This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Burt Long (CN 351, T1)** for the Billy Graham Center Archives. No spoken words that 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 made by Maria Bergstedt and Paul Ericksen and was completed in July 1996.

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 351, Tape 1. Oral history interview with Burt Long by Heather Conley on November 26, 1986.

CONLEY: Okay. This is an interview with Dr. Burt Long by Heather Conley for the Missionary Sources Collection of Wheaton College. This interview took place at the Billy Graham Center on November 26th at 9:00 A.M. Dr. Long's career as a medical missionary in West Africa spanned over thirty years, but to understand them better, I'd first like to ask or to discuss his pre-African days. Dr. Long can you describe your perceptions of missionaries growing up as a child. How did you view them?

LONG: Well, I really didn't have any perceptions of missionaries or a mission program until I was about [pauses] twelve years old. The churches I went to were liberal Methodist, mainly the Methodist church in Norwood Park of Chicago. Once in a while we would have a pastor who was conservative, but the congregation [laughs] would hardly allow him to air conservative views. They were quite liberal. And when Paul Rader came to Chicago he was on the radio frequently. Now my parents went to that church just because my mother's father was one of the founding early members of the church. And they went there just as a matter of routine, but they were members of the National Holiness Association, so that they were really much more...although Holiness-oriented which is not strictly Pentecostal, but it's...they put a lot of emphasis on the Second Blessing, sanctification, being filled by the Holy Spirit. But when Paul Rader came to [pauses] Chicago, they also got interested in his work. And Rader was a great missionary pastor and preacher. And there were missionaries going out from the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle. When the Tabernacle closed down during the Depression, it was because they put so much money into food relief for poor people that they just went broke, couldn't raise enough money to justify their heavy program of giving to...food to the poor people that two churches arose from it. One was the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle with a different pastor, and they started over as a very small church. And the other church was founded by Lance Latham, who was the musical director and boys' and girls' work director of Paul Rader's, and that started by meeting in different hotels, any room that we could find. And I was in the group that went out with Dr. Latham or Lance Latham. And when we finally got organized, it was in a furniture store on Fullerton Avenue. We used to have...[microphone bumped and moved]

CONLEY: Let me put this [microphone] on your tie.

LONG: [Recording louder and clearer] We used to have missionaries regularly. One was Paul Rhode [?], who had been an SIM [Sudan Interior Mission] missionary in East Africa, but he wanted to go into Kenya and Tanganyika, so he left SIM and started his own mission. And another one was Paul Metzler, and he worked with a mission in the Chad. I think it was a Swiss mission...Basel Mission or one of the Swiss missions, and he spoke French. His wife was a Swiss woman or a French woman. She spoke French as a native. But anyway, I visited that work later when I got to Africa in 1951. But [pauses] Tanganyika has become part of Tanzania now. Well, these men came whenever they were on furlough, and that challenged me, and I had decided as a child in grammar school, about the age of twelve, to become a physician. And when these missionaries came along, I volunteered to be a missionary or a missionary volunteer when I was fourteen. The two different goals didn't seem to interfere with each other, and I...I just asked the Lord for.... A medical education was very expensive. And when...that was during the Depression all through. I graduated from high school 1935, and went to work in a leather shop in the Loop [downtown area of Chicago], a fa...a factory of Chicago, and then in a year's time I had earned

$560 that I was able to save, and that's exactly what my first year at Wheaton cost me. It was in 1937. We....

CONLEY: I see.

LONG: I was here from '37 to '40.

CONLEY: So you were very aware of missions growing up then.

LONG: At that age, yeah. But to me the missionaries themselves emphasized that the most important program they knew of was the program of world evangelization. And...and I was very formative in those years and I...I said, "Well, if that's the best and the...the Lord needs missionaries, then I'm willing to do whatever He wants." So I asked Him to guide me about medicine, whether or not to stick with it, and started preparing for missions right away. And I would say that a person who prepares for missions from very early like that can choose his educational stream in a way that helps a great deal. I [laughs] never realized that I would be in a French area, so I never took the French language until after I went into missions, went in the SIM. I went to France in order to study French, but German was required for my course in pre-med here at Wheaton, and I took German in high school and here. Otherwise I wasn't exposed to the language really till I got to [pauses] France and then to Africa where we learned the Hausa language.

CONLEY: Okay. Oh, getting back to just your early perceptions, what was your perception of Africa as a child?

LONG: Well, these men were excellent speakers, and they told very graphic stories, and I don't know if you've ever noticed how missionary stories tend to emphasize the things that stick in your mind, and...and they don't emphasize other things. And I just figured, well, they go out there and they live in...in huts like the Africans do, and [pauses] yet, the work they were doing, which was evangelization with the African languages, how they lived just didn't really matter to me. I figured that they lived any way they could. I was willing to rough it too if that was necessary. Although these [laughs]...these missionaries that I saw weren't necessarily rough characters. They were men who could...who could dress well and...and speak very well and educated men, and yet they were also able to handle rough journeys on mules and...and horses and.... You know, back in those days they didn't have too much good transportation. A lot of their trekking was done by walking, and I expected to just follow in the train.

CONLEY: How did you come about deciding to go to Wheaton?

LONG: You know living in Chicago and being an Evangelical (or we called ourselves Fundamentalists in those days), I didn't even know about Wheaton College until I was a senior at Carl Schurz High, and I was rather high up in the class, and apparently because I was high in the class, nobody could understand why I wasn't going to college. I hadn't put down in any of the questionnaires that I was going to college. It was simply because I was too poor. And my dad was a...at that time was a substitute high school teacher in Chicago, so all the teachers knew my dad was a teacher. And I...I was in good fellowship with most of my teachers [not?] because I was a good student but because my dad was...was sort of in with them because they were all teachers. But they offered me all kinds of scholarships, but they weren't scholarships I could really use. They were part-time help in all the big universities in and around the Midwest and a few farther away,

and I just couldn't afford the rest of the program, so I just went to work entirely holding off until I could make enough money to...to be a college student. And then I began to look around and found that Wheaton was a...a Christian school. But, of course, Wheaton in those days wasn't what it is today. It didn't have the reputation, it wasn't as widely known, it was a small school, and it had come through a lot of financial difficulties, too. They were having a hard time. And it...it was rather small school with a...a limited faculty and so on. But when I did realize that it was a solid Christian school, I focused my attention on it and found out a lot more about it, and so...and it was it was also close to home. I lived in Norwood Park of Chicago, and transportation was therefore easy. We had the "Roaring Elgin" or the Chicago, Aurora and Elgin electric trains used to come out here. [I] could go back and forth for less than a dollar. But my grandfather was Holiness, very strong, and he wanted me...he offered me a free scholarship to go to their little school out in Iowa. And that school has a varied history. It was known as Kletzing College [formerly known as Central Holiness University] for a while, which was his name because he left his fortune to the college. [Long's parents attended the school, and professors, James Mack, Sr., John Leedy, Sr., and Fanny Boyce taught there before coming to teach at Wheaton.] But I didn't want to go because it wasn't accredited, and I was interested in a pre-med program. And, of course, to get into med school you had to be from a well accredited school, and a school that was [pauses] well known by the med schools. And Wheaton had a...one thing about it, Wheaton had had a good reputation in that its pre-med students succeeded in medicine and a lot of the doctors in practice were...who are Wheaton grads had made a good reputation, and the schools were anxious to get us. Also it so happened that the registrar at University of Illinois (which was the only med school I could possibly afford because your state university gives you a lot cheaper admission than any other), was a man by the name of Moon, who lived here in Wheaton, and he was aware of the College and its goals and appreciated them. I never talked to him personally enough to know him, whether he was a Christian himself, but he definitely was interested in Wheaton students, so I got in there that way.

