

General Missionary Meeting at Keswick

by George Verwer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of missionary work and the need for Christians to be involved in reaching the world with the gospel.

Duration: 1:08:27

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:35, Matthew 9:37, Matthew 22:14, Mark 1:16, Mark 2:14

Topics: "Keswick"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on two passages from the Gospel of Mark. The first passage is about Jesus calling Simon, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him and become fishers of men. The second passage is about Jesus calling Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him. The preacher emphasizes the need for more workers in the harvest and encourages the church to have a renewed vision and commitment to missions. He also shares a testimony of a disabled evangelist in his country who is doing a remarkable job spreading the Gospel.

Transcript

Let the world know of Jesus, Savior, Lord, and King. Let the whole creation whisper praise His name. Know of Jesus, Savior, Lord, and King.

Now our scriptures are to be read by the Reverend Alfred Yeo, who is a Methodist minister, and the secretary of the Singapore Keswick Convention. And after the reading of the scriptures, we shall be led in prayer by Mr. Raymond Castro, who is the secretary of, I was going to say the Pune and India village mission, it shows how old I am. It's the International Christian Fellowship.

The scripture reading is taken from St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 9, starting from verse 35. Matthew 9, 35, And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. And seeing the multitudes, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, we seek the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. We're going to pray together for the world, and so that we might be united in our intercession, as I voice a prayer for the world, will you think into it and pray into it? People you know, ministries you know, and then we shall make it a united prayer for the world and the

world of mission.

Now let us gather together in prayer before the throne. Let us pray. Father, it's a big world, and we really can't compass it in our prayer just now to you, but we come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with the assurance that you know the world because it is yours, and we just want to be open in our hearts and in our prayer to what you know already.

Since the world was in view, dear Lord, when you sent your Son to be the Saviour, we want to intercede together on its behalf. And first of all, Father, we want to give you thanks and praise that you are building your church in the world, and we want to pray together for its leaders, its pastors, its evangelists, its youth workers, and its members. We ask, Lord, that the witness of your worldwide church will be graciously blessed and used.

Where there may be division, Lord, bring healing. Where there may be nominal profession, please give quickening into newness of life. And where there is, as Lord we know, there is so much evangelical life and witness, please anoint it with saving power.

And as we think of your church, Lord, we want to remember especially your church in Russia and Eastern Europe, in China, and in other places where it's under pressure. We are humbled as we think of its witness. Please give strength and courage and faith, Lord, to its members, and may their example stir us in the freedom that we enjoy.

And bless those who help them and encourage them. Then, Lord, we bless you for the thousands of men and women who've moved out into other countries and other cultures at your call. And we want to bear up before you, Lord, the missionaries of the cross from many lands to many other lands.

We pray, Lord, for young recruits as they adjust and learn. We pray for mature workers that they may be encouraged in the fight and may see glorious victories in the gospel. We pray for those who sow the seed faithfully that they may do it in perseverance and with expectancy.

We pray, Lord, for mission leaders that they may be given wisdom and discernment in constantly changing situations. We think, Father, of doctors and nurses and teachers, agriculturalists and relief workers, Bible teachers and theological educators, all in these vital ministries, Lord, that play their part, and we want to ask your blessing upon them. And we do want to pray especially for those who evangelize and plant churches in areas where the gospel is new to those who hear it.

Lord, may your church be planted wisely so that it may grow in dependence on your spirit and become in its turn a witnessing church. We pray, Father, too, for those who reach out with literature, by radio and in correspondence courses. We thank you, Lord, for these ministries, and we pray your blessing on those who prepare the material for them, those who distribute it and broadcast it.

We pray for the work of Bible societies around the world. Lord, will you reach the multitudes by these means, and will you follow Bible and books and broadcasts with your mighty convicting and saving spirit, Lord? And, Lord, we pray for these multitudes, millions yet have never heard. We praise you for those who are hearing.

We praise you for those who have heard and believed, but we long, Lord, that all may hear. And Father, opportunities abound, and you're still opening doors, and there is a harvest, Lord. Please send out labourers, and please help each of us here to know his part.

Yes, Lord, it is a big world, but you are its Lord, and the day will come when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. Hasten the day, Lord. Hasten it with the preaching of the gospel.

Send forth thy light and thy salvation. Lord, hear our cry for all this, and for this great world to which you send us in mission. Bless those we know in that mission.

Use them, Lord. Call others to join them. Help us to know what you would have us to do, and to this end, bless us now, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen. Some forty years ago, Mr. Kenneth Adams founded the Christian Liturgy Crusade and has travelled widely since then and has been greatly used. It's a great joy and privilege to have Mr. Kenneth Adams come as our first speaker this morning.

As World War came to an end, we began to move into a new era of missionary thrust and outreach around the world. The number of missionaries increased considerably. The funds began to flow more generously.

And the reaping was seen in greater extent because not only were we seeing people coming to Christ, but now we were moving into the era of the national church responding to the challenge of worldwide evangelization and taking up the Great Commission. And so today we are living in an exciting age as we see what God is doing through his people of every nationality who are responding to the word of God to get this gospel to the ends of the earth. Those of us from the West are by no means alone today in this great ministry of missionary outreach.

