

Aims & Goals Towards Ad2000

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of balancing local and international ministry efforts to effectively reach every person with the gospel.

Duration: 57:11

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:24

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of staying focused on the overall goal and aim of spreading the gospel and building the church. He mentions the 82,000 movement, which is coming to a close, but emphasizes that the vision will continue. The speaker also talks about the need for teamwork and the willingness to do even the smallest tasks in service to God. He concludes by highlighting the commitment required to be on God's team and the willingness to go the extra mile in reaching as many people as possible.

Transcript

As we begin another OM year, it's been hard for us to gather together as people have been in Debron, others have been away, still are away, but we thank you that so many are here this morning. Commit to you others that may be able to hear this by cassette tape. And Lord, we're just cast upon you now.

And I need wisdom and discernment as my heart is so full and I can get too excited and then miscommunicate. We just realized that no matter who is leading us and we're constantly father trying to find the balance in the whole area of leadership that the end of the day is a weak feeble earthen ragamuffin vessel and that includes me. But we thank you for what we can learn, what we have learned.

You alone can bring into balance the reality of ragamuffin-ness with the commitment to excellency. That's just such a challenge and we don't want to be found, Lord, functioning at less and less reality than our unconverted friends. So we can't compare a person who's converted with one talent with a non-christian of ten talents.

So keep us from that as well. We do want to grow in wisdom and discernment on this team in every area, every department. Give us the humility to keep growing and receiving even though some of the things may seem repetitious.

And as someone, Lord, who has studied the Bible almost every day since my conversion, that's a lot of it seems repetitious and yet you still speak through those same words. So help us find the balance in that. In Jesus name, amen.

I would appreciate, unless you have a perfect memory, if you could jot down a few notes. I just sense in my heart there won't be anything more important on a practical level on the bigger picture that I say this year than what I'm going to say this morning. If you follow what's going on in these teams the last couple of years, you know that I actually speak less than I used to.

I used to speak quite often, make tapes, send them from here all over the globe. I've cut way back on that and you hear many other speakers. We want to try to find the balance.

That's not easy. But the thrust this morning, and we're not going to look at a set of notes on various nuts and bolts of team life, all of that is important, but this morning is more the big picture. What are the goals and aims and the ministry of this team here in Forest Hill? I don't know whether people in Carlisle will listen to this or not.

One or two may. I believe most of these goals and aims fit Carlisle as well. It's a tremendous difference in the two ways of approaching the same goals and aims with a phenomenal amount of overlap that only more, I'm afraid, discerning or people who don't know what goes on, especially on the telephone, might be able to understand.

I wanted to read this amazing favorite scripture from 1 Corinthians chapter 9 where Paul says in verse 19, though I'm free, I belong to no man. I make myself a slave to everyone. In some ways, this is one of the passions of this team.

We're not just serving very gifted and committed area leaders, which is a part of our mandate, but we're wanting to serve very ordinary people who sometimes walk in off the street. It demands a lot of balance, a lot of discernment, and a realization that we have severe limitations and also that unless we function as a team, it can't be done. I know ever since we started having more mission events here, that's added another five or ten percent to my own workload, which was already beyond comprehension.

One of the persons who came here on Tuesday really press me to take meeting his church. I thought this might be a large strategic meeting. I found out that it's a very tiny, struggling church.

I can't even figure out exactly what he's doing. I had the grace when he phoned me yesterday to say some other time. I only could give him a Saturday.

People don't always show up on a Saturday. He only gets 30 or 40 on a Sunday. I go to plenty, plenty of small meetings, so it's not the size of the meeting.

The next day, I have major meetings in Christchurch and Bromley. I'm just trying to find balance in that area, but if it wasn't for all of you committed to this mission center concept, especially the mission mobilization department in Chaco, I'm out of it. I just say thank you.

I can't do that because I'm on overload, but that's it. That's a tangent, so let me get back to the scripture. I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible.

Boy, that's a great goal, isn't it? You have that into your purpose statement this year, to win as many as possible. To the Jews, I became like a Jew. Wow, talk about cultural sensitivity.

Of course, he was a Jew. That helped. To win the Jews, to those under the law, I became like one under the law, though I myself am not under the law.

Wow, what a message. So as to win those under the law, to those not having the law, I became like one not having the law, though I am not free from God's law, but I am under Christ's law. I tell you, you've got about four paradoxes already.

I've only read a couple of lines. So as to win those not having the law, to the weak, I became as weak. To win the weak, I become all things to all men, inclusive language, all people, so that by all possible means, I might save some.

I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race, all the runners run? We're in the ICT marathon, just in case you don't know that. It's part of the OM marathon, which is part of the Body of Christ marathon, which is the Jesus marathon.

But only one gets the prize. Had a little struggle with that one. Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training, not just new recruits who need training. We all are in God's ongoing Holy Spirit-directed training program. They do it to get a crown that will not last.

When we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly. I do not fight like a person beating the air.

