

Going Somewhere

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the critical role of vision and the Holy Spirit in the pursuit of world missions and evangelism.

Duration: 51:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 13:2-4

Topics: "Missions Strategy", "Church Planting"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a strategy in fulfilling the task of spreading the word of God. He cautions against blindly rushing into missions without proper training and guidance, as it can do more harm than good. The speaker shares his personal struggle with overwhelming vision and the need to delegate responsibilities. He highlights the need for men and women of vision who are passionate about reaching the unreached and establishing the church, working alongside other mission agencies. The sermon encourages the audience to seek the vision of God and to pray for laborers to be sent into the harvest.

Transcript

We thank you for what you have done throughout this day. We thank you for the people you have brought here from all over North America and Mexico. We thank you for this message and song, this challenge to our hearts concerning Love Europe.

Lord, we are excited about what you are doing. We thank you. We don't have to fake that.

It's burning. It's an inner burning that we cannot quench. And we ask you to speak to us now as we look into your word, as we consider the challenge of world missions and our part in that great challenge.

In Jesus' name, Amen. When you think of world missions, you often probably think of the book of Acts. And I want you to turn to Acts chapter 13.

It's a book that I spend a lot of time reading, studying, memorizing, and discussing. There seems to be a lot of ignorance about the book of Acts these days. I remember in a church in England sharing that I wanted to speak on the book of Acts and would they turn in their Bibles to Acts chapter 29.

It's interesting to see everybody turning to Acts 29, including the pastor. You know, of course, I hope like the Bereans have a greater knowledge of God's word and know that there's only 28 chapters in the book

of Acts. We are Acts 29 or 2029.

The same Holy Spirit who worked in the lives of people in the book of Acts, that same Holy Spirit is working through men and women across the world today. And I want to just make it very, very clear that our burden is not operation mobilization. That is not our first burden.

Some of us have often got very close to leaving simply because we're not interested in sectarianism, we're not interested in just pushing our own thing. I speak in far more non-OM meetings that have nothing necessarily to do with OM than I speak in OM meetings. You come to Chicago on June 2nd and I'll be speaking at the Jesus People Christian Music Festival.

It has nothing to do with operation mobilization. I probably won't even be presenting operation mobilization. But we'll be seeing young people converted.

We'll be seeing men and women making Christ Lord. And God has given us a unique linking with over 100 mission societies. We have OM graduates working with almost every single mission society in the entire world.

Many of them are now missionary directors. One major European mission has a number of XOMers as major directors in their work. And we are of one heart and one mind with so many groups, especially those who are working in the Muslim world.

There aren't that many. We have differences. Great unity is not in the midst of uniformity.

It is often far more in the midst of differences. And I hope you will be challenged as you spend some time, perhaps in personal study, in the book of Acts. As we think about discipleship, which we're considering each evening in some aspect or other, as we reflect back on last night when we spoke about the kind of men we are looking for, the kind of men we believe God is looking for, crucified men and women, Spirit-filled men and women, disciplined men and women.

We, of course, know there are many other things God is looking for in our lives. But as we move on from there, to think of how this commitment, how this reality can flow from Hamilton to Bombay, from Toronto to Calcutta, from Canada to Iran, from the United States to Turkey, how we can obey the Lord Jesus who gave us the Great Commission through realistic biblical commitment. When I think of this, a word immediately comes to my mind that I want to be impressed upon you, and it's the word vision.

One of the reasons, we're not here in Hamilton right now just for one reason. There's a number of reasons, and God will be working in different people in different ways. That's why behind the scenes all during these days, there will be counseling and praying and the work of the Holy Spirit on a personal basis.

And we've got some real victories to win this week before we move out. But that word vision, I believe is incredibly, or very, very important as we consider, the task that is ahead of us. I would beg of you to understand that OM is not primarily a training program.

It has never been that. People have called it that. We are pluralistic.

We allow a lot of vocabulary. I've heard leaders stand up and talk about OM. I said, well, that's great.

I don't know what movement they're talking about. Praise the Lord, at least they're with us. Operation Mobilization was raised up, firstly, as an evangelistic thrust to reach the lost.

I went to Mexico when I was 19. I wasn't thinking much about training. I don't even know if the word was in my vocabulary.

I hadn't gone yet to Bible college. I was in a secular college, a few religious overtones, and I had a burden to reach men for Christ. I was in the jail one night of the week.

I was with drunks another night of the week. I was with lost children in the poverty-stricken areas of that city another night of the week. I was usually in Youth for Christ on Saturday night, preaching on Sunday in the few churches that would ever let me preach.

