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The Work in Europe

Sermon by Robin Jones

West Coast Church of God, 2 March 2024

Thank you very much, Donnie. And good morning, everyone. Beautiful, beautiful British weather.

I feel right at home. Well, I wonder if we understand the importance of the history of God's work.

We said for a title, the work of God in Europe, but we could also say the work of God worldwide.

Now, we understand that the Bible is the Word of God.

Jesus said, your word is truth in John 17, 17.

But the Word of God, the Bible, is not only truth, it is also history and rather carefully selected, rather important history.

When we read Exodus 13, verse 14, when the Israelites were coming out of Egypt, God said the history of this work of God should be passed on.

Exodus chapter 13, verse 14, God says you need to explain these things to your children. Make sure all of this is passed on.

Exodus chapter 13, verse 14. Exodus 13, verse 14.

And it will be that when your son asks you in time to come, what is all this? What's it all about? Why do we do these things?

You will say to him, you'll explain to him by strength of hand. This is what took place in history.

By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage.

So God wants us to understand and pass on the events that have taken place where he has been involved.

God wants us to understand and pass on the history of his work, the knowledge of his work.

So how important is it that we are familiar with and we understand exactly what God has done in history?

You know, the Old Testament, right up to the book of Job, is just history.

Now, there's all types of other information included, but you've got a story there.

From the beginning of Genesis, all the way through up to the book of Job.

That's over 60%, nearly two-thirds of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, the four gospels and the book of Acts, they're all history, aren't they?

They're telling us the events that took place back then.

So over two-thirds of the New Testament is history.

And there's something else.

Between a quarter and a third of the entire Bible is prophecy.

And prophecy is simply history written in advance.

So God puts a lot of weight on the historical record.

It's interesting to me that in Acts chapter seven, we want to read that today.

When Stephen is serving God, he comes under pressure, he comes under attack.

And what he does as the mob begins to get enraged, he gives the entire history of the work of God, starting at the time of Abraham.

So in a way, he kind of gets them on board.

He's talking about things they know about before he finally gets up to the time of Jesus Christ.

Acts chapter seven is one of the longest chapters in the Bible, by the way.

Sixty verses, a very long historical account.

Then Stephen is familiar with all of that.

He's able to expound it and explain it and show God's hand was involved.

Why does God want us to understand the history of his work?

Not only in the Bible, but in our age today.

I think 1 Corinthians chapter 10 gives us a little food for thought.

The first book of Corinthians, chapter 10.

Here, Paul is talking about ancient Israel.

First book of Corinthians, chapter 10.

Paul is explaining some of the events that took place with ancient Israel.

And he shows parallels in verse one, 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse one.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you would be ignorant,

how all our fathers were passing under the cloud and they all passed through the sea.

And he shows a parallel here, just as ancient Israel was able to escape

and God put the waters to both sides and above them.

He says, well, that was a picture of baptism.

Verse two, they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

And in verse six, he says, now, all these things were our examples to the intent that we shouldn't lust after evil things as they lusted.

We can learn when we understand history and when we see the hand of God in history.

We can learn the right way to go and also what happens if you go the wrong way.

So it's very, very valuable.

Notice verse 11, 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 11.

Now, all these things happen to them for examples and they're written for our admonition.

They're written for us, for you and me, he says, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

So God is explaining to us that it's most important that we know the way he has worked and still works in history and for us, especially in our present age.

Now, you and I are blessed to have the two volumes of the autobiography, the autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong.

Of all the literature we have produced, and we have produced hundreds and hundreds of magazines every month with good news magazines, Tomorrow's World Magazine, the Plain Truth Magazine, co-worker letters, annual letters, member letters, a booklets galore, of all the literature and the books that we have produced.

Perhaps these two volumes of the autobiography are the most valuable.

We learn there how Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong studied the subject of the Sabbath day back in the 1920s.

And we see the steps that they went through, how they studied and proved all of these different matters.

How Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong began to keep both the Sabbath day, the weekly Sabbath, and the holy days.

For seven years, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong observed the holy days on their own.

None of the Sabbath keepers that they had met up there in the Willamette Valley, none of those Sabbath keepers would join them.

They weren't familiar with that, they weren't used to it, it hadn't happened before.

This was something different.

They just continued with what they understood and they wouldn't join Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong.

Now, Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong had no idea what the holy days meant.

They didn't know if there was some meaning behind them.

But these days were obviously clearly listed in Leviticus chapter 23.

