

Lets Make It Happen Om Staff Conf 1994

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of taking ownership of world missions, being on fire for Jesus, and seeking spiritual balance in Christian living.

Duration: 1:09:06

Scripture: Matthew 11:27, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:6, Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 13:2, 1 Timothy 4:16

Topics: "Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a vision and increasing our spiritual vision. He refers to the example of five men in Acts 13 who received a vision from the Holy Spirit. The speaker encourages the audience to not just attend the conference for personal gain, but to take what they have learned and apply it in their own contexts for the advancement of God's kingdom. He also shares personal experiences of being filled with the Holy Spirit and encourages others to seek the same fullness. The sermon concludes with the reminder that being on fire for Jesus should be the normal Christian life.

Transcript

This week, I hope that you've taken greater ownership of world missions. This week, as you've heard experts and gifted communicators, that that vision has just exploded in your heart. And I must confess that as I have gone through Operation World again almost entirely, it has been exploding in my heart.

It's one of the reasons I got into AD2000. And as you read this book, you will realize how much has to be done. How much has to be done.

You will also realize how much God has done. He's given us this book. We in OM are the publishers of this book.

In a sense, we relaunched it after it died 20, I don't know how many years ago. And then the prayer cards, which will be distributed soon. I sent a memo to leaders around the world.

Let's get the prayer cards out. I hardly got any response to that memo. I guess it got lost.

No, I did tell them to respond direct to Don Velbum, so maybe I didn't get a copy. Brothers and sisters, this is serious business we've been dealing with this week. Men are lost.

They're going to a Christless eternity that the Bible calls hell. The academics may debate it, but Jesus preached it. And we must respond to that word where it says, I, Jesus speaking, in the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father, but by me.

Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts chapter 1 verse 8. Just for kickoff. Every one of you can preach on one. Acts 1.8. We have so many gifted and communicators in OM.

It's an embarrassment for me even to come and speak. So many other people that could be speaking. And I just love to see the younger men and women speaking.

And I just want to be a supporter of the new generation. But I don't want to pretend to be something I'm not. So I also have something to say, and God in his mercy gives me 400 times a year to say it.

And it's just getting more and more exciting, though not always easy. And I often preach on Acts 1.8. I have a brand new translation just sent to me by the Bible Society. Bible for today's family.

Probably someone will attack it, but it looks good to me. Isn't it amazing how much we have in English while hundreds and millions have never had a gospel tract? Just amazes me. But anyway, someone gave me this, and I haven't had a chance to sell it yet.

So I'll use it. But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and everywhere in the world.

Since I haven't listened to all the ministry of the week, I don't know how much this has been emphasized, but let's realize this is so absolutely vital to everything we're saying and doing. It was the heart of the prayer meeting. I missed the first 20 minutes of the prayer meeting.

Maybe this was the scripture used because that's what we were into in prayer when I arrived. Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth. I'm not going to expound this, but I am going to say that what has been put on our plate this week, what we have been challenged with, what we want to do can only be done by the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit.

And we need to make sure as we go from here, some tonight, some tomorrow, that we go in the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit. Turn to Acts chapter 13. Another passage.

I have the privilege of speaking on and tonight as it says in Timothy, I give these things to you that you may contextualize them into your own ministry and give them to others. If the 60s was a decade when a few people, and it was only a few, attempted to copy George Verwer, the 80s was the decade in which people definitely overreacted to make sure whatever they did, they did not appear to be like George Verwer. It was weird.

We could have made a movie of it. People that absolutely would not sell books because they knew I sold books. People absolutely refused to read any Tozer book because I was into Tozer books.

People would never be seen with a map because I was into a map. There was a fear someone might accuse you of copying George Verwer. Satan is a great intimidator.

I remember speaking at Moody after I graduated and somebody coming up to me and saying, oh, you're just trying to be like Billy Graham. You know, that's a pleasant thing to say to somebody, isn't when he's just a young Christian. Hasn't preached that much.

You know, I think I'm about as similar to Billy Graham as I am to, you know, ballet dancing dinosaurs. But no doubt, you know, no doubt there are some similarities. We both have a mouth.

He's a gentleman. He's a southerner. He's an evangelist.

I can name a whole bunch of other things that he is, none of which I am or should try to pretend to be. Though I must confess, the first southern woman I ever met, I was just a teenager, blew every circuit in my romantic head. And on the first date, I didn't understand southern, you know, how they worked.

They're a lot slower than us, New York people. And I brought this girl. Her name was Marsha.