CONLEY: Okay. In addition to your...your studies when you were at Wheaton, what other kinds of activities were you involved in?

LONG: Well, we had a requirement for a three-point-five grade point average, so that came to eighty-seven and a half in the grade system we had. Ninety-five was the top here at Wheaton then. Do they still grade by numbers or is it by letter?

CONLEY: From ninety to one hundred is the top.

LONG: Well, ninety-five was the top grade you could get, so I figured that I had to have an eighty-seven and a half average, which meant that I couldn't get low grades at all, so.... I was a fairly good athlete. I had played softball since I was a little kid and baseball early, but I decided.... Of course, I was a very small person. I [laughs] only weighed 130 pounds when I got to Wheaton. But wrestling interested me because it was a late afternoon gym class, and I had to take gym, so wrestling was the only sport I had time for. I went to many of the literary societies, but I never joined one. And I figured that I just didn't have time for social activities as such. I had to study hard to get my average, so.... Another problem with the pre-med course is that it's loaded with science and with physics and chemistry and...and biology and whatnot. You have labs and this takes a lot more time than the other students do in the arts courses, so I had a hard time keeping my average that high, but I made it, and was willing to sacrifice social life for the other. So I...I...my social life was more or less just with the kids I lived with and the...(we lived in the houses around town rather than in dorms)...and with the kids in our class. And we had...the Foreign Missions Fellowship was

a very strong group in those days, and we had meetings on...on prayer meeting night, and we would have missions prayer meetings, and missionaries would come and speak, and this was about the sum total of my exposure. Despite going to Wheaton and having a college education, which I believe in, I don't believe in a college education for the sake of getting ready to practice some profession or to be trained to make more money. I believe in a college education for its intrinsic value as a college education, but I was limited even in the pre-med course. I couldn't take too many arts courses and too many.... I had to take one history course. I had to take Bible. I had to take [pauses] other courses, but I never had time for philosophy, except the required courses. I never had time for [pauses] logic and a lot of the courses. I could have gone through college two times. I really appreciated the arts side, but never had time for it. So I was so strong in math and biology and chemistry that I could have had majors in all three of them because I had enough hours, twenty hours of each or more. So that's the kind...that's the kind of education I had. But being also very interested in all those other fields, I always read about them, so most of my education is really not college-oriented. I got a lot of education outside of college, which includes Bible. I knew more Bible than most of the students in school. I had no trouble in Bible courses. I just breezed through them, because I had been going to church ever since I was six years old, and...and I really listened to sermons, and I really...really zeroed in on Bible knowledge and had a lot of it. I think as a physician, I was better trained in Bible than any other physician that our mission ever had, and I did a lot of preaching and teaching and...and I...and Bible-teaching type work along with my...my medical work, much more that the other doctors did.

CONLEY: That's interesting. Were there any professors on campus who had a...left an impression or impacted your life while you were here?

LONG: Yes. Paul Wright was the head of the Chemistry Department, and the man was absolutely dedicated, not only to chemistry but to students, and he would do anything for any of his students. He was a very humble man. Still alive [laughs]. He's eighty-two or four years old, lives down in Arkansas. He's part Cherokee Indian, and he lives down in that area. And then Dr's. [James] Mack and [John W.] Leedy were two professors that my parents had had in this Holiness school out in Iowa, and so I made contact with them, and I had courses under both of them, limited way. And the math teachers and Dr. [Roger J.] Voskuyl, who was later president of...of [pauses] the college in Santa Barbara, is still my friend. He just lost his wife to cancer, but he's still out there, an elderly man now, and I enjoyed close fellowship. We had [pauses]...Miss Scofield was our Bible teacher. I knew her well. I used to come home and visit the teachers once in a while.

CONLEY: Okay.

LONG: I even knew teachers that I didn't have in class, like, you know, I wished I could have taken Greek for example, but I know the Greek teacher. He's retired out in...in the same place where Dr. Wright is...in Tahlequah, Oklahoma which is the center of the Cherokee nation.

CONLEY: That's interesting. You were talking about the Foreign Missions Board, I think it was.

LONG: Foreign Missions Fellowship?

CONLEY: Oh, yeah. Could you just explain some of the activities? Was that the extent of...of missions activities on campus at that time?

LONG: Yeah. We had chapel every day in those days, and we had...a lot of missionaries came as speakers, too, and Isaac Page was one of them. He was an old timer with the China Inland Mission, and...but the FMF would get speakers on campus. We would also invite the deputation secretaries of different missions who lived in the area. I remember Carl Tanis with the SIM [Sudan Interior Mission], the mission that I eventually got into. (He lived right over here where I live now; I live in the old house he built.) But he would come to speak. And [pauses] the whole idea was to keep the id...the idea of missions alive in the students' minds. Naturally being at college, most of the guys training here were training for the pastorate, not for missions, but there was a large number that also...that were interested in missions, and a lot of the girls were interested in missions. So we would have prayer meetings of, oh, a hundred students at least, and it would go up to two or three hundred when you have an interesting speaker. [We] used to meet in the basement of the [pauses] Pierce Chapel. Of course, Pierce Chapel was our only chapel in those days, and missions was strongly emphasized really here in the College.

CONLEY: Did World War II have...have any effect on campus while you were here [inaudible as Long begins speaking]?

