

An Exhortation to Leadership

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of leadership, commitment, faithfulness, balance, and humility in ministry, and warns against the dangers of weak foundations, cults, and extreme thinking.

Duration: 42:37

Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:1-24

Topics: "Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of applying the basic principles of the message in our lives. They share a personal experience of a leader who had been in the work for many years but was not living out these principles, leading to discouragement and a decision to step down from leadership. The speaker emphasizes the need for bonding and friendship in discipleship, highlighting that no amount of resources or preaching can replace the connection between individuals. They also mention the challenge of balancing different teachings and challenges, and the importance of personal evangelism in spreading the message.

Transcript

I do want to share this morning, I'm not here next Friday as I'm very much involved with the ship in Merseyside. We have a very important board meeting on that day, the Friday. There's a little group of us going up in the old coach on Thursday evening.

And we won't get back until very late Sunday night. So I wanted to just share some thoughts that are on my heart, which are basically connected with leadership. Some of you might say, well, I'm not going to be a leader.

That's the last thing I ever want. Absolutely amazed at people that were not in responsibility of leadership in OM, but when they've left, what they get into. Some people highly esteem your having a couple of years, not necessarily even with OM, overseas.

And in any kind of Christian organization, they think automatically when you come back, you're some kind of a leader, or you have some authority. And surely one of the greatest problems in the church is that people gravitate to major responsibility with weak foundations. That is one of our problems in operation mobilization.

You never have enough people to lead or to be leadership servants, so people get thrust into responsibility without necessarily having a proper foundation. Getting a proper foundation isn't a matter of just hearing what's involved in basic spirituality, basic leadership. It's appropriating it.

It's learning it. I stand aghast at things that I'm still trying to learn. I'd like you to turn to 2 Timothy, chapter 2. 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verse, well, we'll start at verse 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses.

The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, no man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned except he strive lawfully.

The farmer who laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, at the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds.

But the word of God is not bound. Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful.

He cannot deny himself. Of these things, put them in remembrance. I guess that gives some encouragement to share with people who have heard these things before or have been around a long time.

That's why I reread basic books of these things. Put them in remembrance. Charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit.

Seems to me a lot of that's going on in the church today. But the subverting of the hearer. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, but shun profane and vain babbling.

For they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene, in whom are Himenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some. My mind jumps back almost 25 years ago. A young man I met in Mexico, well, seemed a nice young lad.

I had a time of fellowship with him. Next thing I knew, he was back in the States and had joined a cult, a thing called the Way. Movement quite well known in certain parts of the United States.

I remember here in Bromley, I guess 20 years ago, one of the leaders of the Navigators. Within weeks after I got to know about this man, he joined the Children of God and became one of their leaders. Got a letter a year ago or two, maybe more than that now, a young man came back from OM and became an out-and-out Jehovah Witness.

The first Englishman I think I almost ever met, his name was Tim. I met him in Spain. He influenced me to come here in the first place.

He was very much taught under Ian Thomas in Capony, but he didn't like the idea. After I got here, he sort of shied off because he wasn't very much into doing anything. He was very much into sort of a more passive approach to a Christian message, waiting for the Holy Spirit, waiting for the whole, what he felt the life in Christ to do it through it.

At the same time, he went to one of our leading Bible colleges where he became a very committed Mormon and is to this day. There are just a few stories, I could give you many more. The Word of God urges us that if 99 people are going right and one is going astray, that's the one where we should give attention.

I really believe we should acknowledge that it's our own sins and our own failures as a movement, and I'm willing to include myself, that is linked with a lack of long-term recruits that we face this year. Now, one sense we don't lack, we're growing very quickly. We've now become one of the largest missionary agencies in the world, but that's not gonna help us to fill the gaps, philosophizing that is, to fill the gaps of needed workers.

And we need a specific strategy to see more workers going out into the harvest field. We are committed to do that. Some people believe we are one of the best groups involved in doing that, but he who is good at something needs to work to be better, to be the best.

Excellency only begins when you're good. That's where it begins. If you're doing something good, well, now you can decide to really excel.

