

# How Disunity Comes - Peshawar 17.3.85

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the critical need for love and unity among believers to combat disunity in the church during his sermon in Peshawar.*

**Duration:** 58:55

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, John 13:34, 1 John 3:16

**Topics:** "Disunity"

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## Description

In this sermon, George Verwer speaks about the Lordship of Christ and the importance of surrendering our lives to Him. He highlights seven things that Christians often do that turn people off, such as making legalistic and narrow-minded statements without proper knowledge. Verwer also addresses the topic of patriotism and cautions against blindly supporting one's own country without critical thinking. He then focuses on the words of Jesus in John 13:34, emphasizing the significance of the new commandment to love one another. Despite some vocal difficulties, Verwer passionately shares his message and encourages the audience to listen to the words of Jesus and allow them to transform their lives.

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## Transcript

A little informal meeting. Normally, this meeting, I think, gathers in somebody's home. But somehow, there was a fear that more people were going to show up than they would be able to fit into that home.

And so we've expanded into a church. I always worry when we have a meeting like this, because my main burden in being in Pakistan at this time is for my Pakistani brothers and sisters. And they may think, oh, there was a big meeting at the church and nobody told us about it.

But actually, this was just a little fellowship meeting of friends, and it just expanded. But any time you want to have a Paka Urdu meeting, all you have to do is write Mike Wakely, who is the leader of OIM in Pakistan. And then we'll have a proper Urdu meeting for Pakistanis.

We'd love to do that here. We had it once a couple of years ago. Not many people came.

Maybe someday we'll try again. So if any, especially Pakistani brothers and sisters, there are a few here, say, oh, why weren't we invited? Or why weren't we notified? That's the explanation. We just had three tremendous days in Rawalpindi, ministering in a fellowship of independent churches who have some of their roots back into the great ministry of Bhakt Singh, a man who I've been able to work with quite closely

in India, back when I lived there many years ago.

And what a joy it was to be there in Pindi in their holy convocation. They came from many parts of Pakistan. They had a night of prayer.

And then we had a lot of other meetings, a worship meeting, I guess went around three hours this morning. And then we had to rush down to be with you here this evening. And we thank God for what he's doing here in Pakistan.

And I think all of us as internationals need to just be so aware that we are guests here. And we should be very conscious of the Pakistani church, the Pakistani people, and the Pakistani culture, even though quite a few of you are in relief work among the Afghans. They are also guests of Pakistan at this present time.

I've spent the last three weeks in Nepal ministering to the Nepali church and meeting many of our OM people coming up from various countries. And what a challenge it has been. A lot of my time I just spent in one-to-one fellowship, this time not just with the leaders.

I always meet the leaders, because we have our main Asian leaders conference in Kathmandu. This time I went down to the border and lived in the little town of Butwal. And Peshawar seems like New York City next to Butwal.

And there I met, one by one, with about 100 brothers. And we met in groups also. My wife was with me, with the sisters.

And that was a great challenge. We've been in India now for 21 years. And it's been exciting to see what God is doing there.

Though I, myself, no longer go to India. Before that, I was briefly in Bangladesh. But I especially was in Singapore and Malaysia.

It's exciting to see what God is doing there. And I believe we're going to see an increase of workers coming from Singapore and Malaysia into this part of the world. I had some very good meetings with the Christian leaders, also with ex-OMers, as we call them, people who at one time had some training on OM.

There were about 700 Malaysian and Singaporean ex-OMers. Many of them praying for God's plan for their lives. And of course, if you know anything about OM in Pakistan, you know that about one third of the people, maybe more, are Singaporeans and Malaysians.

And I was with the women's team in Rawalpindi. From here, I'll be spending some time ministering in Lahore and Karachi, and also visiting the OM teams there. Thank you for praying for this ministry.

I really come here to get my Afghan and Pakistani border battery charged. I don't come here with any pretension that I'm going to have some great ministry. It's a very short trip.

Now that OM is so spread around the world, there are many teams I don't visit at all, only once in five years. But I've had the joy of visiting Peshawar every year now for four years. Must be a very special place, very special people here.

One of my burdens is to be able to mobilize prayer on your behalf, because we strongly believe in what you're doing. We know it's not going to be easy. And we want to mobilize careful, culturally sensitive

prayer on your behalf.

Too much publicity for this kind of work, of course, as we've seen in many parts of the world, can actually do more harm than good. But at the same time, we need to mobilize people of God to pray. And the Nepali church, they're praying.

You know, Christian literature is illegal in Nepal. We've been having an interesting time, trying to get more and more Bibles and New Testaments into that country. Cannot keep up with the demand.