LONG: Well, I graduated in '40, and the...the war hit in '39, but America didn't really get a lot of its kids in before that. I was deferred because I was a pre-med student. So my war years...the United States really didn't get into it a lot until '40-'41, but I was deferred because I was a medical student, and the army wasn't sure whether they were going to need us or not. So I graduated in '43 in December just as the war was winding down, and then I got a...they stopped the one-year internships and made them nine months, and they condensed everything, and so I had three nine-month hospital periods. One was called an internship, and two were called residencies. And with that small amount of training, twenty-seven months, I was classed as a surgeon because I had had twelve of those months in surgery. So I went into the army of the United States, which is different from the United States Army in that they know you're temporary. You're not trained at West Point, or...or trained to be a professional Army person for life. And I was stationed in Alaska. But my first interest in Alaska was missionaries, so I spent the time I was in Alaska doing surgery in the 183rd General Hospital, which was the evacuation hospital for the Alaska Command. And we had a hospital up at [pauses] the town halfway up through Alaska. I forget the name of it, but at [Ladd?] Field is...it was the army designation. It was an air installation, and most of the war in Alaska was over. It had been over early, and it was a...an Aleutian chain war and a war with the Japanese. But by the time we got there we weren't treating too many war wounds. We were treating civilian employees of the army and...and the army men and the training aviators and so on, and we evacuated to [Letterman?] Hospital in San Francisco. So I learned a lot in the army, and I was always glad for my army experience, for its discipline and its general exposure to people. But I also went to the Church of the Open Door up there, which was founded by a graduate of BIOLA, where the original Church of the Open Door was, and I got in with a good group of missionaries. He gathered all of the independent missionaries of Alaska together into a fellowship, which later became Arctic Missions, Inc., and is still functioning. And there was another great leader in Alaska, Vince Joy. The other one was Johnny Gillespie. But Vince Joy and John were both strong leaders. Therefore, they didn't tend to join their efforts, but they kept them separate, and his mission was called Alaska Missions and is now SEND Mission. They became Far Eastern [Gospel Crusade] and then SEND. And the mission has a hospital at Glenallen, Alaska, where I have volunteered to go up and relieve doctors any time they need them, but I haven't gotten back yet. But my army experience tended to be as strong civilian experience in that I made good contacts with the people of Alaska who were doing missionary work throughout the territory, and therefore, it became a missionary project as well.

CONLEY: That's interesting. So, in terms of impact on the campus, though, probably the Depression had more of an...an impact on the campus than World War II?

LONG: Yeah, but you know, when everybody's poor, you don't notice that you're poor, and that...the kids on campus...a few of them came from wealthy families and had all their bills paid for them by their parents, but the rest of us were all working for our education. A vast number of kids worked half-time or...or more, and, oh, everybody was sleepy in class. They were all [laughs]...were all working more than they were studying, you know, and things like that. But...but we all were in the same boat, and we were very happy together. We knew each other well. I wouldn't say that I knew as many people as some of the others because I was so zeroed in on my studying, but still, we had a...a large knowledge of each other that lasts to this day. I mean we...it's amazing now...I'm sixty-eight years old, and my peers...half of them have died, half of our college class. But [pauses] you never think of those things when you're a kid in school, you know, that your colleagues are going to be dying off. Of course, you never think of your own death, but it's always somebody else. But they have gone, as is the Wheaton tradition, into all the branches of leadership all over the country, and especially in religious leadership. Billy Graham was on campus during my latter years, my last two years, and my wife started here in '45, although she's only three years younger than I. She was working at a job trying to keep her nose above water, and so I encouraged her to work for an education here, and she wasn't working any harder, but she was getting an education at the same time. Billy Graham was on campus for some of her years, and many men who have become important people around the country.

CONLEY: Was Graham a...a personality on campus when he was here, or...?

LONG: As a preacher he rented the Masonic temple downtown [Wheaton; address in 1996 was 120 W. Wesley], right across from the DuPage Photo [local business] there, and held cla...held church, and we called it tabernacle. And a lot of the kids went to hear him because he was a college student. He was a rank amateur in those days. He had done preaching before he came here, but he was very [pauses] opinionated as a Fundamentalist viewpoint. Billy Graham changed a great deal after he had been through his Wheaton experience, and then in his post-Wheaton years, so that he would never call himself a Fundamentalist after that. And because of that, Carl Henry was in college when we were here, and he was a leader in theology. J.O. [James Oliver] Buswell was the president. He was probably one of the most prominent theologians in the country and one of the best trained, and a lot of these men realized that the liberal movement was looking down on the conservatives because of their lack of education, and Wheaton was a real spearhead in throwing out men who were educated who would combat this idea of the Fundamentalists not knowing anything. You know, people like Billy Sunday, and Paul Rader, and those men didn't emphasize educational things. They were just hellfire preachers, you know. But after we began to get out and show the rationale and the Christian apologetic background for our conservative belief and position, people began to sit up and take notice, and then Evangelicalism began to grow, and Billy Graham's ministry became very large and respected. So it's much easier to stand in today's world as a Christian than it was back in the days of the liberal strength days.

CONLEY: That's interesting. I know that you talked a little bit about this, but as you...as you thought about your career and what you were going to do, [Long takes deep breath] what was your primary motivation in deciding to go the mission field?

LONG: Well, I had the best pastor I could have possibly had, and that was Lance Latham. He was a man who also.... He...he was trained to M.A., I believe, in math, but he was an educated man, but

he was not a preacher in the theological sense, but he was very persistent in following up young people. And he started a work in Chicago, the Northside Gospel Center, which has be...put out the AWANA Youth Association that has over eight thousand youth clubs in the churches of America, and...and he became a very important person. And he kept drumming into us by constant repetition the need to, educated or uneducated, whatever your calling was, stick to the business of being a Christian, of following the Lord as the Lord led, and...and being of value and use to him. And I must admit that my real goals were lined out and outlined by him, not by Wheaton College. Wheaton College had a secondary effect on me, which was an educational one, and to see the devoted Christians who were staying home to educate kids was something new to me. I expected everybody to be very evangelistic, and very outgoing, and...and ready to go to the foreign field, and ready to enter into the ministry here. So Wheaton had the influence of...of balancing my viewpoint in that, in that you have to realize that there are people who need to stand behind the stuff, too, with the stuff when others go out. And of course, as a missionary, I learned that more and more, because there's no way you can go out into a distant mission field without a strong support and prayer group standing behind you, so that's the way my life developed. But my whole determination was to find the very place the Lord wanted for me, and to get into it, not to hold back from it. I graduated from Wheaton when I was [pauses] twenty-one, and I was a little ahead of myself because I had gone through grade school fast. They skipped me several times. So, my medical education did take some valuable [train passes] years, five, six years in school and hospital, but...and then I was two years in the army, so by the time I got to Africa, I was much older than most of the other missionaries. Some of them were arriving at the age of nineteen and twenty with just a high school and or Bible school education. But in those days, missions were much wider open than they are now. They needed people who could do anything, and we...and you just went out when you were ready and jumped into any gap that was there and did what you could. 'Course there were a lot of missionary failures for the same reason. They couldn't find a gap or they couldn't get into such an unstructured program and succeed, so they would work at it for four or five years and then quit. But even the percentage that remained became a strong mission.

CONLEY: How did you decide on SIM?