And that's not so easy. That's where I'm spinning sometimes my wheels. I think one of the things that hit me the most this summer was talking to a leader and just discovering that this person had been in the work for so many years, he had heard these messages, but one of the most basic aspects of the message, it just wasn't happening in his life.

And he was discouraged. Actually, it seemed best that he stepped down from his leadership to a large degree for a season. And that experience, that time with him made a real impact.

Nothing new, just that it hit me very, very, very hard. Especially when I realized that his greatest struggle was something just very, very basic. He just acknowledged this to me that he just never followed up on the people that he met.

He met people, they liked him. He has a fairly good ability to communicate, teaching, preaching. He said it was because of his temperament.

And we discussed that. And I just, ever since then, I've been wondering how many leaders are having this difficulty. It is possible, once a movement gets rather large, it is possible to really get away with an awful lot.

Without sounding proud, the Lord forgive me, I just say this, that if I had done back at 17 and 18 some of the things that leaders do now, OM, I don't think would exist. I mean, let's be realistic. When a movement is being born, it's a tremendous cost.

If you make mistakes, that's it. I could have made a mistake at Moody, I would have been thrown out. I almost got thrown out, actually.

I went back to one or two of the heads of the school and apologized and put things right. I could have actually ended up in a cult. I had that natural extremism, and there's a lot of hostility, especially against sin.

You say, well, how can hostility against sin lead you into a cult? Many people who get into tangents, it's because they can't stand the sin among God's people. They just, they can't understand that. One of our first leading light up men, an outstanding man, left us after a number of years of ministry and joined the Witness Lee extremist group.

Now, if you say that they're a cult, they're liable to take you to court, and they've almost taken me to court. They've got a lot of problems right now, so I don't think they're doing too much. But one of my very close friends ended up joining that group because it had all the answers.

And in his light up work on the ships, he had seen, especially after Indonesia, he had seen so much division, so much sin, so much carnality among God's people, he just couldn't put that together. And there's something in us, isn't there, that wants to put everything together. And the cults give you that offer.

The cults with one sweep say, all these people are apostate, all these people are this, or all these people are that. And if they're just a small group under tremendous pressure, they will have to produce a lot of love. And a small persecuted cult will produce a lot of love.

When we were more extreme, we had more of that kind of motivation in those early days. We were under the gun. We didn't dare make some of the mistakes we make now.

It would have been in the press. And they had a Jerusalem meeting here in England in the early days, when a high percentage of missionary leaders were opposed to me. And one or two had mercy on me, and they invited me into this Jerusalem meeting, the Evangelical Alliance, I didn't even know what it was.

And I sat at the end of this table with all these big canons of the missionary world. And believe me, they shot one or two, praise God. And then a few others stood with us.

The amazing thing is in those early days when we were so criticized, very few people would ever come to you. And that's how sometimes pioneers and people trying to really do something for God can so easily get hurt and bitter and more hostile and decide to just go their own way. It's always a historic moment in a movement when they decide to either go their own way, even though they may say, well, we believe the rest of these people are part of the body of Christ.

They basically go their own way. Follow some of the new groups in Britain right now. With their mouth, they're saying, we believe in the rest of the body of Christ.

But in their practice, they basically go their own way, do their own thing. And if you study carefully, you'll see they have a one-upmanship philosophy where they really do believe they're a little better than the other groups, which in some ways they may well be. But the word of God says, take heed, lest ye fall.

Many, many years ago, I wrote on a piece of paper some of the big mistakes I felt that we were making. In fact, I later transferred this to my Bible. I think it was one of the very first coordinators conferences.

I don't even know what we called them then. I think it was in 65. I wrote Deal.

The conference took place in Deal down on the coast. Again, tied in an amazing way with a small group who were linked back here. Ian Currie's father became the pastor of that little fellowship for quite a few years.

It was there during a summer campaign when I decided to go down and have a one-day visit. There was a Bible teacher they invited. I wasn't quite sure what he was about, but he seemed to be a good Bible teacher.

