This is a complete transcript of the oral history interview with **Burt Long (CN 351, T2)** 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 created by Maria Bergstedt and Paul Ericksen and was completed in December 1997.

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 2. Oral history interview with Burt Long by Heather Coney on December 3, 1986.

CONLEY:...at the Billy Graham Center on December the third at 9:30 a.m. [Crumpling noise] Dr. Long, last time we discussed a lot of things pertaining to your years before the mission field, and then discussing different aspects of the gospel and the presentation of it in Niger. Today, I'd like to focus more on some cultural aspects of Niger. To begin with, pertaining social opportunities in Ni...Niger, what kind of social and economic advancement opportunities were available for the Nigerians that you observed?

LONG: Well, let me say that...we usually say "Nee-ger-ian [phonetic approximation] . . ."

CONLEY: Nee-ger-ian. [Laughs] Okay.

LONG:...because it's a French-speaking country, and because Nigeria is called Nigerian. The people of Nigeria are called Nigerians. But you do have to specify which country you're talking about because both Niger and Nigeria mean black and...(in French and in English)...and the countries are similar in that the northern tenth of the Hausa tribe is in Niger, and the great majority of it is in Nigeria. So there is a border between the two countries, which is quite significant border because one was French and one was British. But still the same tribe bridges the border. And this is a problem in all of Africa in that the colonizing countries paid no attention to tribal borders. And in the case of the Hausa tribe, which is the largest tribe in Africa, it has some significance. So the opportunities decrease as you go north because you go into a...an increasingly desertic area which has a much decreasing product from the farms as you go. So when you get up into the northernmost habitation of people.... And most of Niger is Sahara Desert. It has a...a border with Algeria right in the middle of the desert. So Niger is very, very poor. It was listed when we went out there as the poorest country in the world, and it borders on second, third, or fourth from that position ever since. Although it is true that, maybe ten years ago, they found that they did have uranium and iron and three other minerals that were important in Niger. And at that time, the head tax...when they discovered those things and that they export them, the head tax of two dollars a head was removed from the people. But the...the advantages of culture and education and so on that you mentioned were very, very low. People had no opportunity to advance whatever. [Airplane noise in the distant background] They...they were just simple farmers and they were scratching out a living in a desert. And that means that a rainy season that was under twenty inches... (and twenty inches was just about what we could expect; that was an average rainy season)...under twenty would be a famine year, and over twenty would not be. So that, when I was there during the course of twenty-six years, I would say we would have a famine year two or three years out of five. So if they alternated, they could scratch it out with what they had had the year before, but if they got two or three years in a row.... And then we had the great Sahel famine up until about 1972 of six straight years, or seven or eight depending on how severe a crop loss has to be to call it a famine. But the people just starved, and there was disaster. So that...you know, I mentioned that there were supposed to be three and a half million people and three and a half million animals in their herds. But the government found out when they had better methods of determining, that there were six million of each, and that they were hidden for tax reasons. But after the tax was reduced because of the finding of minerals and the greater wealth to the

government, which took all the income from these things, then the population was found to be about six million of each. But in the courses of those famines, it went way down again. They lost almost the entire herd. Herds would include cattle, goats, sheep, which are the most important, and then camels, donkeys, a few horses and those animals. Being Muslims, they follow the Old Testament Jewish dietary restrictions. They only eat animals that chew their cud and have split hoof. So they're not used to having other animals around because they can't use them. They can't be used for food. But in the famine time, they ate anything and everything. They would eat donkeys. The donkeys would be presented to them as slaughtered meat [clears throat], and only the butchers knew where it came from. But they...they really knew where it came from. But they were so hungry they just forgot the religious rules and they ate anything.

CONLEY: Yeah, I was interested how their religion fended for them. Was there any way that they could get ahead?

LONG: Well, certain ones did. Anybody who...[pauses] I have to become critical politically to say these things, and while I was a missionary, I would not do that because our visas in getting in depended on us cooperating with the government. But the French were a much more rigid and strict colonizing power than the British in the sense that they had to produce a profit for the mother country. And producing a profit for the mother comp...country from a land that's arid and dry and desertic [sic] is very difficult. And almost all the French colonies were in the desert, with the exception of Ivory Coast and a few that reached all the way down to the sea. So they did a lot less to develop their people. The educational opportunities were less, and the people were not brought into the echelons on self-government as much as the British brought them in. And this is why we thought that the British experiment was so great and that the British colonies would succeed much better. Nigeria was picked out as the glowing jewel of...an example of...of passing over by good training from the colonizing power, from colonial rule to internal independence and then external independence. So that when the independence came, everybody was looking to Nigeria, and then when the oil finds were made, and the country destroyed all its other sources of income because they figured they could live free on oil for the rest of their lives, why, the plo...the politics just followed it, and it shows that the disaster which has occurred in politics in all of Africa doesn't really depend on the mother country and the training that they got, because Nigeria was so much better trained as far as schools were concerned. Even today, I would suspect that in Niger, you would only have an opportunity for less than fifty percent of children to go to school. In Nigeria they have passed a law saying that every child has a right to go to school, but the schools, in fact, have become so expensive for them just by putting little fees here, like making them buy their own paper and buying your own supplies and things like that, that it's just out of the reach of people. And when you say the word Koranic school, it sounds like it's a school, but in a Koranic school, all they do is sit under the shade of a tree with no equipment of any kind, except a small wooden slate that they make from...from a wood of a tree and a pen that they make from a...a feather, or maybe they found ball-point pens and paper now at this stage. But they write with charcoal ink made from carbon on the bottom of a pot. And all they do is repeat verses of the Koran and write them on their slates until they've memorized the Koran, and the memorization of the Koran in a language foreign to them. It has to be done in Arabic because it's the official language of the Koran. So Koranic education is really not an education. And they don't do it in French either, so to get somewhere in Niger, you had to have French. But if you had good French and modicum of math and a modicum

of...of rational thinking methods, smart kids could get up into jobs in the police department and in government offices and things like that. They would never be supervisors or things like that, but they could get up high.

CONLEY: So it sounds like getting ahead would have to result in a...and move southward and into the cities, then, too?

LONG: Oh yeah. They'd have to get to cities that had to do with the governmental chain of command. They had certain cities where they had government offices and certain cities where they didn't, and the cities that had them would grow and the other ones wouldn't.

CONLEY: You were explaining some of the differences between the French and the British. How did the Africans view the French? What was their attitude towards them?

