you sort of hung on to your facility with the tribal languages, even....

BRAIN: Well, I did and I didn't. It sort of [pauses, laughs] went into a...into the background of my mind. I know all through college I had a Bible, or New Testament back in those days, in the Luchazi language, but I can't...I don't think I ever read it or anything like that. In fact, I...I don't think I knew how to read the language when I was there. I left there when I was just a boy, fifteen years and a few years before that, I'd been away to other schools. But it was back there, dormant, filed away in [laughs]...on some disk or something [laughs]. And then when we went back, it just came back to me. It was just an unusual experience. All I had to do was hear somebody say something and I'd know right away, even though I couldn't say it. But once I heard it, then it would come back to me and then I could say it [laughs]. And that was my experience with Portuguese too, in the year that we were there in Portugal studying Portuguese because I had heard Portuguese, and I knew that quite well as well, so it came back to me, too.

ERICKSEN: So you didn't have the difficulties [unclear]...?

BRAIN: No, no problems at all learning the language.

ERICKSEN: I guess since you...well, what's it...what are Portuguese and the tribal language Luchazi...



BRAIN: Luchazi, yes.

ERICKSEN: ...what are they like to learn?

BRAIN: Well, Portuguese is...is [pauses] very very close to languages like Spanish and Italian. It's a Latin language with a Latin background. And there are lots of terms very similar to, you know...terms we even use in English. And the construction is very regular. I think it's easier to learn Portuguese than it would be for anybody to learn English. And the African language is also very consistent and obeys rules of grammar. It's one of the...one of the easiest languages to learn. There are no special sounds in the Luchazi language. And we spell it phonetically, just like we do our English language. And anybody can pick up the Bible and read it and even though they don't understand, a person in that language would understand what they are reading.

ERICKSEN: How did you and Joan run into each other?

BRAIN: [Laughs] Well, while I was up in Boston in school, I took on some...some practical work, which was part of our...our training and I became involved in Bible clubs with a fellow by the name of Tal McNutt, who had four or five different Bible clubs. This was before the Bible club movement, I believe, before it came into being. We had some of these Bible clubs with teenagers, and I was given on up in the North Shore area, and it was at one of these Bible clubs that I met...met my wife. We didn't go together though until I had finished that assignment. In fact, some time went by before we started dating.

ERICKSEN: And was her...was she interested in missions as well?

BRAIN: Yes. Yeah, she...she had felt the Lord had called her. She came from a very missionary minded church. She felt that the Lord had called her to Africa, and she had applied to the AEF, our mission board, before we started going together and she were going to go out as a lab technician, to work in one of our hospitals out there. So I guess the Lord brought us together [laughs]. Yeah.

ERICKSEN: Looking back on your education, is there anything you can see now that you wish would have had?

BRAIN: Yes. I think one thing that I would be very interested in would be [pauses] more of a pastoral theology. When I see today what they're doing in the what they are doing in the area of like Christian education and pastoral counseling, I wish I'd had more courses and specialize in that area because this is really something you could use all through your life, no matter, you know, what type of people or what language you're working in. The principles of Christian education and...and counseling are just applicable in any situation. We had some courses in pastoral theology, nothing in Christian ed. and I don't think it was even established as a department back in those days. And, of course, there was nothing in counseling. But today they are...they're big fields in our colleges and seminaries.

ERICKSEN: What have you found most helpful from your education?



BRAIN: Well, yeah, I would say perhaps the courses in [pauses]...the historical courses like Old Testament survey, and the life of Christ, and the apostolic age, I found these to be very helpful, and I took extensive notes and so on, and bought some books, and I adopted all of these for our courses out in Angola and then in Zambia.

ERICKSEN: Anything outside your educational work that you've found particularly helpful?

BRAIN: Uh-hmm. Well, I...Dad...Dad is gifted with his hands. He wa...always, you know, very good at making hou...building houses and furniture and so on, and I think I've inherited some of that and I just love to work with my hands. All through college I...I got a job working with a carpenter part-time and then in the summer time. And then after we got married, I worked full-time doing carpenter work, and this has always helped me out there on the mission field.

ERICKSEN: Can you give an example of...?

BRAIN: Well, when we first went out there, in '50...we got to the field in '57, we didn't have a home. So as soon as we were able to get funds, I built our own home out there. We burnt the bricks right there on the mission station and had the lumber cut out in the woods and we made a ranch style home, cement floors, and we had a fireplace that we...that I built. Then all our furniture...we had to make our own furniture. You can't go to a furniture store out there and buy it [laughs]. I had some rolls of this artificial leather and foam rubber and so on, and we were able to make some comfortable chairs, and we used them all through our twenty years out there in Angola. They had good solid African mahogany out there. It really stands up [laughs]. Everything had to be done by hand. Cutting the lumber out in the wood and sawing it, it all had to be done by hand. Planning it, we had some Africans plane it and put it into shape, and then from that I would make the furniture.