We had invited him down to Deal. This is a couple of years after this conference. So I went down to speak, and I met this character.

Name was Peter Maiden, and that was one of the steps that led us together in this long-term partnership. So Deal has an important place in O.N.'s ministry. And I shared just these thoughts.

The great dangers that face us as a movement. Now, that's a long time ago. I wonder if some of these dangers are facing us today.

I really believe if O.N. and we as leaders, and it includes everyone, these things can be contextualized into anyone's life. They're very, very basic. They're tied in with 2 Timothy 2, the things that God has given us.

Commit to others. We can all do that. I used to beg people almost on my knees, will you please read How to Win Friends and Influence People? It was a required book.

It was in the early part of the leadership manual. I think we'll go down in history that one of our greatest mistakes was the phasing out of the leadership manual without bringing anything in its place. I just agonize.

I have nightmares about this. And yet I failed to get this new leadership manual. The job has been delegated off to us.

I've been on the phone with the people involved for over three and a half years. This has been discussed at area level. It's uncanny how we have no leadership manual.

Somebody said to me, but we have a policy manual. Only a few people in the movement read the policy manual. And it's very different from a leadership manual.

Praise God, we almost lost the discipleship manual in the midst of the same confusion. But when I took the survey at the new recruits conference, praise the Lord, two thirds had read the discipleship manual. Any movement as it goes forward in some areas will go back in other areas.

Let us acknowledge that's history because we have so many things we're attempting to do at once. We have a lot of other better teaching tools and teaching methods that are going on in a sense which make up for the missing leadership manual. Like for example, a lot more teaching within each national country.

That's where the big muscle, the big clout, the big action generally takes place. A whole conference going on this week, just finishing I guess today. Training the Middle East people.

And a lot of the things that were in the original leadership manual are now in other manuals. Middle East manual, Luke manual. So we're not lacking for manuals.

But I believe that if we as leaders and all of us could just take a few steps of faith, make a few changes, the impact would be enormous. Now let's be honest. Some people on OM are basically obnoxious people.

Let's just be honest about it. They're not gonna disciple anybody. They never have disciplined anybody.

They probably never will disciple anybody. Now praise God at OM because it's teamwork. That rather obnoxious, unfriendly type of person can still play a vital role if he somehow teams up with someone else.

Now maybe you feel those words are too strong, but I will tell you some of the offensive things we have done in churches are incredible. And those churches have closed their door and they've said OM is not coming back here for many years. We have quite a few Christian leaders in this country who still will not touch us.

I could give you names. And I'm involved in it because in some cases I said something, I did something that was unkind, maybe obnoxious. I've got all the potential for arrogance, obnoxious, impatient, hurtful statements.

And if we could just reread that book or something similar, say the Sermon on the Mount, I believe we could feel the impact. The bottom line in winning people today in the society we're in is making friends. It's making friends.

It's not carrying placards down your street. It's not sketchboards. Praise God for sketchboards.

It's making friends. It's Love Europe, not George Verwer that announced this is the decade of friendship evangelism. So what's with us? Can't we make some more friends? Different people make friends in different ways because I had a strong message.

I had a message that certain people wanted to hear including some other hostile people like myself who were hungry for God, desperate for deliverance and victory. I could win people who didn't particularly like me. Not everybody has that gift, you see.

If you're quiet and you don't have a vision and if you're not sort of of that kind of temperament, you generally won't win people unless you make friends with them, do you follow me? Because there's nothing there to gather them. People that couldn't stand me joined Operation Mobilization. They believed the message.

They believed that the word was a bit loud and he was a little unkind and a little insensitive. They believed the Holy Spirit was with them. Now let me tell you something.

If you can convince people today that the Holy Spirit is with you, you can get people to join you who can't stand you. Isn't that amazing? Now they don't always stick around. If later on they discover that you don't have the reality, they don't stick around.

Why do many people join different groups and fellowships? If there's a major sort of charismatic type of leader with a vision, with a burden who's going places, they join because they want to do something. It's not necessarily friendship. It's not necessarily even godliness so that will have to be there to some degree.