I brought her back after the date and there was her father and mother. They talked to me for 10 minutes, finished. Case closed.

Never dated her again. So much for southern romance. I'm glad he gave me a Milwaukee yank as a wife.

Acts 13, five men got a vision. Have you got a hold of the vision this week? I mean, to go out of a conference like this without a vision is just, to me, beyond comprehension. Unless you, of course, are at a major time of spiritual depression and defeated in your walk and somehow bitter or hurt.

And we know there are people like that at our conferences and we try to reach out to them and praise God. Over the years, many, many people who have been in that situation have been set free and ministered and healed and helped. But one of the purposes of this week, this was one of the more focused conferences.

This was not a traditional OM conference. This is a focused conference. People wanted a focused conference.

We got a focused conference, but of course some people are wondering why we didn't get some of the other more general OM ingredients. You can't do everything in a week, though I may attempt to do everything in this last hour and end up a real fool. But certainly, one of the great goals of this week is to increase our vision.

These five men got a vision. We find in verse 2, while they were worshiping the Lord and going without eating, I know that's not exactly the favorite thing in the church these days, but you still find it in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit told them, appoint Barnabas and Saul to do the work for which I have chosen them. Our brother Paul shared about Paul and Barnabas in his ministry, and it was beautiful what he had to say.

Everyone prayed and went without eating for a longer while or a while longer. Next, they placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul to show that they had been appointed to do this work, that everyone sent them on the way. Notice that in that verse, it's speaking about the Lord's people, the church in Antioch, sending them on the way.

Whereas the next verse, it says, after Barnabas and Saul had been sent by the Holy Spirit, they went to Seleucia. There, it says, the Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas. What a beautiful balance, the human factor, the divine factor.

Man's part, God's part. And I just find that in everything that I do, if I want to stay in the straight and narrow, I got to find that balance. Man's part, God's part.

My part, God's part. And I think that's been coming through the ministry of Louise and Paul and others during this week. And this is one of the greatest chapters that we can share on in churches.

If you think churches have looked at Acts 13 in an in-depth way, you obviously haven't ministered much. And there it is. And I feel that today in our ministry, we need to tie it more and more to the Word of God.

The Word of God has the authority, not us. Yes, we can speak with authority. We need men and women who will speak with authority.

But the Word of God is the final authority. And I find when I stick to the Word of God more and attempt to find biblical balance, that there are less old Verwarian distractions that keep the Holy Spirit from what He is wanting to do in people's lives. And it's exciting.

And I'm grateful for what I've been learning through more study in the recent years about communication. The Holy Spirit. Billy Graham said in one of his great messages, be filled with the Holy Spirit, right from Ephesians chapter 5. And I hope that in this final night of this particular conference, that every one of us could go from here with the assurance that he or she is filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I'll warn you in advance. I'm gonna give an invitation for you to be refilled or filled with the Holy Spirit at the end of this meeting. I realize that any crisis not followed by a process will soon be an abscess.

But a lot of people with no crisis, you'll not have any abscess because you don't have anything. The New Testament emphasizes the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. We are a movement that wants to emphasize the person and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Half of you are probably card-carrying charismatics. You hide the card a little bit when you're on OM. I don't know why.

Some people don't. They're pushing it all over the place and causing confusion in some of our countries. But nothing new.

And people said all along what we're attempting to marry the evangelical and charismatic movement together is impossible. It would have come apart years ago according to them. But it hasn't.

And now we've got a whole international network called AD2000 that is attempting the same thing. And it's one of the reasons I like AD2000. It represents really where the church is today because 60 to 70 percent, that's a rough super-calculated guess, of the active Christians in the world, probably, when we count places like Brazil, I think Louise Bush, didn't he say on one of his tapes, there's more believers in Brazil than all of Western Europe? You know, whether that's, it probably is true.

I've heard it many times. Somebody else from Brazil said, look, take it easy, brother, half the Brazilian Christians are backslidden. Statistics aren't everything.

But what are we going to say of half the European Christians? Will it be necessary for truly godly spiritual people in OM to lower their standard to stay in the movement? Ask yourself that question, my friend. Because the tendency of history, if you look at 2,000 years or more, is for spiritual movements and churches and people to degenerate. It's not automatically better and better.

If your church is going uphill, better and better and better every year, I know there are churches like that. I've been in churches like that. But since this week I've heard about a lot of churches in the disaster zone,

maybe you could write me a letter about your growing, balanced, spiritual church, where people are being saved without a multitude of people being hurt and ground to powder in the process.