And I was just burning to reach men for Christ. I had already seen that revival, or mini-revival in my high school. I had already flooded out tens of thousands of gospel tracks in the subways of New York City.

I had already stood at 42nd Street preaching the gospel, hiring coaches to run people into the Billy Graham campaign in 57, showing Billy Graham films all over my area, selling books door to door in all the surrounding towns in my area. I don't think the word training ever even came into my head. I had been filled with the Holy Ghost, and I was going to reach the world for Christ.

And sometimes there is too much emphasis on, Oh, I have so much to learn. Oh, God can never use me. I need another 20 more years of education.

I need a beard and four kids and all this and all that. And maybe someday, somehow, I'll go out and God will use me. Do you know how many missionaries our seminaries have sent out in the past 20 years? Do you want a scandal? Do you want something to make Jimmy Swagger look like Little Orphan Annie? Then you study what our seminaries are doing for world missions.

It's a scandal. And we stand up and say we believe the Bible is the Word of God. Don't misunderstand and think that I am anti-seminary.

I am pro-seminary. And there are seminaries, a few of them, that are putting world missions back on the map. And maybe you'll go to one of them.

Because we need theology. And OM has been indebted through our whole ministry to men like John Stott, to men like Josh McDowell, who I ministered together with last summer, and many, many other great intellectuals and theologians. We need theology, but we need theology that is on fire.

We need the balance. We need great intellects in the church. It's one of the great needs in Germany, where I've just come from.

Great, dynamic intellects who can answer the hard question. But they need to be on fire. And they need to be men and women of vision.

And we want to instill within you this week vision. Without vision, OM will become drudgery for you. This summer will become a burden.

It will become a heavy experience that you may even look back on with less than a pleasant taste in your mouth. We are going forth to Europe, to Quebec, to Mexico to evangelize. Now before I go any further,

let's look at the text.

I got in great trouble with my dear friend John Stott at Urbana way back in 68. I got so carried away with my testimony, I only had 25 minutes. And I got to the text in the last two minutes.

He took me aside and exhorted me, and it was a great experience that I'll never forget, I can assure you. So let's get into the text, lest I get in trouble with David Lundy or one of the other seminarians who are here today. By the way, this brother just graduated from Ontario Theological Seminary and the president of the seminary I think is speaking tomorrow or the next day.

I think we have one of the younger members of the XOM fleet speaking tomorrow, Dr. Homer Payne. He isn't even 80 yet, praise God, for so many young men that are in the battle. It's an encouragement to me.

Acts 13. Now there were in the church, here again we see the church, it's always the church in the book of Acts. Now there were in the church, that was at Antioch, it was a local church in that city, certain prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger, Lucius, Cyrene, Manan, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, a missing ingredient in the average church, isn't it? As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, there they go again. Talk about extremism.

When they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed on to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus, which by the way is the OM coordinating base for the Arab world, in case those of you, you know, you need a verse for going to the Arab world, there it is. You can underline it.

You won't stay there long, Egypt is too nearby. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had also John to their minister. I remember when Dr. Donald McGovern spoke at the OM conference in Germany some years ago.

We have it on video, it's brilliant. When I first heard about this man, I was a little bit skeptical. You always seem to be talking about church growth, and you always seem to be emphasizing to go where the people are already.

Here we were banging away at Turkey and going to the hard places, and he was sort of saying back in the 60s, you know, go to the easy places. But you know, as we listened more to what this man had to say, and as we brought him especially to one of our conferences, and he also changed, perhaps a little bit, and saw the need also to go to the Muslims, and to go to the hard places. I tell you, we were greatly encouraged.

And we can learn so much from these men. He was actually a missionary in India for many, many years. And he brought to our attention something that some of us hadn't seen before, that the whole church at Antioch didn't necessarily have a missionary vision.

Perhaps can't be proven. But he brought out that it was five men. And you know, if there's only a few in your church have a missionary vision, don't get discouraged.

Don't sit back and wait till everybody, you know, is totally agreed on what you're going to do. But you start praying. Don't start just mouthing off.

Don't start just in some kind of judgmentalist campaign to put everybody who hasn't got a missionary map and a copy of Operation World down. There is such a thing as missionary pride. There's map pride.

You haven't got a world map. Where have you been? Maybe he's been out working, trying to give money so that some other person could have a missionary map. Five men had a vision.