LONG: It all depends which African you talking about. If you talk about the lowest class, which were farmers.... It's a peculiarity of all of that culture and all African countries that I've ever been in that everybody farms. They raise some of their own food. So that when the rainy season comes, they have to have a job that they can drop and go to their farm, especially on the day after and the second day after a rain because those are days when the farm must be cultivated...plowed, cultivated, seeded, and then...then it just stands there. Then they can just sort of farm it at their leisure. They really do two [pauses] farming periods in which they hoe out the weeds, one about two weeks after the crop is planted and another about a month later. Then the crop can just stand until it's ripe, and then they have to have time to go and harvest it, which if...in the case of a good harvest takes quite a bit of time because hauling home all of that heavy grain takes some doing. But...but on years when there [laughs] was nothing or very little, then the harvest was no problem. But if they had any other kind of job, they did it when they were not farming. So that's a three-month period of farming. And they had to have an alternate crop, so that if the sorghum crop failed (that is to say they start the first of July with rains), and if by the first of August they hadn't had enough rain to keep that crop alive, they'd have to start with a crop that only took sixty days instead of ninety days to ripen. And that would be millet, which is a much lower protein-containing grain and less efficient and less volume or weight. So that they didn't have enough food in those years either. But if they got a millet harvest, at least it was a secondary harvest to fall back on when the...when the sorghum didn't come through. Of course, they had their cattle, but they didn't want to slaughter cattle any faster than necessary. And when meat prices went high because they were slaughtering too many, then they couldn't afford it unless they had a lot of grain income to buy it with. So by and large, their first income came from their grain and was not money. It was only the grain. They'd store it in the granaries. And the family wouldn't sell the excess till they saw whether next year was going to be a good crop or not. So they were selling year-old grain, which was not as good as fresh grain because it had a lot of weevils in it and so on. So then they would have a secondary job or a secondary crop, so that a farmer would...would find an area near water during the rainy season and raise onions or vegetables of some kind because they knew the French people were great vegetable eaters, and so were the missionaries. They themselves would eat them if they had them, but if they didn't have them and if they could sell them, they prefer to sell them for a cash crop. They raised tobacco and cotton also. After the other harvest came in, they would plant crops that didn't take so much water because there was no rain then. And the...they would sell all of their

tobacco and cotton except what they used in their own house. So they had secondary crops that they called cash crops, and the government, of course, subsidized the cotton...would buy it all from them. So unless a man.... Now...now jobs like blacksmith occurred and these guys would be farmers too, but they would blacksmith in the in-between seasons, and they would see that they could sell quite a few farming tools when the harvest season came and when the plowing season came because they all do this all by hand, no machines. All the plowing's done with hoes by hand and the planting. So they would make farm implements, and then in their off-seasons they would make curios, things that anybody might buy. And they would.... Then there would be goldsmiths and silversmiths who would make art objects by...by melting coins and things like that. Or you could give them metal of whatever type you wanted, and they'd make you necklaces. They'd.... [Pauses] Decorations on women in Africa all include necklaces made of different coins. And these men would make little holes in the coins in ways that they could put them together on necklaces. And a woman might wear a silver coin. They had the old Napoleons...silver coin bigger than a silver dollar, which would be worth a...a couple of dollars. And she could wear ten of these around her neck and be a great decoration. But also she could fall back on it in a time of famine by taking the coin off one at a time and selling it again, putting it back into circulation. Since it was silver, it was saleable. If it was just a piece of cheap metal like iron or copper or something that wasn't monetarily significant, then they would not be able to sell them because everybody would be selling them, and there would be no market for them. People wouldn't be able to afford them.

CONLEY: Yeah, you were talking about the attitude of the Africans towards the French. How did this farming schedule in which they had to...

LONG: [cuts Conley off] Okay, go up to the next class then. You've got the class of African that goes and works for the French people. Now we had...at first when we went to Africa...house employees are cheap. You could get them for a dollar a week. And that was normal pay. It wasn't exploitation. That's all they could make anywhere. So we would have a cook and a houseboy and a yard boy. The French people were much wealthier than the missionaries. They would have s...two or three yard boys. They would farm a large area with just flowers, which the Africans thought was absolutely ridiculous because you can't eat flowers. And...and so the...they would have elaborate wells and water systems and large houses and a lot of labor. Well, these people hated the French because they treated them like...like slaves, not like servants. And...and...not.... You can't talk about people as a class without remembering there are a lot of exceptions. There are a lot of people who did not treat their people like slaves, and they were...they were much better liked than the others. And then the French, as well as the British but more often the French, would leave their wives home in France when they came to Africa for a four-year term or a three-year term or a year-and-a-half term, and they would marry African women or live with them. They actually would...would marry them. They would be called their African wife. The wife in France knew that they'd had these women, but they would be raising...what I'm getting to is the children of those marriages who would be mulattos. Well, now you've got a...a situation where you've got an educated father who is high in the echelon of the army in France because it was the colonels and higher *commandantes* who...who ruled in each county-sized area. And these men would be living with these women and producing children, and those children would be...would be sent to schools because the father saw to it that all his children, even his half-breed black children were sent to schools. Generally he loved those kids, and he loved his wife too. So we as missionaries were sort

of fighting a system that we couldn't see as being moral, and yet we were in it and these were the people that we were working among. So we could work among the high class, the ruling class of French people who wouldn't listen to the gospel by and large. They were anti-clerical Catholics from France. And then we would have their offspring who were half African and half superstitious and half educated. And those people would work in the police department and the government offices. And those people, the mulattos, became very highly trained, very capable people because their fathers saw to it that they did. Some of them even went home to France and...and met the other wife and lived in the other home and were trained in French universities and then would come back and be high in the echelons of...of the so...civil service. But when the French...when the total independence came along, the blacks couldn't stand the mulatto group any more than they could stand the French group, so they drove them all out. So there are many half-breeds from all the nations the French ruled in the earth in the government...in the...in the country of France today. And they're all accepted as French, and they're all part of the French community. So there are French Indo-Chinese, French Africans, and...and France had colonies all over the world, all the islands and Tahiti and all of those. And...and these people have gravitated back to France. So you can see how that has changed the culture of France, but the Africans wouldn't accept those changes. They got rid of everybody who was not all black. And there's enough trouble between the different tribes in...in these countries so that they don't want any trouble on that other nature of the racial difference of the people. because the Zuberma people (that's a name I couldn't think of last week)...they were the other half-tribe of Niger among the fourteen or so tribes that were there, the Zubermas ruled the west section of Niger and the Hausas the east section, so.... But the Hausas were connected to the rest of their tribe in Nigeria, and there's a section of the Zuberma tribe in Nigeria too along the border. But as....

CONLEY: [Interrupting] Can you spell Zuberma?