I'd love to hear about your church. Because my commitment to the local church is as great as my commitment to OM. And most of my ministry, a lot of it, is in local churches in fellowship.

And I have a bonding with pastors and churches that is hard to explain. And I stick with them even when the whole place is just about coming unglued, because sometimes that's when God breaks in and does a new thing. I love Acts chapter 13.

I love to see the Holy Spirit working in the lives of people through this great book that I've studied pretty regularly for about 39 years. Look at Acts 4.31. That's a good one for tonight. Acts 4.31, you've heard it again and again.

They were gathered in prayer. After they had prayed, the meeting place shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and bravely spoke God's message.

Bravely spoke God's message. A number of years ago I realized it was getting harder and harder to speak at OM conferences. So easily, because we were the family, because I knew a lot that was going on and they knew that I knew a lot, so easily you'd say something that was a general principle and someone would take it personally.

I wrote something in my Bible around that time that I really believe the Lord put on my heart. It doesn't mean it's perfect. But I wrote it in front of my Bible.

Messages or strong spiritual statements which once convicted us and brought us to repentance now upset us and lead us into self-defense, bitterness, hurt or even resentment. If you don't think that's true, believe me. You haven't been in the thick of the battle.

We are in some ways in the middle days of the beginning of our movement. We have seen disappointment. We have disappointed one another.

There has been hurt. I don't believe we should pretend about our warts and about our problems or our sins. At the same time, I believe that OM is well and healthy.

There's a message I gave to the field leaders in January. Ten signs of health in OM. People are coming to Christ.

Two, young people are still signing up and many are being recruited. Three, good balance of ages, nationality and denominations. Four, people are handling change in a mature way.

Five, we are keeping the focus of people and their needs, fellowship and family. Six, most of our graduates love us and stay in touch with us. Seven, we are paying our bills, almost no debt.

Eight, moderate and simple lifestyle is holding. Moderate probably would be more accurate. But it is simple in some countries, I can assure you.

So don't judge OM on just where you're living, my friend. People are repenting and being honest, good relationships with other missions and networks. I believe in many ways 1994 and 95 as we move toward the year 2000 is the brightest day in OM.

Our God is not wanting us to look back. We have no bitterness about the past. God's spirit was moving in every one of these conferences that I've been to, which I think is all of them, almost for 31 years.

But we believe that God has laid a foundation. Many countries like Albania that we once only prayed for, now we have churches and people. Lands that were once only targets in prayer meetings, now are fields with people, with conversions, with churches being born.

This is OM's brightest hour. Don't miss it. Don't get caught down some corner arguing over some theological tidbit.

Don't get down some road of extremism because you think this would be a shortcut to doing what you feel wants to be done. Beware of your own personal agenda. And as you see in the book of Acts, submit and let the Holy Spirit do the speaking.

We're living in exciting days. I remember when I first went into Yugoslavia, one of the nations that was more on my heart than almost any other place in the world. I even thought of living there.

My first trip in Yugoslavia was similar to my first trip into Russia. I got arrested. I think it was on the second day.

And then we, after the interrogation, somehow the window of the car got broken. So we drove back with a sheet. It was a long drive with a sheet peeking out through the sheet.

Roger Malsted and this one other fellow and myself. And we met on the border at that time, I think both before and after the trip, two women with Christian Literature Crusade. And they taught me a song that I've never forgotten.

I never hardly ever hear it sung. And I wrote it in my Bible. And I believe it's the need of the hour.

I believe it's the need of tonight. Let me read it. It was written by General William Booth.

Thou Christ of burning, cleansing flames, send the fire. Thy blood-bought gift today we claim, send the fire. Look down and see this waiting host.

Give us the promise, or we could perhaps insert the power of the Holy Ghost. We want another Pentecost, send the fire. God of Elijah, hear our cry, send the fire.

Make us fit to live or die, send the fire. To burn up every trace of sin, to bring the light and glory and the revolution, now begin. Send the fire.

The fire, tis fire we want, for fire we plead. Send the fire. The fire will meet our every need, send the fire.

For daily strength to do the right, for grace. To conquer in the fight, for power to walk the world in white, send the fire. To make our weak hearts strong and brave, send the fire.

To live a dying world to save, send the fire. Send the fire, send the fire. O see us on thy altar lay.

Our lives are all this very day. To crown the offering now we pray, send the fire. I want to ask you, our time's short tonight.