No, I beat my body, I make it my sleeve, so that after I preach to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. What a phenomenal scripture, and I'm sure you've heard messages on that scripture. I think when we think of our overall goals and aims, one of the best ways to summarize it is in the goals of the 82,000 movement.

Even though that movement is going into closure the end of next year, the vision will go on. The vision will go on. There's been confession of sin, and confession of exaggeration, and folly, and there is many, many messy situations, and it'll never all get sorted out, but God's work will continue, and the vision of 82,000, the gospel for every person, the church for every people will continue, and I hope that can continue to be our goal, and our aim, and our passion.

And it's important for some people more than others, so be patient this morning, to at times just stop and look at the bigger picture. We're involved in a fellowship of 2,800 full-time workers, plus our older kids, with more ideals than you can list in a policy manual. We're involved with our own graduates, who number 100,000.

Maybe we're involved in 10% of them, 20%, 25% would be great if we could come up with that statistic. We're involved, of course, with thousands of churches, even excluding what the ships get into. We're involved with hundreds of other agencies.

We're involved with thousands of Christian leaders, but the ultimate goal, and we don't want to get bogged down with just attempting to maintain too many relationships, become hyper-generalist. I'm already a generalist in some ways, so we have to sometimes just stop and make it really simple. We're attempting to

give the gospel to every person in the world.

In the past months here, and that's gone out on the internet, other people are now quoting it. I actually believe I'm the one that started this 25%. I've never heard.

You see how you can get these things going. Now it's being accepted as fact. I've always said it's just an estimate.

It's just an estimate. I said it because some people were saying 50%, and from all I could gather in my monitoring, the Billy Graham Association, the Every Home Campaign, other mass evangelistic agencies, radio, television, I would be very strong and willing to debate that probably 75% of the people on planet Earth have at least heard or read the gospel. We're not saying that's enough.

We're not saying they're evangelized. So quickly correct yourself or a missiologist will be all over you, and it may not be pleasant. But I haven't found many people disagreeing, and you've heard me remind people of the fact that 25% of the world's population today is very close in terms of numbers of people to 50% of the world's population in the 50s when some of us got started.

Isn't that scary? Therefore, I believe the goal that we're trying to maintain here and in our fellowship of giving the gospel to as many people as possible is still strategic. And what a thrill to see, without much pushing on my part, people like Joseph D'Souza and our brothers and sisters in India, working with other agencies and other churches in a united effort called the Millennium Project, which is going to be the largest literature project we've ever been involved in. 10 million, 15, 20 million, I don't know.

I don't want to say. We've already had one of the largest gifts in the entire history of OM two months ago to help pay for these tremendous, powerful... It's like a book, a lot of pictorial book presenting the life of Jesus with testimonies of Indians. The responses we're getting from the churches across India at this time, just been on the phone with India again this morning, is very, very encouraging.

So with all the other visions and burdens we have, we can't touch on those this morning, we are still having this goal of reaching as many people as possible. That means I will still be battling to say no to a lot of things going on in OM. I lose many of those battles, but I'll still fight because if we just get so diverse, especially in our effort to be holistic, then we will not be able to reach.

Just this morning I made a decision that cost us \$25,000. Praise God that we have that money in special projects because the two main pieces of literature they give at the gangway of the ship, Lagos and Dulas, they don't have, they haven't had it for quite some time. There's no money designated.

I've just been monitoring, waiting, waiting, waiting. Finally it's getting too late for West Africa. I'm sure they have some material, but they want \$250,000 in one item, \$100,000 in another item.

There's no money designated to that. This morning we pushed a button, or Vera will later in the day when she reads my scribble, to go ahead with that \$350,000 piece of literature to give away at the gangways of the ship. All the money we spend on the ships, all the money to line up a country, and then somebody goes to the ship and walks away without a single piece of literature.

Now the children, by the way, they got this gold nugget. We had big gifts for this children's book. So the children are way ahead, but we want also every other ordinary person, can't neglect the older people, to get something when they walk off the ship.

And then that second major goal, the church for every peoples. We realize in both of these goals, compared to the total task, our part in OM is still small. Our influence, however, in the whole body of Christ concerning these things, may be larger than we are able to measure.

So in a movement like OM, you always have those two things that are happening. You have what you're actually doing, and then you have what you are influencing. What we did on Tuesday is small compared to the influence that will come from what we did on Tuesday.

They overlap, they're not easy to measure. Moving on from this, because we could consume all our time just talking about those two great things, and you've already heard, I'm sure, quite a lot about those two things. I've written down just some basic words in my outline to show how we here in ICT Forest Hill and Carlisle, we fit into this.

How are we going to make this happen? There's a tape floating around a little hard to find called Little Visions. I only think I gave the message once or twice. I think it's a very important message for the average person.

He's probably not going to want some major new vision in his lifetime, and that's not their particular gifting, but it's showing how without a lot of people having little visions, like every department on this team has to have its little vision. It might be quite big, and only as every department and every individual on the team has their little vision. For example, how many of you would make any effort in the next month to learn how to redeem the time a little more? Now I know it's very hard for me to speak on this because I'm considered a complete fanatic, and so when people are complete fanatics, they open their mouth, people immediately say, I've had it said to me so many times, well, I'm not George Furwer.