They could see that obviously Jesus and the apostles observed these holy days.

Nobody, no one in any church can misunderstand Acts chapter 2.

It's so obvious that most churches end up observing one of the holy days.

They may not necessarily calculate it the same way.

But almost all churches on earth, with very few exceptions,

almost all observe the day of Pentecost because it hits you between the eyeballs.

Acts chapter 2, when the day of Pentecost was fully come,

they all met together in that room.

You can't really avoid it however much theology you've studied.

Obviously, the apostles were keeping, they were observing the holy day, the day of Pentecost.

Well, when we read in the autobiography, we find that in 1933,

finally the campaign in the Furbur Schoolhouse,

just a few miles to the west, a little bit northwest of Eugene.

I've been there to that area, looked at those places.

Some of the schoolhouses where Mr. Armstrong had those early meetings,

sometimes every night for weeks at a time in some of those little schoolhouses.

He would walk around the area and personally invite all the dirt farmers,

the people with little plots of land.

He'd say, I'm going to have these meetings in the schoolhouse, won't you come?

And of course, that was big news in those rural communities.

That was a big event, somebody holding special evangelist meetings in their little schoolhouse.

And he generally was able to fill those schoolhouses.

And of course, you know the story, 1933, the Furbur Schoolhouse,

and the meetings he held there in July and August that year.

And finally, the first meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Smith in October that year.

And then, of course, the organization of the Oregon Conference of the Church of God,

separately incorporated, not a part of the Church of God Seventh Day,

either at Salem, Virginia or in Missouri.

So they established that conference there just to the area west of Eugene.

And it was this fledgling group where the Holy Days began to be observed.

For the first time then, they began to understand that there was a meaning behind these days.

They began to see what was revealed in the Scriptures.

Of course, very soon the radio broadcast began January, 1934.

And the next month, February, 1934, the plain truth appeared for the first time.

This Philadelphia work, this Philadelphia age of the Church had begun.

Now, although many campaigns were held, towns were prepared, leaflets were sent out,

Mr. Armstrong would have meetings in different halls, but we had no ministers.

So we ended up with no other churches.

There was no one to shepherd the people that were showing interest.

And the people that were baptized found themselves simply on their own.

I'm not sure that a lot of our members understand this today, but this was just the way it was.

In the 1930s, the 1940s, up into the 1950s, so most people that were baptized were simply on their own.

No local fellowship, no local minister, they had to study the Bible and obey God on their own.

Perhaps that sounds a bit familiar to some of our brethren today.

But the work grew, the radio program grew, the income grew.

The plain truth became larger and larger in circulation, but we had relatively few members because there was no one to feed them in local congregations.

When Ambassador College opened its doors in 1947,

the work had been going all through the 30s, all through the 40s.

And do you realize we had less than 50 people to keep the Feast of Tabernacles that year, 1947.

After all the work and all the campaigns and all the radio and all the printing,

less than 50 were keeping probably smaller than your congregation here if everybody could be present.

Less than 50 keeping the Feast of Tabernacles in 1947.

The church actually could not grow until after Ambassador College began to show fruit.

I've had people say to me, well, we weren't very honest in the past, were we?

I say, what do you mean?

Well, we used to pretend we were a college.

On our literature, it would say printed by Ambassador College.

I'd say, that's the truth.

We were a college.

There was no church to any extent until the college began to graduate people that could begin to feed the flock.

So yes, we really were an extension of Ambassador College.

The radio program continued to grow for 19 years.

And in 1953, it jumped the Atlantic to start on Radio Luxembourg.

That was the first time.

Now, we had stations outside the United States because we use these big Mexican stations like XCLO.

And those signals came into the states, mainly in the south, but in the winter, further north,

that was where my wife and her family in Nebraska first began listening to the program at the end of 1952

from those powerful Mexican stations.

At that time, we had only seven or eight congregations in the entire United States and none anywhere else.

But we were using four million watts of radio power.

So the work was expanding and more and more people were listening.

The very first week of January, 1953, the world tomorrow went out in Europe.

Now, it was a long way away for most of the countries and the signal was weak in the south of England.

It came in better in the winter and in the evening.

And if you put your ear close to the radio set and could tune out all the atmospherics, you could just about follow.

That was when I started listening, the beginning of 1953, just a month or two after my wife and her family

near Columbus, Nebraska, when they began listening.

She wasn't my wife then, I hasten to explain, but that was future information, another sermon, perhaps.

