

H0010 Hoeh 7-4-92 Trip to Syria

These are not my notes.

Some of you know that I've just returned from Syria.

Others of you did not know I left for it, but this is a very special day in the history of the United States where we use the Roman calendar.

And sometimes there is a time of reflection, much as we have had with respect to the Sermonet.

We have fewer than a hundred thousand baptized members in the church, fewer than six billion on earth, so that the figure was, I would say, quite reasonable, somewhere around one out of fifty thousand to one out of sixty, probably nearer fifty-five to sixty thousand.

That should tell us a great deal about how much God expects of a very few for the world tomorrow.

I thought it would be appropriate today, by the nature of today, that is, the day commemorating the Declaration of Independence that we should take a look at some aspects of the church that we may not necessarily be involved with directly, though we all are indirectly, much as we should reflect on some aspects of this country in which we live in terms of the work that this country stands for with respect to other nations and peoples.

Let me illustrate a point.

This is not a perfect land.

The Canadians are very sure of that.

More Americans have the view that it is, unless they've really lived life in the inner city along to the labor unions, been in business and have gone bankrupt.

That is, I think more and more Americans have become realistic about our society, nevertheless.

For a long time, for at least a hundred years, and for some parts of Europe, for two to three hundred years or more, this country, this area of the world, speaking of the east coast of the United States and now the whole of the United States, has represented an area to which to escape from problems.

That is, it represents a kind of opportunity, religious opportunity, opportunity for public communication that was not extant in many other areas of the world.

If people have come here and see in the United States opportunities that simply were not afforded in their homelands, we should recognize that we are not alone today, that there are other places in the world that represent something similar.

And the same way, the church, as this work goes around the world, does represent something unusual in the whole of the Christian world.

And there are people who do take notice of those distinctions.

For example, let me point up a few things that have not generally been understood.

For many on the continent of Europe, Britain has been, apart from times of war where you couldn't migrate freely, and for many in India, for many in Africa, the Caribbean, Britain has been playing a similar role to that of the United States.

For that matter, Australia has played a similar role for peoples of southern Europe, especially since World War II.

New Zealand plays a role of this nature as a kind of attraction for the peoples of the Polynesian areas of the Pacific.

In terms of central and eastern Europe, the Prussian Berlin used to play that role, a remarkable city that did not play a similar role in the days of Hitler.

But nevertheless, Germany today is playing a major role, as well as the European community in which Britain now is, countries that play a role to attract others.

We have, outside of the areas that I've cited, we have some remarkable places like Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, where countries attract other countries.

And strange is that maybe Japan is attracting people from the Philippines and other areas of the Pacific Rim because of its prosperity and opportunity.

So there is the sense of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, the ability to progress instead of to live in misery.

All these things tend to be found in some areas more than other areas of the world.

The question of religious freedom is not an issue with respect to Japan.

It was primarily that of the United States and is not now in the world seen so much a matter of concern at the present time.

But political freedom most certainly is.

Ask anybody who has tried to come from but has been turned back from the western part of the island of Hispaniola, that area that represents the first independent republic in the new world, a black republic, not Spanish speaking, Haiti.

There are many areas where political freedoms do not exist today in the 20th century.

And those people are seeking opportunities.

Now the church in a sense is completely out of the realm of politics, even though we do speak of the kingdom of God, but we ought to reflect on the fact that there are many individuals in the world who are looking for answers to questions.

Some people find that they are not looking for answers and stumble on it.

Some people are looking for answers and discover the church, providing that answer.

And some people search and die, as Jesus said, they have sought and have not found, but your eyes in His days were open to see.

And perhaps there are different ways of manifesting the church.

So that's what I would like to address today.

Much as there are different ways of manifesting the role of the United States, in our sense of political freedom, religious freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of opportunity, freedom to pursue fleeting happiness.

In a certain way, we offer an opportunity, maybe you never thought of it quite in those terms, an opportunity to take a new look at the world and a new perspective and see goals that perhaps were never apparent before, spiritually speaking, in terms of eternity.

But we find that over the years, there are different means of communicating.

This work started as a result of a radio broadcast and different forms of publishing, letters, a magazine, booklets. Then there was another opportunity come 1947, and that was an educational opportunity. Now, that was a necessity in terms of the work that the church does. But for many, Ambassador College was an opportunity, young people who may not have known at all of the worldwide or then the Radio Church of God, that did see Ambassador College as an opportunity and came to understand or participate in a way that they might never have dreamed. As time went on, we bridged the gap of the great oceans and began to reach other areas of the world outside of North America. And in so doing, some 15 years, 14 years after the work began on Radio Luxembourg in Europe, we had new opportunities, not merely people who might have been disgruntled over the political world, the economic world, the world of their personal lives or the world of religion. People who were searching for the truth disgruntled or not, sometimes people assume that the Worldwide Church of God only takes people who are dissatisfied.

Well, generally speaking, that's true. If you were fully satisfied with what you were doing, you would not want to take upon yourself the responsibility of rethinking everything, the whole of life. And it is important to realize that a self-satisfied world, like ancient Athens, was not the place that Paul spent most of his time. He spent much more time in a city of frustrations called Corinth, business opportunities, business failures, trade, commerce, and all sorts of moral variations. In this world, we began to realize by the middle of the 1960s that there were areas of the world that you couldn't reach or go to or communicate with quite in the same way that we had been used to by means of publication, radio, and finally television.