I think of our own ministry in Japan, for instance, where we have about fifty workers and some forty-five of those workers are Japanese. Each of our ten bookstores there are manned by Japanese brothers who share the vision of literature for their country. And from Japan we have seen missionaries go to other parts of the world.

I think of Mrs. Saito who served in Japan for four years up in Hokkaido and now is a missionary in Brazil to help meet the need of Christian literature for the one million or more Japanese people who live in the greater Sao Paulo area. And so we rejoice to see what God has been doing over these last thirty-five years since World War came to an end. But one of the interesting things is this, that perhaps it is the age of mass communication.

Literature is now a new thing because of the new educational thrust around the world. As new nations, some hundred of them, have come into being in this last thirty-five years, one of the first responsibilities of the leadership of these nations has been to deal with the problem of illiteracy. And so we are seeing across our world today something close to one hundred million new readers coming into the world every year.

And so this presents to us a new and tremendous challenge to get God's word in print to the readers of the world. But reading alone and education alone is not satisfactory because unless we put into the hands of these new readers from the simple primers away up to the study books and the devotional books, we have not done our task. Literature has, of course, a two-fold thrust.

There is the literature that you give to the people to tell them about Jesus, to tell them that God is love, to tell them that there is a Savior who is ready to meet their need. And so we have the joy through literature of seeing people finding Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior. But then literature also is the tool that

the Holy Spirit is using to build a new convert in the faith and help them to grow in grace and mature in the things of their newfound Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is a great joy for us in our ministry of literature to see many people growing and maturing as they are reading, studying God's word, and as they are growing and maturing through the books that come into their hands. And so we live in this age of literature evangelism, mass communication because of radio and TV and the great cassette ministry that is going across our world today, and all the other facets of missionary trust. And yet every one of them, if they are to do their task successfully, must use Christian literature.

And so it's a great joy to be sharing in getting this literature to the ends of the earth. How grateful we are for the Bible Society and the Scripture Give Mission and others who are producing and publishing the literature. But thankfully we have the privilege of being part of the distribution program in this great age of opportunity.

And not only overseas, but also here in the homelands. Because you see what is happening today is the mission field is actually coming to us. I understand that here in the British Isles there are something like a million and a half Muslims in this country.

Here is an opportunity for all of us to be literature evangelists. And CLC has made possible literature in scores of languages so that if you have a Chinese family living up the road, get hold of some Chinese literature and put it into their hands. If you have some people from the Arab world living across the street, get hold of Arab literature and put it into their hands.

And so the opportunity is with us today here in the homelands and also across the seas to be missionaries using the tool of literature to help in the evangelization and the growth of the new convert in the faith. Yes indeed, we are seeing a great demand for literature today. I think of Venezuela and some of these other countries where the demand is just beyond what we can cope with and of course China lays heavily upon our hearts.

The Lord make all of us real literature missionaries. Since 1966 it has been impossible for us to have anybody from Burma to this Keswick Convention It is a very great joy indeed to all of us that Mr. Tansy MacDonald has been able to come from Rangoon to this convention and is now to tell us something of the work of God in Burma. Mr. MacDonald.

I'm very grateful for this privilege of joining you at Keswick and sharing with you. Burma is a country of about 260,000 square miles with a population of about 32 million at the last census which was about six years ago. The Christian population is about one and a half million, about three and a half percent of the total.

The country is predominantly Buddhist who are about 75 percent of the people. The Christians come mainly from the tribal groups around the country. The church is not making much progress amongst the Buddhists so this is where we need your prayers.

But the encouraging thing is that gospel teams go out into the tribal areas working with the local Christians there and taking the message to all around them. Travel is very difficult and in most cases we travel on foot covering 200, 300 miles on each trip. Another encouraging thing is that the animists have taken the initiative to spread the gospel.

They have invited us to their areas to come and preach. And in four or five instances they have said, please come to my village, please come to my area and preach your God to us. This is where God gives the growth.

There are many evangelists doing a wonderful job in my country but please let me tell you about one. She is a lady, a chin lady, about 27 years of age. From the age of three she never ever walked again and she never ever will walk again.

She's flat on her back, she can't sit and all she can use is the forefinger and thumb of her right hand. She's never been to school, she's never had formal training and yet she's one of our greatest evangelists in that area. She has to be carried about and she preaches and teaches.

She's learned to read and write her own language and she's learned to read and write Burmese. Animists from different villages come to her, carry her to a village and ask her to preach. And just before I left for England she was in a village where there were 40 houses, households and seven had joined, had come to the Lord within a matter of four weeks.

So please pray for her that God will continue to bless her. She receives no salaries and no perks. All she has ever asked for was some aspirins to ease the pain in her back.

But all is not plain sailing in my country. In some places travel is difficult and even dangerous due to insurrections. Some of our people have been killed in cross fires.