LONG: That was a problem with me because these missions were all organized, but today, the CIM, China Inland Mission, which has become the OMS [sic], Over...Overseas Missionary Fellowship, OMF, was one of the most respected missions. Well, I wasn't trying to get into China, necessarily. I didn't know where the Lord wanted me. I thought maybe in South America. (The...most of the missionaries of my later exposure were from there.) But I found out that in South America, to practice medicine, you had to go through the South American country's med school after you got down there, but I was already trained here and didn't want to repeat that. So Carl Tanis, as I have already mentioned, was often over here emphasizing the needs of the mission for a physician, and just about the time I was ready to go, I was coming back from Alaska, they were pressing for a doctor to open a new hospital in French West Africa, as it was called then. So I volunteered for it if the Lord would follow through on it. And then I went to the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Oklahoma...Norman, Oklahoma, with Wycliffe [Bible Translators] [pauses] and learned linguistics. I didn't want to be just a medical missionary. I wanted to have other exposure. In fact, one of the other earlier missionaries, Dr. [Seymour] Hursh of the eye hospital in Kano had warned me that medicine is such a demanding thing in Africa, there's so many sick people, that most of the doctors tended to jump right into the work without learning the local language, and he warned me against it. He said be sure that when you get into a mission, you request them before you sign up that they'll give you language training. But from then on, knowing that that opening

was there, I just more or less focused on SIM, and they opened their arms to me, and they were very satisfied with my qualifications and training, so we went out with them.

CONLEY: I see. Okay, so you didn't...I was going to ask you if you decided on Niger, but [unclear as Long speaks]...?

LONG: Well, it was because that was the hospital that was open.

CONLEY: Yeah.

LONG: I investigated TEAM, which was called The Evangelical Alliance Mission at that time. And one of my pre-med associates here, Doug Taylor, went out with them and became a successful physician in their area. And Zerne Chapman, who was my friend here at Wheaton and my anatomy dissection partner at Illinois Medical, he went to India with TEAM. And Brad Steiner, who was a year ahead of us was in India with TEAM, and his father had been a physician there ahead of him, so they just went back to the field that they'd grown up in. And all of those men left the field earlier though because India shut down to foreign missions gradually, and Brad Steiner's still in practice in... here in North Lake and Elmhurst, and Zerne Chapman out in Washington.

CONLEY: Did you know much about French West Africa or anything [unclear as Long speaks]...?

LONG: No, just that it was Africa.

CONLEY: Just that....

LONG: I didn't realize that it was so desertic [sic], but I ended up in a hospital in the south Sahara Desert area.

CONLEY: What...can you tell me about SIM's philosophy, or...or what is its strategy for...for reaching Africans?

LONG: Well, it's changed through the years, but SIM is now one of the leading missions in the mission world, the ones that we call Evangelical, and the IFMA [Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association, which is the Independent Fundamental Missions of America] [Long confuses this with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America], the [pauses]...with the former CIM. SIM is an old traditional religion...almost a religion, a mission, and they're very hard to move, but about oh, fifteen, twenty years ago, there was a big change in the mission. They got a...a man who was trained for the [pauses] position of director rather than just choosing one of the missionaries on the field to be the director, and management...and management techniques were introduced. And now a missionary goes out with a much more structured view of what he's going to get into. In fact, they look for people who have a training in the directions of the people they want, and they have job descriptions for those people. So the...the mission is very structured, and it's very well organized, and it's very well [pauses] based so that surprises don't occur anymore. We have a manual that's as thick as a Chicago phone book, not that it's got that much material in it, but it's a big one. And that manual has just about every situation outlined in it that can arise, and we're supposed to live by the manual. And, of course, each mission chooses its financial policy and how it works. Each mission chooses its area policy, and how it controls the supervision and discipline of its missionaries, so they develop their own, and most other missions now use the SIM to copy

because they are so well-established, and that we were the largest mission in the IFMA for many years until Wycliffe passed and became larger. Wycliffe in now well over five thousand in number, but Wycliffe is not in the IFMA because of certain practices that they do that weren't acceptable to the IFMA. They assist a lot of other missions and missionaries like the Roman Catholics and so on, and this was a problem with the IFMA, so they were asked to leave it. But still we are one of the large missions, the SIM, and the effort to evangelize is done by missionaries where it's necessary, but as soon as we have local converts, evangelization is just natural to them, so the SIM draws its work backward into the supporting of these evangelists in Bible schools, theological seminaries, and printing, and literature, publications, Sunday school work, young people's work, doing any kind of development of anything useful to the church which the Africans themselves don't see yet, and we try to guide them into a church-type development that's not U.S. oriented, but that's oriented to the African church. And that it works is well proved by the fact that the church growth in Africa is the best of in any mission field in the world. We have better that a six or seven percent church growth rate, which is very high. We have two million converts in SIM churches alone in Africa. Now that's a large number of countries. That stretches all the way from Ethiopia over to West Africa, Liberia, but...but still, that's a lot of converts, and that's five thousand churches. In this...of course, the mission's a hundred and twenty-five years old, but most of this growth has been in my lifetime, which is the last thirty-five years on the field since 1950.

CONLEY: In its strategy for evangelization, has SIM had to adopt it at all for the Muslim culture which is...which is so radically different from other cultures [unclear]?

LONG: SIM, unfortunately for those people who like a lot of converts, has more Muslim fields than non-Muslim, and therefore we have adapted very strongly to that, and we have a...a lot of Muslim study going, and we have a lot of our missionaries involved in Muslim studies for that very purpose. And because we...the name of the mission was Sudan Interior Mission, which meant that we dedicated ourselves in early years to getting into the country, not staying down at the coast. Back in the 1890s, when the mission was founded, there were many missions right along the coast, which is where supplies were easy to get and so on, and interior there was...it was called the white man's grave, because it was so tough to live with malaria and other untreatable diseases. Most of the missionaries died in a few years. However, we have a variegated service. We supplied doctors, not only to treat the Africans who were in churches and who wanted hospitals, but to treat our own missionaries. And the mission station that I was with...in fact, we founded Galmi Hospital, and the station was founded for that hospital, and it was meant to be a hospital station. Now this was in a Muslim area, a strong Muslim area in Niger. The country was then about ninety-seven percent Muslim. Death rate among children was seventy, eighty percent in the first two years of their lives, so there's a combined effort to save life. But we used the hospital as a...an evangelism method. Within the hospital we could trade medical treatment for [pauses] the hearing of the gospel. We could go out into the marketplace and preach, and nobody would listen. They'd just ignore you because they were not allowed to hear the gospel or the presentation of another religion. If they were caught listening by their *mallam* [Hausa word for *mullah*, which is a Muslim *imam* or teacher of religion, even if uneducated], their teacher, they would get demerits, and they worked so hard to get merits that they didn't want demerits on their opportunity to go to heaven, which is the way the Muslims looked at it. So in the hospital we had a trapped audience, and we could work on them. We allowed...we required every patient who entered as an inpatient to stay two weeks, whether he needed it or not. We'd kept every post-op patient and every patient who accepted a bed had to stay two weeks, and the fee, which was very cheap, which was only four dollars for two weeks in the hospital including hosp...an operation. So in those two weeks we would give them a course of

exposure to different Bible ideas until they had been exposed to a systematic evangelization method, and we had many converts.

CONLEY: I want to discuss...the hospi...the hospitals more in detail. First of all, though, I do want to ask you: can you just kind of describe the size of SIM in Niger, number of people stationed, different locations?

LONG: Do you want to know names and things like that?