Beware of overreacting to what you hear George Furwer does. People won't wear a global jacket because, you know, George Furwer wears a global jacket. I had a guy come to me the other day, and I had this global tie.

I said, oh, I'm glad I didn't wear my guy had a tie just like that. I thought I would steal your thunder. You mean to tell me if one other guy in the audience has a global tie, it's going to steal my thunder? If so, my thunder, you know, needs overhauling.

But it is complex, and my heart goes out to any of you that have to work with me. My heart goes out to those that have to work with Bill Drake, too. In fact, leaders in general who are getting things accomplished are not always so easy to work with, and somebody may come along and say to you, oh, what are you, you just another yes person? You know, you just another Furwer yes person? Boy, that'll really charge some of your batteries.

But you, in reacting to that, could end up in the very foolish situations. No matter who is leading the team, and no matter where we are, there are always those kinds of hassles. What if Madonna was leading the team? She gets saved, and she comes in to lead the team.

You gonna have any hang-ups? I surely would. I think I'd have to go to another team. By the way, she did profess faith, knowing the way she operates, I think it lasted for several days.

But the words I've written down that I hope can help us focus on the goals and aims for the new OM year. In my mind, this is always the beginning of the OM year. The new recruits are here, or they're getting out there.

A lot of things happen. Financially, we do not begin now. The new year financially is, I think, is it January 1st? Or calendar year financially, I believe.

But we're speaking about ministry. We're speaking about recruits. We're speaking about more general things.

The first word I have, you probably guessed it, is ministry. Ministry. We could easily change the name of our team in Forest Hill to International Ministry Team.

We're not going to do that as long as I'm still the international leader of the movement, because it's my biggest job. And the thing I'm committed to the most, at least the next four years. By the way, if you're elected president of the United States, you only get four years.

So I tell you, I am out to make these the four best. By the grace of God, if he leaves me around, I want to make these the four best. And I'm glad I've got great people like you to help make it happen.

And it's quite uncanny what God has done to prepare us for where we are right now. But we, on this team, do have a worldwide ministry that is often unnoticed, that is strategic in itself, even if it was totally separated from OM, which it will not be. But even if it was, it would be strategic in itself.

We saw this at the meeting of the Americans, when it was coming out through this discussion that OMUSA didn't really have a ministry in the USA, because someone was talking about, you know, are we going to start teams to work among Muslims? Of course, we don't have that ministry. But I think there was a consensus, I wish we had time to discuss it, that OMUSA has a major ministry in the USA. It's not just recruiting.

It's not just sending workers, raising money, that's bottom line. But when we go out to minister, and I don't know how many thousands of meetings I've taken in the United States, some of which are almost detached from OM, because they ask you not to speak about OM, that is ministry. People are converted.

More people have recommitted their lives in our meetings and joined other groups than have joined OM. Some feel uptight about that. I know many a church we're after, we got them all excited, Campus Crusade came in, especially two years ago, and got all the money out of the deal, because one group builds upon the other.

And the same, of course, is true in Britain even more so, because Britain, we've declared officially, we have a ministry in Great Britain. And, uh, it's off. We have a ministry in Great Britain.

I'm convinced with all my heart God wants to continue to give us anointing for that ministry. I believe we will fall into a ditch if we constantly try to separate what's international from what's national. We live in Great Britain.

We live in London. Some of us have been crying out to God for this city for 38 years. We've given millions of pieces of literature out in London in the early days.

We continue to speak in London churches, as I do, tomorrow. And, uh, if we have to constantly pick up changing hats, international hat, national hat, I believe it's counterproductive. And I praise God that more than ever, I've seen other leaders here in the UK acknowledge that important part of our ministry in Forest Hill, it is to impact Great Britain with the Word of God, with our lives.

If all the emphasis in Scripture about our lives being even more important than the Word, then where we live is important. And where we live and the churches we go to, the tracts we give out locally, that is a vital part of our ministry. You cannot easily separate it.

You want to forsake it when you walk in the door at 9 o'clock on, uh, Monday morning. But in the middle of the morning, some needy soul that you've just witnessed to on the weekend may phone you. You say, I'm sorry, I cannot take this call because during the daylight hours, we're only involved in international activities.

Oh, oh, by the way, if you're an Indian, I can talk to you, but if you're British, I would not be able to. Every movement, especially as it gets bigger, has a tendency to more easily slip into following because there are more voices, we're reading more books, we got more baggage, and we're attempting, of course, somehow to do so much. So our ministry in the U.K. is a vital part of what God has called us to.

Of course, that involves, number one, this is my second word, if you're only writing a few words, mobilization. I've written three sub points under the word mobilization. The first is prayer.

We're committed to mobilize prayer worldwide. I believe it is a vital part of our ministry, whether we're speaking to 10 or giving prayer requests on the phone or sending prayer requests out through an email. B, of course, we're trying to mobilize finance.