LONG: Z-U-B-E-R-M-A. And [pauses] they also have another name, which I'll think of in a minute. But anyway, the border wasn't a real border to the native people. We had to have passports to cross that border. They didn't. Blacks can go...come and go across the borders anytime they want to. But whenever something happens in a country that makes it wealthy, then people flock to that country. So that if there was a reason for immigration or emigration such as that, then they may stop it. They may require even the blacks to have passports at a time like that just to prevent all of the people of one country from entering another country just to live off of it. So these all have strong effects. Now when the British were driven out.... The same thing happened in Nigeria at the independence. But they weren't hated as much as the French because they hadn't treated their people with quite so much slave attitude. They would [pauses]...they educated them more. Not completely, but they had more education. And they used them in government offices where they intended to leave them and have them take over the government. So the British were much more prepared for the independence in that they had a trained cadre of people ready to take over.

CONLEY: Speaking of the governments, what was the... [pauses] the government's official position on mission work in Niger?

LONG: Well, they were against it and had been against it for many years, but in all of the French colonies all over the world, missionaries were trying to get in and...and little by little they got in

because of persistence. And whereas the normal missionary who was, say, an evangelist or a bush-trekker or a man who teaches, something like that.... Getting a hospital permit to build our hospital in Niger took fifty years. We had fifty years of requests before we got one, and then we could only build one in the bush. I mentioned this last week. We couldn't use a town where they had already even the smallest medical organization...a...a single dispenser, and a little tiny dispensary with five patients a day. We couldn't even go into a town that much equipped medically, but....

CONLEY: [Interrupting] But they ended up changing their...their attitude towards mission work, didn't they, during the time you were there?

LONG: Just grudgingly. They didn't think that we were doing any good. They were mostly all atheists, the French people...

CONLEY: Well, what about...

LONG: …or infidels.

CONLEY: …when the president of Niger went to Canada and was saying...giving compliments, you know, left and right about your hospital?

LONG: Yeah well, you see, that was after the independence. The president of Niger was a black. See after the French were driven out, then we began to experience a total new relation with government. Now we had an independent government, and we had to be careful to treat people that might have been...low class people before have become important people. And we have to be careful how we address such people. We...we got very used to calling people by their first names. When we first went out there, people only had one name. But after a while, they'd adopt a second name, and you'd have to call them Monsieur so and so instead of...instead of Yacubu, you know, and address them with their dignity. And, of course, they also assumed the office of dignity too. They would put on fancy clothes, and they would live that way, and then we missionaries even found out that we weren't appreciated wearing shorts and scuffed shoes and things like that like we used to either. We had to dress up in order to come and see them. So the whole way of doing missions changed when that happened. And there were a lot of changes in there that took some of the missionaries or some of the missions a long time to catch on to, so that.... Real changes took place, but it's true that the government at first thought, "We can function here without the missionaries." But when they found out that their school system depended on missionaries, and...and their health system and all of that, they began to appreciate them, and it's true. A lot of missionaries were given awards, and a lot of other good things happened between governments and...and missionaries. But then when the coup...the first coup came along (and every country, the first government was heaved out by a...usually by a very rough military coup), then it all changed again. So now the missionaries are considered bottom of the pile again.

CONLEY: That was the '74 coup?

LONG: Uh-hmm.

CONLEY: Okay.

LONG: In fact, I'm surprised if it was that late. It was probably closer to '68 or '9. Although it depends on the different countries when those coups took place, but there have been coups right and left ever since.

CONLEY: What was the government relationship like with the Catholic Church, and then with the Protestant church in Niger?

LONG: Well, the Catholics, of course, were native to France, and all Frenchmen were Catholics and they knew what Catholicism was. But Protestantism they didn't understand. They didn't really know what it was because there never was a real Protestant movement in France, except for the one group in France that was Protestant from way back [Huguenot], and it was...and they all lived together in a certain section of France. The Frenchmen just didn't understand that a church wasn't just a place where you were baptized and married and buried. Most French are anti-clerical, but they still go to the church to have these things done, and yet they're not religious. Now even among them, of course, is a very devout group of Catholic people, Catholic people who may even know the Lord by our Protestant definition. But they're very much religiously oriented to the Catholic Church and its mass and all of that kind of thing. But the Catholic Church did very little to reach out and get the Africans. So that only in the big cities where they would have a big Catholic church.... And in Niger that would be only two or three cities in the whole country. So that the people out in the boondocks really didn't know anything about the Catholic Church either. And we were out there in the boondocks. We were not specializing on the cities. Protestant missions for some reason focused on the poor classes and worked up through that group because they were looking at the masses and they wanted to see large-scale conversions. Today they work with both groups, but it's a whole different group of missionaries that work with the two groups, so that it's a whole different way of working. And, of course, we anticipated that we would have many churches growing rapidly in our.... But...but when the Muslim toughnesses met, then you don't get the conversions, and...and the churches grow very slowly and so on, so.... Today I think probably in our mission range we would be hard put to count more that five thousand converts after forty years of function in Niger. In Nigeria it was completely different. We have a million there.

CONLEY: Yeah. Does the government have an official religion in Niger?

LONG: No. They're...you know, they call that an Islamic republic. When they declare themselves an Islamic republic, then that's the official religion, but we did not have that. We had a freedom of religion written into the constitution even after the independence. So that is a great help to Protestant missions. When you have an Islamic republic, generally they won't even let you in the country. So that when Somalia became an...an Islamic republic, for example, and we had two converts that went public, they were willing to say they were Protestants, they stood up and said, “We are the first Somali Christians.” And the government heard that and came back and said, “There is no such thing as a Somali Christian,” and they persecuted them. They were willing to kill them, but they...they escaped. So you can see that there's a big difference in what you consider an Islamic republic and a republic. I might say in respect to this that Nigeria's present military ruler, that is to say it's been a military government (there's a military committee, but the one man is at the

head of it), he made a secret pact with the Islamic people in his country who are forty-nine percent of the people (Christians are fifty-one now, so you see there's a big problem going to happen in Nigeria). . . he made a secret pact to make it an Islamic republic, and when the Christian community heard of it, they just went up in arms, and so they have repudiated it. The people have, the Christians have, and the population has, but the government never has. So that agreement is still there, and it's like a thorn in their flesh because they realize that the present man has got to go. And yet he's got the military power to stay in power. And until he goes that pact will be there, but it's a secret pact. And this is a...a fact of life in Nigeria today that the missionaries are...are having a great deal of trouble with. There's a lot more persecution of missionaries and a lot more difficulty to missionaries in Nigeria today than there was a year...two years ago before that pact was made. So it makes a big difference, as you suspect, that a country that is an Islamic republic becomes almost impossible to evangelize because they just won't let you in.

CONLEY: When you were in Niger, did you detect any anti-Western attitudes or anti-...you know, just foreigner attitudes?

LONG: Quite the opposite. They.... Well, when we first went in, of course, some of them had never seen a white man. And to come to my hospital and see me, the problem wasn't the doctor, it was the white skin. So after they got used to seeing white people and they would come finally, you know, they would get so sick they would finally come, then the superiority of the results they got and the love and care and concern with which they were treated, which they had never before experienced, not from the French people, maybe from a few French missionaries...Catholic missionaries, that won them over. So, you know, once we...we made good solid contact with the people, they realized they could trust us.