And they ministered to the Lord. Now, I could speak for an hour on that one word, ministered unto the Lord, because I believe it is one of the things we are missing in our contemporary Christian scene. Now, I am a man greatly indebted to other people.

And when I was a student at that Maryville College where I met Dale Roton, an interesting character came to town who had been in the New Tribes Mission when they had two airplane crashes and killed off two plane loads of missionaries. They, in those days, were a little bit in a hurry to get to the field. And God took New Tribes Mission through an awesome time of testing far greater than I think we've ever known in O.M. And DeVern Frompke was in some of that.

He saw some of that. Maybe some people feel he went to the other extreme. I remember when he spoke at our conference in London about the mid-60s on the need for preparation.

I'm sure he had some doubts about O.M. We looked a little bit like New Tribes to him. But you know, God used his message. But long before he spoke at that conference, he came to this little town in Maryville in Tennessee.

And Dale and I went down to that meeting. Almost anything around that was spiritual or that was alive, we'd go to it. We were hungry.

And we went to that meeting and we heard that man of God, DeVern Frompke, speak about the inner sanctuary, speak about reality living in the Holy of Holies. We heard some beginning messages on God consciousness. Later on, I was able to get his books, Divine Intention.

His books about the ultimate intention and other books that are not widely known. And I learned something more. Tozer had a similar message about becoming God conscious.

Because I was too people conscious. And some of my ministry was people oriented. And after I ministered, I wanted to know what the people thought.

And I stood at the door and they came by and shook my hand. If they said, God has dealt with me, God spoke to me through you, I would be encouraged. And God, through the writings of DeVern Frompke and A.W. Tozer, and also the ministry that came to me out of Keswick and from Alan Redpath, more and more exposed so much of self that was creeping into my ministry.

I was even preaching at times with a heart that was hostile. And the preaching was almost like a therapy for this hostile, angry young man. God is longing for us to focus on Him.

Even here we can focus on OM. We can focus on what we want to do in Europe. It may be Love Europe.

It may be Run 88 India. It may be Operation Peachtree City. It may be Quebec for Jesus.

It may be Take Mexico for Christ. All of that can have its place. But above all else, if we want to be God's disciples in world missions, we must become God-centered.

What does God think about what I'm saying? What does God think about what I'm thinking? He knows our thought life. This small group of men ministered to the Lord. I don't want to say more than is written here.

There are many other passages in the Old and New Testament that could be added in at this time to bring out the importance of God-centeredness, God-consciousness. There were great men of God that learned to practice the presence of God. I shared with you last night that I believe the greatest book back there, none of them equal to the Bible.

The Bible is God's Word. Books are sermons in print. But it's a book by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones on basic spiritual life.

I think the title is It miscommunicates spiritual depression, its cause and cure. In that book, he brings us back to God. One of the books that's been required reading often in OM, J.I. Packer's book, Knowing God.

We urge you to read some of these books by men like A.W. Tozer, The Pursuit of God. So important to understand this. But we don't remain here.

We don't play one truth against the other. Isn't that sad? Don't you find that often happening? You find a group of people that seem to be seeking God. They're having a great emphasis on worship.

But if you come along with a challenge about world missions, you can't get in the door. One truth is not in competition with other truths. Paul said, I shun not to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.

The book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 8 says, The words of our Lord Jesus before he ascended into heaven, ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. He preceded that by saying, and speaking about the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit. They're not in competition.

Someone said if you don't have a holy go, you probably don't have the Holy Ghost. I think there's an element of truth in that. Somebody else said you're either evangelizing or fossilizing.

I know these are cliches, but that's the advantage of working with young people. You can use cliches. It's the first time you've ever heard it.

It's not a cliché. It may blow you right out of your pew. I want to ask you, do you have a vision? I can share this honestly that some of us are so overwhelmed with vision, we sometimes collapse under the load.

My problem isn't more vision. I wouldn't doubt my vision needs constant sharpening. That's why I pray through the entire book Operation World.

That's why I receive a few hundred missionary letters from other missionaries outside of OM, and a few hundred, many hundreds, of missionaries from people in OM, and I read through them and I pray through them and I try to get into a new book every week or two. Not as much as I used to. My vision needs sharpening, but somehow, more generally, I have too much vision, too many ideas.

I'm overwhelmed by it. I can't get enough people to delegate things off to, and I have to just fall at the feet of my Lord and worship Him and ask Him to lift the vision, lift the burden because I can't handle it. If someone gave me \$25 million right now, I could spend it in two months, most of it outside of OM.

The needs are so great. People are dying without food, without clothing, right now, in Ethiopia. What does our society care? We say, oh, we do care.