And in so doing, there began a series of interesting communications. Now, this goes way back, but it was not really the issue in those days. In 1945, Mr. Armstrong, as someone involved in a radio program, had the opportunity to participate as a member of the press and a religious figure in the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco.

As a result, he had met Sheikh Hafiz Waba of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Armstrong had, for a long time in those days, interests in seeing what might be done through the Arab world, and especially with the founding of the State of Israel by 1948, when the crisis there was occurring in the first year of Ambassador College.

It was in 1967 that Mr. Armstrong, as a result of knowing how to communicate with the leadership in the Arab world, was prepared to do a broadcast, then under the auspices of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for reaching the State of Israel.

And he was at the airport when the Six-Day War broke out in June.

I think it is significant to realize that there was a point at which you have old methods, the broadcast, a primary means of reaching people, and suddenly it is called to a halt there.

Now, for whatever reasons, I will follow one train of thought here. It was in 1968, in August, September, that in the faculty and administration of Ambassador College at Brickett Wood in Britain, a proposal was made to Mr. Armstrong, was presented to me also for my academic evaluation, that we might find that instead of reaching the State of Israel by way of radio, it might be done by way of an academic means.

And that is to participate. Now, it was correctly advised by the staff at that time that, and I will use these terms, Mr. Armstrong, the Israelis do not need just money, they need our presence to understand us. And that's been a fundamental methodology.

Our presence is necessary, not merely monies. If monies were involved, there are far greater institutions in terms of money that can be made available. I don't have to mention the various foundations. But it was a marriage of, let's say, sums of money that the church could make available with the personnel from Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God that might open doors. And so, interestingly, an opportunity arose with Hebrew University.

I made two trips from September to December to the State of Israel, the second one with Mr. Armstrong and others, the first one with a representative of the faculty and administration.

And there it was quite apparent that what the Israelis needed was both money and personnel.

And that's how we began the building of a bridge that Minister Moshe Cole called an iron bridge between Ambassador College and Hebrew University, a kind of strange combination.

If you want to picture it, a university of the breadth of Hebrew University and a small college, essentially, with a religious background. And yet the two, in terms of the world perspective, would not be that different. Why should there not be an arrangement between the representatives educationally of those who have preserved the Hebrew Bible for the world and those who are, though not the preservers of the Greek New Testament for the world, are the, shall we say, exponents of what that text says. And so we've had, since the end of 1968, a very long and effective relationship with Hebrew University that has enabled us to be understood by numerous people within Israel who would not have heard of what we stand for. I have given you from time to time and will not repeat some of those things, but from time to time visitors from Israel would come here and become acquainted with us. And they finally realized that there was in the world, not only a world of orthodoxy and Catholicism and Christianity, a world of Protestantism, but there were heirs of the Jerusalem church. And they recognized that fact, though it may have troubled them somewhat, they thought that problem was gone. Nevertheless, they have regularly respected us in all of our relationships as we have those whom we have worked with in the state of Israel.

Once we are there, there is also the necessity of developing an instrument that makes better sense than Ambassador College to fund projects. Now, some of you were fully aware of these things, but I am sure if I were to ask some of you to come up and explain, you might find yourself at a loss. And that's why I'm covering some things here for many who were new or don't know all the background. If you were managing a college, you have funding for student needs, the academic, the administration, the repayment of debt, the reconstruction or construction of buildings, then you have for research. Well, now, if we were to do the varied things that have come to our attention that were opportunities of research, shall we say, as we had been involved with with Hebrew University and archaeology at Jerusalem, the city of David, and in publishing that material, we would find the funding completely out of balance. And that's an important aspect to take note of. That is, Ambassador College would cease to be a legitimately financed institution with a balanced program

that would have like a crab, you know, one great big arm doing this research work, which doesn't make sense. Now, that's not the only reason, but it is a fundamental reason why ultimately there needed to be the Ambassador Foundation, often called the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation. That is, in some places of the world in Germany today, we are not registered in a public way as the Worldwide Church of God, however translated. In many places of the world, we still are represented by a corporation title, however translated, usually just that, Ambassador College. That is, the publication work we do is seen as an extension, corporately, not institutionally, from Big Sandy, but corporately as a manifestation of the role of the college. In other places, we can go to a country and be the Worldwide Church of God. So some countries have no objection to educational institutions, others would have no objection to religious institutions.

But in certain areas, it makes no sense to go just as an educational institution and certainly not possible as a religious institution, and hence the need of some kind of charitable foundation that represents, let's say, the means financially of doing work and having its own fundamental policies in the area of culture and education and public service of varied sorts. Supported by, but not exclusively by, the Worldwide Church of God, utilizing Ambassador College students, but not exclusively because we have graduates who are no longer students and sometimes Church members who can participate whether or not they went to Ambassador College. And indeed, in our headquarters here, we generally provide an entirely different concept, and that is, we don't have Ambassador students performing our cultural series, but we have some of the great creative minds, talented personalities of the world giving presentations.

But in the Middle East, it was essential, finally, to have the Ambassador Foundation to underwrite the work that was done in Israel financially. We were working most directly with Professor Mazar, former President of Hebrew University. Over time, however, it became apparent that we needed to be balanced in the Middle East, and I have not been to Jordan since 1957, some of you have, so I will not speak of the work that we are doing in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. With respect to the fundamental program of aiding the handicapped and the helping the teachers of the handicapped, and now potentially a long-term archaeological participation. And we did many other things in Israel. We have done things in Lebanon, we've done things in North and East Africa, I'm not going through all those, that's now some 15, 20, or 25 years ago.