CONLEY: What kind of relations does Niger have with it...the neighboring countries around it?

LONG: Well, Algeria to the north is in the desert, so there's practically no relationship. [Moammar] Gadhafi [leader of Libya, also spelled Khadafi or Kadhafi] from Libya has tried to make a Muslim republic out of Niger by extending a lot of his oil wealth with equipments, sending them military help and health help and vehicle help and so on, even help them with road paving and all that kind of stuff.

CONLEY: Was this when you were there...

LONG: Yes.

CONLEY:...that he was doing it?

LONG: But as soon as the government of Niger [pauses], who...which is being run by a colonel in the military (who's now a general, of course; they always elevate themselves), he was quite accepting of help as long as it was donated freely, but the minute Gadhafi tried to tell him what to do and how to run his government, then he threw him out. And this was true of the communists too. The communists thought that they could help Africa governments and get in and then take over. But the minute they started to take over, they threw them out. So communists and movements like

Gadhafi's have had very little results in Africa because the Africans want to rule themselves. They do not want to be told how to run their own country. [Conley tries to talk] Even though their way of running it themselves is a total disaster [laughs], they still don't want any help unless it's freely given.

CONLEY: Did the communists make advances in Niger then, too?

LONG: Oh yes. Definitely. And in Nigeria. And they were thrown out. And then when the Americans come in with their AID [Agency International Development] program and so on, as long as it's freely given, they'll take it. And so America still is well-considered and American products are well liked. And even things like tobacco and liquor and things like that, if it comes from America it has to be good. And the same with automobiles and...and all of our other products. If it's American it's good, and they like it. But now the situation today is that American products are too high-priced for them. They can't afford them. And this is the economic advantage that I mentioned that France tried to exploit its colonies for its own good and so did Britain. And so French automobiles are for sale. French goods are for sale. They even take the Niger products home to France, manufacture finished goods, and send it back out. And then the African has to pay for all that improvement. Now Nigeria being as wealthy as it is has tried to put a lot of these products as home industries and government industries. And they tried to nationalize all of these industry...industries, and they tried to make big industry grow so fast that they went broke doing it, and it was a disaster. They have not really succeeded, but they know that in order to succeed, they've got to do it. So the time will come when you can't buy an imported car. And as a matter of fact, an American car would be imported into Nigeria today with a five hundred percent duty. But if you import a British made car into Nigeria, then it would only have about a hundred percent duty. But if you buy a car in Nigeria, then it's...has no duty at all. Unbeknownst to the poor Nigerian, though, each part that was imported had the same duty on it, so they're not saving anything. In other words, any goods made in Nigeria...and it tends to be in Niger also, although Niger is not making much st...in their own...in that area . . .the goods are all very high priced because of duty to bring parts in.

CONLEY: Who does Niger receive the bulk of its...its aid from?

LONG: Well, the French are in the European Common Market, the “Community” as it's referred to, and of course that's where their aid comes from. The British are now in that market, but in Nigeria, the British sort of watched over Nigeria with some sense of relationship, but not too helpful. The...the country was wealthy enough to support itself. And when you see a country squandering its own wealth, you're not too likely to help them, especially when the home country is poor. Only America helps these countries whether or not. And we see an awful lot of American gift waste out there, too. The waste to all of this is fantastic. It's just...just great.

CONLEY: Is it...is it waste because the type of aid is not needed or because they don't know how to use the aid or...?

LONG: Both. And...and just ignorance. For example, even...even the aid of [pauses] hunger relief. There's no way you can stop a famine in an African country from North America. It cannot be

done. And Americans don't believe that. They think that it can be done, and so they keep throwing money into famine aid and sending it over there, but it all just goes into the pockets of the politicians. They take it all and sell it on the market, and very little of it gets to the starving people, especially when you have a situation like you have in Ethiopia where a war is involved and you're trying to help one side in the war, the poor side. The winning side doesn't want them to get that help because it's going to make them stronger in their war effort. So the whole effort of aid in Ethiopia was a disaster this year.

CONLEY: In Niger when it was having that great famine, did aid from the U.S. help to get food to the poor people?

LONG: Yes. Well, it came into the ports where the government took it over. Then the government dispensed it as they wished. They sold most of it, but we knew that it was coming because we were American missionaries, and we went to the American embassy, got a hold of the man in charge of famine relief, and he gave us letters to the government. And, of course, the government realized that without him they wouldn't get any of it, so they allowed us to take some of it. And we got some of it in to some of the villages. We put it in the hands of the pastors of the churches that we had, and they knew who it was for. We didn't. And they passed it out, so I would say that we might have had as much as twenty bags of grain that would go into a village of five hundred people once every month, which isn't much help. It keeps people just alive enough to be hungry again next time.

CONLEY: I'd like to talk about the hospitals and medical system a little bit more in Nigeria. How would you describe hospitals in...I mean, in Niger, rather [laughs], particularly yours in Galmi...am I s...?

LONG: Yes, uh-hmm.

CONLEY: Right. And how do they compare with American hospitals?

LONG: Oh, exceedingly primitive. [Conley laughs] We just built a...a large building. Once we got permission for...for a hospital, they required that we build a certain number of square feet. Otherwise it wasn't worthwhile. When they saw our hospital, they realized we had built ten times as much as they had considered a minimum. They thought we were just going to do some cheesy little operation, but we did really put money into it. And it wasn't by American standards. You know, it costs about fifty thousand dollars per bed to build an American hospital. So a one hundred bed hospital would cost you fifty million dollars. But in Niger we built very cheaply, but we built a building that would withstand the weather. And we bought a lot of local beds, which were just low beds. And I broke my back on those many years stooping down to the patients until I got a bunch of beds out here at MAP. Do you remember the Medical Assistance Program? They were used hospital beds. And I began to find organizations in America that were getting all of the thrown-offs of American hospitals, and I would take them out there. So I could buy a bed here for eight dollars, and it cost me one hundred dollars to ship it. So that when I got out there it cost me about a hundred and eight dollars per bed to put them in my hospital. Well, I had to raise enough for two hundred beds, which I had enough room in my buildings for two hundred beds by crowding them. And I knew I'd have them full all the time, so I didn't have any trouble having patients. We had to put

patients off until we could get a bed and also had to put them off until we had time to work on them. I would schedule eight surgical cases a day, which by American standards would be a entire day's work for a doctor. And then after that I would still have to see a couple a hundred patients a day. And then I would still have to get up at night and do all the emergency work. Out of twenty-six years I spent there, I was alone, the only doctor, for sixteen years and I had one doctor with me for...for ten years. And we would have visiting doctors who would be helpful in that they could do something, but they couldn't speak with the people, and we'd have to give them temporary jobs to relieve our pressure that they could do without knowing the language and so on. If they could do surgery, they could do surgery without knowing the people, but if they were...had to interview patients in order to treat them of...you know, house calls and...and office calls and that kind of thing, they couldn't do it. So when you have a schedule like that, you're...you're pressed to your physical limits, also to your psychological limits; pressure's on you. And it's easy to go downhill. It takes a rugged type dedication that most people don't have. I wou...I think Americans have it more than any other simply because there are more American missionaries than there are any other missionaries. But still it's tough. But once that hospital became known in Niger as being the only place where they could get help that was sympathetic and cheap, reasonable, then we were just inundated. There was no way we could keep up with it.