Just as we read in the book of Acts that the gospel was proclaimed in Judea and Sumeria and all through Asia Minor, where Paul wrote his letters, Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians, all these cities in what we would call today Asia Minor or Turkey.

That work continued for 19 years.

And finally, in Acts chapter 16, on Paul's second evangelistic tour, the door opens to Europe.

You probably remember that in Acts chapter 16, in verses eight and nine, there's a call that comes.

It's often called in the margin of your Bible, the Macedonian call.

The Macedonian call.

It's Acts chapter 16, in verses eight and nine.

This is Acts 16, verses eight and nine.

And they were passing by, messiah, and they came down to Trois, Troy, where the Trojan war had been four years before.

They came to Troy, verse eight, and verse nine, a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

This is Acts 16, verse nine.

There stood a man of Macedonia over the water and prayed to him and said,
come over to Macedonia.

We'd call it Greece today.

Come over to Greece and help us.

Here was a call from Europe.

And so immediately after we'd seen the vision, we endeavored to go to Macedonia,
gathering that the Lord had called us.

He had a job for us to do.

In the same way, they'd had 19 years.

This was around 50 AD, 19 years since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
and the establishment of the church.

And 19 years later, here's a call to go to Europe.

Now, is it a coincidence?

I don't know.

But it's interesting that in January 1953, exactly 19 years after January 1934,
when we first went on radio, we had the opportunity.

The door opened to go to Europe.

God's work had a foot in the door.

That was when I first heard the World Tomorrow broadcast.

And people began to write in for the Plain Truth magazine
by the summer of 1954, the summer of the next year.

We had about 3,000 people that were reading.

And we needed a London office.

So many letters were beginning to come in.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong came over to London with their son, Dick.

Dick Armstrong, who of course died in a car accident in 1958 on a baptizing tour.

You know that, of course.

But Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong came over to London with their son, Dick, and Rod Meredith.

This is the summer of 1954.

They planned some evangelistic meetings while they were here.

We might as well get some mileage out of our trip.

So they planned three nights in London, one night in Manchester, one night in Belfast, and one night in Glasgow, in Scotland.

Now, I was working at the time in a tuberculosis hospital in the west of England.

And the closest location for me was to get to Manchester.

The only problem was it was over 200 miles, and I really didn't have much money.

I only had enough money for a one-way trip on the train.

So which way was it going to walk one way?

It was over 200 miles.

Well, the meeting was planned for a Friday evening in Manchester.

So I planned at the hospital to have my one day a week off.

Actually, we were allowed one day off a week, and I planned to have my day off on Friday.

Thursday night, after I finished work, I hitchhiked all night long to get to Manchester.

Got there early in the morning, the next day, Friday morning.

And I found out where the hall was located, where the meeting was going to take place.

I managed to get a few hours' sleep in an army hostel.

Now, with the work that I was doing, I was wearing an ex-army surplus clothing.

I had khaki trousers and a khaki kind of jacket.

And so they probably thought I was in the army and let me in.

So I managed to get a few hours' sleep in this army hostel.

And that evening, I went to the Onward Hall on Dean's Gate in Manchester, up to the fourth floor of the building, and the hall was filling up.

I met Dick Armstrong at the door and Rod Meredith.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong both walked onto the stage.

She liked to be close to him when he was speaking, either in the radio studio or even in a church meeting.

And she'd keep an eye on him to make sure he didn't deviate too much.

She'd kind of look at him, and so I could see her finger.

Now, Herbert, stay on the track, stay on track.

So she sat up there right beside him on the stage while he gave that talk.

The hall was packed out with over 200 people.

Mr. Armstrong began to tell us some of the history that we're looking at today.

Some of the history of the preaching of the Kingdom of God.

He explained that there was going to be a revival of the Roman Empire in Europe.

He said, this is what I can't tell you over Radio Luxembourg.

It's a Catholic radio station.

I can't explain these things.

We'd get thrown off the air.

But the Bible shows that there would be seven resurrections of the old Roman Empire.

And there's yet one more that's going to arise, a revival of the medieval Holy Roman Empire.

It will be a Catholic political union.

And it will herald the start of what the Bible calls the Great Tribulation.

In Jeremiah 30, verse seven, you're probably familiar with the passage,

where it is talked about as the time of Jacob's trouble,

the worst time the world has ever seen, the time of Jacob's trouble.

Now, remember back in Genesis 48, we'll just look there for a moment.

Genesis 48, verse 16, you remember that Jacob had had his name changed by God to Israel.

Remember that?