The different areas that we've participated in. But I would like to focus on an experience that we have, and that students participate in, in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was in 1976 that we wanted something in the Arab world in a sense to balance what was being done.

In Israel, we had started in the participation with the excavations in 1969 after formulating the program in December 1968, where we met actually in the Knesset, which is the secular Jewish Holy of Holies, or Israeli Holy of Holies, as they would look at it today.

We needed something in an Arab country. And of course, there are many areas in which archaeology contributes important information that simply is not a fundamental function of what we are doing.

And there was a need of creating, let's say, an interest. Jerusalem, obviously, may be another city, but there's nothing in the state of Israel that would have touched people's interests more than Jerusalem. Maybe something in the Galilee, but hardly Hebron, most certainly not then Hatzor in the north, though now we are able to branch out and do some things that are no longer necessary. You know, in those days, we had to do numerous things that we don't have to do today. Then we would even have to sell a project with the name of Jerusalem, so to speak, on it. Today, we may participate in excavations, and we don't have to explain why we're there. There was a time that we had to

publish pictures of Ambassador College on the cover of the Plain Truth just to sell, or the cover of the Good News, to sell the idea of a college to the audience, whether or not we had a major subject in the magazine. Because most people then were not interested in sending money to the Worldwide Church of God or earlier to the Radio Church of God, but they didn't mind sending monies, excuse me, to an institution that was doing the work that the college was seen to be doing.

Now, we don't live in a world, this is 1992, not 1952, and 40 to 35 to 30 years make a great deal of difference in terms of people's response.

So, if we were going to do something in the Arab world, obviously the most famous Gentile city of the Bible was Babylon. But that had long since been the area of major participation of Germans and others, but the opportunity had risen for us to participate with the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA as a result of long-standing friendship beginning in 1966 with Giorgio and Marilyn Bucciolotti.

Marilyn Kelly Bucciolotti teaches art history and does numerous other functions for Cal State, Los Angeles. Giorgio Bucciolotti is a linguist and an archaeologist at the University of California at Los Angeles. In 1976, the Iraqi government opened up the opportunity of participation at the site of Dilbat, the port of Babylon, and UCLA was in that sense the recipient of an opportunity. I met an Iraqi scholar, a delightful person, a Muslim who was a kind of contact on this matter, and everything was essentially ready to go. The team, the small financing from the Ambassador Foundation in 1976, and then the faculty support, student support from the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA and some others from other institutions, University of Paris, University of Rome, Cal State LA, that is, you know, these are often group projects. And the Iraqi government sent a message within about two weeks before the departure of everybody saying, we have decided that we will do this work ourselves. Thank you. And that was closed.

Well, as it turns out, of course, 16 years later, that makes sense. That wasn't for us.

It then turned out that, of course, the Bucciolotti's had done work in Syria, and whereas some things take months, the Bucciolotti's petitions through certain contacts they had in the Department of Antiquities, probably under the Ministry of Culture in Syria, to participate at an excavation. And within 30 days, talk about red tape, within 30 days, the Syrian government gave the go-ahead, and the whole team was able to go to the modern site of Ashara, ancient Tarka capital of the kingdom of Hana, K-H-A-N-A, on the Middle Euphrates River. This is between the major city on the map of Derazor and the Iraqi border. And for years, from 76 through 82, 83, we participated in excavations at this ancient site on the Euphrates River. This was, of course, a nice balance. It was both an interesting area, anybody, anybody moving, as Abraham did, from or the Caldees to the area of Heran and then to the Promised Land, as it turned out to be, would have had to go through Tarka on the Euphrates River. For a long distance, there is no major city other than that one there.

So, it had its academic interest. I participated in some work between Trumpets in Atonement in 1978.

That little time where generally there is a aid. You either have everything done or the work is accumulated, and that year I had everything done so I could leave and spend a little time at the excavation. I also went there in 83 in July. And later in 83, I made two trips that year, we had a chance to go to northern Syria, which I had never visited before, the region essentially of the homeland of the family of Abraham in the upper Habur toward the Turkish border well on the other side of the Euphrates River. Now, in a certain sense, what we were doing was telling our Arab friends, look, we have work that we do in Syria. We have work that we do in Jordan.

We have work that we do in Israel, except that in Syria, you never mentioned the third one.

You only mentioned the other two. But don't assume they didn't know. That is, there were things, you see, they knew the state of Israel lay to the south of Syria. But there was no map in all of Syria that ever mentioned Israel. It was always Palestine. In fact, you never saw the word Israel unless it was a crisis that involved a war. That's different today. I have here the Syrian Times as an illustration. Anyway, it was important that we began to participate in 1976, 77, 78, sometimes two years in one, because they weren't able to go at an excavation every year.