I think it's time that here on our team, we acknowledge that we are in fundraising in a major way and it's not just me. And if you haven't listened to that message, fundraising is teamwork. One of the most important messages I think I've ever given on the subject, and I still see people behaving, certainly, as if they'd never listened to that.

And sometimes giving honor to a certain person, saying certain things to give the idea that the fundraising is because of this person or that person. I urge you to understand fundraising is teamwork. If that person typing that receipt doesn't do that properly, the next gift may never come.

And no great entrepreneur in the world can make up for some of these complexities. So prayer is teamwork, plus personal prayer. Finance and fundraising is teamwork, plus personal finance raising, whether it's for your own support.

And I believe we want to have more teamwork. We'd like to help one another more. Dale Rotom, he didn't find it too humbling to ask me personally if I could write a third party letter for him to help him get his support, which was in the doldrums for years.

Ever since that third party letter, Dale told me he's never had a shortfall on support. It doesn't always work that way, and that was definitely teamwork. If I can't sell the ministry of Dale Rotom, then I just can't sell, and I should go back to perhaps collecting something.

I do collect things, by the way. C, the third thing under this mobilization title, of course, is recruits. We have to engage in more creative thinking.

We have to brainstorm. Some people are, but certainly of all the teams in the world, we are one of the teams that has the greatest potential for recruiting, for helping others recruit, for inspiring more recruitings. The Act 13 vision, mobilizing 200,000.

There's so many things tied into that, and it's exciting. Wherever we go to meet people that somehow have been recruited in our meetings, not near the numbers we dream, and I could get into major discouragement about this with my ideals if I wanted to, but again, recruiting is teamwork, and when people join other missions as a result of our ministry, I think we should praise the Lord for that. We are not in competition with these other groups.

Feedback I had both by phone and email from one of the special visitors to DeBron was the thing that warmed his heart the most is when I stood up and said, I want you to just know, OM is not my big thing. It's not even my second thing. It's my big thing, and the whole body of Christ and other organizations, that's my second thing, and I don't know where I put OM, I guess the third or fourth thing.

That just so touched this man's heart. He said, that's why I'm committed to OM, and he is very extremely committed to OM. We're part of one body, and it's exciting the synergy we're seeing from greater cooperation, though it is messy.

It is complex, and there are the discouragements. The third main word I wrote down here is the word encouragement. I think those of you who know me well know that that is really one of my favorite words.

I'm gifted at times at miscommunicating. I phone someone, they think I got some major agenda. They think I'm recruiting them, or you know, all I'm doing is trying to encourage them, just see how you're doing.

Is there no place for non-agenda activities? Can't we phone someone and say, you know, how are you doing? You feel okay today? Is there any prayer requests? I believe people are intimidated. They're intimidated in some of the basic friend raising and prayer partner winning, because they put it on too high a level. They're afraid to make this phone call.

What will they think? Well, they think I'm after their money. You can be so intimidated if you go around always thinking, and they're after my money. I could go right out of my mind.

When they invite me to speak, do you think they're actually inviting me because I am George Burwer? They know me? They love me? They are inviting me to speak because they've heard by some source that I can get results, and they've got goals, and they've got aims. You know, I'm flying all the way to Australia again next August. I'm trying to get off the hook on it.

It's not working. They want me to get the air ticket booked now because of the Olympics. I'm not in the Olympics, just in case you didn't know that, unless they open up a whole new, you know, thing for people who speak loud.

But the fact is, they've acknowledged they don't know me. They're afraid that no one's gonna come, or it's not gonna help more people come, because I'm a semi-unknown speaker. So they want to have a big flurry of my tapes right now.

So what if I get hung up? Do people really want me as I am, this ragamuffin who forgets to zip his fly at a university meeting, and they still love me? Or do they just want a preaching machine? We cannot get into that. We're dealing with human beings, and people are just getting to know us. We've gotta give them the benefit of the doubt.

Therefore, we must deal with all kinds of intimidation, whether people love us or don't love us. Some are still non-functioning in their Christian life. They're not even sure whether God loves them, which is a denial

of the entire Bible, though I understand how that can happen with emotional struggles and punches in the nose.

I'm not being hard on those people, but I believe sometimes it's good if you've been a Christian for many years, and you're still struggling with that, just to somehow stand more firmly on the Word and say, I know with all my heart God loves me, and I stand against the doubt, the intimidation, the fiery darts from Satan, because I think they are fiery darts. When it comes on your mind that God doesn't love you, that is a fiery dart straight out of hell. That is even almost denied.

His, you need to move on, as I wanted you to say a further word about the ministry of encouragement. I think we realize how many people have been encouraged by our ministries. We know there are always some who have been discouraged.

When we hear that, we try to go the extra mile to try to get that sorted out, and as a movement gets larger, and the number of relationships we have gets bigger, you have to live, you have to live with things that have gone through the cracks, if you know that expression. You cannot go back and resolve it all. Now, by delegation you can accomplish a lot.

The biggest method that a person like me has to use is delegation. My main thing is not what I do. My main thing is what everybody else and all the leaders in OM that I'm in contact with, what they are doing.