Genesis 48, verse 16.

But more than that, it wasn't simply that Jacob's name was changed to Israel.

Here in Genesis 48, verse 16, the angel, he says,

that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, these two boys, Ephraim and Manasseh.

This is Genesis 48, verse 16.

Israel, or Jacob, says in the middle of verse 16,

let my name be named on them, on Ephraim and Manasseh.

So that's rather interesting, isn't it?

Ephraim and Manasseh are the main nations to bear the name Israel today.

The Britain and the British Commonwealth and the United States of America.

Well, it was about nine o'clock in the evening by now.

We were all getting psyched up and excited and hearing that we had never heard this from anywhere.

I'd been reading the Bible and studying different churches for about five or six years by this time.

And I'd never heard anything remotely like this that there's going to be a revival of the Holy Roman Empire.

It was about nine o'clock that Friday evening and there was a door halfway down the rectangular hall with over 200 people crammed in.

The door opened on the side of the hall and a bad-tempered lift attendant stood there and he called out, how long are you going to go on for then?

How long are you going to keep preaching away?

Mr Armstrong stopped in his tracks and he said, our agency has booked the hall till 10.

We used a reputable agency.

We used the same agency Billy Graham used for his campaigns in Britain.

What's the problem?

And the man said, well, I want to go over and have my dinner.

And Mr Armstrong said, shall I stop or shall I go on?

And the whole audience cried out, go on, go on.

So Mr Armstrong kind of shrugged his shoulders at the lift attendant and the lift attendant said, I'm going to turn the lift off and you're all going to have to walk down four flights of stairs.

And I'm going to go home and get my dinner so he disappeared.

That's so unusual that it will never be erased from my mind.

Mr Armstrong, of course, you probably read it, talks about it in the autobiography, as you know.

But that was quite an evening seeing that lift attendant storm off.

Mr Armstrong continued to explain the resurrections of the old Roman Empire.

What I didn't know was that a certain Mrs. Palin from the town of Crue, you've all heard of the town of Crue, the railway junction,

she was sitting in the audience and she had written in for baptism.

She was the first person to respond to that broadcast over Radio Luxembourg, writing in for baptism.

Now, although we didn't have an office in London, we had a mailing address and the letters were forwarded to Pasadena and Dick Armstrong was taking care of those things at the time.

So he had her request for baptism in his pocket.

And the next day, Mr. Armstrong with Dick and Rod Meredith drove out to Crue.

It was a row of terraced cottages or row houses, you might say.

About 9.30 in the morning, Dick Armstrong knocked at the door, no reply.

He knocked again, no reply.

I guess we'll just have to go back, he said.

We haven't come all this way to give up, said Mr. Armstrong,

and he went up and began to pound on the door, pound, pound, pound.

A voice from upstairs called out, I'm coming.

Mrs. Palin appeared at the door in a dressing gown or a house coat.

All she explained, Mr. Armstrong, I'm so sorry.

I was at your meeting last night.

I got home on the train about midnight and I'd been up all night reading my Bible.

I finally fell asleep a couple of hours ago and that pounding on the door woke me up.

Please come in.

She quickly dressed and asked about baptism.

And after a while, Mr. Armstrong said, you have very good understanding.

You should be baptized.

But I've got a question, she said.

How do I keep this feast of tabernacles?

Well, said Rod Meredith, you're going to have to start to save up.

But where do I go?

She said, well, it's quite a long way, said Rod Meredith.

But where do I go?

Well, he said, it's in Texas.

And she must have been absolutely staggered out of her.

Where?

This is 1950s and 1954.

Most people didn't travel very much.

Probably not more than one family in seven or eight had a car in England at that time.

Just a minute, Rod, said Mr. Armstrong, just a minute.

This is something I can see we have to study some more.

When we get back, I'm going to have our graduate class look into this.

When we get back to America, because I can see we do not fully understand this.

We've written articles, you see, to say we must go where God places his name.

We could see the scriptures and we'd assume that must be one place.

And the land would be donated partly to us there in Big Sandy.

So we wrote articles saying you must come to Big Sandy.

But Mr. Armstrong could see now this didn't make much sense.

He said, hold on, we're going to have to study this more to see what happens with people from other parts of the world.

Now, when her husband that evening, when her husband came in from work, he was very suspicious.

You are following a man, he said.

No, I'm not, I'm following the Bible.

You listen to this man on the radio, you read what he writes in his magazines, you get letters from him, then you go to his meeting in Manchester and now he's come to the house and baptized you for his son.