We still need more dedicated workers. There are many vast numbers who are unreached. We lack the means, we lack the money and we lack the men.

However, this visit to Keswick has taught me to have faith, to obey and to trust him and then go out and get on with the job. Thank you. Thank you, Tansy.

Number 235 in your hymn books and we're going to need Tim Buckley again. 235, Lord for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way. He leads the way, he leads the way, he leads the way, he leads the way.

He leads the way, he leads the way, he leads the way, he leads the way. He leads the way, he leads the way.

As you know from Tokyo this year Mr. and Mrs. John Masuda have come to Keswick. It's a great pleasure for us now to be able to listen to the Reverend John Masuda and I introduce him to you as the Secretary of the Japanese Keswick. I just say all one in Christ Jesus in Japanese.

May I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have been asked by the members of the Central Committee of the Japan Keswick Convention and the Chairman to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Chairman and the members of the Keswick Council of your country and also dear friends of Keswick Convention here for praying for us in the land of Japan for the cause of the Lord especially through the ministry of the Japan Keswick Convention. We are grateful for the speakers you have sent to us in the land of Japan.

Your speakers have provided us the spirit of Keswick and the messages of the Keswick Convention and may I tell you that Japan Keswick Convention I think is the best thing that has happened to the spiritual life

of the Japanese churches and Japanese Christians. So thank you very much. And next year we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Japan Keswick Convention.

Now in the land of Japan we come of age at the age of 20 years old. So we feel that we are finally coming of age so to speak in the land of Japan as far as the Keswick Ministry is concerned. So thanks to you again and we hope that you will continue to pray for us in the Keswick Ministry there.

We do have today and they are doing very well we feel. Then in the central place nearby the city of Tokyo we have again about 800 to 1000 people gathering for the convention. Then in the city of Tokyo about 700 to 800 people are gathering and then to the north in the northern island of Hokkaido we have about 400 people gathering to hear the Keswick messages.

So continue to pray for us. Now as for the land of Japan as I stand here this morning I am somewhat embarrassed by the fact that Japanese products are invading into your country. And I am not to speak about those products.

May I tell you that several years ago we Japanese strived to gain three Cs. I don't know if you can imagine what these three Cs are. They are namely car, then cooler which is air conditioner, and then colour television.

Having obtained most of these three items on the part of most of the Japanese people today they are looking for something better to satisfy their longing, their search for something. We are strangely conscious of the fact that we Japanese are, I hope I do not sound too presumptuous when I say this, one of the most educated and rich pagans on earth. Some missionaries said once this, the Japanese language must be created by Satan.

Because it's so difficult. However I am tempted to say that Japanese people's hearts are gripped by the power of Satan. And that Satan has been using the power of education and materialism in such a way to be rather a success.

As you know our country is just like your country of England. We are of the island country. And in our island country of Japan live some 120 million people.

And the Christian population constitutes about 1%. This has been so for many decades. Some time ago I received a newsletter, an English newsletter.

In it, it said something like this. Japan, the country of small churches and slow progress of the gospel. I tell you my heart was really sad when I read that.

And then I cried unto the Lord. Lord, how long should our country remain as such in the grips of the Satanic materialism? When I say Satanic materialism, it implies something like this. Most of the Japanese companies today are manned by very dedicated people.

And that's one of the reasons why you have the Japanese products invading. Now one of the executives said something like this. The company is immortal or eternal.

But we are mortal. Let us dedicate ourselves and work for the company. It is my prayer that this dedication may become the dedication on the part of the Christians.

So that we may carry his gospel to our people. Thank you very much. Now we're keeping John and Maciej Masuda here for next week too.

So that the holiday convention can also meet them. Now something quite different from a country that's in the news today from Bolivia. Mrs. Nikki Thurstfield is coming to represent Bolivia but the whole of Latin America.

Or at least her presence here does that for us. But we've asked her especially to speak about Bolivia. Mrs. Nikki Thurstfield of the EUSA.

The vast continent of South America has Roman Catholicism as the recognized official religion. But within the church however there is a struggle between the traditional wing of the Roman Catholic church. With its images, its many grottos and superstitions.

And also the more modern wing that is embracing theology of liberation. The involvement of the Catholic church in social issues. Hoping to bring about radical social change.

Something of this struggle could be seen in the recent visit of the Pope to Brazil. When it was felt that he was trying to reconcile the one wing of the Roman Catholic church with the other. In Peru last year at the Congress on Evangelism.

A similar tension over involvement in social issues was very much to the fore. In a continent where there's much poverty and social injustice. The church cannot stand by unmoved.

How far to be involved in a cause where Marxists too are very vociferous. Although with different goals. Needs to be thought through very carefully and very prayerfully.

If a word was needed to sum up the response to missionary work in South America. The word to choose is openness. Openness to preach the gospel.

And openness of the people to listen and to accept the gospel. Because of this the church is growing fast. In recent years in Chile the rate of church growth was equal if not more than the population growth of the country.

In South America we're seeing young churches, young Christians. And while evangelism is very strong in the cities, in the rural areas and in the jungle areas. There is a tremendous need to back up the evangelism with teaching of the Bible.