It's illegal to become a Christian. Christians are put in prison. On the other hand, to a large degree, though these laws are there, the Nepali way seems to be a peaceful way.

And the church is growing. And some amazing things are happening in Nepal. And there may now be even 15,000 or 20,000 believers.

When my wife and I lived in Kathmandu back in 68, 69, there were just a few thousand believers in the country. Now there may be 15,000, 20,000, 25,000. A lot of the work of taking the gospel has to be done by trekking.

And some of you know Mark Soderquist. He's been traveling with me this year. He was involved with all of you here last year.

But he's also been involved in Nepal. And if you want to know a little bit about trekking, at how many thousand meters or feet? 8,000? 18,000 feet. I don't know how many meters that is.

But that's high. I didn't know anybody lived that high. Did you have to just go that high to get to the next valley? Or were people living up there? They live that high.

But pray for Nepal. You know, in this giant subcontinent area, we refer to this as the subcontinent, some of us, there are 1,000 million people. Americans say a billion.

1,000 million people. Do you know it took until 1830 to get that many people in the entire world? Around 1830, world population reached 1,000 million. Now you have that number living in the subcontinent.

It's really quite an overwhelming challenge. Now, in many ways, some of us perhaps prefer the sort of house atmosphere. This is the popular atmosphere in the church today, meeting in a home.

And we prefer that, too, in some ways. But God tonight has given us this historical atmosphere. So you can just make the adjustment in your minds and not let this meeting have any kind of coldness because you're all sitting in rows.

But just think of this amazing church. I've never been in a church like this. Looks like a mosque right here in the middle of this very unique historic part of the world where so many have lost their lives in physical warfare.

We have been called here in a spiritual warfare. And let's thank the Lord for a place even to meet. In Nepal, a meeting like this would be pretty well impossible and probably true in a number of other countries as well.

The word of God. Lord, we thank you for what you're doing here in Pakistan. We thank you for the privilege of being here tonight in a free country.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for what you're doing in other lands like Nepal, Singapore, Malaysia. And Father, we believe you have a word for our hearts tonight. We don't want to waste this time.

Speak, for we, your servants, listen. In Jesus' name, amen. Now I want to share a message that really is burning on my heart.

I've had a little difficulty with my voice again. I've been speaking too much. Since I was last with you, I've been in the hospital and operated on again, tuning up my vocal cords.

Nothing that serious. But sometimes after speaking too much and getting too excited, which has an effect on my vocal cords, my voice gets just a little bit weak as it is right now. But this message is really burning on my heart.

I guess it came back to my mind. It's a message I've been sharing for years, though I will be adding some new thoughts to it this evening. But I guess it especially came to my mind because there on the Nepal border, I came again to a very grievous church situation.

A little church, a small town, the only Christian church in the town, surrounded completely by Hindus. And somehow, the enemy got in. I had been there a couple of years ago and met some of the people.

I hadn't ministered there at that time. And somehow, a year and a half ago, the enemy got in and the church split in two. And I had the opportunity of counseling with the pastor.

And though it's a year and a half later, this man is still in pain. And a lot of other people are in pain in that little town. And some of the people who were seeking the Lord, they're not going to either church.

And all the Hindus are talking about this Christian church. The new church, instead of going on the other side of town, opened up its meeting place. I spoke there as well.

The man who seemed to be involved a lot in the split, he's left Nepal. Though he was in Nepali. And instead of at least a church being on the other side of town, it's right there in the same community.

I am the missionaries. Even before I got there in Katmandu, I had shared this message with the church in Katmandu. And somebody said to me, that's the message you need to share down in that town.

There's also division among the believers in Katmandu. Division has come between Nepali-born Nepalis, who are citizens of Nepal, and Indian-born Nepalis, who are not citizens of Nepal. And two or three of the strongest churches have had to leave the Nepal Christian Fellowship.

And there's been tears, and there's been heartache, and there's been difficulty. And I guess this just brought my mind again back to this subject of unity among the people of God. And I want to speak to you this evening, a very similar message that I gave this morning to the Pakistani believers.

And they were, of course, Pakistanis are very gracious and very hospitable, but they were just somehow overwhelmed with this word and greatly helped by this word, because some of their little fellowships also have been through great disunity. I didn't know that this morning when I spoke on this. One brother came and shared with me that their own little fellowship in a small Pakistani town has been through terrible

disunity.

And another one of their fellowships in another major city has been through terrible disunity. And though I didn't know any of this, the Holy Spirit did when He put this word upon my heart. The Bible says in Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 2.11, Be not ignorant of Satan's devices.