The average person isn't in that situation. The average person doesn't have a chance to stand in front of people and try to win them. Even when I was a student at Moody, so young and even before that in my own high school, I was given the opportunity to speak.

Therefore I could overcome some of those barriers when I was speaking. There was one pastor in my hometown who really in a sense didn't like me. He was speaking out a little bit against me, especially my extremes about forsaking all.

I think back in those days I didn't even believe in drinking things like Coca-Cola or spending money and the word came out that this man didn't agree. Imagine that! This pastor didn't agree with George Verber's teaching on forsaking all. That's when I was only 18.

But as we look at the situation in OM today and our emphasis on friendship, surely it should drive us to rereading such books, how to win friends and influence people. And I just say this this morning, my first burden isn't OM as I share this. Some of you are gonna leave OM soon.

And if you don't get your act a little more together, you're not gonna make it. It doesn't mean you won't exist. In fact, I'm convinced some of the marriages break up because we were insensitive.

We don't know how to sometimes communicate to our own wife, to our own children. I think of the mistakes I have made in this area. Again, God's mercy, God's grace, the charisma factor, God's hand upon me.

It's a mystery. Surely a mystery how and why God uses some of us. But I do know this, that the world out there is a cruel place.

Some people think OM's cruel when they're on it. They're usually a little naive. I have followed ex-OMers for 34 years.

Almost all of them will say that OM was a fairly pleasant time compared to what hit them when they got out there. That's why some of them are divorced. That's why some of them are in such terrible situations, including completely overthrowing the Christian faith.

The thing that has shocked me the most, and it's one of the things that pushed me more and more into preaching and living and talking about balance, is the people who united with me in the early years who were the most outspoken and seemed to be the most committed to the very revolution which we were hoping was a Jesus revolution. When the pressure came, they were down. I just stood and waited.

And then some of my own failures under pressure, one of them I guess worthy of putting in the Gospel Gazette, shook me into the reality that balance is not optional. Balance is not optional. Balance is absolutely basic if we are going to survive.

What are a few of those things I wrote down and shared with those leaders? If anybody could find a copy of this old tape from the mid-60s, I'd be interested in getting it. Number one, getting set in our ways. Praise God, He heard our prayers, and by His grace, OM never got set in its ways.

We are, of course, to some degree, it's a continual area of growth. And the changes we have made over the past years, I believe are as important as some of the basic principles that we brought into our movement in those early years. Beware in your own life of just getting set in your ways.

Be willing for change. Be willing to read a new book. How many husbands, even though they have difficulty in their marriage, never, never would read a book on marriage? I believe one of the greatest mistakes I made in my marriage is not to read more books.

I leveled off somewhere in my early days because I was heavy on marriage books. I just stopped reading it because the fact, my kind of stubborn character needs to read it two or three times before it got in. Some of the great truths of those books never got into me.

I mean, they may have got in a little. And I think my wife has had to suffer because of that. Have you read any of that material by Dobson and others on how to understand your partner and how to love your partner? I mean, that stuff is so revolutionary and yet so incredibly difficult to put into practice, especially when you're in a movement that makes a lot of demands on you and on your time.

Let's not get set in our ways, in our marriages, in our witnessing, in our discipling of others. Let's be willing to grow. Let's be willing to change.

Let's keep listening to others. Let's keep the L plates on. If those of you have heard me speak many times, get even one thing this morning that you feel you could use to make some changes in your life that would enable you to encourage more people, disciple more people, build a kingdom that it's worth.

Stopping for 45 minutes and sharing some of these things. Number two, failing to keep walking in the light. It's interesting that Pauline Hymas, who's helping lead The Real program, shared with me that she feels this is where O.M. is really slipping.

A movement that once so emphasized walking in the light. You couldn't even get in the door without reading Calvary Road. Now we have people in the movement that don't even know what we're talking about.

Walking in the light, what does this mean? Working in the daytime instead of working at night? People don't know what walking in the light is. And there is so much gossip at times going on behind people's backs. And unfortunately, that is normal in Christian work.