CONLEY: Are...are there typical medical practices and traditions that are...that are typical for Nigerians?

LONG: Yes. They have a set of people that they call bonesetters, and these men only treat fractures. And they do it with a splinting system made with corn stalk splints. And every doctor learns in American med schools that a Folkman's [?] contracture by too much pressure on both sides of a fracture stops the blood supply and your whole limb dies. Well, these men would get...fifty percent of their cases would have some kind of...of gangrene or necrosis or limb failure connected with it. But if they got a healing, their fame would be...well, broadcast. Even though they had many failures, a success gave them success. So we could never compete with these guys completely. We could...a lot of people realized that our results were better, and they would come to us. But often times if we would put a cast on one of them, and then he got uncomfortable in the cast (which always occurs, it gets itchy, it gets hot; you know, it has to be on from six to twelve weeks...usually twelve on a weight bearing bone), so they would just go from us, take off the cast and go to a bonesetter. So we had to be sure that we used some system that would keep them with us once they got in the cast. And that was that we required full payment in advance. And since they [laughs] had their treatment all paid for, they would be less likely to go and get another treatment. Because these bonesetters would charge them ten times what we were charging. They really charged them. There's another group of healers that would be called pharmacists, I suppose. They had...they had all the old traditional weeds and...and plants and animal parts where it was part [pauses] herbal, that is to say some good that is in the plant and part superstition. That's just the way they did it, you know, the way the man sold it to them, the incantations that went with it, the movements that went with it, and the ceremony. And then there were the religious healers. They would write Koranic verses on their slates, scrape off the verse and make a little pile of sawdust

and ink or wash it off and make a little moisture, you know, and bind that in a charm. And then they'd wear that around their neck like the old asafetida [fetid gum resin of various oriental plants used in medicine] [bumps microphone] bags that we used in American pre-rational medicine days and so on which was full of asafetida and garlic and that kind of thing. So, you know, if you compare an African to an American, they're just two centuries behind, that's all. Because in America today, even you and I have friends who the first place they go to for help is what they've heard from their mothers, the old wives' tales. They'll use the old wives' remedies. And then they'll go to the pharmacist and ask the pharmacist if he's got something that'll help them. And so they had these men with all the drugs and they would go to them. And then they'll go to their priests and their pastors and ask for prayer or healing and so on. And then they'll finally go to the doctor who practices rational medicine because he's going to cost them more, and they're avoiding the high costs of medical care. Now America has become so affluent that a lot of people go to the doctor first, but there are a lot of people who don't go to the doctor first. So we are not much different. When you get right down to it, we are no different from the basic African living on the land. But after a while when...when things like hernias, tumors, big, massive things happen to people, they realize that their medicine really wasn't doing them any good. So as the last man on the chain, we got them. And sad to say in the case of diseases like cancer, the later you come, the less chance you have of getting a cure. That was too bad. We were on the end of the chain, the wrong end of the chain. So that if they would come to us...you know, a woman gets a lump in her breast, one of the very common cancers, and instead of going to the doctor, she puts up with it because it isn't hurting her. She knows it's there, probably, but she doesn't know how to...how dangerous it is. Then when it begins to ulcerate or the breast is twice as big as the other one or something like that, and she realizes that there's something drastically wrong, she'll go and have mud cakes put on it, manure cakes, leaves, and all that kind of stuff. And then when it ulcerates and begins to smell bad, her family doesn't want her with them because she stinks, and...and she's ostracized. Then she comes to us. Well, with an ulcerated, gross cancer that's either eaten away the whole organ or else it's a massive organ just full of cancer, you've already got metastases that are going to kill her. It's already under her...inside her chest. It's already in her lung or maybe in her brain. It's already in her liver, and it's high up under her axillus [underarm] so it's...they're...they're dead on arrival so to speak. But we found that by developing a rapport with the patient and kindness, and.... Sometimes we would take them off knowing that we couldn't cure the disease, but if we get the big mass off of there, which was a filthy necrotic mass, and maybe doing skin grafting over what we knew would recur anyway, we would give them six months to a year of help, maybe less, maybe more. But knowing that we were trying to help and seeing that we could help.... We could give them pain control, which the others couldn't. Their pain pills weren't as good as ours, you know. And this way we found out that as far as our ministry was concerned, we weren't there to save physical lives, primarily. We were there to save spiritual lives. So we would still have the kind of results we wanted. The only trouble is if you get converts who are going to die in a year, you can't build a church [Coney laughs]. So we had our best results among the very class of people that was no good for building churches because they were the people who now, at this late stage in lives, they didn't care whether they were known as a Muslim or a Christian. They could stand up to their Muslim teachers because they knew they were dying anyway. Just the people [as he is laughing] we needed to build our church were the people we couldn't use.

CONEY: Where...where were you getting the medical supplies?

LONG: Well, I got tons of it from MAP [Medical Assistance Program, formerly located in Wheaton] out here, and I had other contacts with people who were getting drugs and...and other supplies secondhand, you know. A pharmacy closes down and their stock goes to a...to a collector of stuff, like [pauses] mission organizations and so on. We would get all the doctors' samples [brushes against microphone] and we would get used equipment. My first surgical kit I bought in Paris when I was studying French. The army had left all its field materials behind in France, and these old kits of surgical instruments, orthopedic and general surgical, I bought from a French company that had picked them up on their battlefields and put them together. And for a thousand dollars, I got what would have cost me fifteen or twenty thousand dollars in a surgical supply store here in America. And still that Frenchman had only gotten them by scraping them off the battlefield [laughs], and he made a nice profit, too. But anyway, I could raise the money, so I got it and I took it to Africa, and I used those things for twenty years.

CONEY: Had the government given any medical supplies?

LONG: Very little. They said they would, and they were supposed to supply all the medicine for all of the...of their dispensaries. But they were strapped for funds also, and I would send in such a tremendous order. I...I had [pauses]...I had seven hundred patients a day some days, and their dispensaries would have seven patients a day. And I would send in such tremendous orders. You had to send them in annually, and then they would break in into four parts and send it to you quarterly. Well, I would get less than a tenth of what I asked for. So I still had to be taking all my own in.