You know, I studied in Bible college for two years, and I never ceased to be amazed as to what they didn't tell me, really, of how difficult and how complex Christian work can be. Now, I've been in Christian work for 30 years, and believe me, I do not think I have arrived. I'm still here as a learner, and I like to listen to those who have been in God's work 40, 50, 60 years.

Like my brother Buk Sim, or Oswald J. Smith, or old Mr. Maxwell, who just went to be with the Lord, or Paul Bilheimer, who died at 80 years. And I listen to a lot of the cassettes, a lot of the messages. I've listened to messages of over 100 different teachers.

Your Bible education doesn't end when you graduate from Bible college. It goes on. A.W. Tozer said, The greatest gift needed in the church today is discernment.

You may think your work is difficult now, but I will tell you, if the Afghan people respond to the gospel, your problems will multiply tenfold. Tenfold! It's all nice to talk about Korea and talk about Brazil. Have you ever been there? It's nice to talk about tremendous church growth in Mexico.

Have you ever been there? When people start coming to Christ, when churches start being born, your problems multiply tenfold. You know one of the reasons we have so few problems in Turkey, where we've been laboring 23 years? We hardly have any believers. And we still have plenty of problems.

The latest news is that the OM team in Adana with six believers have all been arrested under martial law and may be sentenced to six years in prison. So you can pray for the OM work in Adana, Turkey. But there are just not that many believers, and so the work is simple.

Most of the fellowships and groups that labor in Turkey, many different groups are working there. They all work together. There's a relative degree of unity.

There are some little split-offs among Turks due to some extremist teaching. But generally the body of Christ in Turkey has a relative degree of unity, which of course is possible because there are so few. And also because they have put a strong emphasis on unity.

They meet together in different camps. They discuss their differences. The different groups that are working there, and I think it's a good policy here as well, they don't emphasize necessarily the group that they are coming from.

People have never heard hardly of OM in Turkey, though we've been there with quite a large group for 27 years. I believe Tozer was right. We need discernment.

And here in the work, in this very delicate, culturally complex area of Pakistan, we need a lot of wisdom. And it's my prayer that if somehow this little message could increase your wisdom even 3%, my visit to Peshawar would be worthwhile. I'm incorporating into this that which has taken me 30 years to accumulate.

Now I tend to speak too long, so I purposely put in a C60 cassette because that's what controls my speaking. When the cassette ends, we'll close in prayer because my voice will need a rest. I want you also to feel absolutely free to write to me about anything I say tonight.

I don't think it's fair for me to be able to just speak, and you can't write. The meeting last night, I spoke on the Lordship of Christ. By the way, there are over 30, if any of you Urdu speakers somehow want to listen to my ministry, there are over 30 George Verwer cassettes in the Urdu language on every kind of crazy theme, even marriage.

But last night, I spoke on the Lordship of Christ. And about 50 stood at the invitation to ask Christ to be Lord of their life. In many ways, I would love to speak about that tonight.

But I have this message on my heart. When I was a young Christian, before I went to Bible college, I was at university, which I left because I felt so many of the courses for me were an absolute waste of time. But while I was there at university, I spent a lot of time studying the Word of God, and I took an old piece of paper, and I listed all the major themes, my feeble viewpoint, in the New Testament.

And the theme that leaped the most out of my New Testament was the theme of love and unity. I listed, without the concordance, all the verses on love, and then all the verses on unity. I was shocked.

I realized this message was more in the Bible than my message that I was hitting people pretty hard with about world missions, about evangelism, a lot of other things, even discipline. And I began, I guess I was about 19 at that time, to make the number one message always the same. Love.

Because it's so clear in Scripture that whatever else we have, if we don't have love, we're nothing. And wherever I go among God's people, I think I can state the same thing. We need more love.

I don't know anything about the work here that much, but I can say on the authority of Scripture and from visiting God's work in 50 nations for 30 years, probably your greatest need is more love. More love for your own wives, husbands. More love for your own husbands, wives.

More love for your leader, follower. More love for your followers, leaders. And on we could go.

There's no doctrine that the Church pays better lip service to than this, and especially on the mission field. And especially sometimes in operation, mobilization. A movement that at times has had some teens that were so unloving, it's a miracle God didn't drop them in the nearest ditch.

Fortunately, He's more merciful than I am, because I certainly did. But then the Lord convicted me, and I had to repent of my lack of love. Be not ignorant of Satan's devices.

