



Philadelphia Church of God

WORLD HEADQUARTERS

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September 14, 2006

Dear brethren and co-workers in Christ,

God has just opened an EXCITING NEW DOOR for His Work!

In the last two letters I have written to you, I explained how the personal appearance campaigns we are now engaged in were prophesied in Matthew 10, where Jesus said, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (verse 23). The fact that God is having us undertake these campaigns shows how close we are to the end of this age!

I told you earlier in the year that this would be a VERY INTERESTING SUMMER. Events in the Middle East have proved that statement true. But we have also seen very interesting developments in GOD'S WORK this summer.

In my last letter, I also showed you what it says in Isaiah 40: "O [you], that bringest good tidings [to Zion], get thee up into the high mountain; O [you], that bringest good tidings [to Jerusalem], lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" (verse 9). "This is a prophecy of a message going out to the cities of Judah *just before the return of Jesus Christ*. I wrote, "WE ARE THE VOICE CRYING OUT TO THE CITIES OF JUDAH, JUST BEFORE CHRIST RETURNS, 'BEHOLD YOUR GOD!'" It is interesting to note that we must deliver a message to the CITIES OF JUDAH. Matthew 10 talks about delivering a message to specific cities in Israel—but here in Isaiah 40, God specifically mentions the cities of JUDAH.

That brings me to the new door God has just opened for His Work. I'll let my son, Stephen, tell the fascinating story, as he told it to our Herbert W. Armstrong College students at this year's school orientation:

Mr. Armstrong had some troubles getting the *World Tomorrow* into Judah. He very nearly went on Radio Jerusalem with the program in 1967, but the deal fell through because of the Six Day War, when Israel took control of East Jerusalem from Jordan.

That apparent closed door, however, actually opened the way for Mr. Armstrong to establish an office and work in the city of Jerusalem. Once Israel captured the Old City of Jerusalem, an Israeli archeologist from Hebrew University, Dr. Benjamin Mazar, immediately set his sites on excavating the southern wall of the Temple Mount.

Prior to that time, several instructors at Ambassador College had acquired an interest in having students participate in archeological digs in Israel, but Mr. Armstrong didn't like the idea of sending students to some isolated rural area in the Middle East. Dr. Mazar's project, right in the heart of Jerusalem—and possibly the most significant

archeological dig ever undertaken in Israel—was an altogether different matter. Once Mr. Armstrong found out that Dr. Mazar was short on funding, a miraculously close relationship developed between a huge university in Jerusalem and a small, liberal arts college in Southern California. Three other United States universities had sought participation in the dig, but were rejected. But Professor Mazar offered Ambassador College a 50-50 joint participation in the project! Mr. Armstrong later flew to Jerusalem to make the participation official. At a meeting in the Knesset to finalize details of the working relationship, Israel's minister of tourism at the time, Moshe Kol, proposed building an "iron bridge" between Ambassador College and Hebrew University—a bridge that could never be broken. Mr. Armstrong wrote about that open door in a December 10, 1968, co-worker letter:

Now I can explain to you this important announcement. Ambassador College has just been given the great honor and responsibility of entering joint participation with Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the most important archaeological excavation of our time—uncovering 3,000 years of history! We are now actively engaged—Ambassador College and Hebrew University—in excavating down, layer by layer, removing the accumulated rubble and filth of century after century of Gentile occupation! ...

This great archaeological project is under the direct supervision of Dr. Benjamin Mazar, one of the world's recognized outstanding experts on archaeology, former president of Hebrew University.

Mr. Armstrong then went on to describe how important the project was—it would bring prestige to Ambassador College and, he said, it was a way they were preparing for Christ's return!

How are we preparing the way for Christ's Messianic coming? In three ways: 1) by proclaiming and publishing worldwide the gospel of the Kingdom of God ... 2) by making ready a people for His coming!

And 3) something that even I did not realize until recently we were also commissioned to do—clean up the filth and rubble in that area that was the original Jerusalem and city of David ...