CONLEY: Yeah. Just kind of a...so the listener can get a...an understanding of the scope of SIM's influence.

LONG: Well, Niger is as big as Nigeria. Nigeria's the largest population of any country in Africa, black Africa, with a hundred million people roughly. But Niger only had, we thought, three and a half million. We...we know now that it had six million, and the people were hiding from the tax collectors. That's why they would not give the truth in population figures. The animal population was also at six million, but they thought it was only three million, because there was...they were taxed per head of cattle. So these were hidden figures, which we have discovered later. But it's a desertic [sic] country and only the southern edge of it, along the Nigeria border and the Haute Volta [Upper Volta, now Burkina] border and the Dahomey [now Benin] border were occupied. Up in the desert were only the nomads and they were very few and far between, the Tuaregs and Buzus. But all of those would come down to our hospital when they got sick. We developed within five years...we developed a terrific reputation. The French had clinics and hospitals throughout the country, major hospitals in Niamey, the capital, in Maradi, and in Zinder. Zinder was the old fort of the *Beau Geste* stories, and the French had a fort there. French West Africa was one big unit to the French, but, of course, it included many different tribes. When the independence came along, it became seven different countries, but these countries were divided up by the French or the British, depending on the occupying power for geopolitical reasons. Nigeria has 475 tribes. Niger has perhaps twelve or fourteen, but these tribes were not the reasons for the divisions. They were just caught. And, of course, each tribe would be an individual nation, so that's how many nations there are in a country, who has the ascendancy determines the political formation of the country, so that the Hausa tribe occupies mostly the [pauses] east end of Niger, and the [pauses]...another tribe which has two names [one being Zubarma], I don't recall them right now, occupies the other end of the country, but the capital is there. So they became the dominant tribe of Niger. In Nigeria, there are three tribes that fight for dominance because they are so large compared to the others. So the others sort of get swallowed up.

CONLEY: So did these tribes affect then where SIM located its...its mission [?] stations?

LONG: Yes, because there are so few missionaries in any given area, the missions more or less agreed not to overlap each other. So you'll find very few places where up 'till ten or fifteen years ago there was any overlap. So every mission worked in its own area, and they would work among tribes that they had learned the languages, and once you learn a language, it's unlikely that you're going to be moved out of that language area because it takes you five years to become fluent and twenty years to become very fluent, and once you do that, you hate to lose it. So...but the Hausa tribe is the largest tribe in Africa, and the Hausa language is the largest vernacular language in Africa, and it includes Niger and Nigeria, so in both of those countries, you can just about travel the whole country with...with English, French, and Hausa.

CONLEY: Now, [pauses] as for the size of SIM in Niger was...was Galmi the only hospital, the SIM hospital in Niger then?

LONG: The reason was that the government wanted all of the health work in their own hands. That was France overseas colonial administration. So they put a little clinic in every major town and they call that a hospital because they'd have a few beds there, too, and then they had these three major hospitals. So we applied for hospital work for forty years of occupation that country when we had as few as five and ten missionaries in Niger. French were very opposed to missionary work because they were Catholic in background, but they also figured that if there was religious disturbance in the country, that would add to their problems of government. But when the missionaries finally did weasel their way in and get permission, then it began to grow, and the...the administrators became more comfortable with having missionaries around, but they were never very comfortable with them. The British were much more comfortable with missionaries than the French were, and even they were jittery about it. So when we finally accepted a location for a hospital, (it was out in the bush where there was no medical installation of any kind), the mission jumped at the opportunity and built the hospital. So you find that this hospital at Galmi is probably the only bush hospital, which is strictly bush that you'll ever find, but now it's not bush anymore because we have towns that grew by leaps and bounds in our area because of our health conservation. We saved the lives of thousands of children who have grown up and become adults.

CONLEY: I was going to ask you about your preparations for the field. Now, I know... understand your medical training. You were saying you studied...did you study French then, or the Hausa language before arriving?

LONG: Not Hausa, but French we did. We went to the Alliance Francaise, which is a [pauses] mildly formal school [informal type of international language school teaching French]. It's quite a...an informal situation, though, too. You can drop in and out of the classes anytime. But we stayed in Paris for ten months, and I started with nothing in French. I di...I didn't even know that "non" was a na...was a French word. They spell it N-O-N, but it's pronounced the same as our "no." And I stayed...I excelled in language because I was dedicated. Most of the guys over there were just going there because the GI Bill allowed them to stay in a school, and would pay their schooling for them, and room and board for them, and a lot of GI's, especially blacks liked France because of their attitude toward blacks. They were very accepting of them. And they all stayed over there as long as they could, and most of the Americans that were [pauses] going to school weren't much interested in...in the school...schooling. They were just interested in being in Paris. But I was studying hard, and I [pauses] figured I could put forty hours a week into study because forty hours was a work week, but most students figured that an eight or ten hour week is enough. So I even studied much longer than most of my missionary colleagues, and...and I advanced all the way to the superior class in ten months, which meant that I had a lot more French than most of them. They were in the *moyenne* or the middle classes when they left. Then when we got to Africa, all of the missionaries were allowed to go to a language school of the language they were working in, but I was not because I was a doctor. And they put me to work immediately. There were patients lined up at this brand new building, which had no equipment in it of any kind, and so I started trying to learn Hausa with a local missionary who was teaching me, my wife as well. In...in the SIM, the wife is equal as a missionary with her husband. She's not just a wife. She's also a missionary, and they are required to be missionaries and trained just like...like the men. Even though we had two children, eventually had six, but the kids go to a school far away from the station, so the...the wife is still an effective missionary.

CONLEY: When you first arrived in Niger, what were...what were some of your main impressions and...?

LONG: Well, it was an exceedingly primitive country. It was...people living in little one room round mud huts with grass roofs. But I immediately discovered that the missionaries did not live that way. They built bigger houses. They built little two-bedroom bungalows, although they would have a little study that you could use for a third bedroom if you had to, and we had to because we ended up with six kids. Kids slept in the front room on rolling beds, and rolled them out in the daytime. And [pauses] we [pauses]...the temperature would go up to a hundred and thirty degrees in the hot season. We had no air cooling system. We had...for the first six or eight years we had no electrical generation. We lived with pressure lamps, kerosene lamps. We hauled our water by donkey in big pots that contained five gallons apiece. A donkey could carry two of them, and the well was a quarter of a mile away. And we lived a tough life, but that doesn't make any difference. Mission work in my view is simply living among the people, however you have to live, and by living there, you're a witness to them. And the medical work grew slowly also because we didn't have any vast amount of equipment. It took us five years to get a lot of equipment out, but all that five years we were doing heavy medical work just with our hands.

CONLEY: Can you describe your work both at the hospital and then outside work that you did?

LONG: It would take hours.

CONLEY: [Laughs] Can you do it in [laughs] two minutes?