Turn with me to those very strong words that led Dr. Schaeffer to write an entire book on the subject, found in John's Gospel, chapter 13, verse 34. A new commandment I give unto you. Now these are the words of Jesus Christ.

I'm not too worried about what you do with my words. If you go away from this meeting, and there's something I've said, and you say, well, you know, I don't agree with that particular thing that George Verwer said. That's no problem.

I appreciate you telling me, but if you don't have time, that's no big problem. But these are the words of Jesus. This is the beautiful thing about a Christian meeting.

We come here maybe expecting to hear a so-called visiting speaker, and what happens? We hear Jesus. Isn't that great? Sometimes speakers are such a disappointment to me, I pop on a cassette tape of some famous Bible teacher, and halfway through I'm bored stiff. I don't know, I'm the kind of character that likes hot communication.

There's nothing like listening to somebody talking about the greatest truth in all the world in a monotone, that somehow drives me almost around the bend. But probably that's a temperament problem with me. Jesus wants to speak to us tonight.

This is Sunday. He especially speaks on Sunday, right? Or does he speak here in this part of the world on Friday? That's the thing I like about Pakistan, that you can get good meetings on both Friday and Sunday. Because some churches are honoring Friday, I lean that way myself, and others are honoring Sunday.

We had great meetings on Friday, but this morning we had, you know, the more official breaking of bread meeting, and we had a good meeting this morning as well. That's great. That's one of the privileges of being in this part of the world.

Jesus wants to speak to our hearts. In this, verse 35, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another. That's what it's all about.

That's part of the Gospel. Now I have some very radical ways at times of presenting the Gospel. John 3.16 is my favorite verse.

Forgive me. I love John 3.16. I accept it. Preach it.

Memorize it. Even in Spanish. That's Spanish.

Not very useful in this part of the world. But there are a lot of other verses that to me are part of the Gospel. What about 1 John 3.16? You know that one? In this we perceive the love of God, in that He laid down His life for us.

So we ought to lay down our lives for one another. Some of God's people, they aren't even talking to one another. Lay down our lives? Forget it.

We're not even talking. We're not going to lay down our lives. We might take somebody's life if God doesn't get control.

But we're not going to lay it down. And it's the scandal of the Church. It's the scandal of the missionary community.

It's the scandal of Pakistan. It's the scandal of every nation I have been into. And some people maybe will accept it.

They say, well this is just the way it is. This is just the way people are. But I don't accept it.

Because when I read my Bible, it tells me it doesn't have to be that way. It tells me in Acts chapter 2 that God's people can dwell together in love. And in unity.

And when I visit my brothers in East Africa, and I see these dear black brothers who have experienced revival for 30 years, and who are laying down their lives for one another, even though Burundi and

Uganda is still a complete nut house, it makes Pakistan seem like the most sane, quiet country on earth. And yet in the midst of that situation, the believers, of course, they have their struggles, they have their problems, but many of them are experiencing revival. And even between many of the missionaries and the black brothers and sisters, there's been a sense and a spirit of revival.

The book Calvary Road came out of that revival. Do we dare to believe that if a great work of God is born here in this part of the world, it could be different? Or are we already pessimists? Are we already cynics? That if a church is born here among the Afghans, surely it'll divide within the year. Like my Nepali friends I was with last week.

A lot will determine on what you believe, if you're a part of what God is doing here. A lot will depend on what you pray. A lot will depend on what you make the priority in your life.

Let's read a couple of other passages of Scripture. I could give you at least a hundred different verses, but already we're getting to the end of side one on this tape. So let's just look at 1 Corinthians chapter 1. This is dynamite, this one verse.

It's dynamite. As you know, the Corinthian church had division and they had disunity. Some said, I'm of Apollos.

Others said, I'm of Cephas. Verse 13, is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were he baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God. This is Paul writing.

I baptize none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. The verse I want you to look at is verse 10. Mark it in your Bible.

When I was a baby Christian, I learned to mark my Bible. Revolutionized my Bible study. Mark verse 10.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. That's strong. It should be.

Because it was Jesus Christ himself, in the 17th chapter of John, who prayed, who poured out his heart to the Father and said that they may be one. They may be one. Now I know some people spiritualize this and they say, well, in Christ we all are one.

That's already settled. So we don't need to discuss this anymore. I don't accept that.

I partially accept that. We are one. Spiritual unity is there.

Every believer is a member of the same body. And that should motivate us to love one another, to forgive one another, to let love cover, to see unity as much as any other doctrine perhaps we could find. But you see, there's something in every one of us.