Are you on fire for Jesus? You know, some of the greatest Christians I've ever met, and I've had the privilege of meeting a lot of mighty men and women of God, many of them have not been well educated. I've traveled and ministered in almost every state in India, so you can imagine Brother Hebert's ministry got pretty close to my heart, as he talked of Rajahmundry, talked of Guntur, places where I saw the power of God come upon meetings, and sometimes 50, 60 people profess Christ in a night. And more, I remember one time when I was so incredibly sick, I think it was actually in Guntur, and I was vomiting and sick, and they said, oh brother, you don't want to preach.

I said, what do you mean I don't want to preach? And they carried me to the meeting. And I leaned on a table, and preached as people prayed. And I'm not into overemphasizing the spectacular, I can assure you, but some spectacular things happened that night.

And when people come up and want to be saved, and got good luck charms and evil spirit wires around their head, you know, that's a little obvious. Some of the things people talk about, evil spirits today, doesn't seem very clear to me. But this was pretty clear.

And to pray, and to see this woman seemingly set free, and other people converted, and other people helped and healed, is something that a young missionary in India will never forget. Brothers and sisters, the normal Christian life is to be on fire for Jesus every day. Stop complicating it with overly thick books on sanctification.

Do you think these people that don't know how to read in India cannot be filled with the spirit? Do you think these brothers and sisters that traveled on my teams up and down that country, who were very simple people, didn't have higher education, but were out in the streets winning men and women to Jesus Christ, do you think this was unreality? Do you think these poor souls, they weren't quite where we are, with all of our education and all of our knowledge? And I believe in education. I believe in knowledge. I'm in God's study program that involves thousands and thousands of pages of reading every couple of months.

I go through an average of 200 lectures, probably every year or two. Listening, growing, learning, repenting, because I believe that that's part of God's program for my life. But I would never despise the weakest brother or sister in Jesus, even if he or she could not read or write.

And if you study the great mass movements, especially in Latin America and other parts of the world, you will discover they were like some of the apostles, ordinary men, ordinary men, and people could not understand them. We need that balance, especially in the Western world. We really do.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Send the fire, send the fire, send the fire. Are some of you afraid of that? I don't think in an OM conference, but I tell you some of the churches I go into.

It's amazing. As soon as I get on the subject of the Holy Spirit, I see things sort of change in the audience. People are so afraid of extremism.

Maybe that's my fault. I wrote a book on the subject. I pulled it out of print years ago, but I think the illegal copies are going around.

I wrote the book, Revolution of Balance. The love in its place has a whole new message. The message I gave at Peshawar so many years ago on being big hearted.

I still, of course, preach against extremism. But as Brother Andrew reminded me, in this very country, Corrie Ten Boom spoke in the morning. I had to speak in the afternoon.

Brother Andrew arrived. We had a cup of tea together and he said, Brother George, did you give an invitation? I've always had struggles giving invitations. I don't know whether it's my Calvinistic streak or my coward streak.

When I get to heaven, I'll check it out. But I said, well, Brother Andrew, I didn't give an invitation. Boom, he shot back at me as quick as a Dutchman knows how to do.

And he said, well, I'm sure going to give one tonight. I've learned it's easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse. You've all heard that before, right? Which are you? Will there be a day in O.M. when any even borderline fanaticism will not be tolerated by the hierarchy? I don't think so.

Praise God. Half the time the hierarchy doesn't even know what's going on. I'm not sure that's good, but it's partly the truth.

The Holy Spirit is the chief executor officer of all missionary work. If you like that terminology. And it's God's will that we know something of that fire.

In the book of Revelation, it says be ye hot or be ye cold. If you're lukewarm, I'll spew you out of my mouth. In the book of Hebrews, it says our God is a consuming fire.

Right at the end of the book of Hebrews, some of you who know me know I fill in all the blank spaces in my Bible. Not with things that are inspired as the Word of God, but quotations and statements from men of God that have impacted me. And right at the end of the book of Hebrews, and I see Peter Maiden sitting here, and I think the patience of this guy to listen to me over the years, and he's probably heard me read this at least 30 times.

But anyway, I'll have to listen again. Samuel Logan Bringle's definition of fire. How many remember it? Maybe even in one of my books.

I have trouble rereading those books. How many of you, Samuel Logan Bringle? Hmm. Just shows the ability of the human memory.

Makes you want to leave preaching and going into full-time fundraising, but... What is fire? Samuel Logan Bringle was that man that united with William Booth and became one of the greatest winners of men and women to Christ the world has ever known. He wrote a book called Resurrection, Life, and Power. Here's his definition of fire.