LONG: Well, I was a white man. The area had never had a white man in it. They were afraid of a white doctor. But the ones who came would be those with the most grievous diseases that had not had any help from the religious, from the witch doctor, from the pharmacists, or the...the guys who...who are called medicine men, and all of the [clears throat] medical crafts they knew. When a patient failed in all of those, they would come to us, and last resort. And they were dead when they arrived, almost. But we did some miracles among them and they found relief and I'm telling you all you need to do is...is give a blind man vision one time and the word spreads all over the country. It wasn't five years before we were known from one corner of the country to the other, a spread of well over a thousand miles. So the work became famous, and...medically speaking. And the fact that it was *Gidan Almasihu* [used for any building dedicated to the church or Christ or Christianity; formally translated “Christian hospital] or the House of Christ [*Almasiu* is the Hausa word for Christ], according to the Hausa people, didn't bother them. They...they knew they were welcome, they knew they would be cared for, they knew they would be dealt with honestly, (which even their own people did not do). They couldn't even trust their own people. Many of our local workers would give us their money to keep for them, because their own Moslem teacher or priest was a crook, you know. They knew they'd never get their money back from him. And so even though they wouldn't accept Christianity, they trusted it. And of course, that is a perfect reputation and that means that they're ripe for evangelization, because they know that it has truth connected with it, whereas their own didn't. So this is how the medical work became an evangelistic work. And of course, we would train our converts right away to do evangelism. We had guys going out to all the villages preaching. We would go out with them when we had time and as I learned Hausa (I would learn it by listening to the preachers preach and by reading the Bible in Hausa and so on), and finally I did ask for permission to go to the Hausa language school. They usually allowed six months for that. They gave me four, but I had been on the field for a year before I went, so I'd had enough so that in four more months of that training, I came back with the ability to preach in the

language as well as do the medical work without an interpreter. Doing medical work with an interpreter is a very unsatisfactory thing because in the second place you've got patient doctor confidence, and you've got a third person interpreting. And the impression that the interpreter (who is a nonmedical person) gets is not the one you're after when you're taking a history on a medical problem. And so being able to talk to the people myself, I developed a medical vocabulary in the Hausa language, which no one else had ever investigated. And I also knew the [laughs] vulgar terms for everything that the people did in a medical sense, a sexual sense, and all the things that doctors need to know and...and I found out that the language is totally vulgar in some areas. There is no such thing as a...as a...an acceptable word. It's always an...a vulgar word that they use, so it's the only word usable, so it's the natural word to use. And so the missionary has to step down from his position of using only elegant language, like we can in English. I mean, we speak of our...of our sex functions, our urinary functions and those things with technical terms which are acceptable. But to them, you have to learn the vulgar language and this is hard for a missionary to do in a way, but the doctors do it. And I was able to get very close to the people because I knew the way they expressed things much more than the other missionaries did.

CONLEY: So what were the years you were working at Galmi, then? 1951 to...?

LONG: 1950 to 1974 [later corrected by Long to 1976].

CONLEY: Okay. And then that was when you left for Nigeria?

LONG: Yes.

CONLEY: Okay. What were the particular problems and opportunities for evangelization in Galmi?

LONG: Well, at first we did like we used to do here in this country. I don't suppose you even know what a street meeting is, but in our church we would have an afternoon service, and then we would go out in groups of ten and stand on street corners and preach the gospel, and attract people by singing and so on, like the Salvation Army used to do. In the cities today it's against the law, but we do that in Africa. And we go to the village and do it. We go to marketplaces and do it. But we found out that it wasn't a type that was adapted to Africa very well. We would even take a loudspeaker until the government made us stop using loudspeakers. They figured that the communists used them, so they passed a law against it, and that included us, too, although we were told by one of our *commandants* [French administrative officers over country sized areas] that if we'd go ahead and do it without asking for permission, he wouldn't shut us down, but if we asked for permission, he would [laughs]. So he knew that we were not doing any harm in the sense of preaching communism. But they were very afraid of communism in the early days of poor Africa, and the communists made strong efforts to win Africa, but they largely did not succeed. There are very few communist oriented countries there. So we would also then...our nurses would do bed to bed evangelization for a few...for the early years. When we got enough money to hire a converted person to be a chaplain, (and, of course, we didn't have converts who were willing to do that kind of work for...for five or ten years.) We had hospital chaplains who knew the different languages of the different people coming, and we had a...a very systematic evangelization method, so that every patient who came would definitely be shown the way of salvation, and he would sing...learn to sing Christian songs that had the way of salvation built into them. It...it was amazing to wake up at night and hear Africans (boys and girls as well as adults) going down the road singing our songs,

even though they were Muslim people. But they didn't sing songs. They didn't have that kind of a thing in their...in their language, and they liked the songs, so they'd sing them.

CONLEY: Did you have any particular kinds of problems with the people right in your area as far as evangelization goes because of their culture, or...?

LONG: Well, we had a Moslem cult in the town of Galmi, which was different from the other Muslims of our other areas, and they had a group of Moslem *mallams* there. (They're priests or teachers. They don't really have priests in the sense of the Roman Church.) And they were very strongly opposed to us, and, of course, they would keep their people away from us. We had a town right across the road from us by the name of Guidondoutchi [Hausa for House of rock" because it was built on a rocky place], which wasn't two hundred yards from the hospital, and many people would get sick and die in that village and not come to see us...

CONLEY: [Unclear]

LONG: ...because these *mallams* would be watching them and tell them not to.

CONLEY: Were there any particular classes [train passes] of people you were dealing with? I don't know if the society was stratified at all.

LONG: It was stratified into rich and poor, and the rich weren't necessarily rich in money, but they were the leaders [usually Muslim *mallams*]...the leader class, and the people would be required to give them money by some means or other. And a difference of five dollars would be the difference between a rich man and a poor man in those early days. But they would also have clothes, and they would have position and dignity and ride horses instead of donkeys and so on. But we reached both classes, and in the early days it didn't matter whether you went to the poor man or the rich man. They would all listen to you. In some tribes in Africa, notable the Tuareg people of the desert, you must go to the top man first because they have a royalty and a nobility and a...and a lower class. If you go the lower class people, the royalty won't listen to you, but this was not true of most of the tribes. You can go to anybody anytime.

CONLEY: I see. And as far as language difficulties that you encountered then, was the Hausa and French sufficient, or were there other languages?

LONG: Well, the Hausa is a lingua franca. It's the trade language. The French was a trade language. So we were well-fixed for language. We were in the two major languages. But still there would be people if they came from a thousand miles away, from one of the [pauses] tribes that...that was way back in the bush that was uneducated, they wouldn't know either language. Then we'd have to find somebody who could talk to them.

CONLEY: I see. What kind of...I take it that...well, maybe you can describe both the impact of the tribes...that the tribes had on the people and the impact of nationalism? I'm wondering of one was stronger than the other.