Yes, we say that with our lips. But the way we spend our money, the way we spend our summers, what we think about, what we put into our bank accounts, that tells what we really believe. This is just talk.

And it's no different sometimes than the pub or the bar down the road. It's just talk. We don't really mean it.

If I told you this roof, that I had researchers working all day on this building, which looks a bit old, and that the roof was going to fall in on your head, what would you do? Tell me. No doubt you would write a chorus. Oh, my.

We have a new chorus every day in England. We've become chora-maniacs. Sometimes the choruses go on for an hour.

The poor guy, the poor, poor turkey, poor guy, has to get up and preach. He gets about 20 minutes at the end of an hour of choruses. I love choruses.

I even sing them in my sleep. Not out loud, generally, because that bothers my wife. Last night, I was... I hate to get in talking about my wife because I know it offends some people.

It does not offend my wife, as far as I know. But Frank Fortunato gave me a new praise tape. He gave me two praise tapes.

The first one I put in the machine and it just crumbled up and disintegrated. It was a bad tape. Thank you, Frank.

So I put the second one in the machine. I really wanted to listen to it. But it was real late.

I guess it was about 11. Phone calls were over and general activities were simmering down. And I love to listen to praise tapes.

They usually, if you have a good tape recorder, they stop at the end. But, you know, my wife does not like to try to sleep with Verwer praise tapes going on. So I don't actually remember what happened last night, though I know I did dream about being in a Soviet prison camp and a lot of wild things happened.

I throw that in in case any of you have bad dreams. It's absolutely normal in an OM conference. Most of it never comes to pass and I hope you won't pay too much attention to it.

You see someone like Frank Fortunato coming through your window in a dream with some new song, don't worry about it. Vision. I was climbing a mountain in Scotland about a year or two ago.

One of the things you can do these days when you climb mountains is listen to Bible ministry because you've got these walkmans. And I was climbing this mountain in Scotland and I was listening to John Stopp on the subject of vision. And I tell you, before I got to the top of that mountain, I was repenting and asking God to renew my vision.

He spoke on leadership. This was a tape from his contemporary school of Christianity. Some of our people have gone through in London.

And he was speaking about leadership. Some of you, I know, as sure as I'm standing here, you are leaders. God is going to use you.

Men and women as leaders in the church. But if you are to be a leader, you must have a vision. In this particular message, he talked about Wilberforce.

Often when I take people for a walk near my home in England, I go to an old tree. There's almost nothing left by that tree. And I stand on this place where Wilberforce first challenged William Penn, the Prime Minister of England, that he wanted to present to Parliament the concept of freeing the slaves.

And from that time and before that time, Wilberforce, day and night, seven days a week, lived and dreamed this vision that the slaves of the world may be free and that there would be no more slave trade. It was an uphill battle. It was impossible.

It was ridiculous. The whole society was against them. The whole world was against them.

But God gave him a vision. And before he died, this man who had become a committed Christian, slave trade was brought to an end. And the history of the world was changed.

I want to ask you, young man, young woman, do you dream dreams? Dreams of seeing men and women set free in the back streets of a Muslim city. Dreams of the last tribe in Africa, the last unreached people's group in Asia, being penetrated. Dreams, somehow, of little worshipping groups in Turkestan, little worshipping groups in Balochistan, or Kurdistan, gathering, even as we are tonight, worshipping Jesus.

We need men, we need women, who will dream dreams, who will have a vision. And nothing will stop them from seeing that vision fulfilled. Now, always when you speak this way, there's a danger you'll get some one more person into extremism.

Some little half-converted cockeyed cowboy will jump up and think, I'm Wilberforce. And he'll launch down the street with a big sign, turn or burn, passing out leaflets at the parliament building, and demanding that whatever may be on his mind at that time, free coffee for vagrants or whatever else. You must understand that if you are to be God's man, if you are to be God's woman, there has to be that time of preparation.

For some of you it will be Bible college. For some of you it will be your own church. For some of you, OM may play a small part in that time of preparation.

I may have gone to Mexico when I was 19, but I was absolutely, seriously committed to Christ by 17. There were two intensive years evangelizing in New York City, seeing revival in my high school, memorizing Scripture, listening to Barnhouse on the radio, feasting on every Christian book I could get before God ever took me overseas. And when I went overseas, it was very much in subjection to a missionary of the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mexico City whose sister I met selling books in my hometown.

Incredible way that God puts things together. And it was in subjection to a local church in Monterrey, Mexico. And when we went out to that prison in Monterrey as young Christians to minister, we went under their umbrella.