ERICKSEN: Did you hire the Africans to do the work?

BRAIN: Yes. Yeah, I would hire them to do the...that part of the work to prepare the lumber for me.

ERICKSEN: Do you have any recollection of what...what it cost you for a year back in your...?

BRAIN: To live out there?

ERICKSEN: Yeah.

BRAIN: I really don't but back in those days it wasn't too expensive. First of all, most of our supplies we would grow, you know, locally right there at the mission station. Staples like sugar and flour and soap, coffee, this sort of thing, we would buy. But we'd buy them in bulk so it was quite cheap back in those days. But all our vegetables and meat... I have done quite a bit of hunting. We used wild meat, and I would go out practic...almost every month, and bring in a big animal or two and this would be distributed among all the missionaries, and we would give some to the Bible institute students, and sometimes to the people in the church. So from that standpoint, it's really hard to estimate what our living cost were. But referring back to the home, I built that home

for four thousand dollars, including everything, windows and doors, and we had an asbestos roof, a ceiling, an insulated...it was an insulated like press board we got from Sweden, and that was available locally [clears throat].

ERICKSEN: Let's back up just a little. Can you describe the process of actual application to Africa Evangelical Fellowship, the process you went through to actually become a missionary?

BRAIN: Yeah. Well, of course, Mother and Dad were missionaries, and already with the board, and that made it much easier for me. I wrote in to the mission and just told them that I felt the Lord was calling me and I would like to become a member. And then there were the forms to fill out. There was a medical, as I remember it. And then they accepted me as a full-time missionary, which gave me then the authority to start working on...on support. And in our mission board, and I suppose most...most faith mission boards, each missi...missionary has to raise their own...their own support.

ERICKSEN: And how long did that process of raising support [pauses] involve?

BRAIN: Well, I...I didn't work at it [pauses] shall I say full-time, because in the process I met Joan, and she was applying to the mission board and she'd had no training in Bible, although she'd come from a good church. So the mission asked her to take the equivalent of two years. So this stretched out my deputation work over two years, so in a...to be truthful, I didn't really work at it. The Lord just provided. I had my home church that really stood behind us, and several of the churches that had supported Dad down through the years took on our support. And then some of my contacts in seminary also materialized. And then Joan's home church also helped. Then when we were ready, Joan had finished her work and we were ready to go, the mission gave us some contacts in churches that were further removed. And we went down there as...then as full-time missionary candidates doing deputation work and they took on our support, so....

ERICKSEN: Where was that?

BRAIN: Well, there was a church down in Ocean City, New Jersey, that took on a share of our support. And there again, back in those days it didn't require as much as it does today.

ERICKSEN: Was there a candidate school that you had to go to?

BRAIN: No, no, we didn't have any candidate school at that time.

ERICKSEN: Orientation.

BRAIN: Nothing like that, no [laughs].

ERICKSEN: You just headed for Portugal?

BRAIN: When...yes, when we went to Portugal, there was a type of orientation there. They had a retired missionary there that ran sort of a center for missionaries, and there were forty of us there in

Portugal at that time. Not all from our board, of course. There were different boards. Some headed for New Gui...Portuguese Guinea, and others were headed for Mozambique and we were headed for Angola, and they gave us a type of orientation program there.

ERICKSEN: What was that made up of?

BRAIN: Well, I would say [pauses] just telling us some of the, you know, the customs, the African customs, and how to relate to the church. And here again, it wasn't anything that was planned in any way. Just this senior missionary would have different sessions. I know one thing we did in Portugal that was really interesting to me was we formulated a camera club and had contests. This was just amongst us as young missionaries. And one month we'd have a contest on like bird pictures, others on character studies, another month on buildings, and...and so on. And then we'd give...we'd pay dues, and then give prizes to the best pictures. And this really helped us to...to learn how to take pictures.

ERICKSEN: Do you remember anything about Al and Mary Lee Bobby from your time in Portugal?

BRAIN: Well, yes. The Bobbys were missionaries then working with TEAM [the Evangelical Alliance Mission]. They had their home in Portugal. I can't remember what suburb they were in, right near Lisbon someplace. And we'd meet them once in a while in one of the Portuguese churches, and I think that once in a while they'd invite us out as a group of missionaries for a picnic or something like that in their home. And I do remember once, I was up against it for something, I just can't remember the details, but I remember that Al Bobby loaned me his little Volkswagen, and I was just so thrilled that he would do that to help us out [laughs].