LONG: Well, of course, a...a tribe like the Hausa tribe is dominant by numbers alone, but they're also dominant in that they were Muslims, and Muslims tend to dominate. So they really wanted to dominate, and the other tribe on the other end of the country, whereas it was a different tribe and they had a different political reason for dominating, they were also Muslims, so they were...(they

call themselves brothers, all the Muslims do), so they were brothers in that sense. And the tribes don't tend to go to war with each other anymore. Once the French and the British occupied West Africa (and before World War I, it was German, but those colonies were all under French and British control also), peace was the...was the result because the colonizing powers organized very well a school system, and a government system, prison system, a justice system, and they had everything nicely organized, and it was organized for the aggrandizement of the occupying powers, so that all of the commerce of the area would either go to France or to Britain, depending which country you were in, a French or a British colony. An ex...and one thing that modern Africa does not do, they don't give credit to those occupying powers for the marvelous work that they did in Africa. Those people would still be savages running around, each tribe fighting the other tribe if it weren't for the occupation of Africa, because they trained the people, they gave them schools, and they gave them a great deal. They gave them roads and economic life far beyond what they had before, and there is no truth whatever in the statement that those tribal peoples were better off with their own language, their own religion, and their own methods before the colonizing powers came. But the in...independence movement was so strong that it overcame finally, and the colonizing powers pulled out. And you can see in what's happened to Africa since then, they've gone back to fightings, and to wars, and to all kinds of destructive ways, which the colony powers refused to them. So, there was a real good effect. And we were there during the days of French West Africa and British West Africa, when they were occupied by these powers who were military powers. They had...they had soldiers trained in each tribe to be in their local army, and they kept order. And life was good, and farming was productive, the people had plenty to eat, and imports were inexpensive. You could get anything. Today, quite the opposite.

CONLEY: And as...as far as the gospel presentation goes, how...how did these changes in...in the tribes affect the gospel presentation?

LONG: Well, we would try to establish as soon as it was established that a man was converted... (we knew that his Christian growth depended on Bible knowledge), so we organized Bible classes for them in each local station. Now you asked how many stations we had. At one time we had about six stations Niger. It was all. And there was a church on each of those stations that the mission built. But we were interested in having the Africans build churches for themselves, and having a natural growth. So after a while, we got enough converts so that could happen, but it took years. It took forty years before I was there and while I was there to do that. And each tribe was uncomfortable going into church with another tribe, so we found out that it's better for each tribal unit to have its own church. Now in some of the big cities where there's a polyglot population, they will mingle in the church, but if there's a major group in the church from one tribe, they will secede from the church and build their own church. So tribalism is not a...a bad thing in that sense. It's good for people to feel like their own brothers are in church. But as they become more advanced in their Christian development and in their Bible knowledge, then they are more willing to accept a brother from another tribe as being more important to them than a tribal member who is not a Christian, because he's a brother only by tribal connection. So there is that change which takes place in a Christian population.

CONLEY: How did illiteracy affect the gospel presentation?

LONG: Well, there was no literacy until the missionaries started schools. There were no clinics until the missionary wives held back porch clinics. Every morning they would wash ulcers, and they would treat wounds and things like that. All of those back porch clinics eventually became clinics manned by medically trained converted Africans. All of those schools teach...teaching

converts to read from primers were developed that way. The first president of the Niger Republic [Hamani Diori] was a cook from...a missionary family had trained him to read and write. He be...eventually became a teacher, and then he was chosen to be president, so that a large number of the first officers in all of the governments in West Africa were trained by missionaries originally.

CONLEY: That's interesting. So the missionaries thought that literacy was important.

LONG: Oh, very much so.

CONLEY: Yeah.

LONG: In other words all we were interested in was teaching them Bible and getting a Bible translation in their own language that they could read for themselves. That was the reason.

CONLEY: You talked about the cultural influences that affected the spreading of the gospel. You mentioned in one of your letters that the culture compared to the Palestinian culture. I don't know if you remember that, but I was...I was....

LONG: No, I don't remember, but the reference is not to the fact that it was a cultural similarity, but in Palestine, they lived like the people do in Africa. Their winter is not a strong, cold winter, and they live on the land...on the surface of the...in the...in what we read in the Bible the way Abraham lived is exactly the way the Africans live today. And the way...of course, the...the Palestinian culture today as lived by the Jews is quite different from that of the Arabs, but the Arabs come south through the Sahara Desert, and the...eventually reach the blacks, and they live the same way. You can't believe the primitive life of Arab people in the actual Arab countries, like...like Assyria...like Syria and Morocco and those places. They are just as poor and just as tough and...and living on the earth as the black people are on the other side of the desert.

CONLEY: So do you think this helped the Africans in identifying with the Bible stories?

LONG: Yeah. They...they wou...they knew a lot of the things about the Bible. You know there was one reference in the Bible that we never knew how to translate, and that's the one in Isaiah where your sins shall be as white as snow, because they didn't know what snow was. And yet otherwise, the culture really identified closely: sheep herds, goatherds, and the way they did things was just exactly the way it was in the Old Testament Bible days, even though it's not that way today.

CONLEY: Did you adapt your meth...methods of the evangelism...evangelism [laughs] for...for children in particular, or what kinds of gospel activity did you [unclear as Long begins speaking]....

LONG: Yeah, we...we would gather any group that we could teach. It had to have some kind of an organization. You couldn't teach women and girls together, and you can't teach boys and girls together. They're always raised separately. So we did boys work and girls work, and then we would do women's work and men's work. And then in church, the men were dominant. The women would come and sit and listen, but then they developed women's Bible classes and groups that would meet not during the church meetings but after, and for some reason, it's exactly parallel in this country. It's easy to start a women's work in a church but not a men's work. The men are out earning a living, or the men won't come, so we have a women's missionary fellowship, or a

women's missionary group in the churches in Africa which parallels the ladies missionary societies in the churches in this America...in this country. So that there are many more women who live close to the Lord and live as true Christians than there are men, and yet the conversion rate is so great in Africa at six and seven percent that we have millions of untrained Christians who know very little about the Bible and the Christian life. We have...only half our churches have pastors. [Clears throat] The churches grow so fast we can't train pastors fast enough, and a lot of the pastors are poorly trained. They just preach the same sermons over and over [clears throat]. Excuse me. So, it's tough to have so many Christians who are worldly, materialistic, politically oriented, not really oriented toward Christianity. They say they're Christians, but they become materialists. So we lose a lot of them in the sense that, although they're converted, they don't grow in...in their Christian lives.

CONLEY: How did the culture where you were view Christianity and new believers?

LONG: As gross heretics.

CONLEY: And so how did that affect their lives?

LONG: Well, that means that they would resist being converted, and it means that if they were converted, they would risk...they would not risk telling it. They'd keep it secret. You can't build a church with secret believers. It's very difficult. So, by the time a Muslim...a man in a Muslim community will admit that he's a Christian, he's a pretty well established Christian. Also, you know, Muslims will kill them, often do, and [pauses] it's dangerous for them to become Christian witnesses. So that by the time you get eight people together, which was our rule, (we had to have eight to establish a church)...a church with eight converts in...isn't no...a...not a big church, but it...it finally is an organism, and it can grow. So it would take a long time to get that many converts who were willing to stand up and say they were Christians in a Muslim community. In a pagan community, very easy. You can build a church in...in six weeks once you enter into the community and win a few, and...and it grows like mad. The pagans are easy to win. Pagans are people who have the so-called naturalistic religions, fetishism.