We went under their teaching and guiding hands. A beautiful story. The world is not going to be evangelized unless we have more men and women of vision.

First of all, that vision of God that we see in Isaiah chapter 6 that I hope you'll read during these days. And then that vision for reaching the world. So often we refer to Matthew 9. I don't want to do it again.

The harvest is plenteous, the laborers are few. Pray ye, the Lord of the harvest, that He'll send forth laborers. As we have this vision for world evangelism, as we have this vision to penetrate the unreached people, to establish the church working with all mission agencies, whether they agree with us or not, we're working with them.

Because the Holy Spirit is the director. As great as we think Love Europe is, we realize that Love Europe, even together with the people that work with us, other mission agencies, will still only be a small part of all that God will be doing in Europe. That's great.

I'm glad that what we're doing is only a small part. Because the task is so great. But as we think of vision, as we think of the task, we must have a strategy.

We must have a strategy. It's not a matter of just hearing a battle cry, just getting a television newscast, people are dying in Ethiopia, jumping in your car, jumping in a plane, and going to Ethiopia. You could do more harm than good.

Some OMers, humanly speaking, have done more harm than good. We've been battling that since the first campaign. And I believe we are more trained and more experienced than ever to try to keep that negative factor at a minimum during these great campaigns.

We have men of God, we have pastors and teachers, some of them were trained on OM, some years ago. Never running the sound, please understand with me, you don't turn it up, you turn it down. Praise the Lord.

One of my goals is to speak softer. That's just another example of what a failure I have been over the years. I was in an Anglican church in England trying to speak soft, and they had one of these mega-sensitive sound systems.

And I started, unfortunately again, there it is, another weakness, getting excited about Jesus and the Word, world evangelism, and the volume went up and up, and I don't know what the man was doing with the sound, but a lady gave me a note at the end of the meeting. This was in Cambridge. Good proper Anglican church.

The lady gave me a note. I like to read the notes because sometimes it's saying, you know, praise the Lord, God's work in my heart. I did have a note come up to me at the pulpit once.

That was a little embarrassing. It said, your time's up, sit down now. But this note, this note that this lady sent up to me said something about the message, but she said, you don't need to shout, we Anglicans are not deaf.

Never forget that. As we have this vision to go, as we obey the Lord Jesus Christ to go, which is what we are doing this summer, let us not think of this as being superficial. I'm willing to challenge anybody who's done his homework on short-term missions about this kind of work being superficial.

I just love the fellowship of these people. Some of them end up joining OM for life. One false cult has 24,000 men on the field short-term right now.

24,000 men. I don't know what they do with their women in this cult. And they have proven over many years that that two-year commitment is not superficial.

In fact, it forces them to put their work more quickly into the hands of the nationals because they go back. They go back into business, they go back home, and then they send their money. And they have done an in-depth work for their cult all over the world with very few long-term career people.

I actually believe in long-term career people even more than the short-term. So that's not a problem. But when God is in it, though you may only be 19, though you may not know the language very well, when God is in it, it is not superficial.

There is a difference and we need discernment to know that which is the beginning of something great and that which is merely superficial. I dare to say some of the things done in some of our great institutions that sometimes criticize short-term people, I dare to say some of the things they do might be a bit superficial. But I'd be very slow to write off those institutions if God has raised them up.

Perhaps we all just need a little more patience with one another and just a bigger view of what God can do. What is the strategy as we go forward? Firstly, the strategy is pray. That's what we see these people do.

And in OM we believe in prayer and fasting, though I think in recent years we've become a little weak on fasting, reacting against those years when we got extreme in the fasting. One woman on my team fasted 40 days. We had a number of people in OM fast 40 days.

We had people falling over from fasting. People looked at me and thought the whole movement was one big propagation of skinniness and fasting. All kinds of rumors got spread around.

People would meet me at the door and give me a donation and say, look, get a meal. You don't look good at all. A lot of money came in in that way in the early days.

Dale Roton wrote a two-page paper on the subject of fasting and I would challenge you to study that subject. You'll probably on OM have the opportunity to at least miss one meal for the sake of the kingdom and many more opportunities according to your own self-discipline that we spoke about last night. Prayer.

Like we're going to have here on Wednesday night. Like we're having sprinkled throughout the day and in your fellowship groups. Like you're supposed to be having early in the morning before you come.

Not so easy when there's an intensive schedule. I think it's important to understand that we're not basically here for a Bible conference. This is not a summer camp.