And then came 1985, and the Giorgio and Marilyn Buccellotti felt the time had come now that we were involved in an excavation also far in the north as we were completing the work that was possible at ancient Terco on the Euphrates. There was the need of having an opportunity to do work in northern Syria. And so it was proposed that Mr. Armstrong then should visit where he had not visited before. He had been to Jordan, he had been to Israel, but he'd never been to Syria. So in the Worldwide News, it's best just to read directly, HWA travels to Syria, Jordan meets royalty official students. This was by Aaron K. Dean, written from Amman, Jordan, edited by our staff here. The pastor general, I'll just skip to those paragraphs of importance, had flown to Jordan from Damascus, Syria. Arriving in Damascus, May 6, from England, Mr. Armstrong was greeted by UCLA professor Giorgio Buccellotti and Dr.

Marilyn Kelly Buccellotti of California State University, Los Angeles archeologists excavating at the ancient city of Terco as it was in the Mesopotamian valley on the Euphrates river.

And the site of Tel-Mozan, as we now do as it is, possibly ancient Orkish, that's the capital of the Hurrian realm near the Syrian border with Turkey.

The Terco excavations are funded in cooperation with the Ambassador Foundation, the University of California, Los Angeles, and other foundations and institutions in particular from time to time, the Kress Foundation, the Amundsen Foundation, and other smaller contributors.

Prime Minister Abdul-Raouf Al-Qasim's office, wait a moment, what happened, I take it here, is that when this was Xerox, the rest of the, I was looking for a name, the rest of the story is not here. So I'm picking up in the second column. They drove to Syria's National Museum.

There, Mr. Armstrong was given a private tour.

I'm skipping what he saw there. From the museum, the group drove to the office of Najat Attar, the Syrian Minister of Culture. Now, a Minister of Culture is a member of the cabinet.

You know, the President has a cabinet. Some are more important, some are less important.

Najat Attar is a woman. Well, more than that, she is a lady, and she is a doctor, and she's dressed like most of you, but maybe better. That's just because she has a very high public office. I think we misunderstand the Arab world if we think that every Arab woman is covered like this. This is a, and in Syria in particular, you find that women simply are western in orientation when it comes to grooming, unless you are a farmer's wife or a Beidou from the, or a member of the Bedouin, the Beidou from the desert. She is the Minister of Culture, who was Mr. Armstrong's official host for the visit. With Dr. Attar was Afif Bakhnessi, Director General of Antiquities in Syria, and William Eagleton, U.S. Ambassador to Syria.

Dr. Attar thanked Mr. Armstrong for his support of the excavations.

Now, I won't read more than that, but let me explain something here. This was the first time in the history of the function of the Minister of Culture that the Minister of Culture ever had a public audience of this nature with a private citizen from a foreign country. It had only been diplomatic people before. I think that's very significant. Only diplomatic people previously.

It was like saying that we were being treated as if we were diplomats of some realm, shall I say.

That is, we were ambassadors for another kind of life and a kingdom that is not yet on earth in the sense that a kingdom rules over the earth. To have that was a remarkable state of affairs, a remarkable achievement. The Syrian government, in other words, is aware of us, and to my knowledge, no foreign institution has participated over such a length with the kind of funding that we do. It ranges anywhere from \$25,000 to \$40,000 a year.

There's no reason not to define it for you. Its value today often is \$50,000 to \$80,000 for the simple reason that the monies which are contributed through the supervision of course of Mr. Joseph Locke, go to the particular institution that the Buccalares established for the management of the excavations in Syria. So it's not directly a part of the Institute of Archaeology where it would be linked with UCLA. It is a separate institution, the International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies, IIMAS for short, or IMAS. I'm a member of the Board of Trustees of IMAS, another church member of another local congregation, is in fact the financial advisor of and the supervisor for taking care of financial matters on behalf of IMAS with respect to the federal government of the United States, state of California, the IRS, for instance.

We're grateful to be participants. Nevertheless, NEH, the National Endowment for the Humanities, is also helpful. The government of the United States has made arrangements that certain funds can be doubled by federal funds. So we contribute early.

A certain sum varies from season to season to IMAS, and IMAS sends that money on to NEH.

NEH keeps it, I guess they get some interest out of it in the meantime and verify that the donation is valid, examine the work that is being done, and then they return the original money and, at an appropriate time, return the additional money. So that if we make a contribution of \$40,000 over a year, IMAS ultimately ends up with \$80,000.

That is one of those things that the United States government has been doing for a number of years.

So our contributions are significant beyond our normal means.

It is undoubtedly this extended contribution over a period of time that made the Syrian government recognize that no other institution in the United States has had this long of participation in the country and to, in a sense, to have been given diplomatic acknowledgement.

That was in 1985. In 1983, a little earlier, I had the chance, in that crisis in October, over Lebanon, between the United States, Lebanon, Syria, and numerous problems were then. I had the chance, along with the Buchelades and numerous others from Europe who were there to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the French expeditions at Mari, further south on the Euphrates River, to be guests of the Governor General of the province of Derizor on the Euphrates River.

And that was quite remarkable. I will repeat only one part of it. The only foreign guest, and logically, seated on the side of the lead table where the Syrians were seated, was the widow of the French excavator. Now, even though French and Belgian, British, East and West Germans, who knows, Turkish excavators were invited on this occasion. It was a public presentation and then a public

dinner for them. There were numerous academic papers presented earlier. On the other side of the lead table were guests, without exception.

In this critical period, the only guests on the other side of the table were Americans.