And I say unfortunately with a capital U. Instead of going to one another in love, sharing what's on our hearts, we talk to other people. We got the possibility of that in the next eight months, playing habit with this team. We don't pretend that we're a perfect team.

This team sometimes is a survival operation because we're human beings, we're under pressure. We are overcommitted. I am convinced absolutely, Viv Thomas is overcommitted.

Not quite convinced Wakely is overcommitted because he doesn't seem to indicate that he is, but he's so phlegmatic and laid back. But I'm destined to get him overcommitted because it happens to anybody who gets near me. He's got to lead this team when I'm away.

He's got Nepal growing, he's got Bangladesh growing, Pakistan growing. I did see a few signs last year that he might be getting overcommitted, but we won't discuss that at present. Let's walk in the light.

Let's not lose that principle in O.M. First John 1.7, walking in the light. Number three, not taking time to meet for prayer. Can you imagine way back in the mid 60s, where we're already getting upset about the lack of prayer in Operation Mobilization? And of course, I believe that this is where a lot of the enemy effort

comes.

Do you think Satan knows that there's a book called His Present Darkness? Do you think Satan knows? Do you think he's read that? Does Satan read? It's one of the fastest selling books in the history of the Christian church. Did you know that? One of the fastest selling, but now there'll be a major blockbuster movie coming out of Hollywood on that book. Now Christians are divided on that book.

Mike Wakely's written two pages explaining the weaknesses of the book. I was with Dean Sherman when he was talking on the spiritual warfare, oh, I'm not picking on you this morning, spiritual warfare message. And I think he had his hesitancy.

Anybody with a brain will have some hesitancy about the book. But he said, at least the book is making God's people aware that there are forces of spiritual darkness. At least people are being made aware.

But Satan is so subtle, people are so locked into habit that people are reading that book and it is not necessarily changing their prayer life. How can it be? How can it be that we could actually say we believe in evil forces, we believe these powers are there and around and it's prayer, the book makes it very clear, prayer. And now we've got this new teaching on territorial spirits.

I mean, when we have these marches this weekend, different people will be doing different things. For me, it'll be a survival march and I believe in praying against the forces of darkness. I'm not gonna get into a semantic jungle.

I'm not sure what this territorial spirits is all about, but I believe in just praying. Let's pray for Maggie. Let's pray for the White House, not the house, but the people in it.

And if somebody else next to me is praying that something up above gets out of the way, though I find it a little bit uneasy, I'm not gonna have a fight with them. I got too many other things to do, but I know that's becoming a big issue around Great Britain and other parts of the world. Long before you arrived here in Brownlee, most of you, I sort of gave up on hardlining on evangelism.

I think Jack was the last to make the big ditch stand to lead evangelism. I can't believe anything could be so difficult, so complicated, so exasperating as trying to lead people out in the more old-fashioned kind of O.M. evangelism, door-to-door, in the streets. And I finally, I guess in the name of balance or survival, delegated this off to others, no longer set the pace.

I was so extreme on setting the pace, the pressure that brought my family into the time it took me away from my own children is quite uncanny. Saturday was the day we did it, yet Saturday was the best day to try to be with our families. I would drag my children out in every kind of evangelism you could think of, when they were real little, they loved it, but as they got older, like around eight or 10 or whatever, they weren't so keen.

And so evangelism in the past years, of the more old-style traditional evangelism, O.M. was known for, has been very weak in Brownlee. I guess it was in the name of survival, it was in the name of whatever. I can honestly say, and I trust you can as well, that I have never hardly a day lost my evangelistic seal.

But I have found that I so quickly get involved with people that I lead to Christ that it just becomes overwhelming. I'd meet people on the train at Brownlee South, I'd have them in the house. In the early days in the East End of London, we had people right off the embankment, drunks, drug addicts, we'd have

them living out in the O.M. place.

We have tried everything in the name of trying to obey the Sermon on the Mount that you can imagine. I wonder, at the end of the day, we decided to work for balance, we got into certain teachings like a human factor, and realized how difficult it was to put all these different challenges into practice at the same time. Different people have different amounts of time.