This is a boot camp. This is a last... How can you say it? A last minute effort to get as much information and facts and orientation. I'm speaking more of the day time.

Into your heart and mind to prepare you for what you're going to face in a few days time as you land in Europe. And some of the people who are critical of short-term work actually are not critical of OM because they believe the training, the orientation, the preparation for cross-cultural communication, the emphasis on language and contextualization that OM has enables us to be more effective than some situations where there isn't that kind of training. So our first strategy is prayer.

Pray ye the Lord of the harvest. Would you do that by visiting friends? We need more workers. Every mission needs more workers.

We need more prayer. We need to make the prayer meeting the number one meeting in the church for the believers. We need nights of prayer.

Praise God for David Bryant and the great world concert of prayer movement. We're having one as soon as I get back to Europe on the 18th of June in London with all the churches of South East London or many of them coming together with OM and having a world concert of prayer. David Bryant will be one of the main speakers at our main conference for the year and two year program people that comes the end of August and September.

Many of us have been involved in these in the United States. May it spread by God's grace throughout the whole world. Pray for David as he has moved out from InterVarsity as this movement is growing so fast.

InterVarsity felt it would have more freedom and be able to accomplish more as a separate entity. We need to pray for him. Prayer.

Intercessory prayer. There's an emphasis especially in Europe and you'll see it on praise and in worship and that's in OM as well. We've always believed as Tozer said that worship was the missing jewel of the evangelical church.

But real worship, real contrition before God should lead to intercession. Or it somehow short circuits all that God wants to do. Some of you know how to worship.

You know how to praise the Lord. In private and in a group. Wonderful.

Let it flow now into more intercession. Into prevailing prayer for the kingdom. That's our first strategy.

Everything else should grow out of that. That doesn't mean we don't believe in management training. It doesn't mean we don't believe in expertise.

It doesn't mean we don't believe that excellency and the call to excellency is important. It doesn't mean we don't believe in social justice. It doesn't mean we don't believe or preach against abortion.

OM with all of us around the world, we have so many different convictions and burdens we can never put them all together in one conference. But we believe prayer is the priority in making all of these things really work for the kingdom and not become wood, hay and stubble. We need more people praying about that abortion thing.

We need more people praying about the problem of injustice in South Africa, injustice in the Soviet Union, injustice, the truth is, in almost every nation in the world. So I don't know why we always pick on one or two nations. And if you don't think there's any injustice in your nation, you just haven't studied much about your nation yet.

Prayer is the priority. It also is the great equalizer because the director of the mission and the newest recruit, the most gifted man, the weakest man, they fall together at the foot of the cross. There are no titles, there are no badges, there are no rewards that we can throw out for prayer.

What are we going to do with dear praying Mrs. Clap down there in Pennsylvania at 87 years of age? Send her a title? I'm sure that would really impress her. International prayer woman. Prayer is the great leveler, the great equalizer.

The second part of our strategy is to take the gospel to people where they are. To go through every possible method. We've broadened our methodology over the past years as we've learned more about people in the way that they think.

But we don't want to condemn people. We don't want to condemn people in the methods that they use. How many of you have heard of Arthur Blessed? Raise your hand.

Maybe not so well known in Canada. Probably if you first heard about him you'd think it's a gimmick. Who's this crazy Hollywood American carrying a cross around the world? What a joke! Must be an ego trip, right? Beware of judging other people in their ministries.

I will tell you Arthur Blessed has made as great an impact upon Britain for Christ as any man in this century apart from perhaps Billy Grant. An incredible, honest, open, unique one-off character actually. We're all one-off.

Just some are a little more off, you know. And in sincerity he has gone around the world. His biography is just incredible.

He has made an impact in one of the most sophisticated churches in London, Westminster Chapel where Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones used to be the pastor. It is a story that has not yet been told. And one of the things he emphasized speaking at one of our conferences is the need not to judge other people in their ministry.

In fact, that's where I got that idea about that poster, Turner Burn. He said, if some little old man feels God has led him to go down the road with that poster, then you better be careful of judging him. That came in a question and answer session.

I thought he was going to answer the opposite way that he gave the answer in such a compassionate and loving way. O.M. believes in flooding literature out across the world. But we believe that literature should be with follow-up, correspondence course invitations that can lead us to be able to bring people to follow-up rallies and see them converted and see them form Bible study groups.

We have channeled hundreds, literally hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people over the years into the Bible correspondence courses and some of them, never as many as we would long for, have come to know the Lord Jesus and are going on today. So O.M. is still committed to literature evangelism. I've written a book on the subject.