Not French, not Belgian, not German, not British. I think that was a message, and I have repeated it before. It is very important to recognize that from our experience, the Syrian government has wanted to keep open its relationship to the United States, irrespective of government political differences. And for the military governor to, in fact, have invited only Americans to the head table. On the other side, in honor of the widow of the French excavator, was a remarkable thing at a time of crisis. And in these times of crisis, being over there is like feeling you're safe. Now, that might sound strange, but after all, if the military governor is there, how could you be other than safe? I mean, he has the weapons. There's nobody, nothing's going to happen to you as long as he's there. And you have that feeling. It's something that, in a sense, though we don't have the same military situation now, one nevertheless perceives again. It was not long ago that on behalf of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, the Buchelades wrote me, since I essentially coordinate the relationship between IMAS and AICF. He wrote, as with particular, they wrote, it's with particular pleasure that we're submitting to you our progress report on the excavations at Mosin, deriving from the fact that this year we know we'll be able to show you in person the results of our work during your upcoming visit. I haven't been there since 83.

We wish to acknowledge in this manner, as well as the, yes, as well as the generous support of AICF, which has allowed us to match the funding made available to the expedition by the federal government through the National Endowment for the Humanities. That's, we wish to acknowledge in this manner and through this accompanying publication, my participation, the function of AICF and EH.

We trust that both the written report and the field visit, which you will undertake, will serve, not only as a sign of our gratefulness, but also as an evidence of the fertile and dynamic research activities which the AICF funding continues to make possible. Looking forward to see you soon and to have you with us in the field, we remain yours truly.

Now, I haven't turned over a copy of this because I really wanted to keep it while on the trip, but I'm going to turn this over to Mr. Joseph Locke for review and, therefore, other access to this information. This information was, in fact, drafted for NEH in order to inform them of what the federal monies have been accomplishing and the policies utilized in such funding.

Today, 1992, we have a little different experience. I had a letter awaiting me, which I knew of, because I had been informed of it. This was addressed to me at a hotel in Damascus.

Welcome to Damascus. As Marilyn will already have told you over the phone, which was the case, I made reservations for you at this hotel, which is where we and just about every other archaeologist in Syria is staying when in Damascus. While modest in appearance, it has the best possible service.

I did arrange for a meeting with the Minister of Culture, Dr. Najaa Attar, whom I also hope to be able to invite to UCLA next year. She is a scholar of Arabic literature and a wonderful person, besides, of course, having been responsible for the cultural growth of Syria in the recent past, since she is and has been at the head of this ministry for over 15 years.

That's essentially when the work began that we have participated in.

I talked to her about your visit, and there should be an appointment for you late this morning, and then the date is given. To find out about the details, please call the Office of the Director General of Antiquities. At such numbers, the hotel will help you.

You may ask for the Director General, Dr. Ali Abu-Asaf, who studied in Germany and speaks German well. If he is in the office, you may want to see him first. It turned out he was in Aleppo.

And I met another person. Otherwise, you can call directly the Minister's Office. Her secretary's name is Azuka Aljabi, and her direct line is such a number. Getting to the ministry is only a 15-minute taxi ride. I told her that you were connected with our Institute, Imus, and that you represent AICF. And please, I only represented. I am not involved in any official capacity there. Let's say I would say I'm a loyal supporter.

She knows the AICF and that it is a major foundation behind our work in Syria, and she remembers Mr. Armstrong's visit. There should also be a train reservation for you tonight.

It leaves generally at 7, so you will want to leave the hotel about 6. The train takes 14 to 15 hours to get to the other end. It's a nice night ride in a sleeping car. And you can sleep in this one. It's comfortable. Anyway, having arrived a day later because the day of departure was the day of departure for Syria was, in fact, the day anticipated, but the day of arrival was the next day. I flew through Vienna. That was not known, so the minister learned that I was not there on schedule, but that I arrived, she learned the next day, that I had arrived the next day.

So it is very gracious of the minister of culture that she should have opened the same time of day, the next day, to meet me. So I had a chance to meet her in the office, and we discussed certain matters. I presented her not with anything elaborate. You normally bring a small gift.

Mr. Locke said, I think, and Mr. Vanderpool, that the best one we can give now is a section of the envoy devoted to the work of AICF, where we summarized our work in Jordan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, and there was no direct reference to any work in that issue of the envoy for Israel.

That way, there were no political sensitivities that were necessarily raised, and one has to be discreet in the matter. It's a very nice pull out, so to speak. We have these different sections printed, and that section is printed in greater quantity so that they may be distributed.

All that's a part of knowing how to present ourselves in a manner where, to say, I'm a minister of the Worldwide Church of God, would you like to read something with me in the Bible? It isn't quite the way you do it. You rather indicate where you stand in terms of education and morals until they take notice that also you have an interest in the welfare of the country.

It was that same evening that our dear friend Marwan Dabag, whose name I have mentioned on occasion, he is an architectural engineer, has made possible the road communication and the buildings that we use at the site at Mozan where we can reside. It's really a beautiful complex.

It means that we can do work, we can sleep, we can eat all at the site of the tell. So we actually now in our work live on the tell and not in the village, and it's a part of the tell where we did not anticipate any significant fines, and after all the building will probably last no longer than the attempt to excavate the rest of the tell, which for a small group as ourselves could take 500 years. I mean this is a great big place, you know, built by thousands of people excavated by tens.

So you have to understand that not every place is big enough to afford the building on the tell itself. The tell is this heap that looks like a mountain, but it is not. Not a natural mountain.