Teaching of the Bible at all educational levels. And to all the different strata's of society. The continent is open to the gospel.

It is also open to the cults and the false sects. There is an urgent need for literature for the church. The literacy rate is increasing steadily.

And so is the hunger for books and other forms of literature. From the Quechua Indian in his mud brick house high up on the Andes mountains. To the executive in his office in one of the teeming cities of South America.

From the student to the laborer in a factory or a mine. Tracts, scriptures, commentaries, devotional aids are all needed to feed the Christians. And to counteract to the growth of liberalism.

Although not a predominant force, nevertheless creeping in insidiously into some of the churches in South America. The youth too cannot be ignored when 60% of the population is under 21 years of age. Such groups as UCCS and youth camps are vital to reach and to teach these young people.

The leaders not only in the country of South America tomorrow, but leaders in the church of tomorrow too. These young Christians need to become mature and responsible in the things of the Lord. A campaign by Argentinian evangelist Luis Palau in Bolivia has led to an openness among the higher class people and the professional people in that country.

But God has not only prepared hearts amongst the upper classes, but also amongst those who form the lower class in that country. These people, the Quechua and Aymara Indians, form 80% of the country's population. They live at altitudes of 8,000 to 13,000 feet in the thin cold air and exist the life of subsistence farming.

Some move into towns and cities for work and education. Many more respond to the opportunity offered them by the Bolivian government of a better way of life. In three of the tropical lowland areas of Bolivia, the jungle is being pushed back and the land cleared of the largest trees.

What is still left is still overgrown and jungly and is given to these migrants from the mountains to clear and then to plant crops such as sugar cane, maize or bush rice. Life is still very hard for them, but for those who adapt and remain, it is certainly an improvement on their former way of life. The Quechua, who leave their mountain homes, leave behind all that they have known.

They also leave behind their local animistic spirits and gods. And when they arrive in the lowlands, there is a spiritual void in their lives that needs to be filled. There is an openness to the things of God.

This void doesn't last forever. It is soon filled, we have found, with materialism. And that will eventually take the place in that void and the people become hard to the things of God.

As their new way of life enables them to acquire luxuries and status symbols such as a push bike or a radio, a sewing machine or eventually a lorry of their own, these people have no time for God. They are caught up acquiring more and more and paying for what they have. These people need to be reached with the Gospel when they first move down.

A representative of the government body responsible for allocating the families to the colonies in Bolivia has said that missionaries are free to go in and evangelize. The National Institute for Colonization does not want missionaries to go in and do medical work or to do educational work or even do agricultural work in these areas. The Institute itself can do this.

Missionaries were told, you go in and preach the Gospel, we will do the rest. New groups and churches are forming as Christians move down and witness in these colonies. Many colonies have no Christians.

Missionaries are needed to visit and evangelize. They are needed to help establish churches and to help and teach the believers. Praise the Lord for the opportunities in South America today.

Pray for the church that as it grows it will mature and strengthen. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest that his harvest in the continent of South America won't be wasted because of the lack of workers. Some of you already know Dr. Nambuthiripad because he's been here before.

Many times he's been to England. He is the principal of Ludhiana, that great medical college in the north of India, widely known in India and indeed in many other places. A doctor, it's a great pleasure and a privilege to have Dr. Nambuthiripad with us this morning.

Thank you very much for the kind welcome and the Christian hospitality that you have extended to me. I have enjoyed this fellowship very much. When we think of India we think of 640 million people, a huge mass of people overpowering and staggering and it staggers us.

Many people get cultural shock when they see this huge mass of people in a country as big as India and as diverse as India. And this can itself be a great disappointment and discouragement to missionary work. And I think this is what's happening in this decade.

The best way of looking at this is to look at individuals. We cannot solve the problem of India. We can only solve the problem of individuals.

And these individuals in turn will change India. I'm an outstanding example of this individual change. I came to this country 24 years ago mainly to become a neurosurgeon, to train in brain surgery.

I was a Hindu Brahmin and I did not know Christ, nor did I have any desire to know Christ at that time. But because a few Christians in the city of Bristol, England, cared for me, loved me, looked after me, showed concern, introduced me to Christ, took me to a Bible study group, encouraged me to read the word of God, I was converted to Christ in the city of Bristol 21 years ago. I gave my life to Christ and I decided to follow Christ.

And I said to Christ, wherever you send me, I will go. And God sent me to Christian Medical College, Ludhiana. And God has helped me to convert people.

My wife was converted. My whole family forsook me when I became a Christian. But God was very faithful.

My wife was converted. My daughter was converted. My two sons were converted.

One of my brothers was converted. We saw Hindus converted. God helped me to establish an assembly in Ludhiana.

God helped us to send missionaries from CMC Ludhiana to other parts of the country. The best way of looking after the needs of India for Christ is to look after individuals. And I gather you have lots and lots of Indians here in this country.

God has sent them here. And if you will look after them as that nurse looked after me in Bristol. And the ward boy, and the ward aide, and the fire stoker, simple people.