You are following a man.

I'm not, Mrs. Palin said, I'll prove it to you.

I will cancel everything, cancel all my literature.

I won't listen to the program.

I will just follow the Bible.

She wrote in to our address.

We had a BCM address.

It meant British commercial monomark.

So the address we used was BCM ambassador.

And those letters were all forwarded on.

However, we were going to establish an office in England.

And on that trip, when Mr. Armstrong had this meeting in Manchester and the other four cities, he established an office in London and Dick Armstrong remained to be in charge.

So when she wrote in, he actually got the letter saying, take my name off the list, cancel everything.

Well, it was quite an unusual time there.

Two years later, 1956, Mr. Armstrong planned a two-week campaign in London.

After that, we had a small church of about eight or 10 people meeting on the Sabbath.

It was the first church area outside the United States.

Then every church has a number in the world.

We were number 016 in London, number 16.

There were 15 churches by now established in the United States.

And our code number was 016.

The London Church was the 16th congregation to be established.

Now, in January, a few months later, January 1957,

Rod Meredith had returned to London to work on his thesis on the Protestant Reformation.

It's available online, I'm quite sure.

And it's very interesting work.

And Rod Meredith could see this tiny little fledgling group was going to waste away.

It got down to seven and then six and then five people.

So he held a four-week campaign every night for four weeks in London.

Now, by now, I was a student at a college in London.

And I was able to cycle to the meetings every night.

So he had this four-week of meetings and I was able to be there.

And he was so thorough.

Every evening he took a subject.

It might be Easter.

It might be Christmas.

It might be the Ten Commandments.

It might be Sunday.

And he would show the truth from encyclopedias and from the Bible.

He'd lay it bare and show the truth.

And I could see he was proving every single point.

At the end of those four weeks, I started to keep the Sabbath day.

And the following year, 1958, I attended Ambassador College in Pasadena.

The college in Britain started in October 1960.

And some of us in Pasadena were sent over to help get things started.

You may know some of the names you may not.

Ruth Myrick or Ruth Walters.

She was head of music there in Big Sandy for a while.

She came my first year in 1958.

And she was asked to transfer as a student to Brickett Wood.

David Wainwright, who was an Oxford graduate, he was in Pasadena.

And he was transferred back to Britain, was head of the language department.

And the same in Big Sandy.

And also finishing his undergraduate course at Ambassador.

Gerhard Marx, you may know.

He taught German.

He'd come to America to New York from Germany right after the Second World War.

And he was transferred as a German teacher.

Leon Walker, you may know the name.

He was transferred to England and taught Spanish.

And me, I was a third year student beginning my third year.

I was transferred back to Britain.

And Guy Engelbart, my wife's brother, and

Khan Catherwood, you may know these names.

They were in their last year.

Charles Hunting, he was in his last year.

We were all transferred back.

And along with a few freshman students, it was a tiny, tiny college there in Brickett Wood.

Well, I graduated from Ambassador College in 1962.

And I'd married Shirley Engelbart from Nebraska.

And later, we were sent up to Manchester to visit the members of the church in that area.
An Australian student, Helen Birchell, I believe her name was,
was working in the co-worker department at the office in Brickett Wood.
And she was cleaning out her desk, as some people like to do.
She pulled out the small top drawer.
And back of it, she found an old dirty four by six card,
one of these file cards.
On it, it said, Mrs. Palin, member, Radio Church of God, 1954.
But the name was crossed out, and the entry was crossed out.
And over the top was written, membership withdrawn, send no more literature.
And so Helen found this card and thought, what on earth is this?
Member, Radio, what is it?
I'll send it up to Robin and Shirley Jones, up there in Manchester, they're visiting people.
So here, we got the letter with this dirty card in it, and we wondered, what is this?
What is this?
From 10 years before.
Wow.
Off we went to crew.
And what were we going to find?
We came to the terraced house, two doors beside each other, one for a downstairs apartment,
one for the upstairs apartment.
Beside the door was a notice, hairdressing appointments taken.
Here's the number.
No appointments between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday.
Our hearts began to pound.
So excited.
We knocked, and Mrs. Palin came to the door.
I said, I represent the Plain Truth Magazine and Herbert Armstrong.
Please come in, she said, and she told us the story that I told you.
About the morning after the meeting, when she'd been up all night studying her Bible,
Mr. Armstrong was there at the door with his son Dick and Rod Meredith.

And now she was baptized in the canal at the end of the road.