So that evening Marwan Dabag was being honored by the staff of the American Embassy because one of the staff members had been very graciously cared for by Marwan Dabag, who graciously cares for other people as well, and they were giving him this honor and he introduced me to the staff members, and we visited the home of the wife of one of the staff members, and then we had a chance to meet with the man who handles the finances for the Embassy and on behalf of all businesses of the United States and Syria, and later the temporary ambassador, Mr. Newton, came and we had a nice discussion at the home and then we went to dinner. The Embassy took care of this. It was an honor of Marwan Dabag's many services, and I had a chance to explain the various things that we were doing around the world in terms of the foundation in the different countries. It was the next day that I took the train to, no it was a little, let me explain this briefly, there was too much of a wait, and what we needed to do was to try to resolve the problem because I would have had to wait till the next night to take the train. So the train goes to Hama, Homs, Aleppo, and then cuts inward to Derazor and goes north through Hasakah to Comishli. So the train had already taken off the night before, so what we did was to drive overland the next morning and meet the train in Derazor. So we drove overland from Damascus through Palmyra to Derazor, where we picked up the train and went all the way to Comishli. So that was a way of making good use of the time, and we arrived around 12.30 a.m., and I stayed then in the home of Marwan Dabag.

The reason we know him so well is some of those in the ministry would know, or I have mentioned, he has a separate business, which business is to buy tractors from the United States and combines and well-drilling equipment now and also water pumps for the farmers in northern Syria, and I am his non-paid American extension. That is, he communicates through the Buchelates or through Mr. or Mrs. Akal what he's planning, and I handle to be sure that everything is paid for in this country when he's abroad. We have a joint bank account. There's no reason you shouldn't know that the ministers have ways of helping other people, and you'll be surprised at the results of some of these things. So we have a joint bank account so that I can pay his bills.

And in that sense, we have a very nice working relationship. The farmers there are very much appreciated, and I saw a number of the tractors. I had help from the ministry around the country initially to find possible sources. We located the best, and the best sources actually turned out to be in the area of Oklahoma and Kansas. The reason that's true is these were the farmers who were earlier on too poor to get the new tractors and kept the old ones longer, and having kept the old ones longer when they finally wanted new tractors, then the old ones were cheaper to buy, and the Syrians had no reason to want to pay more. Marwan Dabagh, of course, speaks very little English. He's an excellent negotiator when he comes to Oklahoma. He has his money in his pockets to pay, and they pay in cash. And the farmer says, well, now this tractor is for \$2,500. It's too much, our poor farmers. They can't pay that. How about, let's say, \$1,400? Well, no, no, no. I could perhaps come down to \$2,200. Well, how about \$1,500? Well, I could come down, let's say, to \$2,000. Well, how about \$1,600? Well, I can't go below \$1,800, and at this point Marwan brings out the cash, and it's only \$1,700. And the farmer looks at the \$1,700, and suddenly he can come down to that figure. And that's how they negotiate.

I thought that I should repeat that so that you understand the fine art of negotiating.

Anyway, on this trip, Marwan de Bogg very graciously, apart from being at the excavation where I must took care of me, Marwan de Bogg paid everything for me.

That's a very grateful gesture. We turn it around, and my wife and I take care of him at this end.

Of course, these things go without saying. You don't have to discuss the matter. You know that you treat other people as you have been treated or would treat them yourself. And he'll be coming here in August, I believe, sometime. We take care of him and his travels and his stay, and it works out very well. But we were very pleased to have a chance to meet him and his wife. His wife is Turkish, probably one of the most beautiful Turkish women in the world. At least that's George Joe and Marilyn Buccillade's opinion, and I would not disagree. She is a remarkable woman learning English by herself through a second language called Arabic. So it's a little roundabout way.

But Marwan de Bogg of Arabic background in general with some Turkish background, I believe, was in fact born in Mardin in Turkey, a community visible, visible from the excavation site in Syria.

Anyway, I participated at the excavation on two full days, and it amounts to three days there, and about another day in other activities away, and another day there. It's amazing how time goes by. Four days of travel and six days on the site, but in reality we were doing a number of other things which I would like to explain. On one occasion we had a chance to meet the Monsignor who represented the Armenians in this part of Syria who are not Orthodox but Roman Catholic.

We were a guest at a late lunch, and we were also a guest of his on another occasion, and on behalf of my wife and myself and Imus, I made a contribution to the work that the Monsignor and the local Catholic Church is doing. I think you should know it's appropriate for Assyrian and Chaldean Christian refugees who fled Iraq and who have had no international support other than charity. Being Christians and the Iraqi leadership being Muslim, there are a number of conflicts in the country, and I would like to discuss this a little further because many of these people, just like the Muslim Kurds in Turkey and also in Syria, are refugees. So you have Muslim refugees and Christian refugees. When you're in this part of the world, you'll realize that Arabs don't speak of everybody who is an Arab as an Arab only. Thus, Arabs are people who speak Arabic, but one of the biggest businessmen in Damascus, as Marwan Dabag said, he's an Arab, but he's also a Philistine. These other people are Assyrian and Chaldean Christians. Some are Armenian Christians. The Syrians as a whole who are Christians, and neither Assyrian or Chaldean are generally Aramaic Christians and would simply think of themselves in those terms.