Why is that important? Because Christ has said He will yet choose Jerusalem, and make it the capital city of the whole World Tomorrow! ...

[T]here is a physical preparing, as well as spiritual, in preparing the way for Messiah's coming! Further, God says we are to shout, with amplified power, to the cities of Judah the glad message that the Messiah is soon coming.

Ambassador College started funding the project in late 1968. The following year, Ambassador College sent 60 students to Jerusalem for the summer to help with the dig. For the next 10 years, about 50 Ambassador College students traveled to Jerusalem each summer to help Dr. Mazar with the excavation.

Mr. Armstrong and Dr. Mazar, over those years, cultivated a close friendship and respect for one another. Mr. Armstrong's close ties with Dr. Mazar also led to numerous other friendships in Israel, including many high-ranking government officials. Over the years, Mr. Armstrong met, on several occasions, with former Prime Ministers Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin and Menahem Begin. He also developed a very special friendship with Jerusalem's mayor at that time—Teddy Kollek. Mr. Armstrong even funded the construction of a children's playground at Liberty Bell Park in Jerusalem.

King David's Palace

Ten years after his relationship began with Dr. Mazar, Mr. Armstrong wrote to members and co-workers, "[On] December 1, the Israeli government is planning a celebration in my honor—on the 10th anniversary of the beginning of our participation in the great archaeological excavation, starting southward from the Temple Mount. This date will mark the beginning of the second decade of this major project—now starting further south, in the area of the ancient city of David, to uncover 2,500 years of accumulated debris (some 50 feet high) over the *ancient palace* and throne of King David" (May 21, 1978). While excavations in the city of David continued throughout the 1980s, David's Palace never did turn up. Many archeologists assumed that David's place of residence must have been located somewhere inside the cramped city walls of the ancient capital.

After Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, the Worldwide Church of God soon lost interest in the project. After Benjamin Mazar died in 1995, the same would have been true for the archeological community, were it not for Mazar's

granddaughter, Eilat, who is also an archeologist. Before her grandfather died, Eilat Mazar told him she believed David's palace was built outside the city walls, just north, and that it might possibly be a massive structure. She based her conclusions on a number of clues found in Scripture. Before he died, Dr. Mazar encouraged his granddaughter to act on her research. But for 10 years, she had neither the funding or support from the archeological community needed to start a dig. That changed last year, as we reported in the *Trumpet* this past March:

Within weeks of beginning the dig, Ms. Mazar's team was uncovering the remains of many rooms. At first, most were more recent Roman structures, like baths and pools, but then, within the boundaries of the limited excavation area, she found the remains of "massive older walls underneath the Roman structure, running toward the rim of the Kidron Valley" (*Washington Post*, Dec. 2, 2005). The walls, constructed with boulders, are on average 2 yards thick and extend at least 30 yards. Their size gives credence to the importance and grandeur of the structure. ...

To this point, only a small fraction—approximately 10 percent of the structure—has been exposed, but the finds have been remarkable. Ms. Mazar described her discovery, which was potentially David's home, as "not just a house, but a fantastic house" (ibid.). In another uncovered room, dating to the 6th century b.c., a bulla, or seal, was found inscribed with the ancient Hebrew name of Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shevi (*Canadian Jewish News*, op. cit.). Jehucal was a Judean prince mentioned in Jeremiah 37:3. This fact suggests that the site was an important seat of Judean royalty for four centuries after King David.

Raising the Ruins

When I talked with my father in July about how God might open doors to Judah, he directed me to contact Dr. Eilat Mazar to see when she planned to begin the second phase of her dig—and to inquire about the possibility of providing her with some student volunteers from Herbert W. Armstrong College.