You really should plan to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, I said.

Yes, yes, I know.

She didn't tell us everything at first.

I know, but it's so expensive.

That's why I started the hairdressing business.

I thought maybe I could begin to save up enough.

It doesn't cost that much, I said.

And we could help you.

We could help you with a few pounds.

Oh, it may not sound much to you, but it's a lot to me, she said.

It's too much money, and it's so far.

Not really, I said.

It's not that far at all.

And she looked at me so puzzled.

What are you talking about?

I said, well, we've got a fecite down in Hailing Island near Portsmouth.

In this country, she said.

And I said, oh, I can still remember the expression on her face.

I thought I had to go to Texas.

Very, very unusual.

She started to attend our Manchester congregation.

Her husband, who was a Methodist, was very suspicious.

I'd like to go along and see what's going on in these meetings.

Maybe it's some kind of cult, he said.

So he attended once.

And then he said, I'd like to come again.

And he came a second time.

And then he came a third time.

And soon, he was coming every week.

And then he asked if he could be baptized.

He was a choir director, as it turned out.

And about six months later, he started a choir in the Manchester church,
and we had our own choir for the first time.

Their daughter later attended Ambassador College.

And all because a woman was called by God and remained faithful.

Kind of like the work in the United States, isn't it?

Where one woman discovered the truth and her husband was determined to prove her wrong
and found when he studied the Bible that she was right all along.

The work grew through the years until we had over 5,000,
between 5,000 and 6,000, keeping the feast in Europe.

And just as we had 19 years of the work in North America
until we went on Luxembourg in 1953,
so God gave us another 19 years, up until January 1972.

The Gospel in 1953 went first to Europe,
and then through those years, it went around the world.

All through history, however.

The work of God has always faced trouble and difficulty.

And in 1972, this work worldwide began to suffer a decline.

We began to lose income, we began to lose members,
and we had seven years of difficulty.

Until one day, out of the blue, the receiver walked onto the campus.

On January the 6th, 1979,
that assault from the state of California galvanized our church.

We were on every TV news channel.

A big state attacks a small church, said the news readers.

Who's going to win? It was exciting.

Every time we turned on the news, there we were in the headlines.

Interest in the work increased everywhere.

And after the seven years of decline, beginning in January 1979,
we had seven years of rapid growth.

Mr. Armstrong was busy trying to,

amongst all the other things he did,
he was trying to put the church back on track.
We had steady growth in Britain and in Europe,
as well as here in the USA.
In the area I was responsible for, which was the north London area,
most of London north of the River Thames,
we would have 20 or 25 requests for baptism every year,
along with all the other letters requesting visits.
So most of the ministers couldn't even keep up with it all.
There was so much happening from 1979 over the next seven years.
And the work grew rapidly, until January 1986,
when Mr. Armstrong died.
And then, under Mr. Decach, senior,
we continued to grow for another five years,
until January 1991.
We'd had seven years under Mr. Armstrong,
five years under Mr. Decach.
God gave us 12 years of growth.
Isn't that interesting?
And January 1991 was the high point of this work in our time.
It was our highest membership.
It was our highest income.
Mr. Decach received far more money than Mr. Armstrong ever had,
\$200 million a year in this country alone.
Mr. Armstrong never had that kind of money.
God was showing us that it was his work, not the work of a man.
Now we'd seen seven years of decrease from 1972,
and now 12 years of growth from January 1979 until January 1991.
God had given us a third 19-year time cycle,
a third 19-year period, seven years of decline, 12 years of growth.
Since that high point, in January 1991,

we have had difficulty and attrition on a constant basis.

All around the world for over 30 years,

we've seen division and confusion.

And up to now, God has not opened up any major new doors
to spread the gospel.

We're reminded that through most of history,

God's people have been a scattered remnant.

Do you remember the prophecy in Zechariah 13?

It's quoted by Christ.

He actually takes it right out of context

and applies it to his death and what happened to his disciples.

But when you turn to Zechariah chapter 13, verse 7,

toward the end of the minor prophets,

only a few pages from the end of the Old Testament,

when you turn to Zechariah chapter 13, verse 7,

we see a prophecy about our time.

Zechariah 13, verse 7 is a prophecy about the end of this age,
just before Christ returns.

This is Zechariah 13, verse 7.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,

against the man that is my fellow,

says the Lord of hosts, smite the shepherd,

and the sheep shall be scattered.

Now, we can discuss in detail all the points of that verse
and probably come up with a dozen different explanations.