If I were in the Lebanon, you would discover that most of the people there would see themselves as, in fact, Canaanite Arabs. So Arabs may descend from Ishmael, they may descend from Canaan, they may be anybody who speaks Arabic, whether remnants of Chaldeans, Assyrians, Philistines, Egyptians. Most Americans don't realize that within the Arab world, all these discerning thoughts are manifested in their daily conversation. Later on another day, we were guests of the governor of Hasaka. Formerly, the other trip in 1983, we were guests of the governor of their resort. This man is an educator, not a military man, the governor of Hasaka. He and his wife were at the garden, and we were personal guests. The we means two archaeologists from another site, the Buchalates and myself and Marwan Dabag.

That's incorrect. Marwan Dabag was not there on that occasion.

It was just the five of us. And the governor and his wife, you've heard of the Persian garden, well, you should see a Syrian garden, it looks like my wife's.

Every imaginable thing is growing, even that which we don't plant, just grows. They also have what we don't, a place for gazelles. There were two gazelles, and they have an aviary. I mean, you could just reach up and pluck figs. In fact, it was really astonishing what was taking place. Now, at this occasion, instead of Marwan Dabag, it was the Monsignor, the Armenian Monsignor of the Catholic Church at the Armenian Catholic Church at Comishly. But we were meeting at Hasaka. You could look

at a map sometime and see this if you want to. What was significant is that the occasion was to which we were invited. It was in honor of American Arab cardiologists, of which there must have been about 25 altogether.

And then there was in the same room, but not connected with this occasion. We were seated in a huge U, the head table here, and then the two other tables. Then there was another table over there with a group of prosperous people, apparently all Christians. And most everybody here was a Christian from Hasaka. The Governor General may or may not have been, you know, you don't ask that.

But nor does it matter in this case, because he's likely to be the new Minister for Education, which means to have cabinet office. And I do want to communicate with him and his wife. I think it important to keep these lines of communication open, because we have to realize it in the crisis of the close. The bulk of Syria, west and south of the Euphrates River, all as part of the land promised to another people. But where we were was all that area on the other side, inner Mesopotamia, not part of the promised land. It wasn't this occasion that the Buchalates were at the right and the other archaeologists were at the left of the Governor. And I split off from them, because I'm not a professional archaeologist. And I ended up at the tail end that, you know, it's always nice to take the last seat. Well, if you've ever had experience, this was interesting.

Somebody, I was seated next to a younger man, a cardiologist, and somebody said, I'd like to sit here between this cardiologist and the man next to me. So the man next to me said, would you move down one, not up but down? Well, you know, we didn't know all who were going to be there. So I moved down. I was at the tail end there, which was, as it turned out, very convenient. I think the Buchalates thought perhaps I should have been with them. But I found it was just comfortable to separate and to be here. After all, I represented Imus. I didn't represent those who were professionally responsible for the expedition. But it turned out that the man who was seated next to me was the master of ceremonies. You might have thought he would have been next to the Governor, but he was not. He was at the end of the table. That way he could address the Governor. That is a cross. Instead of talking to the Governor that way, to the left or to the right, you see, he could address the whole group because he was at the other end of the horseshoe.

It turned out very remarkable. These all spoke English because that particular man therefore was the one to whom I could give ideas to in our communication. And it was amazing to what extent it was possible to talk to him. And then he talked to the whole group.

There was a red, and many of the people there, by the way, who were Christian Arabs, Assyrian, Chaldean, Aramaic, doesn't matter. They are red-haired. You'd be surprised.

I would say, I don't know the percent, but I would suspect about five percent of the population had some form of reddish hair in some of these areas. These are not Bedouin or Beidou.

But that man had read a poem in Arabic. For whatever reason, I won't need to give that to you as beautifully read. And I commented to the man next to me, who is an American Arab cardiologist, now moving from New York to Indiana, has given me his address. He would like me to communicate. He knows the city of Pasadena. Then he got up, and what he did was to comment about what I said to him in response to that beautiful reading of poetry.

It was essentially the thought that it was possible to appreciate what I did not understand by the manner in which and the tone and the feel that came from the person who was reading it.

The man who was reading it, by the way, had red hair, reddish hair.

He was, I had talked to him earlier, he was an Assyriani or an Assyrian. And in the private conversation with some others, he said something most remarkable. He said, now, our family came to Syria of relatively recent times as Assyrians from the region of Russia, the Ukraine.

Later on, I told Marilyn about the story that that family migrated from Russia to the Syrian Arab Republic. You see, ancient Pliny, the Roman writer, actually describes the fact that one of the tribes living north of the Black Sea, therefore north of the Black Sea, you cross the Black Sea, you cross Turkey, and you're in Syria.

That's all, not that far. We're called Assyrians or Assyriani. And why should it be unusual if Greeks who live there are still Greek? My former secretary, that is my former, former one. The other one is here too. You'll let Merritt visiting. But Henrietta Nikolaev, a student at Ambassador College, her mother was Greek. Greek after 2000 years. Well, here is somebody who is of Assyrian background. You think it's not strange when Phoenicians are found, that is, people of Canaanites on the coast of Spain, which you can find in any map. Well, archaeologists and historians don't consider that a problem. Neither should the other be. That was just a normal route of communication. So apparently some of these people have come back to Syria, others may have gone on in other directions. But it was remarkable to be able to meet a number of these individuals, but the social occasion wasn't over. Then they had Arabic music to dance by.

And I found that that music was easily identifiable with. Now it was perhaps a little simpler.