We're talking about spiritual fire. What is fire? It is love. It is faith.

It's hope. It's passion and purpose and determination. It's utter devotion.

It's divine discontent with formality, ceremonialism, lukewarmness, indifference, sham, parade, spiritual death. It's singleness of mind, consecration unto death. It's God, the Holy Ghost, burning in and through a humble, holy, faithful man.

Will you be that man? Will you be that woman? The story I'll never forget of Brother Hebert's ministry is the guy with the coffin. I'm definitely going to try that. If you missed that message, you better get the tape.

The guy going around India, into the interior, where there's a much higher chance he was going to die. And so the guy takes a big wooden box. I'd been in those places.

I didn't have that much creativity. I had a van that was more like or less like a coffin. And that's where we slept, in the van.

I had Ray Lynch on my team. And Ray Lynch and I didn't have the exact same philosophy on counting the numbers saved in the meeting. And we had an argument par excellence.

I love Brother Hebert's emphasis on arguing. Thank you, brother. I'm not sure if what I'm into is exactly what you were referring to.

This missionary, do you remember? He slept in the coffin some nights. I guess it was mosquito proof. And then when he got back to the main city, somehow we had a celebration.

He buried the coffin and praised God and said, Death, where is thy sting? I'll never forget that story from this week. I hope you've written some of the stories down. I hope you do get some of the tapes.

I hope you realize that you're not here just so that you can get a good feed, just so that you can get a good bless up and a good notebook fill. You are responsible now to take what you've received here in your own situation, contextualized, and build upon it for the Kingdom of God and spread it across the world in Operation Multiplication, in Operation Mobilization. What is fire? It's much more than perhaps we think when we first say the word.

I want to ask you, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? If a character like me with all my failure and all my sin and all the things that have been wrong in my life can know something of that fullness almost every day since my conversion, then I'd like to know who has an excuse. And I don't have a very high IQ. When they first tried to get me into Urbana in the late 60s, believe me, I heard the history later, it was a major debate because they don't have people at Urbana that are that young who don't have a degree.

I didn't even have a B.D., much less an M.D. and D.D. and all these other things. Though I've always loved and admired people with degrees, it's wonderful if people are led in that direction. We're not all led the same way.

If you go out and fellowship with a pig farmer, and I've had great fellowship with pig farmers, do you ask him, you know, whether he has a Ph.D. or does he know anything about pigs? God is working in different people in different ways. And as we get more involved and more global, we are gonna have to understand the unique ways that God works in the world. And it often is not our Western way.

It often is not loaded with all the academic sort of things that we carry with us so often and that we often need. And let's face it, some of the academic things that people gather are not necessarily for their career. They are because of their own insecurity and they cannot function unless they have these papers and these documents.

And you and I know that our cemeteries, I mean, our seminaries are graduating, are graduating thousands of people who do not know the reality of prayer, the spirit-filled life, brokenness, biblical relationships. And I could tell you stories and we have stories out of O.M. so we are not putting anybody down whatsoever. We are just giving a plea for reality.

God is using different people in different ways. And as we go out to these other countries with sometimes greater training, with sometimes arms full of books and all kinds of maps and charts and experiences, I pray that it will never come to the place where we don't know how to humble ourselves, especially in front of that national pastor, and learn from him, and esteem him, and be willing to listen to what he has to say. Because to me, the way ahead, without that kind of biblical humility, is fraught with difficulty.

Fullness of the Holy Spirit. In my notes, which I'm sure you realize are always so extensive, I've written the word Grace Awakening. It's not either or.

It's both. The verse I wanted to read the most about the Holy Spirit is actually found in the book of Galatians. A verse that most of you have memorized, where it speaks about the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 22, chapter 5. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering. That's what it's all about. We want the gifts.

We have the gifts. We still have the policy that we are not ashamed of, that super-controversial gifts that the church has not been able to agree on for hundreds of years must be handled very discerningly and very carefully within OM. That's a re-wording of it.

You can discuss that at the next area leaders meeting. Do you realize some of the churches that emphasize in Latin America the power of the Holy Spirit, some of the ones I've been in, absolutely legalistic. Absolutely legalistic and they are sending people out the back door hurt by the hundreds.

If they're a big church, by the hundreds. And the cults are often there to grab them. Some of you are going to be quite shocked as you launch into worldwide missions and discover some of the dirty tricks of the enemy.