But one thing which is very clear, Jesus says,

the sheep shall be scattered.

The sheep shall be scattered.

So a time, a division of scattering and of attrition.

But notice the end of that verse in Zechariah 13, verse 7.

I will turn my hand upon the little ones.

The meaning is, I will turn my hand to help the little ones.

So even in a time of difficulty,

even in a time of confusion and scattering,

Jesus Christ will help and encourage every one of us.

I will turn my hand to help you and me, the little ones.

Through most of history, the people of God have been a scattered few,

and it's not so different today.

In Luke chapter 18, verse 8.

Luke chapter 18, verse 8.

Jesus explains not many would endure to the end.

This is Luke's Gospel, chapter 18, verse 8.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 18, verse 8.

Jesus is explaining that he has called and opened the minds of some of his elect.

That's you and me, but we are few in number.

This is what Jesus is explaining.

Again, Luke 18, verse 7.

He says, shall not God avenge his own elect?

Which cried day and night to him, though he bear along with them.

This is Luke 18, verse 7.

And now, verse 8, I tell you that he will avenge them.

God listens to our prayers.

He's most concerned about our prayers.

God will avenge his elect speedily.

Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on the earth?

Will there be any more left than just a few?

Now, as long as we remain patient and faithful, we will find out exactly how it all works out.

Now, we've only touched on a little of what God has done through this Philadelphia age of his church.

We must remember the unusual events of these years.

We have been a part of a work.

We've seen some of the miracles.

We've seen the doors God opened to Mr. Armstrong.

When Mrs. Armstrong died in 1967, God gave Mr. Armstrong another 19 years of life.

And he opened up doors all over the world, starting with King Leopold in Belgium.

He happened to see a copy of the Envoy.

Frank Schnee was in a photographer's shop with a hassled black camera.

And someone in the shop said, you're not just taking snaps with a camera like that.

And Frank Schnee said, well, no, I take pictures for a worldwide magazine and for a college yearbook, the Envoy.

In fact, I have one here and he showed it to the man.

And the man said, you know, this is an interesting yearbook.

I know someone that would like to see this.

Can I borrow it?

And Frank Schnee said, yes.

This man was a friend of King Leopold.

And he showed him the copy of the Envoy.

And King Leopold said, I'd like to meet a man responsible for a college like this in this day and age.

The young men look like men and the young women look feminine like women.

Who could ever have a college like that in this day and age?

And the word came to Mr. Armstrong, King Leopold would like to meet you.

And we were having dinner as we did several dozen times every year in the faculty dining room in Brickford Wood.

He said, now what am I supposed to do?

I've got so many people to see and so much work to do in the gospel to preach.

And now, have I got time to go buzzing around with kings?

Have I got that amount of time to waste?

On the other hand, he said, he holds an office.

So I should respect that.

And it was arranged that he met King Leopold.

And King Leopold immediately took a liken to him and wanted to introduce him to other leaders that he knew and to his wife and family.

Mr. Armstrong said, I don't understand this.

God is giving me favor, not only with this man but with others.

When King Leopold would write to Mr. Armstrong, he would sign it yours affectionately, Leopold.

Mr. Armstrong said, for some reason, God is giving me favor and I don't know why.

Well, we know the story, how more and more doors opened.

He was invited to go to Ethiopia, Haile Selassie said, I'm going to put on a dinner.

I want you to speak to some of my cabinet and my diplomats.

At that dinner, there were 19 ambassadors present.

And afterwards, they all lined up and said, Mr. Armstrong, you've got to come to our country and talk about education.

You must come to my country and talk about education.

We were never able to fulfill all the invitations that came our way.

What was happening?

Well, we understand now.

We couldn't see it then.

You know, you look at Acts chapter 9 verse 15, Acts chapter 9 verse 15.

And we realize God was following a familiar pattern.

See, God had often had his leaders meet with the dignitaries of the world.

Moses met with Pharaoh, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel.

He was made close to the top of the kingdom.

John the Baptist, they all had to appear in front of dignitaries.

And here in Acts 9 verse 15, Paul has been struck down with blindness.

Acts chapter 9 verse 15.

The Lord said to, let me see, just here, Ananias has been told by God to go and speak to Paul.

His name was Saul at that time.

And the Lord said to Ananias verse 15 of Acts 9,

Go your way, for he is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

So God often has used his servants to reach the leaders of this world.

All of that started from Frank Schnee being in a photographer's shop with a big camera.