CONEY: You were talking about cancer a minute ago. Was this a...a typical disease or what were some of the common diseases that you treated?

LONG: Cancer is just as prominent in Africa as it is here, but it's less well treated, so you see more patients with it. Also, I think you see it in younger-aged patients. Cancer is a very common disease. But the diseases that you refer to as tropical diseases aren't really tropical diseases. They're diseases, which occur wherever you have a neglected population where parasites are numerous. It is true that they are more...more numerous in tropical areas because the people live in...in warm climates. They live all together. They don't have toilets. A lot of the parasites have a cycle in...in another animal and then a cycle in the human, like the cycle of malaria in a mosquito and then the cycle in the human. Without the mosquito, malaria would die out. So we know that, and we try to control mosquitos and mosquito bites in order to control the disease. Now we have good drugs, and we've found that by using a lot of DDT [acronym for insecticide dichloro-diphenyl-trichloro-ethane] and things like that, we've also destroyed more than just the mosquitos. So, you know, you still have to use your wisdom or common sense in treating a thing. But malaria is still the biggest killer in the world and of course in places like Africa where it's tropical, why that's true. And then there are your...your one and multiple celled parasites, like all the roundworms and the flatworms and the liver worms, the intestinal worms. And there are the single-celled animals like amoeba and giardia and things like that which are also pathological, produce diseases. So Africa has the same diseases we have plus a large increase in the relative numbers of what we call tropical diseases, which are really mostly parasites.

CONEY: I see. Talking about the school...how would you describe schools in...in Niger? You were saying before that they were mainly supported by the missionaries. Were there public schools too?

LONG: Well, every missionary wife soon found out that she was a missionary on her own strength. It had nothing to do with her husband because every day on her back porch would be the sick people of the local village. So she would have to be a nurse. She would have to learn it, that's all. She would wash, dress, bandage, take care of things like that. Now this is the wives of non-medical men, so that it would be left in their hands. Their husbands knew no more about it than they did. And then when the doctors started coming out with the missions, we would teach these women the best ways to do things, and they would soon have a clinic going. Well, eventually those clinics...they had to hire Africans to run them because the women didn't have time for it. Also they weren't trained. We finally got some nurses out on the field who could do a better job, and they ran the clinics. Of course, we were always short. I would say never in my life have I ever seen adequate supplies of dressers, nurses, and doctors. Always you're short, and nurses are the things you're short of the most because for every one doctor, you can handle fifteen to twenty nurses. If you get two doctors, you can use thirty or forty nurses. But the nurses are the ones who are critical. So we never had enough nurses. I never ever had enough nurses ever working with me. And these clinics then, we took African people who had no education, and we taught them to read and write, and we taught them how to read the Bible. Then we would give them two or three years of medical training, and we would call them a dresser. And then they would take over the job the missionary's wife was doing, and the clinic would be moved off the back porch to a remote part of the station where all of these stinking, filthy, necrotic diseases wouldn't cause contamination to the rest of the population. We were also very sensitive about our children being so close to all this. We had eight missionaries in my lifetime who got leprosy, for example, and...and some missionary children who got a lot of parasitic diseases. So we had to be careful about how it was spread around among us as well. But eventually then, we also started up schools, and we would have missionaries teaching schools. But you see it came through the stages of the missionary wife teaching the cook to read and write, teaching the houseboy to read and write, and then his kids, and then...'cause these were all adults, and...and finally we would develop schools. Well, MAP and other organizations of missionary experience developed systems which you now get all printed out of how a mission isn't meant to go into a country and supplant the government in doing all these things for a country, but a mission goes in and sets up an example...an exemplary institution of a school and a hospital and so on. And you hope the government takes the cue and takes it over. So now all of our hosp...all of our schools have been taken over in most of the countries where we were, except in Niger. It's such a poor country, they still want permission to run them. So we have a couple of schools, very low level and we have a high school. But the government wants to control those too. So eventually they begin to control them, meaning that it gets more and more expensive for us. So finally we give them over entirely to the government. So now even in Nigeria which is far more advanced than Niger all the schools are government, and they tried to take over all the hospitals. But even a wealthy country like Nigeria found out it foundered them to do so. They couldn't, so they gave them back. So we went through the stage of turning over in Nigeria (now I'm not talking about Niger), the only country where we have turned our national church free. They're controlling themselves now. They wanted their hospital so bad themselves, to run it themselves, that they got it back from the government. We recommended that they would not take it back, but

they did. They wanted it. So that exists only because of what an independent, indigenous church group wants to do. In Niger, the hospital was offered to the government because the government was persecuting the mission because of its hospital, not allowing them to have any supplies, not helping them with costs, putting rules on them prevented them from getting costs back from the people, so they finally said, “Okay, you take it.” Well, when the government saw they we were desperate, and that we had to give it up. Then they released...relaxed some of their rules, and so it is still a government...it's still a mission hospital. But eventually we want them to take it over. We are in mission business, not medical business. And in these countries we also develop printing plants and bookstores because we want to sell books that the government won't sell and commercial stores won't sell. But eventually our stores also become prosperous because we sell other things like pencils and paper and...and jewelry and all...anything that'll make the thing go. So eventually we want those to be taken over either by the church as Christian bookstores or by anybody who wants to run them. As long as we can see that we can get the materials we want into the hands of the people, we don't care whether it's through the mission or not. So these things start low, and when they get big, they're taken over and we want that [rustling sound against microphone].

CONEY: Now you said the government took over the schools in Nigeria [rustling sound]], but what about in Niger?

LONG: They do in Niger, too, except that the church is indigenous there, and they decided that they wanted a school of their own that was...they could teach the kids their viewpoint on Scriptural things. So we still do have a Christian school in Niger and the...the Christians send their kids from all over the country to get to that school.

CONEY: Is that just one Christian school?

LONG: Uh-huh. But you see it's a very small operation. It's almost an Islamic republic. It's...it's ninety percent Muslim in that country, and it's a slow-growing thing. I wouldn't be surprised that we are still functioning in some big cities like Niamey, which is three-hundred miles from the...from the school that we have. So that a lot of teachers there...or a lot of missionaries there are teaching Africans, but not in a formal school. And we've opened a Bible school [clicking sound] in Niamey, which is the capital. And they won't allow us to call it a school because it...we don't teach school, we teach Bible. So a lot of our students come there not being able to read and write, so we have to start with normal school, but we end up in Bible school. So we call it Institute Biblique, which means Biblical Institute, but the name school can't be put on it by government decree. So it's not a school, but it is a school if you see what I mean. We run it like a school, and we're training evangelists and we're training pastors and we're training Bible students. Even heads of family who are Bible students are better Christians and can be better functioning officers in churches than people who haven't been to Bible school.

CONEY: So this one Christian school is...is more like a Bible college than a . . .