ERICKSEN: So after the year of language school, then you went down to Angola?

BRAIN: Yeah, then we went on to Angola. Back in those days it was all by boat. We didn't have any airplanes. We got on a Portuguese freighter and went south to Luanda. It took us a whole month to get down [laughs]. Like a slow boat to China.

ERICKSEN: And what was your first assignment to be?

BRAIN: Well, we were allocated to Catota, and at Catota, Mr. and Mrs. Pearson, who had come out in the early 1920's, had already started a Bible institute. And by this time I was, you know, quite settled in my mind that this is what I felt the Lord wanted me to do, and we stepped right into that situation. Within a few months of my arrival there I was teaching in the Bible institute because I didn't have the language problem you see. It all came back to me.

ERICKSEN: What...what stage of development was the school at by that time?

BRAIN: It was still very, very primitive. They...they had classes five days a week [pauses] and exams. There were no entrance requirements. Students came to us back then, not knowing how to read and write, and part of the curriculum would be courses in literacy and writing. Some of the...I

know some of the students couldn't write the exams, and after students who could write the exam were finished, then they'd write the exam for these other people that couldn't write it, and that's the way we started out back in those days. They started with three students and the school gradually grew until, I'm not sure what year it was, we had as many as a hundred and eighty in the school.

ERICKSEN: What classes were you teaching?

BRAIN: I can't remember that now either. I think that I...I taught a survey course in the Old Testament. I know Mr. Pearson [Emil] was teaching there and his daughter Edla was teaching, and Mrs. Pearson [Daisy]. So that made three of them and then I came in, that made four of us, and then eventually Joan started, but I can't remember what courses I taught [laughs].

ERICKSEN: Were you doing anything outside teaching responsibilities?

BRAIN: Not too specifically. I tried to get out to villages and so on to...to do a little evangelistic work. I had a motorbike back in those years, and eventually we were able to get a car...a truck, a small truck. And with this I was able to get out to the villages and take some of the students and so on. And sometimes we would go out and hold conferences. Maybe Mr. Pearson would go along and so on, so it was a [pauses]...really a tremendous experience, and really good to get out to the villages and see what the graduates were doing, some of them after they had left school and gone back to their own villages. It was really a...a thrilling experience.

ERICKSEN: What sort of things were they doing?

BRAIN: Well they were acting as pastors. I call them village pastors. You know, just conducting of small, small work out in the village, teaching Sunday school, and running the services, and preaching. The pastors out there don't earn any salary as such, so they have to be self-supporting, so that their...the time they devote to a church is somewhat limited. But alongside with supporting themselves, keeping their own gardens and so on, they conducted these churches and had...had an outreach that way.

ERICKSEN: Are there any ways in which evangelism and church work in Angola had differed from the sort of thing that takes place here in this country?

BRAIN: I wouldn't say...no. I wouldn't say there is any difference. I think that basically it's the same. Outreach there, you plan a conference, and people are invited in, and there'd be a series of meetings with special speakers and so on. And then when there are people that make a decision, we try and follow up with special instruction and men's class and women's class. Then we turn the names over to the pastors in the area and they try to follow it up. I would say it was about the same as we see here.

ERICKSEN: Were there any particular concepts or illustrations or something along that line that you used in your evangelism that was particularly Angolan [pauses] to help illustrate different aspects of the Gospel?

BRAIN: No, I can't say that there...there is. The...the Africans have a rich background of anecdotes and stories and animal stories that they are very clever working into their messages as illustrations and so on. But I think in my ministry I stuck more to the Bible and illustrated my messages from Bible stories.

ERICKSEN: So that perhaps an Angolan evangelist, did he have an easier time?

BRAIN: I would think so, yes. Yeah, because they would know their own people, and...much better than, of course, we would ever know them, even though I grew up out there. You know, it's just different. You're in a missionary home and they're in the village. And [laughs] they're the ones who really have the contact and know their people. So it would be easier for them. I...I think you're right there, yeah.

ERICKSEN: What was tribal...what was the particular tribal culture like?

BRAIN: Very, very primitive. We...our mission station of Ninda and Muie was located among some to the most backward people in the whole of Angola, mainly because of isolation. There were hardly any Portuguese people in there when we in...went in there, even though the Portuguese had been in Angola for over four hundred years. Yet there was, you know, no contact back in that area. So that they were very, very backward. I can remember distinctly, when I was just a child, that it would be a very common thing to see Africans dressed in skins. A skin...they would have a string tied around their waste, and then a goat skin or an animal skin hanging down in front, and then...and another in back. And I can remember, too, the women, back in those years would have a...an oil that they...that they pounded from some kind of a seed. And they would mix this oil and red clay into their hair, and the smell was just terrific. Now you never see that anymore.