No one ever buys it, so if you find one in there, just take it free and tell them to charge it to me. Literature evangelism. But we believe that personal evangelism and friendship evangelism, and we've been saying this for 25 years, is often more effective than literature evangelism.

So we want you to know how to win people to Christ. We want you to learn how to share your faith. We don't use one method.

We have many different methods. We believe also it's important to teach young people how to be good listeners. Before you jump on them and push your four tracks down his throat, you might want to listen to

him.

You say, how can you do this if you don't know the language? Many of the people you will be working with know the language. And if you don't get out into these countries, how are you ever going to learn the language? Some of you are going to come back from Quebec with beginning stage French. Some of you know some French and you're going to be able to polish it up.

I would estimate that O.M. has thrust at least 10, 15, 20,000 people into language learning. You've got to start somewhere. When I was studying Spanish in high school, my teacher used to look at me and, you know, it was really a bizarre scene.

I was supposed to read a book. I couldn't even read the title. Even in college, I took Spanish.

College Spanish. It was bad news. But I went to Mexico that summer.

And in one month approximately between that summer and the next summer, I was preaching and speaking the Spanish language. You can learn a language. Some of you got an inferiority complex about a language.

I remember a fellow who came from India on our ship. You know, he wasn't a highly talented person. Praise the Lord.

He had a willing heart. He was a helper. We put him washing dishes.

We didn't know where to put him. We weren't sure, you know, he could handle it. Washing dishes, a few other things.

I think he learned a language every year. He speaks six languages now, that fellow. Poor guy.

You can learn a language. OM is committed to a contextualized, sensitive approach to winning men and women to Jesus Christ. That doesn't mean we'll never do anything that's insensitive.

We're experimenters. We try things. We are committed to open air ministry.

I wish Mickey Walker was here to speak about that. We're committed to innovative ways of communicating in the open air. We're committed to video.

We're committed to film. We're committed to the audio tape. There's a display in that room by Gospel Recordings that everybody should go and look at.

We've been using Gospel Recordings from the very foundation of our work when we went to Mexico in 1957. I can't even tell you how many of their cassettes and records we just ordered for Run 88 in India. I mean, it was thousands and thousands.

So we have a strategy, but it is a pluralistic approach, and please get this, it changes from one country to the other. So before you decide, some of you longer termers, what country you're thinking of going into, you need to find out what their strategy is. If you think you're going down to Turkey to mainly do mass evangelism, you get down there and you discover that most of the work in Turkey is small Bible study group, friendship evangelism, learning the language.

You probably won't be accepted for your first year, but go to Berlin for our Turkish orientation and language program among the Turks in Berlin. And if you prove yourself, maybe the door will open to go to Turkey, but unlikely will you be giving out tracts or selling books door to door. Every single country in OM is a unique entity where we are finding God's strategy and God's wisdom through prayer, through the nationals who are responsible for the work in their country, the local boards of directors, and the input from local churches to see the breakthrough in that land.

That's how in France we've seen 17 or 18 churches planted without any of them becoming OM churches. That's how we've seen a penetration in Bangladesh, which we're hesitant to talk about or certainly put into print, where we have seen little Muslim cluster groups worshipping the Lord Jesus, where now probably a third to half of our workers in Bangladesh of a couple dozen are from Muslim background. So OM in some ways is a pluralistic movement drawing from a wide range of people in a wide range of nations using a pluralistic strategy to reach people by every means with the Gospel across the world.

That's why God gave us the idea of getting a ship so that we could train and study, which is an important part of OM life, and in a real sense we are a training work. People are trained, but not in terms of extra time or a lot of time for systematic Bible study, systematic theology. Our heart linking with Briarcrest in Prairie, where I go every couple of years to speak, and another 200 Bible colleges across the world, is proof enough that though we feel strongly about certain weaknesses in contemporary Christianity, we are linked together as partners, battling these problems together, rather than standing outside the wall throwing rocks at other fellow Christians.

It's exciting. And we believe on-the-job training has its roots back in the life and teaching and lifestyle of our Lord Jesus Christ who took those 12 and who specialized in two or three who are described later as being pillars in the church. I want to bring in at this point another important part of our strategy for world missions.

The part that to some degree we got from a man named Dawson Trotman. I went to a little house of a real fool for Christ near Maryville College of a dear old man who was a missionary extremist if you ever met one. That was a very important meeting in my life.