Our ministry, in one sense, is the sum total of everything that's happening today anywhere in OM, because we're serving the whole body, and we're serving one another. Yesterday morning it was a major encouragement phone call with Pedro Arbolet in Spain. This morning it was Alfie Franks.

Tomorrow it may be somebody else, and it's not just me that's doing this. I get, I know sometimes you must have to listen. Most of the things you hear about me, I never hear, so you can relax.

But, you know, people do talk, and I pick up some, we make so many phone calls, he writes so many letters, people have even said polite things about that, but we need to understand this has only happened because of the team. In fact, if I fill up all these tapes, I think I did ten, ten tapes this weekend, and I don't have the team to type them, send them, put in a call. Tell me, how many of those letters are going to go out? They will just sit on the tape.

It's dead. I might as well never, I should have just gone swimming. The ocean was a little cold.

So, again and again, I think we have to be reminded of the teamwork, and whether you're driving to the airport, whether you're punching info into a computer, whether you're picking up the phone, whether you're, you know, doing some, some basic cleanup work. One of the things that you may not realize, there's, there's hardly anything that's gone on around here, even the dirtiest jobs, that I haven't spent a lot of, a lot of time doing. And more, I'm more than willing to do it again, if the Lord will release me from other things.

Life is still filled with small things. So, the Ministry of Encouragement, the Ministry of Encouragement that God has given us in so many ways is for all of us. Now, here's the punchline.

You're all fairly relaxed up to now, so get ready for this. Therefore, I believe to be on this team, everybody has to be committed to go the extra mile. I don't believe we can have a two-tier team.

Those who are busting, their knuckles, working extra hard, weird hours, all kinds of pressure, weeping over people, staying up sometimes just so that we can meet these obligations. Do you know how many people that we're linked with have died just in the past few weeks? Which one of those are we going to just forget about? We can't forget about any of them. When you are in leadership, I'll tell you, many things are not optional.

If you don't get it done, it will haunt you. And other problems will come that are greater. Now, this is where, of course, we need a lot of wisdom.

And I have never asked people to work the hours that I work. In fact, I have told people clearly, I can work longer hours because I do have a greater variety of work. And things that non-Christians, or let's say Christians working in marketplace ministry, things that they would have to do in what they call their free time, with me there's a blur between what is ministry and what is, you know, diversion for my free time.

Reading a book to prepare for sermon, that's considered by pastors as part of their work. But a man living next door who works for Lloyd's Bank, that's just his pleasure to read a book. So it gets complex.

And that's why I've never liked an overemphasis on just, you know, comparing people and comparing ministries. Many people don't have the energy to work such strange hours. All the time now, I'm having to put the record straight that I generally sleep seven hours.

Sometimes eight, sometimes six, but seven in the middle. I have to fellowship with people who boast to me that they only sleep five. Boy, do I feel inferior.

Forget it! I esteem people that only sleep five. But I cannot pretend that I'm going to function properly the next day on five hours. Some of you need eight hours.

Some of you, like my wife, never get really proper sleep. And so we're all different. Therefore only you in one way will know whether you're going the extra mile.

In the light of your energy, what you're battling, what you're handling at home, you may be putting just seven or eight hours into the more official kind of work, and yet you're going the extra mile. So this is the beautiful thing about the grace awakening. We're not into judgmentalism.

We realize the problem of workaholicism, and yet at the same time, we don't want to completely lose this other aspect that is a core value of the movement, the willingness to go the extra mile. The extra little bit of work, the extra phone call, the extra letter, the extra witness to a man who's on the road to hell, the extra track given out when you didn't even bring your tracks with you. That's especially difficult.

And all kinds of other things that at the end of the day, the Holy Spirit has to lead you in that. No, we don't want to ever get to the place where we, because we believe the Holy Spirit is doing all the leading, we never challenge anybody about it or anything. We never urge people.

If you were working for a secular company, you would probably, in this day and age, get talks like this. Have you seen the video captions of Walmart's invasion of Germany? I mean, it's almost humorous. I can't believe the Germans are going into this.

And it's a big controversy. Everything is controversy, by the way, especially Walmart. But they got the Germans committed to the Walmart slogans, and they're giving cheers in the morning.

When have I ever come in here made you stand up and give a cheer for OM? Never! We're here cheering for Jesus. But I think sometimes, because of our desire for humility, because of our desire for reality in its many forms, because we have a natural tendency to be introspective, sometimes we lack a little bit of just go for it. Let's go for it.

Let's go that extra mile. Let's demonstrate a little more zeal. In this team, we are overloaded with work.

And that workload has to be shared around naturally. Sometimes it's more difficult to share the workload than just try to do it yourself. But we're at the stage where there's no way we can do it yourself.

That passed years ago. And I just want to take this moment to thank every one of you who again and again has gone the extra mile. You may have been tired.

You may have really wanted to do something else. You've gone the extra mile in whatever way, even spiritually in prayer. Maybe nobody ever noticed it except King Jesus.