ERICKSEN: Terrifically which? Terrifically bad or...?

BRAIN: Yeah, terrifically bad [laughs]. And it wasn't perfumed [laughs]. Yeah.

ERICKSEN: What about crafts sorts of things?

BRAIN: Among the people there? Well, they're quite clever. I think a lot of these arts are being lost today, because with the era of plastics and cardboard boxes and so on. Back in those days, they would weave, you know, beautiful baskets from bark rope and strips of a certain type of a root that they dig up. And, of course, knives and axes and hoes for gardening, bows and arrows, spears, all this thing...all these things. They would dig up certain kind of rocks and smelt the iron themselves. [pauses] Yeah.

ERICKSEN: Was it an agricultural...?

BRAIN: Mainly, yes. They grew...the main staple diet out there is the manioc root. Then eventually corn was brought in and sweet potatoes, beans, this sort of thing, but the were.... Back when missionaries first went there, they had very, very little.



ERICKSEN: Very little...?

BRAIN: By way of variety, you know, food and so on.

ERICKSEN: Did you grow up on the...the tribal cooking?

BRAIN: Well, I don't remember but we must have because we had to trek in. When Mother and Dad first went in in 1928, we trekked in three hundred miles. Dad couldn't speak a word of the language, and he couldn't speak a word of Portuguese, except a few words that he learned as they traveled. We had a large group of carriers that carried all our personal belongings in. Dad made a box for me and put...knocked the two, the bottom and the top out, and put a screening in it. So two men carried me into the mission station, three hundred miles away in this box. And sometimes I'd sleep and sometimes I would sit there and playing with my toys [laughs]. Of course, I can't remember any of that [laughs].

ERICKSEN: What about music of the tribe?

BRAIN: Well, they have different musical instruments. Perhaps the main one, of course, is the drums. These are just tree trunks that are hollowed out and then they'll take a skin and stretch it over there real tight. They have little harps that they play, hold in their two hands and play. It's more or less an instrument just to play for yourself as your walking along the road or something. It's not for like a gathering of people. [Unclear].

ERICKSEN: Did they have any kind of music for public...?

BRAIN: No, just their weird songs, their, like, ballad type songs. And a lot of them are connected, of course, with dancing, tribal dancing, circumcision rights and so on.

ERICKSEN: What was the dancing like?

BRAIN: Well they'd...they'd...it'd be rhythmic dancing around and jumping up and down with their...their feet and waving their arms sort of thing. I...I think some of our modern dances are taken from [laughs] the dances that they have out in Africa.

[Recording is stopped and restarted]

ERICKSEN: So, I guess I'm wondering in light of all these different cultural features, what...are any of those incorporated into the...the chur...the life of the church?

BRAIN: In Angola we didn't. However in Zambia, we...when we went there in 1978, we found that there are a lot of like rattles or shakers that they use in connection with their choir singing. And I think its mainly, not to provide a [pauses] like a tone or anything like. It's just mainly for...for beat, for timing. And it really helps because it keeps the song, the hymn moving along and to time.

ERICKSEN: What sort of hymns did you use?



BRAIN: Well, they just sort of took...we just have taken our regular hymns that we use here and put words to it, sometimes translating where it's possible and where the thought fits in. But otherwise, they would just, you know, put words to it that would be fitting and of a spiritual nature. Recently now in Zambia, I found that more and more, Africans are writing their own songs and coming up with their own type of music. My wife perhaps could explain to you more about that because she plays the piano, and she knows how to read music and all that, and there are some things that are interesting about African music that I'm sure that she could tell you about.

ERICKSEN: Alright. Could you talk a little about the traditional religious beliefs of...of the tribe?