Meeting a man who was a friend of King Leopold.

Well, you know all the story, much of that's recorded in the autobiography, the second volume, the many meetings he had.

And King Leopold had an interest in the indigenous tribes around the world who were facing extinction.

And he'd taken many, many pictures.

And Mr. Armstrong said, we may be able to help you.

We could run articles in our Worldwide Magazine about the work you do.

And King Leopold said, you could perhaps use some of my slides for your pictures.

Mr. Armstrong said, we'll send you a man to select some.

He sent Dr. Hay.

And Dr. Hay met King Leopold and for about an hour and a half or more, he went through King Leopold's slides and selected some we could use.

At the end of that time, King Leopold said, I am so impressed with Ambassador College.

I'm so impressed in all this time.

You looked at my thousand and more slides.

You didn't drop a single slide, nor did you put a thumbprint on any one of them.

I'm impressed with Ambassador College.

It's interesting how people at the top think, not always the way we would imagine.

Well, Mr. Armstrong met so many leaders after this.

You're familiar with the fact that he knew eight successive Japanese Premiers

and eight members of the Japanese diet would travel with Mr. Armstrong.

Many times in his plane, we are your Japanese sons, they said.

We have to learn from you.

Strange, somehow these Gentile nations have an approach that is often lacking in Israel.

Even though they had high position, they were willing to submit themselves to someone they could see they had much to learn from.

They all visited the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena.

Franz Joseph Strauss, in line to become German President, visited Ambassador in Pasadena with his wife.

At the end of the day, after being toured around the Ambassador campus, he said,

today my wife and I have been in paradise.

That was his conclusion.

Mr. Armstrong was the first Western Christian leader to visit China when they began to open up.

He visited Den Xiaoping, no other Western leader, not even the Catholic Church, had had a deputation.

And we found ourselves there, meeting the leader of the most populous nation at that time on Earth.

We became friends with Queen Syracac in Thailand, and she visited us on the Ambassador campus.

It sent shockwaves through the State Department.

They went into belt down.

Why have you got kings and queens visiting you at Ambassador College?

We're supposed to organize this sort of thing.

When Prince Charles, now King Charles, and Diana visited Pasadena to the state at the Huntington Sheraton,

the staff there were in turmoil.

What are we going to do? What is royal protocol?

How do we handle a royal visit?

Phone Ambassador College, they said.

They did.

And we sent Roman Borek to them, and he choreographed the entire visit with Prince Charles and Diana.

These are staggering things, staggering, where we found ourselves thrust into the very highest levels of society.

But the State Department was confused.

Why are these kings and queens visiting Ambassador College?

Well, Mr. Armstrong would have dinner with us dozens of times every year in Brickettwood.

I suppose we've had dinner hundreds of times together.

And he said, God is giving me favor with all these leaders, and I don't know why.

Now, today, of course, we can understand.

We can look back with the passage of time.

Mr. Armstrong was getting to know the leaders of the most populous nations on Earth.

Indira Gandhi in India.

Sahato in Indonesia.

Leaders in Bangladesh and other parts of Asia.

Anwar Sadat in Egypt and his widow when he was assassinated.

Golda Meir in Israel.

She asked Mr. Armstrong, will you take a personal letter from me to Indira Gandhi?

That I will.

And I think Indira Gandhi gave him a letter, a personal letter back.

Strange that we became a liaison between many nations of the Earth.

You see, in the great white throne judgment period, all these leaders of the most populous nations on the planet will be resurrected.

And they will know, Mr. Armstrong.

We know you, they will say, but you look different now.

Well, Mr. Armstrong will say, now I'm a spirit being, and you can be too.

Do you remember I told you a new world was coming?

This is it. It's here.

I suspect many of those leaders that got to know him personally in that resurrection, the great white throne judgment time,

I suspect they will quickly be converted.

And as a result, millions of their nations will also quickly follow them.

That often happens in Gentile countries.

People want to be in tune with the leader.

That's just the habit. That's the way it is there.

So for these 19 years, as Mr. Armstrong traveled the globe, God was preparing for that great white throne resurrection,

when millions and millions will be converted.

This is an unusual age of God's church.

We don't always understand what is happening or why.

We don't really quite understand the confusion that has taken place.

We know one thing.

God looks on each person individually.

The Bible said God looks on the heart.

No matter what troubles, no matter what confusion, no matter what someone else says,

God looks on your heart and my heart.

Will we remain faithful in difficult times?

We should pray for each other that we will.

Thank you.