We sent the letter on July 26. One week later, she wrote back. She said that she hoped to begin phase two of the dig this fall, and that she would love to work with our volunteers! Here is the letter she wrote:

Dear President Flurry,

Thank you so much for these kind words, which have brought to mind so many fond memories. The close friendship that my grandfather and Mr. Armstrong shared was the basis for the fruitful partnership that led to the great success of the Temple Mount Excavations. This partnership was one of mutual admiration and respect, that is evident even in photographs of the two men together. Without the support of Mr. Armstrong and the "Ambassadors," the Temple Mount Excavations would have never become, as it did, the most important and largest excavations in Israel at that time.

I would love to keep in touch with you and cooperate as much as possible in the future. Although every archaeological endeavor here is a matter of financial resources, as a start, so you can imagine that what I need most is funds.

Moreover, anytime your students wish to join me as volunteers on my excavations in Jerusalem and elsewhere, I'll be very happy to welcome them. If it ever becomes a realistic possibility, we can talk about logistics.

All the best,

Eilat Mazar

I wrote back write away to talk about logistics. She responded on August 10.

Dear Stephen,

It sounds great. I do hope to start the second phase of excavations at the city of David sometime at the beginning of September. It is not up to me, and I can't tell you the exact date. You should know that the beginning of the excavations have been delayed several times, and I can't be sure that it won't be delayed again, although I have all reasons to believe that this time it is going to work out at that date. Your suggestion

to have several students of yours come and participate in the excavations is fantastic. And your suggestion to take care of their accommodations is exactly what is needed. I'll be glad to meet you ... whenever [it] is most convenient for you. ...

The participation of you and your students will bring enthusiastic people who truly care about the project to help the staff run the excavation. ... I am excited to have the "Ambassadors" back with us!

Eilat

That was all the encouragement we needed. Three days after receiving that letter, Andrew Locher and I flew to Tel Aviv and spent a week in Jerusalem, working to revive the Jerusalem dig!

We arrived on Monday, August 14, not knowing precisely when we would be able to meet with Dr. Mazar. We were hoping to have an e-mail from her directing us to come anytime. Sure enough, when we arrived, we did!

The next day, Tuesday, we met with Dr. Mazar at the city of David, and talked about how soon we could begin sending students over to help. She told us that she planned to begin phase two of the dig in September—but she did caution us that there had been delays in plans to begin phase two before—so she could not guarantee they would begin. Still, we were optimistic.

On Wednesday, we spent some time scouting for apartments that our students could stay in if and when they came to join the project.

Then, on Thursday, we called Dr. Mazar again. She was extremely excited. Apparently, plans to begin phase two had progressed rapidly since Tuesday. She explained that *so much* had happened in the last two days. For some reason, Hebrew University was all of the sudden anxious to have the project begin. Dr. Mazar theorized that perhaps those who had donated large sums of money were applying pressure to see some progress. Clearly, God had a hand in the timing. Dr. Mazar was now scheduled to begin phase two on September 1. The project will last about five months.

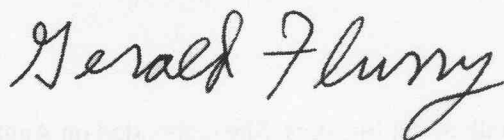
We did make it clear to Dr. Mazar early on that there was no way we could send 50 students to help—if we did so, we would have close down the college! She was more than happy to accept only two or three of our students. After some discussion with her about working around the Feast of Tabernacles, Dr. Mazar suggested we send our students over right after the Feast.

We are currently finalizing plans to make this a reality. The dig is already underway, and we plan to send three or four students immediately after the Feast. The students are excited for this unique opportunity.

Here at Herbert W. Armstrong College, we often refer our students to Amos 9 and the Work God is doing to revive all that Mr. Armstrong established. "In that day will I raise up the *tabernacle of David* that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (verse 11). It's going to be just like it was in the days of old.

How incredible it is to think that as we work to revive Mr. Armstrong's legacy and Work, we might now have the opportunity to raise up the very stones of King David's fallen palace!

With love, in Jesus's name,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Flurry". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gerald Flurry