Some people call it the self-life. Some people call it the old nature. There must be at least a hundred different books giving a hundred different explanations.

You can call it whatever you want. But it's there. It's in you.

The capacity to hate. Some of the most hateful things I have ever seen have come from believing evangelical, Bible-believing Christians. In fact, Jack Van Empie, who was part of what turned out to be a hate movement within American fundamentalism, has recently written the most devastating book called Heart Disease in the Body of Christ.

And I tell you, the book is scary. You know, in Pakistan, just names like, for example, Gujjanwala, just to say Gujjanwala among the Pakistani people, and you say division. The two words are synonymous.

Gujjanwala means hatred, division, court cases, people screaming and yelling, even threatening to kill in the name of Jesus. And somehow, we go on accepting it. Somehow, we go on sort of pretending it doesn't exist or pretending it can never happen to us.

But it can. Because we're made of the same stuff that some of those believers in Gujjanwala were made of. And some of them are believers.

Some may be nominal Christians. It's easy to look for little pat answers, isn't it? Like, they're all nominal Christians, or they're all demon-possessed, or some other little cubicle that we Christians sometimes think into. But it's not that simple.

And it's in every nation. Don't be embarrassed, my Pakistani friends, by these problems in your country. They exist in every nation.

You are not special. Satan hasn't made Pakistan an extra big target. In fact, your next-door neighbor, that big next-door neighbor, has 25 times as many problems like this, because they're just that much bigger.

Why is it that disunity so easily comes among God's people? Let's first of all understand that disunity is not just among God's people. It's everywhere in our society. Look at the Iran-Iraq war.

You see, there's a danger that as Christians we get a little bit down on ourselves. And maybe some of you are young Christians, and you feel there's so much disunity in the Church for you, that's a proof the whole thing is unreal. No, brother or sister, it's a proof it is real.

Because the Bible says, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The two are contrary. The Bible teaches that Christians are still weak human beings.

In fact, I was just reading in Proverbs, man at his very best state is vanity. That's an interesting verse to keep your sanctification teaching into balance. And let's understand that the disunity in the world makes what Christians are facing generally look pretty small.

Because generally Christians, it's mainly talk, it's mainly words, it's hot air. People are hurt, people are injured emotionally. But over there in Iraq and Iran, they have slaughtered a quarter of a million souls.

A quarter of a million souls. And I've heard some statistics for this land of Afghanistan that I'd rather not even repeat in public because they just sound so horrific. Do you think that when the Soviets and the Americans sit down in Geneva, they're going to get this all resolved? And they're all going to go back home and destroy their nuclear bombs? You must be more naive than the whale that swallowed Jonah.

All of history has proven man's hatred, man's inability to get on with his fellow man, the caste system, nationalism, every kind of wild extremism. It's part of our society. It's not going to disappear, even though some great philosophers a hundred years ago predicted utopia by now.

You remember the old liberals, the latter part of the last century. There must be 25 or 30 different places in the world right now where people are killing each other. Hatred is very, very great.

And generally speaking, generally speaking, the church in Jesus Christ is representing the way of love. It's representing the way of peace. It is helping to contribute to peace and to some degree of sanity and love on various levels of society, perhaps because that does happen in some cases.

And it's such a tremendous laven in the lump of society, such assault in the society, that Satan viciously counterattacks. And often it's on a local church level. A number of our people, when they've been out in our work for two or three years, when they return to their church in the West, it's divided in two.

In fact, our present problem in our fellowship is not firstly getting people to go. We have almost more people who want to go at least longer term than the church is willing to send. Now, some of our characters go anyway.

But not everybody's built that way. I was built that way. I went to my local church, and I told them, a little Baptist church down the road, I didn't belong there.

I went there on a Wednesday, and I said, the Holy Spirit's directing me to Mexico. By the way, as I read Acts 13, the Holy Spirit was the director. And the Holy Spirit's directing me to go to Mexico.

If you'd like to pray for me, I want to grant you that opportunity. Please sign up. Miraculously, 50 people signed up to pray, and they sent me off to Mexico.

Of course, if they hadn't prayed, I would have gone anyway. I was already leaving three days later. It was too late to change any plans.

Now, of course, OM has tried to become more biblical in this area, and we're trying, you know, to get the local churches to really send us out, as it was in Acts chapter 13. But time and time again, some of our people return to divided churches, where now, because of the division, the legal case connected with the property, other difficulties, missionary work temporarily has to be put on the back burner. Or, in some cases, it collapses.

I mean, you can't blame the pastor if he's battling for survival. He's about to see his own work disintegrate in front of him. It's a little difficult for him, you know, to be throwing all of his energy into the evangelization of the regions beyond.