And if you can squeeze, possibly squeeze, out of your intensive schedule, and get out door to door in the streets with tracts of personal evangelism, as we did so often, it was our bread and butter. I'm not talking about the first couple of years, talking first 15 or 20 years, until this movement became so big, so complex with emergencies every day, with a backlog of people who have come to Christ through the ministry who are waiting for one single letter from the person who led them to Christ in the first place. We don't lack people coming to Christ through OM right now, that may sound funny, but following up on them is awesome, and we discover that people who profess faith often it is not a conversion.

And I will not give up gently rebuking people when they just list someone who professed faith as being a conversion. We have not had 300 conversions in Jordan in the last few days. I don't think we should use that vocabulary.

300 people while they were getting relief work, also profess faith, it can get a little mixed up, can't it? I hope there are many real conversions out of that. There will be, as we pray, as we follow up, it will happen. Number five is the subtle influences of the lukewarm.

Lukewarmness is so subtle, and lukewarmness is making its way into OM, it makes its way into the prayer meetings, it makes its way into every aspect of our life. We battled it then, let's continue to battle it now. Number six, presumption that we know the principles.

Well, if we were presuming in the mid-60s that we knew the principles, what do we say now? Such principles as forsaking all, walking in the light, spiritual warfare, unity. The old tapes were phased out quite a few years ago. It's unbelievable that that old orientation series that Jonathan Dale wrote down and I gave lasted so many years.

The tapes were getting to be a bad quality, the tapes were outdated. I fully agreed that they should be replaced. Unfortunately, around that time, the average OM office gave up its vision for tapes.

Very few OM offices make much use of cassette tapes. STL dropped tapes from their whole distribution line. They're very hard to distribute.

Some offices continue to use tapes on a voluntary basis for those who wanted to go through them. A few shortened the tape orientation to four tapes. That was actually very encouraging, an excellent compromise.

And a lot of people are saying to me, and I think there's an element of truth, that a great percentage of people come on Love Europe, really do not know what Operation Mobilization is actually all about. It is playing havoc on the ships and in other parts of the work. And though we may have had a lot of failures in those early days, we're not interested in turning the history pages back.

Sure do you know that's my feeling. We can learn some lessons. And if people know what they're getting into when they come on OM, number one, we may lose a few, but I believe we will have less

disappointment and bitterness from people who come and it is not what they expected.

Again, we wrestled with that in the early days because even after hearing those tapes and going through books, I can assure you there were still problems because especially we couldn't live up to the principles that we preached on those tapes and there was not enough balance and the human factor was there on those tapes, but it was weak. And that's another reason perhaps they needed to be phased out. Beware of thinking we know these principles.

Young people come into the movement and if you've been around for a few years, they expect that you are going to be some kind of incarnation of these dynamic principles of these books or these messages. And most people have heard at least some challenging message from an OM speaker before they come and they are now looking for that in some people around them. Seven, choosing the road of least resistance.

I was too strong on that in the early days. I had to compromise because there are times when you have to choose a road of least resistance in order to get back on God's highway. You can't always take the hard road.

And it gets a little more complicated than perhaps I thought in those early days with my strong, strong emphasis on the fact that we were soldiers of Jesus Christ. Have you ever studied the early intensive training program on Lagos? You can be sure that after a few years they did away with that program. Why do we have to do away with that program? Only one out of 10 leaders can lead that kind of program.

The secular people still have that kind of program. Let's acknowledge that as we've dropped it in OM. The secular people still have that kind of program and it costs you two and a half thousand to go on it.

Two and a half to three thousand to go on it and top executives go on it and it's as rough as ours. It's absolutely scary. It's called Schools of Adventure or Outward Bound.

We of course couldn't maintain that because it takes a leader of high giftedness, of high degree of training to lead that. If you don't have the right leadership in that kind of program, who can keep that spirit of core going, who can do all kinds of things, people in Outward Bound are professionally top trained people. It won't work and eventually we had to drop it.