And he played, it was there in that house, they played that old tape by Dawson Trotman in which he tells about winning this man to Christ, the hitchhiker, later on meeting the same guy, no change whatsoever in his life. That led Dawson into the founding of the Navigators and a movement that emphasized man to man discipleship. OM has always been a movement from its beginning that has been willing to receive truth from many, many quarters.

That's why I guess we're a little hard to understand and pin down and get the right label on us. I will tell you, I had already seen what happened in my high school with so many of the kids back sliding who came to Christ in my meeting. And I believe very young in my Christian life through many influences that follow-up was where it was at.

Follow-up was where it was at. And there is a sense that I'm only here tonight because I believe that most of you need real follow-up. And I believe that when you get involved with God, you obey God, you do God's will as they did in the book of Acts.

That is the greatest follow-up program you can ever get in. Many of you know your heads are full. You've been taught Bible verses since you were knee-high to the pew.

Some of you probably know far more from the Bible than I do. But I want to ask, is it real? Does it work? Are you seeing answers to prayer? Are you seeing things actually happen in answer to prayer? I believe as we go forward, we are going to be followed up. If I can use the term.

We are going to be followed up by the Holy Spirit as we emphasize following up other people. As you give out, God gives you more. As you forget a little bit about yourself, even here now, maybe some of you are focusing too much on yourself.

Where am I going to go? Ooh, I didn't have a perfect sleep last night. Ooh, I wonder what this interview is going to be like tomorrow. Maybe I need to do this and maybe I need to do that.

Don't misunderstand. You have to organize yourself. Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

I don't think most of you are going around forgetting yourself. It's not the biggest problem with most people. But I'll tell you, as you want to encourage others, as you want to be a blessing to others, as you look for a possible Timothy, though some don't like the terminology, you're going to find that you yourself grow.

For every 10% of energy we put into raw, frontline evangelism and OM, we put 90% into following up, grounding those faiths, getting them into living fellowships, helping deal with people and their problems, teaching them about perseverance, teaching them about spiritual warfare, learning and helping them to learn about their damaged emotions. We're having an increased number of people come to us in our work who have been raped, who have experienced incest in the home. People coming to us out of prison.

People coming to us who have been on drugs. These people are not generally ready for apostolic missionary work in the regions beyond. But I believe experience has shown that they are often ready for supervised evangelism with the church under supervision.

Yes, it's risky. But let me tell you, if a man has those kind of problems, he is also risky to leave back in the local church. I'm not convinced that all of our local churches are so ready and so effective in following up on some of the young people of our day and age.

Personally, I think God's program is bold. I remember when some churches attacked Bible colleges years ago. Bible colleges of the devil! All training should be done in the local church.

Such narrow-mindedness has sent the church back many, many decades. Dr. McGovern in that same meeting when he shared with us in Germany pointed out that here in the Book of Acts teams were raised up which later in history became classified as para-church agencies. Praise God in Britain, some of the strongest groups speaking against para-church agencies recently in a public meeting announced to para-church leaders you are part of the church! We are together! One of Satan's most subtle strategies has been to bring a division between strong local churches and powerful missionary agencies who have expertise and structure and men gifted to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Yes, God has given us a vision. But God has also given us a strategy. Prayer.

And taking the gospel to every part of the world with great sensitivity and concern for people, for culture. Allowing most of the leadership to be on a national level so that as we go as Canadians and Americans we must go as servants. We must go ready to submit even at times when we don't understand.

As we join hands in partnership with our European brothers, our Asian brothers, our African brothers, I believe the whole world can be penetrated and we can see healthy, yay healthy and happy missionary work. It is my conviction that missionaries are happy people. This is not some kind of overseas purgatory for people who feel bad about past sins.

This is a campaign in obedience to Jesus Christ to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Whether it be on the ship, in the back of an O.M. truck or lorry, or whether it be on a bicycle or by foot. And plenty of you will be doing a lot of walking this summer so you better have a good pair of shoes.

Blessed are the feet of those who take the gospel of peace. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank you for this challenge of world evangelism.

We thank you that you are increasing our vision during these days. You are opening our eyes to see the unreached people. You are opening our eyes to see the neglected Muslim world.

You are also opening our eyes to show us where the church wants our help and needs our help in many parts of Europe and Africa. We thank you that you have given us this strategy based on prayer and godly living to move out in evangelism and church planting and follow up even to the ends of the earth. And though, Lord, we know there will probably be mistakes and failures along the way, we believe even those failures can be stepping stones to greater things for your kingdom.

For we pray this in Jesus' powerful name. Amen.

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