One of the messages I shared in our leadership training program in Nepal, I still have the notes, the seven major blunders of the returning OMer. Maybe I'll share this one tomorrow with my OM fellowship. Seven major blunders.

And let me tell you, when we return, those of us who are here as missionaries, to our own churches, we are very vulnerable. Our lack of love for the brethren back there, our lack of sensitivity to the problems they are facing, they're not living here, they're living there. The church complexities they may be in.

The materialism that is trying to dream them of their last resource. Our lack of understanding and love and 1 Corinthians 13 reality often causes us to say things that we don't dig out of very easily. And we need a lot of wisdom as we go back for our furloughs.

Some young people have told me that re-entry into the United States and England was more difficult than adjusting to Pakistan or Nepal when they first went. Interesting. Well, we can't get into that too much tonight.

Let me share some of the reasons or some of the ways that disunity so easily comes within the body of Christ. It may be a team laboring right here. It may be a church.

I've been thinking lately more concerning churches. This message really is geared toward the local church situation, but you can apply it. You can apply it in your marriage.

I arrived in a city not so far from here recently. I find out that one of the married couples, local people, that thing just stopped, that their marriage is coming apart. And these principles, I think, you could call them transferable concepts.

They will apply in the church. They will apply in parachurch situations. They will apply in a small team.

They will apply where two or three may be living together, you know, in a little apartment. I'd love to write a history of women living together in Operation Mobilization. The only thing that would be more wild would be men living together in Operation Mobilization.

The inability for people simply to live together under the same roof, it is baffling to the imagination. The petty little small-mindedness that creeps in when people somehow have to live in the same building and eat from the same table. The things we get offended about.

Like the married couple that just about split up because the husband believed in squeezing the toothpaste any old way and the wife believed in the systematic roll it from the bottom. I resolved it. I've got the new kind of plastic thing that sits upright and you push a lever on the top and it spurts out and hits you in the eye.

Let me give you some of the reasons disunity so quickly comes or how it quickly comes. Number one, because among God's people there's such a range of personalities, temperaments, tremendous range of temperaments. And the enemy knows how to use those differences.

The quiet person who never shares. You ever get one of those? It's been always one of my struggles. The quiet guy who never shares.

No matter what you ask him, you get some little superficial tidbit that's not worth an American quarter in a Russian vending machine. But somehow he's there. He's there in the body of Christ.

But then there's the other guy, the extreme, that's me, the loud mouth, gets on everybody's nerves, never can keep quiet, mouth goes faster than his brain, perpetually putting the foot into the glass door, the bull in the china shop. A great range of temperaments. Now, of course, some of you are married.

Some of you have thought about marriage. Let me just say that the cock-eyed ideas that single people have about marriage scare me right out of my shoes. They think it's some kind of mutual pleasure trip, some kind of mutual journey in which there's deep, lasting fulfillment.

Let me tell you, that's not what the Bible teaches about marriage. There is fulfillment in marriage. Hallelujah, there's even pleasure in marriage.

But marriage is commitment. And marriage takes crucified living, if it's Christians. And it takes a lot more than people are imaginable.

In terms of self, in terms of 1 Corinthians' love, some of the books say that, you know, as you're married you get more and more like each other, like two little peas in a pod. And we're all told about this one particular couple who have been married for 50 years and they're still just so in love, they're still in the honeymoon period, and they go tottering down the streets, holding hands. Now, I'm not against that kind of thing.

And I just bow down to those people and have them autograph my Bible. But that's not most marriages. That's not most marriages.

Now, I know one couple like that, but they're actually both divorced and remarried. And somehow their second marriage is really, really going well. I mean, you know, we have to go through this two or three times before we finally learn how to do it.

This seems to be the philosophy in some places today. Marriage is commitment. Marriage is part of God's training program.

It's God's graduate school. My wife and I just gloriously celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. If you want, I can even give you a special letter about it that she wrote, uncensored material from the husband, by the husband, me.

And we have discovered over the years how different we are, more than we thought when we were married, in many, many, many things. In fact, the other day we sat down, let's make a list of the things we really agree upon. Praise the Lord, the atonement, doctrine about heaven and hell, operation mobilization.

Definitely there are a number of areas. But a lot of the more nitty-gritty things that marriage is made of, we don't exactly see eye to eye. But we're excited about the next 25 years.

Marriage doesn't work unless we're willing to accept the other person's personality and the other person's temper. And if the person's a bit of a loud mouth, you're going to have to accept that. You can work on it, you can pray for it, you can feed him gumdrops, you can try different things, but you're going to have to accept that.