BRAIN: Uh-huh. Yes. They are spiritists in that they believe that when a person dies the disembodied spirit can come back and can cause sickness or disease or misfortune, lack of rain, anything like this. And these spirits can come back. They call them *mahamba*. They can come back any time and the reason why they come back is to get even with you. For example, if when that person was still living, you offended them or you didn't give them a glass of milk or water or whatever it is that you should have done, then they come back...they can come back and get even, pay you back for this. And they feel that nothing has a natural cause. If you develop a toothache or if you have an earache or if you stub your toe or if you cut your finger, it's always the result of some evil spirit. And they look at them at that juncture as evil spirits, coming back and causing...causing this. And if you...you know, if you just cut your finger, well okay, that's over with. But if you're really sick and you don't get better, or if you have a series of setbacks, what you do then is go to a witch doctor, and he'll divine over you for a price, and then he'll determine the cause or the cure of the...the series of mishaps you've had or this disease that you're suffering, and recommend a...a treatment or something. So they live in constant fear of these evil spirits, and they're all different kinds, different tribes. I've been amazed, when I went back to Angola now, there's a new sect sort of developing among the Zambians, and there are witch doctors that specialize in what they call *mahamba-vindele*, which are the departed spirits of white people. Now these would be people that have come out, for example, as colonial officials or missionaries, and have died out there, and the Africans are fearful and are worshipping their spirits. And it's become a specialized thing, where they hire witch doctors that... And if you're suspicious, maybe your conscience reminds you of something that you did way back when this white man was still living, and then you get sick and you're suspicious that this might be the reason, then you go to this particular witch doctor and he divines for you, and....[laughs].

ERICKSEN: Do you find that it's a big barrier to get over, to get through the...the traditional religious beliefs in a person's coming to Christ?

BRAIN: In a sense, yes. They [pauses]...they...they don't...some of them, you know, just look at all this thing with a big question mark in their thinking. Some of them, you know, might recognize and...and realize some of the tricks that the witch doctors do to fool people and so on, and for this reason, you know, there not completely sold out on this whole concept. And when Christianity comes along, they might be more open to accepting the Lord. But we find even after people are Christians and members of the church for many, many years, there is always the danger. There is pressure from relatives who don't know the Lord. And suppose you're a Christian, you've been a Christian a church member for many, many years, but then suddenly you develop, for example,

like tuberculosis or something like that, which is a disease which has long term effects and [pauses] a Christian can suffer tremendous pressure from the relatives to go to a witch doctor and to...to be divined over to see what this is. And some of them succumb to this pressure.

ERICKSEN: And [pauses] with what result do they...?

BRAIN: Well, spiritually, of course, they've...you know, they're in a backslidden position. If the church finds out about it we...we put them out of fellowship, by which we mean that they are not allowed to come to the Lord's table [communion]. I don't know, does that answer your question? Yeah.

ERICKSEN: Do they eventually come back into the church, or do some...

BRAIN: Many time, most of them...

ERICKSEN: ...just gradually...?

BRAIN: ...I would say most of them do. But once in a while, one will really get, you know, back into it and [pauses]...and really just, you know, depart and forget the things of the Lord. And one wonders if they were ever really saved. And there are so many other circumstances involved in this sort of thing. Perhaps say a wife has been married and then her husband just lets her go, sends her away, and then she be...gets sick, or maybe she was sent away because she was sick, and her relatives take her back in, and she gets back into a heathen context. It's really, really difficult.

ERICKSEN: Are there any...I know in some...some countries the church will have like a burning of idols and fetishes and that sort of thing. Is there any...anything comparable to that...

BRAIN: Yes.

ERICKSEN: ...with the church in Angola?

BRAIN: When we were back in Angola, this was an experience that we had occasionally when a witch doctor accepted the Lord. In fact, we had one come to our Bible institute at Catota, and this...this was the custom. He would bring his fetishes and his relics and there'd be a confession, and then they would throw them on the fire and he would give the testimony, and it was made into a real opportunity of witness, and so on to the...to the Africans that would see this. But I have not seen this in Zambia yet.

ERICKSEN: What sort of things would a tribal person, sort of I guess behavior changes, would an Angolan have to stop doing in the situation [unclear]...?

BRAIN: Well, I think that just the...the regular lifestyle that we have here in America. You know, a lot of people they're addicted to drink and smoking, a very loose moral life, perhaps stealing, dishonest dealings with one another and with the traders. And these were...these are things that



they would have to...you know, the Holy Spirit would deal with them and they would have to give up in their lives.

ERICKSEN: Are there any thing...?

BRAIN: And, of course, their fear of the evil spirits. Pardon, you were going to ask a question.

ERICKSEN: Is there anything that they [Brain clears throat] might give up that we would be...just isn't part of our framework? Anything from their cultural background that...?

BRAIN: Well, maybe this matter of the fear of the evil spirits would be something that we wouldn't have to give up.

ERICKSEN: I was wanting to ask you if there are any...any particular, I guess passages [in the Bible] or emphasis that you have found particularly helpful in dealing with the whole issue of fear of...of spirits and...?

BRAIN: Well, I think those passages that Moses has for us in Leviticus [19:31, 20:6?] and Deuteronomy [18:9-13?] are the ones that we...we use. And the fact that we are to have victory over these things and commit our lives to the Lord.