For Satan has a roaring lion seeketh whom he may devour. Yes, we want the gifts of the Spirit, we want the power, we want the anointing. I would yearn for a wee bit of it tonight.

But without the fruit, then I don't believe we're building on a solid foundation. Jim Ingle asked a good church of us in the 82,000 movement, planting churches, wonderful. What kind of church? Surely as a movement we are committed to quality more than quantity.

Surely our program of disciplined slow growth which has been our policy for 30 or 25 years I believe has helped us maintain quality though we know we have a long way to go. If you think this is a new message in OM, I would tell you that in Mexico in one of the first ever equivalent of a summer conference the summer of 1960, every single night. Back in those days I used to speak every night.

I don't know why but I guess I just did it. I don't know. Every single night I spoke on a different fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The first major conference outside of the student conferences we had back at Moody and Wheaton, every night we just spoke about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If you don't understand that the heartbeat of OM was 1 Corinthians 13, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, relationships, godliness, brokenness, walking in the light, being right with God, being right with one another, then you do not understand the history of OM. Whatever other little story you may have, whatever little thing you can pull out of the discipleship manual which surely may seem legalistic and probably was, you never gathered the heartbeat of the movement as it was even from the late 50s with all of the needs and yes, the legalisms that did at times creep in.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the key. It's the key to the grace of weakening. Let me share something here in which I can, I know I might miscommunicate.

I have a lot of struggles with God's people and I have struggles of course with myself but it does really bother me why so many of God's people are so critical, so quick to criticize. Nothing has disillusioned me with Christian leaders and I admire Christian leaders. I esteem them but I've got to be honest.

I find it difficult that when so often I find it difficult that when I'm with a Christian leader, within a few minutes another Christian leader is indicted and when I check it out there doesn't seem to have been really that much research and sometimes whole books come out with this kind of criticism and when you get a chance to talk face to face with the author you find out really he didn't have enough time to do his homework. It bothers me and I don't want to criticize the critics. I want to love the critics and I know that I myself had a critical spirit.

As we're growing in Christ it takes time to discern between strong convictions in which you're trying to speak out what you believe is from God and criticism. If you've got that all sorted out neatly in your life you can write to me about it. I may use your letter in a message if you don't copyright it.

Brothers and sisters, as you get injected with missiology beware of becoming a critical, old, fossilized missiologist because there are plenty of them. And one of the things I found so pleasant in fellowshiping with Louis Bush as we walked for an hour or more in all my time with him I never heard him criticize anybody. You say, well, he's extreme.

Well, maybe we need a little more of that extremism to bring some of us characters like me a little more into balance. It doesn't mean we compromise our convictions. It doesn't mean we don't speak out.

But it means we're incredibly careful what we say. Especially when it's negative and when it's critical. Have we done our homework? Do we really know what we're talking about? And then when we bring people's names into it and other organizations into it I tell you we better really be careful because probably the mud is going to end up on our face.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is going to set us free from a lot of the critical spirit. The grace awakening that Swindoll talks about in his book and many other books that are similar it's not a new theme is going to help to set us free from a critical spirit. And we'll learn to be more positive.

With that we'll learn to be grace awakened in the many areas that are referred to in this amazing book. Let me just read some of the titles of the chapters. Isn't Grace Risky? That's the title of the Dutch edition by the way.

Undeserving yet unconditionally loved. Squaring off against legalism. Guiding others to freedom.

Grace to let others be. Graciously disagreeing and pressing on. It's almost the present motto of OM as we work our way through all kinds of differences of opinion on a range of subjects that's almost bizarre.

Grace up close and personal. Are you really a minister of grace? A marriage oiled by grace. Charming joy of grace giving.

Grace, it's really accepting. I thought of writing a sequel to this called The Confessions of a Grace Killer. Because I can tell you especially in my home in the 60's I was a grace killer.

And by 1976 my wife was in depression. Deep. And I was partly to blame.

And it took a bold woman in the same September conference where we agreed to go ahead with Duloss. A bold little woman Judy Hammond took me in a corner. And I tell you she took out her gentle six gun and started to aim at this grace killer with all six bullets.

And hallelujah down he went. And within a few months that depression left my wife and has never been back. And it doesn't always happen that way.

There are many different kinds of depression. And one dear lady I'm praying for in Scotland has had it for eight years. But I do believe that God wants to continue to set O.M. free from being grace killers in any man, any form or any manner.

It doesn't mean things will be perfect. It doesn't mean that now George Burwer is Mr. Grace. Come to my house and you'll discover that it's just not quite that simple.