LONG: That's right.

CONEY:...let’s say, a elementary Christian school?

LONG: Well, no. You know, college...if you strictly adhere to the idea that college has to have prerequisite of high school and grade school . . .

CONEY: Then it's not.

LONG: It's not.

CONEY: Yeah.

LONG: It's not a Bible college. But, of course, when you've got a twenty-five year old person who has never been to col...to college, he's never been to high school, and he's had maybe four grades of grammar school or two grades or none, he's just learned to read and write, you've got to treat him like an adult. In other words, you give him as much college as you can. But you also have to give him just plain language, like a lot of them want to learn French because it's the official language. Some of them want to learn English, and some of them want to.... We don't give them math. We don't give them writing courses and...and all that kind of stuff. That just grows, you know.

CONEY: Now, do...do the public schools have different levels then?

LONG: Oh yeah.

CONEY: I mean, do they have the elementary and [unclear] schools?

LONG: Oh, those are very well organized. You see, that's all government controlled, and it's by the French system.

CONEY: Okay. And this Bible school, is that the closest thing then that Niger has to a seminary.
LONG: Yeah.

CONEY: Okay.

LONG: We go Bible school as long as we can, and especially as long as it's in the vernacular language. So they're teaching in that one in Niamey, they're teaching in French. And we have another Bible school [pauses] four hundred miles from it that is teaching in Hausa. So you have your vernacular schools and your official language schools. So only a guy who knows French can go to the French one. So it really applies more to the city guys. But the other one is for the pastors who are going to be preaching in Hausa anyway, and they go to the Hausa Bible school. Now if we had a *Djerma* Christian, or a Christian from another tribe, he would have to know Hausa in order to go there or French to go to the other one. But with French and Hausa, we can cover ninety-nine percent of the population. So that even if we had a...a guy converted from a tribe that they...and he didn't know either of those languages, it would be greatly to his advantage to learn one of them. So the missionary teaches him until he can, and we have three levels of Bible school. We have short term Bible, school which means they get together for only four weeks every summer, and they start learning to read and write. And then they have longer term, which lasts for one quarter, three months, where they have to come away from their home and be taught for three months. And they

can't get into our Bible school either in French or Hausa until they've been to three or four of those other shorter term schools so we know what sort of a student they are, and whether they really mean business, and whether they are apt enough to learn. You know, in a population like the Niger, you've got geniuses that will come up to Albert Einstein's level, but they never know it because they've never been to school. All they're doing is farming. But you can tell, and some of them are clods. Some of them can't learn anything. We have...we have a lot of [pauses] mentally poor people who are...who are birth injuries and that sort of thing too, and we can recognize them. But we have a lot of low-IQ people. But just to think that out there in that population we're missing hundreds of people who have the potential of being [rustling sound on the microphone] straight-A students in...in universities if they ever had a chance to get there is the thing that makes you wonder. You know, how are we going to find these people, and are these people going to get [pauses] jobs that will reflect their ability to learn and carry responsibility. And these are the men we want trained for seminaries when we finally get to it. So because of this, even though Niger doesn't have a seminary, anybody who speaks French or anybody who speaks English can go to international seminaries. We have one in Kenya, now. It would require a trip all the way across the continent, but they could get to it, and the same goes for Nigeria. We have two seminaries in Nigeria in English now, so they'll accept people from any country.

CONEY: Okay. I...we talked about farming and the economy a lot before, but I'd like to ask you to...just how industrialization has progressed. I think you were mentioning something about oil, but that was talking about Nigeria, and I'm more interested in Niger.

LONG: Well, every country realizes how important to its economic life is having exports. And to have exports, they've got to industrialize. Now some countries like India do home industry, and they get away with it. And the Russians tried it, and it failed. You know they had these little foundries. The...the...the Chinese tried it, excuse me, not the Russians. But it doesn't work too well. However if they overindustrialize, they go broke, and this has happened to Nigeria already. So hopefully, or I hope (better English), that Niger wakes up before.... See they're so poor they ha...they can't do any of this yet. They're farming out or mining out all of their natural resources and selling them to France because they still have the relationship with France that is the helping mother country even though they're independent. They all have a commonwealth. The British commonwealth tries to keep all their former colonies, and the French commonwealth tries likewise. The German commonwealth doesn't exist because World War I took the colonies away from them and so on. So it's mainly those two countries. The Americans had some colonies which they also tried to help and keep in touch with, but the Philippines is about the only one they have, and that's as close as we have with anything now. Most of our relationships are political like with Formosa and so on. But in...in Niger they take all of that stuff and send it to France, so that Niger is France's supply for radioactive material. Iron is really not economical because they've got that two-thousand mile desert to cross to get it back to France. So transportation is the problem. They can buy iron cheaper elsewhere. Food would be a good export because they could export it to local countries, but Niger is a desert. They're never going to have enough food to export. So the chances of Niger ever becoming an industrial country are just about as close to zero as you can get. See there are five or ten countries: Chad is one, Central African Republic is definitely one, Niger is one. And these desertic [sic] countries, they just don't have enough so that there's any hope of their ever being [phone rings] industrialized or profitable. They'll always be poor.

CONEY: So do you think that's why Niger is one of the poorest countries, then, just because it...it can't seem to modernize?

LONG: Well, they could modernize if they had money to do it with, but they don't have money, so they can't. They're behind the eight ball is the way you express it. It's a catch-22 [taken from the Joseph Heller novel of the same title; a paradox in a situation which makes one a victim regardless of the chosen response], so what are they going to do?

CONEY: If they advance, could they advance in farming if they can't industrialize?

LONG: They could in certain ways. The land is there, but it costs more to buy fertilizer to put into a crop than the crop is worth after you raise it, and it leaves nothing for the labor of the person. So they don't fertilize unless it's a gift from the government. Like where does the government get it? As a gift from other governments. From the European community, for example. So anything that you give them free [rustling sound], they...they'll use [rustling sound], and it helps their life to some extent, but there's no chance of them ever being independent and doing it. We taught them to take the manure piles.... They tether their animals, their favorite animals and their sacrificial animals, that they...which is the ram for the Muslims, they tether them near their homes, and their homes are built on piles of...of age-old manure. And we tried to teach them to take that earth, which is...has become a big manure pile out to their farms. And the farmers that did it had vastly improved crops, but it's hard work. They don't want to haul. They're...they're...they're weak, they're disease-ridden, they're...temperature's a hundred and twenty degrees. They just...you know, everything's against them. If they would haul all of that manure out to their farms, they'd have more food. But some do, some don't, so they don't get ahead.

CONLEY: Has Niger been like other African countries seem to be in that it...its...its urban centers have been growing?