Some of the, as soon as the music started up, then the special group came, the special group.

And they danced. And the interesting thing is they brought a little infant that must not have been more than a month old and danced with a little child. You can't imagine this taking place in Pasadena. But here the group got up and this child was made to dance with him, although it was on a blanket. You see, there was a recent baptism. This was a kind of celebration.

It was remarkable to see the men, the women and the children. And then when that group sat down, then the cardiologists got up and the man next to me got up to dance with the others. Now, it isn't a question of a man and his wife. Most of them didn't have their wives. There some did.

The Arabs in this case danced in a, what we call a round R-O-U-N-D. And he got up there and a few others. And then he came to the table where he had been seated and said to me, come up. And so I got up and I don't know which one of you to ask, but I won't. So, you know, you raise your, you hold the person's hand, men or women. It doesn't matter. You just simply get into the ring and you move about. I won't explain it, but it was beautifully done. The hands go up and down like this as you, you know, move about in a ring. Being the first American, everybody noted that I was talking to the master of ceremonies. Then they noted that I was the first one to get up of the foreigners. And then, of course, the Buchilades got up and the other couple and Monsignor appropriately did not. That's, that's a custom. Nevertheless, it was remarkable to be a participant and it made one, it made me think privately and publicly, though I didn't express it publicly for everybody, but for some. If only the Israelis could have been participants, just as if these people could participate in the Israeli dances, you know, most of the problems would vanish. Because the real issue is not a question of water. That could be solved. The real issue is not even a question of land.

That could be solved. The real issue is the question of human government.

And some of those who were there, who just heard my comments, agreed that that is the problem. It is a question of human government. And that's the question settled by the doctrine and by the teaching of Jesus Christ, that there is coming the kingdom of God to reign over all nations. So the

political issue won't be whether you were ruled over by Slovak or Czech. You won't be ruled over by Muslim or Jew. It isn't going to be a question of religion or a question of politics. It's a question of whether the kingdom of God and the family of God rule and that all nations are subject to that, whether their neighbor is a Serb, a Croat, or a Hual, or even starts out as a Christian or a Muslim or a Jew.

I didn't go that far to discuss all of that, but the man said, those who, you know, in our conversation, that it is quite apparent that human government is ultimately what the problem is. Because that's the center of the problem. It is also obvious that I return safely. It's now time to end the story.

It's now time to end the story. I didn't go directly from the dance. I went back to the tell and we did many other things there before I left. And Giorgio Buccellotti has sent a memo since then, which I was very pleased to receive yesterday somewhere. It is that a new find has been made at the excavation and tablet from ancient Acadia in the very area in which I was working while on the tell. Anyway, I thought you would be informed. You never know what goes on. On occasion like this, I want to communicate with the ambassador's office in Syria. I do want to communicate with some, at least one or two of the cardiologists. I have, in fact, notes here, which I have photographs of an important part of the tell. But I have notes here. I need to communicate with the governor of Mustafa Miro. Because if one is a guest of the governor, one makes a present at a certain time. And also at the hotel, which was a different one because I didn't stay where I assumed I would. Marwan Dabag wanted me to stay at another hotel. I met a gentleman there who would like to study to be a hotelier that is someone who manages a hotel. And I must ask ambassador college in Big Sandy if they could find information. Or maybe I can even do it right out of our news bureau for that matter of any institution in America which teaches, not necessarily a full college. It could be a private kind of institution, teaches this kind of business, communicate with him, and he would come over here. Most of the people that I met outside of the excavation were professional people, many of them Armenians, surprisingly. This man was an Armenian.

I met another one. And they are interested in getting ahead in the world. Another gentleman, very, very nice person, lives in Sweden, was traveling somewhere, met a woman from South Africa, married her, so he works on occasion in Syria, has a home in Sweden, and lives with his wife in South Africa. And I have their mutual addresses. One never knows. One of the doctors, Professor Barry, I thought I had seen him in Damascus at one of the occasions at the dinner after we were at the home of the, where the ambassador met. And I was mistaken. As he said, no, he had already arrived. But you know, as I said, there are people who resemble one another that one can easily mistake that. So I gave him my card just to let him know and he identified himself.

And he said, oh, the plain truth. Said, I take the plain truth.

Said, Mr. Armstrong, you know, a doctor, he wants to identify. So you know, he's telling the truth.

Mr. Armstrong died in 1986. He used to have an 800 number. I mean, he's a sharp fellow.

He knew these things would immediately identify that he knew the work. He knew the TV. But now you don't have it anymore. So just being there in Hasakah to meet an American Arab cardiologist, you pull out your card, the only one to whom I did that. The other man doesn't know whom I'm going to correspond with, but this man was a reader of the plain truth and looks to the, and looks at the broadcast. So you never know the impact of the work. It isn't that we reach everybody today, we're not able to reach by our means all that we used to, but we still have a significant impact.

And I hope that this gives you some idea that when things occur around the world, in which the work participates, one never knows the end result. And we do want to keep doors of communication open to all critical countries, as well as make ourselves known, as interested in the welfare and the concern of other people. Your own background could illustrate the fact that you wouldn't be here perhaps in some cases if somebody else hadn't done something to make that possible. I appreciate being placed on the list to speak and on this particular day by Mr. Abner Washington and staff, and be happy to chat with some of you as time goes by with some of the other things that are not necessarily essential from the pulpit to be expressed on our recent trip.