Not the intelligentsia. God doesn't use the intelligentsia often to convert people. And I bless God that it is common people who converted me to Christ.

Not the very intelligent, not big missionaries. So will you please look after those people who are here. And you can be a missionary to India, even in this country.

Then we think of individuals going out to Ludhiana and other parts of India. North India is the leading part of India. All leadership decisions are taken by North Indians.

70% of the people of Delhi are North Punjabis. The state where I come from. And they make the decisions.

90% of Indians are Hindus. And only 2.7% are Christians. All the decisions are taken by Punjabis and North Indians.

And we are in North India. And the Christian population of North India is less than 1%. Dr. Edith Brown got a vision to go to Ludhiana, 86 years ago.

She went from this country. She established a small institution. People laughed at her, scoffed at her.

She had only 50 pounds sterling to start a work. And lots of faith. 86 years later, we have an institution of 700 beds.

We are one of the primary teaching institutions in North India. We train doctors, we train nurses, we train technicians. And we send missionaries out into the mission hospitals.

How can these mission hospitals have doctors if we don't train them? Government medical colleges don't train them to be missionaries. And we have had the privilege of seeing missionaries going out from Ludhiana because of the vision of this woman. An amazing vision in 1894 to train Christian women in India.

When you did not have many women's medical colleges even in this country. This woman wanted to train Christian women to go to villages. An amazing vision which is still relevant for us today.

And this is our aim, that we may send Indian Christian doctors to mission institutions to spread the gospel. Do you know that 20% of hospital beds in India are mission hospital beds? 18 to 20% of all hospital beds in India are supported by this 2.7% of the population. We wipe the dirty bottoms of the people in India.

We may not get the credit but we do that. And we consider it a great privilege. We train them to do this dirty work.

And we enjoy doing this and Christ is glorified thereby. He washed the disciples' feet, didn't he? Wasn't that the humblest of service? And we believe this is the glorifying thing about the work of Christ. CMC Ludhiana needs missionaries.

People tell me we don't need new missionaries. There is no moratorium on missionaries. We are an international society.

We need each other. I was converted here. I am as much British as you are.

This is my home, spiritual home, that is. India is yours as much as it is mine. The world belongs to God.

And you have an obligation to send missionaries to India just as Dame Edith Brown was sent several years ago. We need missionaries. We need, of course, professionals who have high expertise, high training because ours is a medical college.

The Punjab University will not recognize us if we are not highly qualified. We need a principal college of nursing. We need a professor in pathology.

We need a professor in radiology. We don't have Christian doctors in those parts. There are not many North Indian Christians who are trained that way.

We need them. And medical missions still will remain the cutting edge of the mission work in India. When people don't go to churches, when there are not churches in North India, where will they hear of Jesus Christ except in the wards of our hospital? 18,000 patients are admitted every year into CMC Ludhiana.

220,000 people come into our clinics every year. And they have the literature. They hear the word that is spoken on the loudspeaker system.

They come across the chaplain. They come across us. They hear of Jesus from hospitals, not from churches.

Hospitals will remain a key cutting edge for the mission work in India. Will you pray? And will you send missionaries? Will you come yourself? Or if you can't come, will you pray for Ludhiana and India? Please remember, India is still uncommitted. She is neither communist nor capitalist.

She is the only big landmass in Asia which is uncommitted when people around us are either totalitarian or communist. And it can be a great instrument for change. Please don't underestimate India.

She has sent many missionaries before. Buddhists. Buddhism started in India.

Hinduism. Sikhism. Jainism.

It can be a great power for Christ in India. Will you pray for India, please? Thank you. All of us have enjoyed having George Verwer with us in this year's convention.

Some of us have also enjoyed getting to know his wife, Drina. We're so grateful for the contribution that they've both made. And it's a joy for us now to be able to listen to George in the last part of this meeting.

Mr. George Verwer of Operation Mobilization. I certainly have been very aware of many people praying for me during the convention. I really believe that Keswick is a miracle.

I've always felt that since coming under the influence of the Keswick ministry some 20 years ago. I think there are some people who presume about Keswick. And sometimes I hear in my circles negative things.

But I think often we don't realize what it is for any movement to go on for 105 years or even 25 years faithful to the word of God in the days in which we live. Ever heard of the student volunteer movement? The great explosion it made and how soon it was dead. And I could name denominations and other movements that were dead within 50 years.

God has kept his hand upon this great emphasis, movement, whatever you want to call it, for 105 years. That's a miracle. And I'd like to just, before I speak, have a word of prayer, of thanksgiving and praise to God.

And then ask him to speak from his word. Let us pray. Father, we know that you are a God of the impossible.

You are a God of the miraculous. And we thank you for your hand upon this convention and upon the people who have ministered here over more than 100 years. We do not come in presumption, but we

come by faith because your word is true.

And we have preached and declared your word and therefore can look to you for the results, visible or invisible. We thank you for the power and the reality of your Holy Spirit that is never firstly manifest in talk, but in walk. And we cry out to you, O living God, that when we go from this place, it would be in the walk and in the energy and the power of your Holy Spirit.