LONG: Yes, people flock to the city, especially when a famine occurs. They can't live where they are. They go to centers, and if the center is near a city, then the government tries to drive them back home again when the emergency's over. But they don't go, a lot of them. They stay in the cities, so the cities have vast increasing slums, and a slum is an area that taxes the tax system because they can't support them. So you can die in the city just as easy as you can die out in the bush. Maybe not quite as easy because the city always has garbage piles. So in a way, the people do thrive a little better in the cities, and that's why the cities grow.

CONLEY: I wanted to ask you or...a little bit more, too, about relationships between different religious institutions in Niger. And I know you were talking before about how much the church was growing in Nigeria. But how did the growing national church in Niger affect you [rustling noise]?

LONG: Well, it...the first thing we did was build a building on each of our stations that we called a church. And we realize now that that's not the way to go. You really have to have a functioning church before you need a church building. But being missionaries [rubbing hands sound?] and wanting a place to meet in that we called church, we would go to the church and we would invite

Africans to come to it. So that what grew up was a bunch of churches that were not indigenous. They were supported by the missionaries. When we realized that this wasn't going to work when the church growth movements began to...or the classes began to teach here in America that that wasn't the way to go, we would try to get them to build off compound. And just this year the church in Galmi has built off compound, first time. We started a church over there, but we don't want to have the missionaries build it. We want to have the Christians build it, and we could never generate the interest and the financial generosity to have them build a church. [sound of passing train] Now, partly with missionary funds and partly with their funds, they've got a church in the village itself, and that means that the missionaries go to the church, but the pastor and the church council, the elders, or the deacons and elders run the church. It's an indigenous church, and the missionaries only attend, and they would speak only if...if invited. So that the missionaries aren't running the church. Now I would say we have about eight or ten churches like that in Niger after forty years. That's pretty slow growth. And we have to have eight people in a church to start it. We have a few churches now with several hundred in it. So, as I say, we can number maybe four or five thousand Christians. Not all of them go to the churches. You know how it is in America. If you get peeved in the church you're going to, you can just go a few blocks and go to another church. And if a man does something that requires discipline in America, most churches don't discipline. But if they do, and he won't accept the discipline, he just goes to another church. But the church at Galmi, the nearest church is twenty-three miles away in Madaoua, and the next nearest church is a hundred and twenty-five miles away in Dogondoutchi, and they don't do that. So there are a lot of Christians who have either merited discipline or who are not living up to the requirements of the church for who is going to...to be an officer in the church. We allow anybody to come to church, but they can't be officers in the church if they have two wives, for example, or if they're doing other things that don't fit Christian doctrine. So you set up your rules of who can be a...an officer in the church, and then you hope the rest of the people will come. But when two women get mad at each other, one of them won't come. And when two guys get mad at each other, one of them won't come. And you have all of the other problems of only one church visible around. So we know we have a floating population of people that are definitely Christians in that they believe in Christ, and yet they're not willing to live the discipline of a Christian life, and they're not willing to meet in church. We have a lot of those people in America, too, but this happens, and it's a disaster but something we haven't cured yet. We don't know the answer.

CONLEY: I'm interested in the development of, I believe, the acronym is E-C-W-A.

LONG: Uh-hmm.

CONLEY: How...what's SIM's [formerly Sudan Interior Mission] relationship to that?

LONG: Well, that is ECWA. [Rustling sound] Evangelical Churches of West Africa is Nigeria's church. In Niger we call it E-E-R-N, Evang...Eglise, which is church, Evangelique Republique du Niger. The two organizations are only sister organizations in that they were developed by the same mission. They each have the same doctrinal statements because they were developed by the mission. But they're in different countries, so they aren't really very closely interrelated. In international meetings, we would find officers from both churches there, and they realize that they're sisters, but there's no contact between because the border is almost closed between the

countries. So there's very little international intercourse between our different churches. But our mission officers would very much like to have a supranational organization to which all of them would be members. Our church in Ethiopia and our church in Sudan and so on. We have two million church members in Africa, but they're in all different countries. One million of them are in Nigeria. In Niger we have less that, what, two or three thousand that are in contact with the churches. So you see what I'm talking about? This makes some differences.

CONLEY: So does SIM work closely, then, with E-E-R-N, or...?

LONG: Very much so, because still in Niger we have not turned the church loose to be a totally indigenous operation. Our rules still prevent them from, say, accepting adultery and fornication as being permissible or accepting multiple marriage. It's almost always polygyny, not polyandry, if you know what I mean, so that [pauses] the...until we realize that our church leaders are biblical in their setup of church constitution, we will not turn it loose. And that's just the way missions work. When they become biblical and we can trust them or when they revolt and go out and start forming their own anyway, then we have to turn them loose. We believe that we started too soon in Niger, so we backed up on it. We believe that we started too soon in Nigeria, but we had to go because the independence of the country required independence of the churches.

CONLEY: How do you account for the lack of church growth in Niger in light of the, you know, tremendous church growth in Nigeria?

LONG: Percentage of Muslims. In Niger...in Nigeria your Muslim percentages now for the first time in its history since recent history in the last four hundred years...that there are more Christians in the country than Muslims. And this has driven the Muslims into a terrible frenzy. They are really up...upset because they think that political control is going to go with it. [Clears throat] Of course, it will eventually. But...but it won't be very quick, because when we say Christian, we mean people who are not Muslim and who call themselves Christians. A lot of them are not Christians in their doctrinal standing, but they go to a Christian church or they're a Catholic or they're not in a...a non-Christian sect.

CONLEY: Were there other mission boards in Niger that you were working with?

LONG: Only one, the Independent Baptists, which is one of the [pauses]...GARB [General Association of Regular Baptist churches] group in America. You know they have Baptist Mid-Missions and the Evangelical Baptists were a group that formed by a man leaving SIM who was disgruntled with SIM. And he formed the mission, and then he realized that it...it was too small to go, so he joined Mid-Missions, but they maintained the name of Evangelical Baptists. So there is a Baptist mission working among the Zubermas. Djerma is their other name, D-J-E-R-M-A. So they work by agreement with us, mostly with the Djermas, and we agree to work mostly with the Hausas. But now there are others, you know these fourteen thousand people groups...or seven thousand people groups that have been discovered around the world to be unevangelized. Are you familiar with the new U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena and...and their work? [Clears throat] We've discovered about four of these groups in our SIM area,

so we're definitely now putting missionaries into the groups so they will be evangelized within the next five years. I don't believe the Evangelical Baptists are interested.

CONEY: I see.

LONG: And so we have now opened offices in Niamey, which is right in the center of their work. So our original agreement, which was only a sort of an understanding is overboard now because we're a much more active mission than they are, and we get a lot more volunteers. We have a lot more missionaries in the country. They're sort of decreasing as we increase. So there's one Baptist church in Niamey that I know of, and there's a Baptist church in a few of their smaller towns.

END OF TAPE