ERICKSEN: Okay. Were there any other major religions active in Angola?

BRAIN: Not in our area, no. Roman Catholicism came in eventually, and, of course, in the civilized areas it was quite strong because this is what the Portuguese brought in, back over four hundred years ago when they came. But other than that there were other groups, Pentecostal groups and that sort of thing, but I wouldn't think of any religion like...there were no Mohammadans or anything like that in there. They, you could find those up in the Congo...what was in the Congo, but we didn't have them down in Angola.

ERICKSEN: Did you have any contact with Pentecostal or charismatic groups in the area you were working in?

BRAIN: No, none whatsoever. And I would say that they came in more through the Portuguese, because there would be immigrants from Portugal coming to Angola that were connected with this...this type of thing in...in Portugal. And it wasn't an extreme Pentecostal group, like you know, speaking in tongues and healing sort of thing, where it was really emphasized.

ERICKSEN: What about other mission groups, other...?

BRAIN: Our sister mission, working along with us was the Christian Mission of Many Lands, the [Plymouth] Brethren group. They worked along the railroad and then further east and also along the same railroad was the United Church of Canada. They had quite a large work there. And back in those days, the missionaries from the United Church of Canada were really, you know, sound fundamental people that really loved the lord, but this gradually changed over the years [pauses] unfortunately and their work really went down, too. Then directly east of us there was what we call

the Filafricaine Mission, from Switzerland, which was a very good work. And we're still connected with them even today after all the fighting and so on, and one of our doctors is located at one of their mission stations. So there's, you know, real close fellowship between us there.

ERICKSEN: Did you do cooperative work?

BRAIN: Not, not really, no. They worked in a different language area so there was no reason for overlapping. Even the Brethren work...work...worked with a different group.

ERICKSEN: So with the tribe that you were with it was basically AEF...

BRAIN: Right. Yeah, there were no other...

ERICKSEN: ...being involved?

BRAIN: ...mission boards in that area. And Mr. Pearson, I referred to him before, he was the one that translated the Bible into Luchazi language.

ERICKSEN: When did he do that?

BRAIN: The New Testament came out, I believe in [pauses]...it was there when we got there, '54 or '55. And then the...the whole Bible, I'm not sure when it came out, about fifteen years after that. [rustling paper in background] It came out in [pauses]...in '63. I have a Bible here with the date in it, '63 [laughs, clears throat].

ERICKSEN: Another question about evangelism. Is there...was the tribe family oriented or what was sort of the structure of the tribe, and was there any way that that effected the way you did your evangelistic work? I guess that's two questions.

BRAIN: Yeah. I'm not quite sure what you mean by family orientated, but they did..they live in families. I mean a husband and a wife will have a house and their children sort of thing, in a village, and there'd be anywhere from one or two families in a village to a big village with three or four hundred people. And when we would have meetings, normally they'd be public meetings where both men and women would come. However, their culture does not permit them or it's not acceptable for men and women to sit together. The men would sit in one area and the women will sit in another area separated, and the children will be back and forth between the two groups.

ERICKSEN: Was there anyone in particular in the whole tribe that [pauses]...sort of a person of influence that you would like to really start with in terms of strategy?

BRAIN: Yeah. Normally in the village there'd be a chieftain, and if you went in like for the first time to hold meetings, the proper thing would be to go to the chieftain's house and talk to him and get his permission. And normally they would, you know, be very favorable and respond and they would call the people together. But if the chieftain was against it or fearful, it'd be very difficult to reach the people in the village, because if they came to one of your services, then they would sort of be on the outs [laughs] with their chieftain.

ERICKSEN: Can you think...any particular situation that you have in mind where that actually happened?

BRAIN: Well yes, I've been in villages, you know, where the chieftain just didn't want anything to do with Christianity. And mainly because, synonymous with Christianity is a life of, you know, separation from sin and so on, and lots of them just didn't want to give that...give it up. However, as years went on, there was less and less pressure so that we would come into a village and there'd be a sizable number of Christians in that village...village, as well as a sizable number of non-Christians. And the chieftain sort of became, you know, as time went on, more neutral. And sometimes the chieftain would be saved, and they'd [the tribe over which he was chief] be a group that weren't Christians. It ju...it would vary in every case. In the...in the latter years in Angola, many times in one village, at one end would be a group of Roman Catholics and they would have their little church, and at the other end there'd be a group of Protestants and they would have their little church.

ERICKSEN: What was [pauses]...what was the Roman Catholic [pauses] Christianity in Angola like?