Speak, O Lord, at this time. Hide the speaker behind the cross, that we would see Jesus and that we would be willing to obey him. Whatever the cost, wherever it leads, and whatever our age, for you are no respecter of persons.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I think people would think that I had backslidden if I didn't mention a couple of Christian books.

And I know many of you are friends of Operation Mobilization and visited our ships. I've met so many friends this week. They've all been very, very encouraging.

The greatest blessing for me this week has been the prayer meeting at 7 o'clock. And each morning as I've been there, and I couldn't figure out how I was going to fit this into my schedule because I'm a very schedule or schedule type of person. And the first thing in the morning, I always have my prayer time and my jogging.

And I thought, how am I going to fit this 7 o'clock prayer meeting in? But it worked very well. I lived quite far from the prayer meeting. So I jogged to the prayer meeting and prayed as I jogged.

And somehow it all worked together, though I usually arrived late. I hope that didn't disturb the chairman, a man of incredible punctuality. I don't think it did.

But what a blessed time that was. And I was so encouraged that almost every morning someone prayed for one of our ships. Even if they had the ship in the wrong continent, in the wrong area of the world, it was encouraging.

There are, in fact, now three ships. One of them is actually very small. It's just a boat in Bangladesh.

In fact, there's two boats. But thank you for your prayers. And what a challenge that meeting has been.

One of my scriptures has already been read. And the other one that I'd like you to turn to to redeem the time why I'm mentioning these two books I want you to get. Both by missionaries.

Both missionaries who have made an enormous impact. I feel very, very much that I'm a poor missionary. I spent a few years in India, a few in Spain and Mexico, a few in Belgium, Italy and France, and on the ships.

The rest of the time in my homeland of England, my adopted country. God led me out of the United States 21 years ago. And I've never been back except to preach a couple of times.

And I, when I think of these two men, Charles Marsh and Ralph Shallis, he's so adapted to France, he writes his books in French. We have to translate them back into English. So there's four of his books in French.

Only one in English. When I think of these two men, this man spent 45 years in the Muslim world. One out of every seven people in the world is a Muslim.

Less than 2% of the missionaries in the world work among Muslims. So that is a man who knows God, I can assure you. And Ralph Shallis.

Both of their books, from now on, a book on spiritual growth and into action, are two of the best follow-up books I can think of for this Keswick Convention. And the Keswick Bookstall and other bookstalls have been prepared, I believe, to have good quantities of those two books available. Now in Mark's Gospel, reading from the American Standard Version, Chapter 1. Keeping in mind what has already been read from Matthew's Gospel.

Forgive me if I go a little too fast. I have a lot that I would like to share and I tend to go too fast. But you can listen to the message on the tape.

And you'll find that if you just turn the speed down to half, you'll be able to concentrate better on the message. Mark's Gospel, Jesus preaches in Galilee. And I want us to just especially look at verse 16.

And as he was going along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And they immediately left the nets and followed him.

And going on a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the boat, mending the nets. And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went away to follow him. And then over in chapter 2, a totally different type of person, Matthew.

And the encounter of Matthew with our Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 14. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting in the tax office, and he said to him, follow me.

And he rose and followed him. Those of you who know Keswick, know that at the end of this meeting, a very simple, but significant invitation will be given. Which you can be even praying about during the meeting.

For those to stand, whose sense that God is calling them, my preference is the word leading. Whose sense that God is leading them to serve him as a missionary. And I think that invitation is a wonderful thing.

I'm always, or generally a coward, when it comes to invitations. So that if I don't get that far, canon niche will. The Lord, however, over the years at times has given me the grace to give such invitations.

And for those that may be critical of invitations, a few people are. I have seen people in almost every nation in the world, as a result of being given a simple opportunity to put some action onto the words. It says in Hebrews, the word preached was of no value, because it was not mixed with faith.

And I always feel that as we come toward the end of a great convention like this. That God is calling us, God is leading us, to mix the word preached with faith. This of course is not just for those, whose sense that God is leading them, or calling them to overseas or missionary service.

There is a sense that it's for all of us. And so though it may be only a few who stand, it is my prayer that it will be all of us. Who by God's grace and power will mix with faith the messages we have heard this week.

Now I'm not a person who can handle many messages. When I was in Chicago sitting under Alan Redpath, twenty some years ago, to hear him once would finish me. I got over excited, my metabolism went up, my blood pressure went up.

And Alan Redpath alone is not world's calmest speaker. You'll be here next Wednesday, I hope, to hear him. It's worth coming back just for that.

I'll get it on tape myself, I've been listening to Keswick tapes for as long back as I can remember. While I've had Donald English on Philippians here in the tent. I've had Donald English in my room, even when I was taking a bath, on Colossians.

What a blessing these tape recordings are. We've sent them out to OMers from almost the beginning of our work. The whole ministry of Keswick through tape and books has been one of several major influences on our whole movement that has enabled us to train and help disciple 22,000 men and women in a hundred nations across the world.