CONLEY: Okay. What...how did you work with the nationals or the Africans in presenting the gospel? What kind of [unclear as Long speaks]...?

LONG: Well, as soon as we had a convert, we would give him Bible study, even one-on-one, so that when you'd have a Bible class, you might have one or two people in it. But we would make it as big as possible, get as many in as we could. We would even allow unconverted people who were really interested to come into the class. And then we would go out and preach and they'd be with us. And it's amazing. You can hardly believe how fast a man who has become a Christian can learn to preach. They'll just give a testimony and tell what they know about it, which is enough. And you've got to keep it very simple for the people who are hearing it for the first time anyway. And that's all he knows. So they become preachers. They're natural, [pauses] fortunately for us, because their Hausa and their native language are perfect. Our's aren't. And they can preach it right, whereas we might make a mistake by choosing wrong words.

CONLEY: I was going to ask you about your relationship between evangelism and your medical work. Now I know you talked about it a little bit before, but could you elaborate? Your...you were saying that the people had to stay for the hospitals in...for two weeks. And....

LONG: Uh-hmm. And we'd put them through a graduated course, introducing them to Christianity, the definitions of God (which are different from the definitions of Allah) and who Jesus Christ was (which they absolutely will not accept, that God had a son.) And most of us don't realize until we reach Muslims that the definition of God's son is much different from Mr. Smith's son. I mean, I am the son of my father by reason of the fact that he had a wife, but God and Jesus Christ are not in such relationship and that puzzles them. They don't understand what we're talking about. It takes a long time to teach a man that. And...but we tried to teach it in the two weeks they were in. And we also would find the points of...of contact with Muslims and the points of contact with pagans and go through those. Like, the...the...Abraham and Moses are prophets to the Muslims and we would use these as points of contact, showing how these men were men of faith and...and they believed God and served him. So a lot of the work is through the Old Testament at first. And we just developed a course that the nurses would go through with the patients, bed-to-bed evangelization after noon. I never had time, except during the operating room time. We did a lot of our operations under local and spinal anesthetic with the patient awake, and I would talk to them while I was operating on them. But otherwise I would just say a work here and there as I was dressing wounds. And I'd see every patient every day at first, and then every other day later when I got too busy [clears throat]. And I...I...we made it a point that the doctor who was more or less top man in the pile and the nurses and the medical personnel and the African working personnel and the non-medical missionaries, all made it a point to contact each person also, so that they wouldn't just say that the nurse who was talking to them every day was telling them something, but the doctor was, and the other missionaries were, and everybody did it, so that they knew we were a...a dedicated community, all preaching the same gospel, all teaching them the same thing, and they would get it from all different directions. This...this I derived from the idea that William McCarrell used to use. He was a board member of Wheaton College here for many years. But he would...he had a church in Cicero. He was Al Copone's [pauses]...the only pastor that Al Copone recognized really in Chicago-area early days. And he said, “Be a link in the chain. Try to get a man witnessed to by as many different people as possible, and...and eventually the chain will tighten and the man will believe.” So this is what we did and it worked. We had many converts. I will admit that they wouldn't go home to their native village and stand up and say, "I'm a Christian.” But they believed when they left the hospital.

CONLEY: What was the format of a typical Nigerian church service?

LONG: Just like ours. We'd have a song service. We'd have testimonies, which isn't true anymore in our church services, although we always used to do it. (When I...the church I came from always had testimony meetings during the service. People would stand up and give witness for the sake of visitors.) And we have preaching service. The stronger a pastor becomes in a church, the more he will do, of course, and the...the more emphasis is put on the sermon. But we had the same order of service. We would meet for [pauses] communion once a month, once a week. Depends where the church is and what would be the reason for doing it. We would have baptisms about every year, but we would...we had a rule that we don't have in America, and that is that a man had to demonstrate that he was a Christian for a full year before we baptize him because we had many who were faking it. And we didn't want to baptize people who weren't really Christians. So we had to watch their life for a while to be sure. But even after the missionaries turned over this function and stopped baptizing, turned it over to the African pastors, they adopt the rule. They believe in it, and they watch people very carefully to be sure that they're not baptizing non-Christians who become a...a bad testimony. There are enough Christians who go back on their testimony and...and back into the world anyway, you know, so....

CONLEY: What...was that a...a problem, people just...

LONG: Oh, yeah.

CONLEY: ...slipping back into their old ways?

LONG: Very much so, especially when the Muslim would be converted. They used the word "believer," so a believer in Africa is a Muslim. They...a man who's following the prophet [Muhammed]. They call him a follower and a believer. So when they become a Christian, they're an unbeliever. So we had to get used to the fact that our people were labeled unbelievers by the Muslims. So we call them believers in the Christian sense. They call them unbelievers, heretics, dogs because they've left the Muslim faith. And anybody who leaves Islam is by far a worse miscreant than a person who has not been a Muslim and has become a Christian. That's why they kill them and they pursue them, always trying to get them to come back into Islam, and a lot of them do.

CONLEY: So, they're kind of alienated by their own culture then?

LONG: That's right, ostracized. To made...they're made to feel like they have really left their home and their community, and most of those African cultures have a strong interfamily connection, and it's built to enforce the way they do things. Everybody does everything the same way, and once they become Muslims and the village is Muslim, the same intertwining occurs. And to leave that community, it just ostracizes you. If you're a merchant, there's no way you can survive. They just will not trade with you, and you will die. If you're a farmer raising your own food, you can manage unless they destroy your farm or unless they poison you. But...but a...a merchant would lose all his business if he became a Christian.

CONLEY: So the church must have had an even more important role, then, for somebody who's alienated by their own culture?

LONG: Uh-hmm. But there were no such people until we came along. Nobody would be alienated.

CONLEY: But in other words, the...the African church might be a more important source of fellowship just because of the fact that they...they didn't have any really soc...or very many social ties with [unclear as Long begins speaking]....

LONG: That's right. And you can imagine when there are only eight in the church how important it is to gather all the church eights together until they see that they number five hundred people, and they take a great deal of comfort from that. So we always had a yearly conference where we would gather together, and they'd look around and say, "Wow, all of these people are Christians?" They couldn't believe that there were that many because each one of them would be standing alone in his place, but to realize that there were others doing the same thing was a real support.

CONLEY: How did the home mission board influence your efforts?

LONG: Well, their only interest was to be sure that we stayed on track establishing churches and preaching a true gospel. Actually, that question really isn't a good question in the sense that no home mission does not know what's going on with its outreach. So you see, we only develop a

work on the field as it relates to our constitutional base here at home. So the home offices don't try in any way to control it. They've got people out on the field who have....

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