BRAIN: Well, they never did very much for the people. They never...they never, you know, did much by the way of literacy, teaching people how to read and write. Along the railroads they would have their schools and so on, but out in the rural areas very little was done for the Africans and.... Roman Catholicism was very easy to subscribe to because there was no element of separation stressed. And the African could continue on in his old ways and superstitions and be baptized a Catholic and be, you know, there'd be no problem at all.

ERICKSEN: [Pauses] So in...in the tribe that you are working with, you had the Bible school and you had the church work. Is that right? And is that basically the extent of...?

BRAIN: Well, we also had a small hospital there.

ERICKSEN: Oh.

BRAIN: This was built really before we got there in '56. But then we had a doctor, Regina Pearson. This was another daughter of the Pearsons that translated the Bible. But she wasn't there too long, and then we were quite a number of years there without a doctor at all. Then during the civil war years or the wars for independence, Dr. Foster, Robert Foster came in and he was located at Cavangu, which was the main leprosarium for all of Angola, but became a general hospital as well. He would pay periodic visits, I think it was...what was it, every...every month he'd come in for a long weekend to our hospital there at Catota.

ERICKSEN: How did the...how did the hospital work fit into what you were trying to do [pauses] in the area?

BRAIN: Well, it would be an outreach in that they would...they would employ a hospital evangelist, like a chaplain I suppose.

ERICKSEN: An Angolan?

BRAIN: Yes, yes. And there at Catota it was always a student or a graduate of our Bible institute. And he would hold services in the men's ward, in the women's ward, and also down in the sick camp, by which I mean patients that weren't hospitalized could live in small houses near the hospital, and he would hold services down there. So it was a real means of outreach, and, you know, a lot of patients would come in from distant villages, and quite a number of them would come to know the Lord and go back, and then they would call and ask for a pastor, and this is the way we kept reaching out more and more. The church at Catota, at one time we had forty-two missionaries of our own out in the surrounding area supported by the local church. And a lot of these contacts were through people that had come to the hospital for treatment at one time or another, were saved and went back to the village, and saw the advantages of Christianity, and then would send in or send a delegation in or come in themselves and request the local church to send out a teacher or a village pastor to...to set up a work in their village.

ERICKSEN: How large of an area was the hospital serving?

BRAIN: Quite large. Two or three hundred miles. Sometimes people would walk for days to come in. Once in a while you'd hear of somebody they were bringing in and the person would die on the way, wouldn't make it.

ERICKSEN: During the period from '56 to '75, do you remember any difficult...particularly difficult years in terms of the work of the mission?

BRAIN: Well, it...it became difficult when the civil war or... (I shouldn't call it a civil war), the war for independence started.

ERICKSEN: What year was that?

BRAIN: This was in the early 60's. It started up north and branched out to the east. And they had these freedom fighters located in Zaire and in Zambia. And those were really difficult years because the Portuguese really were nervous and got on edge. And I...I think that some mission boards were involved with these freedom fighters, helping them and supporting them, and this put us all under suspicion. There were many years there that the Portuguese government would not issue re-entry visas. There were about three hundred and fifty missionaries in Angola and it wasn't long before we were right down to a very bare minimum.

ERICKSEN: Because the government suspected missionary....

BRAIN: The government, yeah, yeah. And it was only where there was really, you know, close contact with Portuguese officials that missionaries were trusted and allowed to...to continue.

ERICKSEN: Was that the case of AEF?

BRAIN: It was, yeah. And I feel that the Lord used us in this area, because our home was always open to the Portuguese. We had been very friendly to the Portuguese. And unfortunately, we had a Portuguese worker on our mission station that [pauses] tried to make trouble. He was [pauses] more Portuguese than he was Christian, I guess, or first a Portuguese, then a Christian. And he made some...some reports about me and the mission station and so on, and then the Portuguese officials started to investigate this, and from...from other Portuguese people they got a different picture altogether, and there was this inconsistency all the time. So they sent in two policemen and they lived right near the mission station, and we became very, very friendly with them. They had to build their own little houses and so on, and I furnished them with lumber and furniture and plumbing and so on. I furnished them with tools to...to set up their home. And they were always down at our house for meals and so on, and one of them brought his wife down and we became very, very friendly. And through these social contacts, we'd go on picnics and out on hunting trips together, one of them got converted and went to a Bible institute, or seminary in Brazil, and today he's a pastor in Brazil. But it was because of this close...closeness that I try to maintain, an absolutely open home, that our work around Catota there had complete freedom. Even our village pastors had no problem with the Portuguese authorities because they...they trusted us.

ERICKSEN: Did that close tie with the Portuguese eventually turn against you?