But I turned a corner and maybe tonight if you're a grace killer maybe tonight if you don't know the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the fruit we've been talking about maybe tonight if you are entangled in bitterness and failing to forgive someone and Louise Bush even brought that into his missiological challenge on the first or second night then tonight could be your moment of decision. Let the Spirit of God deal with it. Let that blood spoken of this morning cleanse it and go from here grace awakened and free in Jesus Christ to be the kind of Spirit filled person God wants you to be.

But thirdly, I believe if we're going to make it happen the fullness of the Holy Spirit and a grace awakening is not enough. You already knew that, right? It comes a third thing which we don't like to talk about anymore. It's called discipline.

Discipline. Remember the old Jonathan McCrosty messages on discipline. Let's face it Jonathan also at times could be a grace killer.

I've seen him in action. What a miracle this brother he should be up here speaking and I should be down there. But I remember Jonathan's messages on the discipline life.

And I don't believe O.M. is going anywhere if we don't continue to major on the discipline life. Whatever blessing we get from the Holy Ghost. Whatever grace awakening may come through Charles Wendell's book or whatever.

Unless we follow it up with just basic, simple biblical New Testament discipline then it's not going to happen. Every man of God in history has had some degree of emphasis on discipline. Many of them disagree on other areas.

They'd even disagree on some of the things I've already touched on. But you'll hardly ever find a man of God that didn't know something of the discipline life. Discipline and prayer.

How can we do it if we're not disciplined in prayer? Does prayer come automatic to you? Do you just wait on Monday for the prayer meeting on Wednesday to get in there and give a couple of hours to intercessory prayer? I don't see that happening so much among God's people. Prayer takes discipline. It takes planning.

Some of us write it into our diary for the whole year and try to give it a priority otherwise it won't happen. The discipline of Bible study. The Word of God is neglected among the Lord's people today.

The Word of God is surely neglected in OM. It's one thing to have a special conference and have people feeding us. And I believe in that.

And with cassette tape we can have it all year. But none of it is a substitute for disciplined study of the Word of God. I find many people today have never even read the Bible for once.

I took a survey at Stellenbosch University among 2,000 students. They're all mainly reared in Christian homes. Very strong on the Bible.

I mean, really. 95% never read the Bible for once. These are universities.

These are top academics. This is the Cambridge of South Africa. The Word of God is laid aside.

Would you make a commitment to at least read through the Bible in the next year? It takes discipline. It takes effort. So many men and women of God have emphasized that.

I don't know how we can miss it. Some of you know there are special kinds of revivals going on in certain churches. Let us be very discerning about all this and be slow to say anything that may not be of the Lord.

I don't know how to express that. But I know that in reading one article by a brother in the British Isles urging people what to do after they experience some special blessing, 80% of the article was discipline. I thought this is great.

Whatever blessing people may have, if it's followed by discipline, then there's hope. When there's a special blessing, it's like sort of jump-starting a car. And every one of us in OM has had that experience if you've been around long.

It was a wonderful day in my life when I discovered you could jump-start a diesel truck easier than you could jump-start a car. I remember this mechanic telling me to get out and get behind the truck and push. I said, are you crazy? There's seven tons sitting here.

And a diesel truck, you just get it going a few feet and it will kick-start. And in some churches today, and maybe even tonight in this meeting, the Holy Ghost is kick-starting some people. But you don't drive around the world in a kick-start position, I can assure you.

There comes those times when somehow the lightning hits. But you don't live that way with lightning popping out of every bush. Some of us would like to.

Praise God that it is possible to have balance in these things. When I look at people in the sports world, I'm amazed that they're disciplined. Am I just cuckoo in this? Are you amazed that some of these people in the sports world and they're disciplined? Peter, I know amazement is not your big thing, but aren't you amazed by some of this? Yeah, he's amazed.

What about the world of music? I remember somebody coming to me and groaning about Leo Proat's team. Where's Leo? Here's a fellow who looks like Leo, but it's not Leo. Where's Leo? He's back in Belgium probably.

But in the early days, maybe in some not the early days, we had a few people grown under Leo's training program. It was a bit tough. And I had a talk with him about it.

You know what I found out? Leo was a musician. He learned to play musical instruments. I think hard musical instruments.

And that's tough and that's rough. And he incorporated some of that ethos. He was converted through an open air meeting in Austin.

He incorporated some of that into the training program. It was a bit tough at times. I admire musicians.