See, people don't understand what the Spirit of God is doing here in these days. And what the Spirit of God does through books and through tapes and through people who somehow come to grips with God in this tent and then go from here to obey and to do His will. But it'll never happen unless we mix what we have heard with faith.

Unless we're willing to take that step of faith. I have never found faith easy. And do not consider myself a great man of faith.

And if I chose my subject, I would never speak about world missions. That's not my main thing. I was going to a big church in a particular country, I won't tell you which country, and they all heard, you know, George Burroughs coming, international manipulator or coordinator of Operation Mobilization.

Some didn't show up. After preaching almost 14 years in a row in Cambridge and seeing recruits come out of there every year, the rumor went around that I was the evangelical Pied Piper at Cambridge. Can you imagine a skinny little non-intellectual like me going to Cambridge and leading these people astray? It was the joke of the week.

No, I couldn't have got those Cambridge students to go out to the mission field and they're out in almost every country we're working in, hand to hand with their friends from Oxford. Only the Holy Spirit, only the Holy Spirit can do that. And then the rumor went around that people were launching out with Operation Mobilization by great numbers into the communist world and the Muslim world and they weren't coming back.

This wasn't true. Almost all of them came back. Are we willing, really, as we go from this convention to do business with God, to mix the Word with faith? Again and again, I've been driven back to these words in Mark's Gospel.

Jesus, walking along the Sea of Galilee, sees these ordinary men, working men, and if we think that God is only looking for young people to send to the mission field, then we are ignorant of the New Testament. You may have heard a lot of missionary challenges, but you haven't read your New Testament. God is no

respector of persons.

When I first arrived in France, the first missionary I met was converted at 45 from drunkenness, was sent as an American from California to France, and when I met this man I thought, a missionary? He was just learning the language at 50, and now I could take you back to France and show you living churches that that dear man has planted. A humble, ordinary man who learned the language at 50 years of age, and God's used him not just in evangelism, but in church planting. And some of the most dynamic people I have met on the mission field have been sent out in their middle years or in their years of retirement by Captain Paget, who was the captain of our ship after years in the merchant navy around the coast of India where he was accused of being Holy Paget, this spirit-filled bachelor who God so mightily used to keep our ship going for many, many years.

I was with him in his dying days in that nursing home in Hove. Who will take the place of men like Captain Paget? Who will take the place of hundreds who are going to be with the Lord every year from our missionary forces? And some societies have reported to me they are barely keeping up with the death rate. Some of you may be from Brethren Assemblies, one of the most powerful missionary forces in its day.

Before Darby was ever a theologian, he was a dynamic missionary living on the barest essentials, spreading the Word of God across Ireland and across France. And today we can go to Spain, we can go to Italy, we can go to France, and there are still living assemblies because of that great force. And yet today the Brethren Assemblies are barely keeping up with the death rate.

There's not time to go into the statistics of other groups and other denominations. And I personally believe that when it comes to world missions, we are in an emergency. I believe this is true in any case of the world situation.

My favorite writer, A.W. Tozer, said this, The fall of man has created a perpetual crisis. It will last until sin has been put down and Christ reigns over a redeemed and restored world. Until that time, the earth remains a disaster area and its inhabitants live in a state of extraordinary emergency.

To me it has always been difficult to understand those evangelical Christians who insist upon living in the crisis as if no crisis existed. They say they serve the Lord, but they divide their days so as to leave plenty of time to play and loaf and enjoy the pleasures of the world as well. They are at ease while the world burns.

One great man of God said, speaking to a great host of young people, The great sin today among youth is an adultery or immorality or laziness or this or that. It's the sin of wasting time. No to go from this convention with the burden to redeem the time for God.

In many ways I'm very scared about giving the kind of invitation that we'll give in a few minutes because there is such a tendency to think that missions is mainly the people who somehow volunteer in how necessary that is and then go forward. Now please understand what I'm going to try to feebly say because I think it's so important I would have come to Keswick just for the next few sentences. I have come to love this country and make it my home.

I have read the history. I've listened to the recordings of Winston Churchill. British history runs through me and brings me to tears.

The men who have died and given their lives that we might even be here. And the danger in Britain today is we've forgotten our history. We've forgotten our heritage.

And it takes sometimes a dumb skinny, skinny immigrant to remind us that this country was bought with blood and our churches were bought with blood and we are only here because of blood. Dare we play now? Dare we become a group of religious parasites now shuttling in and out of our conventions singing our hymns but never really getting down to business in the warfare of the soul? Oh beloved, may we go from this tent soldiers of Jesus Christ and may we realize that the challenge young people to go to the mission field and then not stand behind them is a sin against God. I have known many, many, many British young people who wanted to be missionaries but received no encouragement from their church.

Sometimes because the church was not interested in missions at all but more often because the church had a stereotype view of what a missionary was and that he must have so many years of education and so many years at the local cemetery or seminary and then perhaps he could maybe become a missionary. I am not against seminaries and have preached in many of them and have more invitations to go back to them than I know what to do with. I just spoke for six days in Switzerland to the strongest evangelical seminary in the country to all the students and the head of the seminary has invited me to go there and teach practical theology and I don't believe in bringing a division between theology and reality theology and action.