BRAIN: Boomeranged [laughs]. It did. And I think that perhaps that's one of the reasons why it was wise for us not to go back to Angola, because eventually these, you know...these freedom fighters got to be in control and they could have, because of our close contacts with the Portuguese...they could have made it difficult for us.

ERICKSEN: As the revolution accelerated, did you ever feel that you were in danger?

BRAIN: Oh, I can't say that I...I did. I...I just felt that in view of the work that we were doing, that we were in...were in a spiritual ministry, and that first of all, the Portuguese knew what our position was and these freedom fighters out in the woods knew that we weren't fighting against them, and, you know, we were helping...essentially helping their people, and should there be an overthrow in the government, the missions would continue right on doing the same type of work that they were doing before, there'd be no change. So I...I can't say that I was fearful at all. There were villages right around the mission station that were attacked. And [pauses] you know, people would come in with...wounded and so on from...from these things, but I can't say that I was ever afraid.

ERICKSEN: Did you have any suspicion when you left in '75 that you wouldn't be coming back?

BRAIN: No. In fact we bought return trip tickets. We came home on a six week tourist visa to the States and we were fully planning to go back. We left everything there, all the accumulation of all our furniture and goods for over twenty years. Unfortunately, I left all my manuscripts that I had used, all my lessons, all the things that I'd translated. I left them all there fully intending to go back, and then found that it was all...that I couldn't get back.

ERICKSEN: Did the whole mission evacuate?

BRAIN: They did shortly after that, yeah. We were the only missionary couple left there at that particular time. The others had already left. There was a Portuguese couple that stayed on, but [pauses] eventually they had to leave, and we lost everything including two vehicles, and typewriters, and different things like that, you know, equipment that is some...of some value. And the biggest thing, as I say, are the manuscripts that I...I lost.

ERICKSEN: Do you have any contacts back into Angola?

BRAIN: Oh we do, yes. Of course our missionaries went back in eventually. Not to that mission station, but to a town about ninety miles away to the south, which was the last point on a new railroad they were building at the time. And we have contacts with them, yes, and some of our graduates. I just wrote a letter yesterday to one of our graduates in Angola. He is now acting principal of the Bible school which is a continuation of the one that I was in. So we do remain in contact [?].

ERICKSEN: And I assume that's completely staffed now by Angolans?

BRAIN: It is now, yes. Yeah, completely.

ERICKSEN: Was it at that stage when you left in '75?

BRAIN: It was when I left, yeah. We turned it over completely to...to the teachers, and it ran and would have continued until the Cubans came, and, you know, they just broke everything up and told them to stop.

ERICKSEN: What were you doing then, if the school was in the hands of the Angolans? What was your responsibility in the school?

BRAIN: Well, I was still working as...heading it up as principal. But when we left, you see, I had trained these men to take my place, and...which they did. And now they're doing the same thing because the other missionary that has just left has left them in charge. Although they're...they're a fine group of people. They really love the Lord and some of them are older men. They've had, you know, many years of...of excellent experience. This is what I lack in Zambia now. I wish I had some men that have had more pastoral experience like we had in Angola.

ERICKSEN: Looking back over the almost twenty years that you were at the Bible institute [pauses], do you see things that changed in the school, areas that it had developed into?

BRAIN: Well, we raised our standards, Paul. We introduced a grading system with grade points, and a student was required to earn a certain given amount of grade points to graduate. We established what we called a prep school, and if a student couldn't read or write, he would be required to go there first for a full year. And we ju...we raised the level of our...of our materials and notes that we're giving. It...I would say it really commanded the respect of the general population around us.

ERICKSEN: Was...was that an internal decision or was there some...?

BRAIN: It was a gradual evolutionary process in...in the school.

ERICKSEN: Okay. Well, I think we've about used up our hour and a half, so I think we'll close for now.

BRAIN: Okay.

ERICKSEN: Thank you very much.

BRAIN: Oh, you're welcome. It's been a real privilege. I would just like to say that perhaps, (I might be biased)...but to my opinion...in my opinion, there is nothing more rewarding or more fulfilling than teaching in a Bible institute const...cont...context. I can appreciate, you know, medical work and doctors and nurses witnessing and having people coming to know the Lord, and that's necessary. And I can appreciate people in the church. But the contact that you have with a person in a Bible school in...you know, living in situations for three and four years, you really see them grow and mature and develop. And then the thrill comes when they go back out into the villages and carry on for the Lord. We were just so thrilled. We heard through Doctor Foster, our general secretary, that five of our graduates have...who fled into Namibia, have decided to, just on their own...to go out eastward into the Caprivi Strip [in Namibia] and to reach out to the bushmen on faith, and this really, really thrilled us.

ERICKSEN: Thank you.

END OF TAPE