And if the person is relatively quiet and shy, you're going to have to accept that. In marriage we accept one another. And in team life, and in missionary work, there needs to be a greater, just, unilateral acceptance of one another.

With the weaknesses, with the raw whatever it is, you can still fellowship, you can pray, you can talk things out, but it comes from a foundation of acceptance, not a foundation of irritability and disunity. So the enemy knows how to use the differences in temperament, differences in personality, and all the other things that are related to that. The second reason disunity so quickly comes is because we are different nationalities.

The Church is an international body. Missionary work is international. And if it's not international, it's intercultural.

Do you think South Indians get on with North Indians? Do you think people from Southern Kerala can get on with people from Northern Kerala? Do you know any country where everybody in the country likes everybody else in the country? Have you been in one of those countries yet? Now, I've only been in 60. Maybe you've been in one I haven't been in. You can write to me because I need constantly to bring things into balance.

Southerners don't like Northerners. People from the West don't like people from the East. I have a friend from Manchester, England.

I swear he wouldn't give you two bob for a Londoner. He doesn't even like to go to London. Southern English people.

Unfriendly. He's got a whole list of words. He's a proper Englishman, and he's talking about other proper Englishmen.

Let me tell you, there are over 100 varieties of proper Englishmen, and they don't get on with each other. That is a national heritage. Probably 75, between 50 and 75 percent of all the churches in Britain in this decade have had serious splits and divisions.

Differences of nationality. Differences of culture. Thirdly, and this makes it so interesting for us Christians, differences of doctrine.

We've got a whole book a whole book full of doctrine. And we've got the most interesting way to go about getting our doctrine. We lay love aside.

That's too basic, isn't it? That's too simple. Love. Of course we believe in love.

Don't be an idiot. And then we get into the Bible, and we pull out all these little things by taking this verse here, this verse there, and we come up with our little denominational cocktails, and our little parachurch cocktails, and we go around, each group pushing their little thing. And pretty soon, it's just like 1 Corinthians, I'm of Paul, I'm of Cephas.

We believe in this. We believe in sitting on the floor. We believe in standing with our hands in the air praying.

We believe in sitting on our hands so that they don't hit anybody when we're praying. And we wonder why some really intelligent people... Now maybe you don't agree with this, but I have a respect at times for intelligent unbelievers. Forgive me.

My burden is to win them to Jesus Christ. To win them, I need to understand them. And so when I meet a man who's totally switched off the church, somehow, you know, I can reach out to him.

And one of the things that switches people off, if you know that term... I gave another message at our Leaders Conference. Seven major turn-offs. I'm big into sevens.

Must be some influence about the number of completeness. But I have a lot of other longer lists. But I listed seven things that we do so easily that turn people off.

Like our legalistic, bombastic, narrow-minded statements, especially about things we've never studied or really know anything about. Like so many Christians spouting off about politics. That's especially

interesting when you get back to the country of my origin.

Now I must be very careful here because the word is out internationally that I am anti-American. Now the one country you think you can preach about is your own. Just naturally, everybody knows you've been brainwashed for 15 years as a child into loving your own country.

You can't even despise your country if you want to. At least it's not easy once you've had 15 years going through the machinery. I'm not anti-American, but I am anti-sin.

And I am anti-anything that doesn't glorify God and edify the body and work toward harmony and love and unity without sacrificing basic biblical and doctrinal positions. And the only way I've been able to find a partial solution to this and I haven't found a total solution is I have a doctrine of compassionate disagreement. You can add this to your theological... You know, just feel free to add this to your theological material.

Compassionate disagreement. And I see that as one of the ways please try to get this one of the ways that we can continue to love and to work together even when there are things that we cannot accept because we do have our convictions. And missionaries have stronger convictions than most people.

If you didn't have strong convictions you wouldn't be out here. And those same strong convictions that get you out here make it impossible to live with you when you're here. That's right.

So you've got some reversing. But as you reverse you'll go too far, then you've got to go forward again. And so you have to learn to compassionately disagree.

We discovered in our own work we can't work with everybody. But we're known for being pretty broad. And here in Pakistan and in countries around here we have terrific linking with the churches.

Church of North India I've never fellowshiped with more bishops until I came here to Pakistan. And the Pentecostal churches, quite a few of them. And this unique independent brother movement I've just been with them over the weekend.