I still want to thank you because in what we're attempting to do globally, if those of us who are in this kind of ministry, I don't like to say at the center, but you know what I mean, if we don't somehow stay in tune with the Holy Spirit and are be willing for the kind of things we just read about in this passage, the Apostle Paul, then I believe it's going to negatively, negatively impact the whole work. Because you and I know OM is a very needy movement. You and I know we have more people going through than we can follow up.

We've got all these grandeur thoughts about re-entry, re-entry conferences. How many of those do you think actually happen? It all takes time. It all takes money.

People are already field over work. Then somebody comes along and says, we're going to have a re-entry conference. Are you going to cook? Are you going to pick all the people up at the airport? Where are we going to house them? And so there are not many re-entry conferences.

Other people coming back from the field, they're too tired. They don't want to fly off to this headquarters for two days of re-entry. Some of them just want to forget the whole thing.

Plus some of them are battling just to find a job, just to find a job or another ministry. So as we attempt the impossible, and we need to reaffirm that, OM in 1999 is attempting the impossible just as we were as much as 59 or 69. And yet it's more complex today because you have all the existing people, all the existing organization that's already there.

It's amazing. So the Ministry of Encouragement will continue to be, together with Basic Ministry, mobilization, a vital part of what we do. And then the fourth word is the word serving.

One of my main jobs is to serve the area and field leaders. They must be a priority, together with my co-director, Peter Bain. When I get one day's notice that Joseph Sousa's due in town the day after tomorrow, that goes automatically the head of everything, except maybe Frank Seeley.

But I'm sure many of you are agonizing with priorities because your life is, of course, beyond the OM fellowship. You've got your church. You've got your family.

You have relatives. We understand that. We appreciate when you're patient with those of us who are older whose lives are 20 times more complex than we were single at 20.

Can you imagine me single at 20? Most of you don't want to. Imagine that. Therefore, letting love cover, being patient with one another is so basic.

Being able to switch priorities quickly, often on consultation with others, rather than just, you know, off the top of your head. We're trying to serve our field leaders and area leaders, who in turn are serving the whole movement. We have some of that as well.

We're trying to serve the churches. Our first line in our main function as international coordinating team, our first line of serving the churches is through those field leaders, through the existing structure. But we also have the part that we're directly involved in.

A team that takes 1,000 meetings a year plus is certainly involved with churches. And the follow-up aspect is just so crucial. I just want to throw this in.

I know some of you have still not seen any kind of real breakthrough in using the telephone in ministry. I would just urge you to reconsider that. This is 1999.

Now maybe yours is all email now. You'll never, you'll never get the same bonding with certain kinds of people, and millions are not into email, that you can on a phone call. Let's not have the either-or camp.

I'm an email person or a phone person. We all also need personal time face-to-face. There's part of me that at times says, for now on, it's all telephone and email.

My more pragmatic moments. Ridiculous. My emails and my phone calls are meaningful to people because I spent hours with them in their home.

They've walked with me, they've talked with me, they've wept with me. They know that Verwer is not just, you know, back there pushing a computer or playing a record on the telephone. A phone, of course, a man called to apologize to me this morning for a small thing.

I said, you don't need to apologize to me. He began to weep on the telephone. Tell me, are you gonna pick that up on email? A little difficult, but you could try.

You could put in the email, I'm now crying. Praise God. I tell you, he and I got a linking, and I just shared, you know, I appreciate his emotion, and I sometimes cry over the smallest thing myself.

And I'd urge you to be willing to change your habits. It always bothered me when a main leader of the movement said, more or less, we're not telephone people. That's not our method.

Wow, what if I had said years ago when they tried to bring computers into O.M., hello, computer organization, I could get a big speech, how great we did before we ever had computers. This is narrow-mindedness. This is stuck in a rut.

This is why young people start praying, Lord, send them out to the pastors, because we want to get on with the work. We need to be flexible. We need to grow.

We can be old and young at heart. Mr. Dalley set the pace on email at 80 years of age. Even the Scottish television wanted to make a film of it.

So we're serving those churches. Third point under this serving section, we're serving our prayer partners, and probably we're as involved with prayer partners across the world as much as any combination of teams anywhere on planet Earth, and that should excite us. It should motivate us.

And then, fourthly, under this serving section, we're trying to serve the world partners. Former O.M.ers. I believe as a team, we're in touch with more former O.M.ers than any other team in the world. It's phenomenal, and we're seeing results, and we praise God that this is an exciting part of our ministry.

The next main word I wrote here is just these two words, foundation and backup. A lot of what we do here, keeping the basic goals and aims ahead of us, it is foundation building, it is backup. Our India Department is laying a foundation.

We together are trying to provide a foundation for the Little India Department to function, which we've done for a quarter of a century. But we're also trying to backup, backup the work in India. Often, I only make a phone call to India because Rosie gets me on the line and says, hey, phone so-and-so right now.

And I just believe we want to be able to continue to keep India as a priority of this team, even though there's only a tiny group in the India Department. We, in one way, should all be in the India Department. We should feel with them, pray with them.