That's why I love Keswick. That's why I love these some of them very quiet down to earth straightforward hard hitting types that I've been living together with a frightening experience I can tell you. I'm glad I had my wife with me I'm a very insecure person I've just been clinging on to her.

Lead the way darling lead the way forward surrounded by cannons. You see we live in different days and mission leaders we've got to understand this. I was reading a recent book about missions it is so theological it is so academic the average young person in Britain will not read that book past a few chapters.

Yes, the Cambridge and Oxford men will read it the Durham University folk will read it but God doesn't just call people out of university and our seminaries as great as some of them are are finding it extremely difficult the facts show us to produce missionaries. God is looking for a wider range of people. Many of our people have come as ordinary working people mechanics, secretaries ready to serve tables nobodies they've come just for a summer petrified at the normal missionary challenge frightened by all the standards and the application forms they saw this little movement Operation Mobilization and it said well just come for a summer learn what it's about we're not a mission society we're just a group of fellow strugglers and they've come and they saw in that one month and there's 400 more coming from Britain the biggest number from any nation again this summer in case you think Britain is being left out of missions they come and God uses them and you know many of them have remained with us for several years of training and then have gone out as missionaries now with almost every mission society in the world many others go back to Bible college after that initial training and discipling and I dare to say we have fed more people into continental Bible schools than any group Europe perhaps has ever known but we've got to give young people a chance we've got to put our buckets of cold water in the closet for a little while we've got to be stripped of our stereotyped ideas of what a missionary is so that even if a weak shivering young person in our church feels that he should spend a year serving Christ we might encourage him and we might support him and I dare to say that the greatest problem today in Britain is not young people going forward that's part of it but it's the church needing a renewed vision of missions needing a total

commitment to missions not a token commitment every church with a prayer meeting like we've had here every morning this week in an age when there is very little action in church prayer meetings because many churches no longer have prayer meetings and that frightens me with all that in mind we come back to this text where Jesus walks and sees these ordinary men and he says follow me and I'm sure that some of you young people have been sensing that all during the convention that somehow the Lord was trying to get through to you and some not so young as well and the question is now what will you do?

I remember Billy Graham speaking at Urbana in 1967 I only heard the tape it's part of our orientation and training when he spoke on Ezekiel 22:30 where it speaks about God looking to and fro looking for a man to stand in the gap and make up the hedge we've heard about the missionary needs there's no time to elaborate I was looking through this little book Operation World before I came up to speak and I just ticked off 15 nations where the sum total of the witness is less than I would find in Bromley, Kent where I now live 15 nations with less churches less Christians and far far far far less witness than one English town this is supposedly the decade of evangelism and I'm not against that as far as I knew since Pentecost every decade was a decade of evangelism but I'm glad now here in

England we're acknowledging this as a decade of evangelism but I would beseech you brethren let's make it a decade of world evangelism because that's what I read in Acts 1:8 ye are my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth and England and Britain has 50 times as much witness and we still need more than the nations I have just come from even in the past six months yes we read from our scripture in Matthew the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few and we've now come to that crucial point in this convention when some of us yea in a real way all of us must determine by faith to do something about it so many young people say to me but I haven't had a special call many of the best workers I've met on the mission fields of 40 nations have never had a

special call in this desperate day and age some of us don't need a special call we need a special kick and I'd be happy to see you at the end of the meeting because we have God's word I've never had a special call I was saved in the night I was saved in Madison Square Garden from a non-Christian home through a praying lady who had prayed for me for three years and prayed that people in her high school would go all over the world sharing Jesus Christ and that literally happened the very night I was converted to Christ I just knew I must be his ambassador I must share his word yes God does give some a special call we're all different emotionally we can see that on the Keswick platform but God in other cases just leads people some for short term some for longer term as far as discipleship

that's always long term that's always for life but some may go out as a doctor for a few years such men are needed or a ship engineer for a few years and then come back as one of our engineers and become the head of the missionary committee in his local church ooh we need some fire there God bless you as you go from Keswick and may you take those steps of faith that this movement is known for for men even like Samuel Zwimmer that mighty pioneer to the Muslim world once stood in this tent or this place and called us to go let's hear the voice of the Lord let's respond in prayer in support in action in commitment and in those steps of faith that will lead young and old actually to begin to go and so often the problem in England today is passivity and instead of real fire we've got false

fire which is spreading across the land in extremist groups and taking 50% of the young people from our churches oh how I yearn young person that when you do commit your life somehow you will not be deceived as Satan pulls a counter attack and then attempts to get you into extremism or emotionalism or into some other little kinky thing down the road where they feel they are the only true church it's a lie of the

devil and it's growing too much in Britain today may we know that true fire that balanced fire that consistent fire that burns and burns and burns and leads us into working together with the whole body of Christ in love in compassion and in all that has been challenged or brought to us through these messages

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