And we work with a wide range of churches and a wide range of groups. But I tell you, we can't work with everybody. In fact, we had to write some strong material in our work against extremism to scare people and try to keep them away from our own because we knew, though we love them we appreciate them, we hope God will bless them even more than he blesses us.

We just can't work with everybody. We're human beings. We're wrestling with our own convictions, what we believe.

Every year we meet together as leaders in our work and we argue over every kind of crazy subject you can ever imagine. And so we've had to set some basic goals, some basic guidelines. It was a joy to share this with these pastors and Christian leaders this morning.

To just see their eyes light up. This was the answer for the church down the road that they don't agree with. They don't feel that church has proper doctrine.

They're not going to win people and send them down to that church. They saw a possible beginning solution for dialogue, for understanding. Compassionate disagreement.

Did Paul and Barnabas have a compassionate separation? I wish I'd been there with my video camera. I wasn't there. When I get to heaven, one of the first things I'm going to do get Barnabas, get Paul and ask him about that particular incident.

But let me tell you, in my own ministry, 30 years, I've had to have a number of Paul and Barnabas situations. We just had to acknowledge we didn't have the energy, we didn't have the solution especially to doctrinal differences which can be so great among God's people. And so there had to be compassionate separations for the sake of getting on with the work.

Isn't it possible for that to happen where there's an atmosphere of respect, love, gentleness, concern, humility, as we're humbled before God that we have not been able to find a solution. I remember once when I asked a main leader of our work to leave the work. It was a terrible experience for me.

I was jet-lagged. It must have been at midnight. For three years you've been speaking again and again against other leaders, against the general policies that OM had, especially the ship ministry which was being born into OM at that time.

He was going on and on. And that night I didn't have the energy and I said to him, because some other people had also counseled me that they felt it would be better for him to leave, I said, look brother, if you really feel that in the depth of your soul, then maybe you want to leave. And he left.

Do you know God is using him? And we're linked together, pray together, pray for each other. That in many ways should be the last resort after every other possible effort is made. But certainly within the body of Christ, if we study the New Testament carefully, doctrinal differences cause a lot of disunity and some of it seems to be inevitable.

But there's something else that causes more than that. Am I up to number four? And that's pride. I believe that pride is the number one cause for disunity in the body of Christ.

Linked with a lack of love. I don't think you can separate. The syndrome is very, very, very, very common.

Some people are discontent in the church. They go to the leader in weakness. Maybe they're upset and they try to present their case or they present their criticism.

Very few people are gifted at criticizing. Very few people. And so when they say it, it doesn't come out in such a very good way.

And so the leader's pride is hurt. And so he reacts. And then they react.

And then he reacts. I've had some great struggles with my reactions. And if it wasn't for godly men around me who have taken me to the wall and brought me to repentance, I would have been disqualified from God's work.

Because I've got a big mouth. I've got a roaring temper. And temperament.

And at once I asked a couple of leaders to give me lists. Ten reasons why not to overreact. I cannot explain how much those lists have helped me.

I've written them here in my Bible. I haven't got time to share them tonight. But I do know that much of the disunity today in God's body is caused by overreaction.

It's caused by pride. It's caused by crooked thinking. It's caused by generalizations.

It's caused by two plus two equals twenty-two. That's twenty-two. And that's why I believe without that little message of Calvary Road, repentance, brokenness, the cross, humbling yourself, that Christianity does not work.

It does not work. Take forgiveness away from Christianity and it's not worth anything. The whole message of God to us as sinners was that Christ died for us to forgive us.

Rebels, enemies of God, were forgiven. And though in God's work and in God's church we will be stabbed, we will be hurt, we will be misunderstood, we in turn probably at times will hurt others. We'll say the wrong thing.

We'll do the wrong thing. The hope always lies in God's mercy, in forgiveness, in coming back to the cross. Not waiting for people to apologize, but to forgive them immediately because Christ has forgiven you.

Now there are many other causes for disunity, sins of the tongue, prayerlessness, lack of love, failure to repent, selfishness, fear, impatience. The list could go on and I'll let you study it on your own. Make love your aim, it says in Corinthians, after the first Corinthians 13 chapter.

Are you doing that? Is that the passion of your life? When you're stabbed, when you're hurt, does forgiveness and love reach out to bring that person in? That's the only way we're going to see healing in our churches and healing in our relationships. And I pray that we may see this from the word of God and act upon it with all of our hearts. Let us pray.

Father, we thank you for this privilege of looking into your word tonight on this important subject. We know that people will know that we are your disciples because we love one another. We want to recommit ourselves to this message, to this way of life.

And we believe by your grace it is possible. And we'll stand on your word.

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