We're dealing with O.M.'s biggest field. Even the ship ministry was born out of the India Vision Ministry, and it was only my going to India, traveling India on an old ship, not ours, that led to the birth of the ship ministry. Where did the ship go to when we first got it, we lived on it? It went to India.

Now, India doesn't need the ship perhaps as much as it did in those days, but I feel we want to keep India as a major thrust. We're providing backup and foundation for the Muslim world. Crescent Consultants maybe has struggled along.

It was new, and with people away taking meetings so often, not easy to just make it all happen. But it still has an influence beyond what we've ever measured. It still makes a statement to the movement that here at the international offices, Crescent Consultants and the challenge for the Muslim world is part of the heart.

It is not the periphery. It's easy to be critical of O.M. More people are critical of us today than perhaps you realize, because we have a whole army of people who are so positive. But the fact is, I would have thought just what we are doing among Muslims alone, so many hundreds and hundreds out working, that somehow when people are talking about the negatives, that that would come alongside and that we would be esteemed just for this tremendous work that's being done among the Muslim world.

You need to understand there's many a people, many people will not support this work financially because they've heard negatives. They've heard there's not enough pastoral care. They've heard that someone went on a campaign and they got hurt.

They've heard we don't take care of the health enough. They've heard George Ferber is a fanatic that makes people work weird hours. All kinds of negative things, not just about O.M., missions in general.

I cannot walk in the United States or preach in the United States without picking negative overtones about missions in general. So the road ahead is not an easy road and therefore again that puts the pressure on us to go that extra mile in keeping together. Often the negative things someone says about their own team

in a moment of weakness is grabbed by someone else who uses it to attack this team.

I had someone specifically tell me they really were thinking of coming to this team but they didn't come because and then they told me the reason. It just blew my circuit. Such folly, such folly that someone would believe a sheer generalization about family life on ICT Carlisle.

But believe me those rumors go fast and furious. You and I are responsible for what comes out of our mouths and sometimes the greatest harm has come right out of this mouth because things I said in a defensive moment or trying to drive a point it wasn't accurate and then later on someone else picked up and ran with it. Well we're almost out of time.

I wanted to mention the foundation and the backup in connection with the South Asia Department with Wakely, with Gary Dean, with ACT. Each one of these is important and each one needs commitment on the part of the whole team. The next word I have is the word training.

We're in the Holy Spirit's training program. We can't boast of a systematic well-organized training program here. We don't even have global action here but we believe through our lives, through the prayer meetings, through the speakers, through doing things together, through carrying these goals and aims and what I've shared about this morning, we can be in one of the most phenomenal training experiences that anyone could ever get into.

We know of our commitment on the team especially with VIP to leadership development. This however is not something new simply because we now have a better name. But if you study the history of OM you know that one of our greatest giftings is to give people their first chance in leadership and there are a few tens of thousands of leaders that are now out serving because somehow they got in this movement and they got with these people who were so committed to these basic goals and aims and the core values that I'm sure you know about.

I wanted to give this example that there's a danger of trying at times to separate the spiritual from the practical. We want people to be spiritual. We want true spirituality but we also want people to develop practical skills from what they do on the computer to driving a vehicle to understanding basics about communication, setting up a book table, handling tough counseling situations and that I believe has to continue to be one of our goals here on our own team.

We then have the literature ministry. That's one of the areas where we still very much are in coordination through Jerry Davey, through Vera and Special Projects, through Clark Kennedy. There's not time to speak about it but it is our desire at literature ministry not just the coordination of product projects but distribution through our meetings, through our giveaway programs.

I mean we could write a book about it that this will continue and I think it's an area where most people on the team are getting involved a bit and exciting. The privilege of having a professional writer on our team like Debbie and her phenomenal books. If OM got proactive about the books the number of titles could quadruple in terms of distribution.

We need to understand today that a large part of OM is not proactive about literature. Now I've seen it actually picking up again in the last few years. Why do you think that's picking up? Do you think it just fell out of a cloud? Because there are people stomping their feet and there are people who are setting the example and there are people who are exhorting and there are people who have the gift of asking hard

questions.

My greatest method of communication often is just asking questions. Now it's a risk because sometimes people get the wrong idea but when you ask people like I did with a field leader who I know has an atrocious literature program, how is your literature program going as we went for a walk in Dubron? A lot came out of that and we'll be in touch as I visit that field this year. So literature continues to be at the heart of the ICT vision.

And then the music ministry. The most exciting department we have to acknowledge on our team. We esteem Bill and his crowd.

They always seem to get more recruits. They take more meetings. They cause more fuss per square millimeter than most departments and we are thrilled and it would be my prayer that we could always have a dynamic international music ministry based in Britain or in Europe that could continue to have this kind of impact.

I've written down here we cannot reach our goals without hard work, creativity, taking the initiative. I wrote extra mile but I've already touched on that. Hard work, creativity, and initiative.

And I would write around the whole thing. Grace. It cannot be somehow us trying to prove ourselves.

It cannot be some false motivation. Though false motivation always comes in and we have to learn how to deal with it. It has to be that we do have this big picture.