We almost had people killed on the ship, rock climbing. You can't play at rock climbing. After four or five years in it myself, I dropped it because I almost got killed and my son almost got killed and then I felt bad that I had started that in Operation Mobilization.

Now my son Ben tells me he wants to go back to rock climbing. His rope he has is so old that if we try to repel, that might be the end. Number 10, I just insert here sort of in brackets, especially in connection with our own temperament.

Number eight, listening too quickly to evil reports. That was a problem in the mid 60s, it's a problem in the beginning of the 90s. You see the movement hasn't changed that much really.

The same old sins are still around. We reinvent the wheel. Number nine, allowing discipline to slip.

Number 10, getting caught into subtle forms of pride. I'm quite amazed that in the mid 60s, we discovered there were subtle forms of pride. I thought we were only aware of the most overt, clear cut forms of pride,

which gets so wonderfully demonstrated from time to time in the work of God.

Number 11, failing to keep up the big battle against lust. And number 12, neglecting the home and the wife. Let me just make it clear that if any of us who have children that are not walking with Jesus, it is not because O.M. neglected the home and the family.

My children don't believe that. O.M. was a new generation movement. There was an extreme emphasis on family and that whole area thing because we had the books.

In 60s, we already had the books. We were one of the first groups to pioneer the concept that the wife is firstly a wife and a mother, not firstly a missionary. It was radical when we launched that.

Now it's been accepted by many mission societies. I'm not saying we didn't do enough. I'm not saying we didn't fail, but in understanding the history of O.M., let's not be intimidated into thinking that our commitment to discipleship world evangelism meant we naturally neglected our families and our children because it isn't really true.

It's a little more complicated than that life. I know we like to measure things in black and white. And some of the most godly people who have never left the United States and who were mega, mega family-oriented people have children who are away from Jesus Christ today.

If you meet one of the brothers or sisters, as I did in a conference recently, you ask them about their brothers and sisters, you'll generally find there's usually one or two that are away from Jesus. So that's not a simple thing to always measure, but we felt from the earliest days, here it is written in the notes, beware of neglecting your wife, your home, and your family. And of course, sometimes we did that.

And then 13, I'm amazed that this got written in here, beware of idealism. I must have not followed up on this because idealism did become destructive in O.M. It became destructive and we ended up judgmental. We ended up legalistic at times.

We ended up turning against each other. We couldn't live up to one another's expectations. And those ideals, which can be so beautiful under the control of the spirit, were like a sewer running through the movement, hurting and hindering what God wanted to do.

And I thank him for the grace to learn, to repent, to grow. And I hope that somehow through this little unique sharing this morning, we can all learn at least something. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you that we can move forward on the foundations you gave us in the very beginning of this work. And though some of us had been around for over 30 years or 20 years, and we're working together with people who have just walked in the door, you can unite us, the old and the new. The basic principles redefined, the basic principles expanding, being integrated into other biblical principles with your strength, your power, your Holy Spirit can enable us to accomplish this vision, this burden we have for world evangelism and for revival in the church and for reality.

Lord, blessed reality among your people. Don't let us who've been around a while presume of what we have or don't have in our lives. Enable us to sharpen up in this whole area of passing these principles on to others also so that we can see this bonding take place with us and the new generation of disciples.

We know you use Love Europe leaflets. We know that you use video cassettes. You use great congresses and great preaching, but none of it, I don't believe, can be a substitute for that bonding between one and another, that friendship, that heart linking when we're repenting together, we're working together, we're growing together, we're learning to walk in the light together in our marriages, on our teams, on this team, in this place.

Here we are from such a wide range of backgrounds and churches. On Sunday, we scatter to worship and to meet in different places and we come in on Monday with different ideas and yet we've got to work together in spiritual combat, much more difficult in a spiritual comparison to those troops down in Saudi Arabia who haven't even begun to fight. We're in the midst of the greatest war in the history of the universe.

Help us to live in the light of this and to somehow work day and night to be better soldiers, better disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

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