That has to be there. We actually want to win people for Jesus. And even though what we're doing right now doesn't seem to be related to that, what we're doing right now will lead to people coming to Jesus Christ.

And I tell you when you catch that big picture, you are going to be more motivated and you're going to be able to battle through some of the stuff that the enemy may be throwing at you even times of ill health, which is always so difficult. And some of you have not seen me in my moments of ill health, but I have had ill health. I have been operated on three or four times and a few other things as well.

In fact, you may remember that I had a serious tropical disease that they thought might explode behind my eyes and that would not be too good. And I've been on display in two tropical disease hospitals. They wanted to give me a new medicine that only monkeys had received.

The board of directors overruled that and the disease went away. That's 15. That came from Nepal, eating uncooked pork.

We'll not go into more details. And then I've written the word hospitality because we believe that is part of our ministry. In fact, hospitality is directly linked with every other aspect of this ministry.

And everybody on the team, on your personal level, or in Manor House, or Westwatch, we're all tied in to the ministry of hospitality. We know our limitations and one of the miracles on our team is that sometimes when we're not able to do it in our own homes, God has provided funds that we could do it some other way. We're not going to evangelize the world, brothers and sisters, without spending money.

And it is very hard to decide when to save and when to spend. Some of you think I'm probably the last of the big spenders. You should have been with me this morning as I was testing my batteries.

I take time, I'm sure I'm going to be rebuked in heaven, to test my batteries, whether there's enough power in there to continue to use them. There's not enough power, I put them in a special bag for recycling. I don't know what to do with that bag.

It's getting bigger and bigger. I will not put a new battery in until I've tested the old battery to see because I feel that would be a waste of money and whatever. When I'm doing this, I'm sometimes wondering what is wrong.

We are still committed to cutting corners and saving when we can, but time is also money. We have a gigantic budget we're involved in, a huge number of multiple things happening all the time, and sometimes a failure to spend can even cause the death of a person. So that's going to be an ongoing struggle.

Then I've written the word pastoral care because we're involved in that through many, many people linked with us. I'm trying to improve on that. I've written the word evangelism because I believe that's also a silver lining that comes down through all these things, and I've written the word local church because I believe we must continue to have this strong commitment to the local church.

On this team, being involved in a local church in an active way is not optional. It is not optional in the work of the kingdom. So please work on that.

I know people now can say, well, what local church does George Berwer belong to? I don't think people should use that as an excuse. If that's a failure in my situation, our family did belong to Brownleaf Baptist for many years. It's all a long story, but as I'm ministering in local churches almost every single Sunday, 52 weeks a year, sometimes twice, and I'm involved in local churches, including many locally, until the Lord hits me on the head, that is the way I'm going to continue.

But I don't think people should use that to justify the fact that they're constantly sleeping in on Sunday as the great rest day and not being bothered with church. Among other things, that is a stumbling block to local people. You can say, well, where does grace and the law come together? We'll probably be wrestling with that to heaven, but I'll tell you a lot of things I do, I do it because I believe it is common sense to just do it, whether I feel like it or not.

That includes sometimes going to the team meeting, right? Our first goal each day, in fact, should simply be to walk with God. At the end of the day, in my own evaluation sessions, my main question is often about people's walk with God. I don't have a stereotype view of that, though I believe there are some basics.

So it's my prayer that we'll continue to have these overall basics. All this has to be worked out in your different departments and lives. I'm willing at any time to discuss these things, including in future team meetings.

My final words on this piece of paper is simply that we need harmony and partnership in a very deep way with ICT Carlisle if we are to carry on our goals and aims, and we need that with all of our other fields within the UK. We also, as much as possible, need it with the whole body of Christ. So I think we've got a lot cut out for us in the next year and years to come, and it's my prayer that each one of us will understand a little more about our ministry here, about where we're going, how we're getting there.

A lot of this needs constant redefining, but we don't have time for that this morning. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this opportunity to be together.

Lord, I've heard of some heads of state that gave their State of the Union message and went for several hours. So really, I've been very short here this morning, and I just pray that we may contextualize this in our own situation, our own health, our own family, our own energy level, but not throw it aside and say it's not for us, and that, Lord, you'd enable us to function as one body, even though we have a lot of diversity, even though we have people probably who just have maybe a general unhappiness about ICT for some reason, that somehow we let love cover, somehow we continue to practice Matthew 18, and if we have something against a brother on our team especially, we'd be willing to go with them privately and talk that through before we just sort of mumble about it and start a little more gossip going on around the team. We're aware, Father, that we are attempting too much.

I have to take part of that blame. Help me to say no. Lord, I have people saying now that I'm saying no too much, and what will happen if George Verber gets known as being reactive instead of proactive? Lord, how do we win in these areas? But I pray that we may somehow be able to pray through and talk through the various steps we take forward that we can move together of one heart and of one mind.

Lord, you've kept this team going for 25 or more years here in Southeast London, but we're not leaning on past history or traditions. It's a new day. It's a new way ahead.

We have just four more years in this particular structure, and we're going to go for it in the power of your Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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