Danny Clap, the man that influenced me, gave me, his mother sent me the gospel. His brother Steve is one of the greatest Christian violinists in the world. I think he's at Joliet now.

And when I went and visited with him and saw how he trained people to play a violin, I tell you, I felt that big. There is a danger in Christian work if we overemphasize grace, if we overemphasize certain aspects, even in the area of relationship, pastoral care, all that kind of thing, which I believe is very important and very beautiful. But if we overemphasize that, we will not be able to produce great men and women.

We've got to have both. We've got to have an emphasis on discipline. We've got to be able to rebuke people.

We've got to be able to, in some cases, ask people to go back and start again. We have to in some cases say to people, look, you have, as far as we can see, you have failed the course. We cannot recommend you to join WECC.

We cannot recommend you to join another mission. You need, perhaps, another training program. We need a seriousness of purpose within OM.

What we are doing is more important than playing football or learning how to play the violin. What about the people in the world of arts? And even in the world of business and politics, I have the privilege, it's quite intimidating, of meeting people who are incredibly disciplined. My esteem of Christian business and professional people has continued to climb over the past 25 years.

And let us understand, some of those people who are supplying our money are as committed to Jesus Christ and more committed and more disciplined than we are. And we ought to esteem them. And we shouldn't be afraid of them.

We should encourage them. We should write them. We should give them books.

And not be especially intimidated if they seem a little wealthy or they have a bigger car or they have a bigger home. We're all different. God's working in different people in different ways.

Eugenia Price, in her brilliant book *On the Subject of Grace*, and her books influence me far more than Swindoll because she's pre-Swindoll. Maybe he learned from her. But Eugenia Price said, when you're tempted to jump on somebody because they're doing something that you feel is wrong or ugly, maybe you should just pray instead.

Maybe somehow in their spiritual development, the Lord hasn't yet been able to show them that particular area that you're upset with. Brothers and sisters, we've got a range of Christians in the world today. Yea,

we have a range of Christians in O.M. That without a grace awakening, this movement will become a... I don't want to say it because I say things that are over the top.

Fill in the blank. What about the whole area of the tongue? Are all these different men of God that have preached about the sins of the tongue, are they all cuckoo? Are they all just over the top? Men that have said they feel that the sins of the tongue are the greatest problem in the church. Brothers and sisters, the sins of the tongue are deadly in missionary work.

We must constantly work on it. And I can only say for someone who sins with my tongue that there is forgiveness and there is cleansing and there is victory in Jesus. But we need a ruthless honesty.

What about the use of time? Redeem the time. I fear because I've been extreme in that. People overreact.

I am not expecting you to be like me. We're all different. Some of my ways of redeeming the time, even for my new wife, she just finds it extremely difficult even to watch it, much less do it.

But all of us in our own way, often a very quiet way, we can redeem the time. Redeeming time includes recreation. One of my great time redeemers this summer was reading magazines.

I'm a magazine-aholic. I'm always looking for a chance to read magazines. I had a great chance to read magazines on the queue, on the line, to get on the roller coasters in Sandusky Park and Great America, Chicago.

I had 25 roller coasters. You say, why is George Behr into roller coasters? I mean, this is a practical way to increase your prayer and faith life. Actually, I go on them because I love it.

I get kicks out of it, my adrenaline pumps, and I forget O.M. for at least two and a half minutes. I think redeeming the time is exciting if it's kept in balance. It can become foolish.

You can even get yourself killed like trying to walk across the street reading and praying through Operation World. Let's not overreact to the bizarre, but let's somehow find a balanced way to redeem the time. One man of God said he felt that was the greatest sin of young people today, the sin of failing to redeem the time.

I wonder, do you ever put any value on your time? Be careful in doing that because you may become judgmental about someone you feel is using you. And that's easy. But there's another place, another time where you can just realize time is money.

We are still in O.M. too judgmental about the way other people spend money. We are. Let's just acknowledge it.

That was a major cancer in the 60s and 70s. That doesn't mean God didn't work through us in those days. We kept dealing with the cancer.

There was a lot of repentance. And with some of the financial pain we came through, that difficulty was normal. The Lord understands that.

He's merciful. But let's be set free from judging other people and the way they spend money if we feel what they're doing is wrong. And sometimes, I'm sure it is.

Let us go to them as a brother. Let us go to them as a brother and talk it out. You may discover a lot of facts you didn't know about that particular situation.

Brothers and sisters, the challenge of the disciplined life is not something I'm just pulling out of the air. It's written through the whole of the Word of God. I think of the Apostle Paul in Corinthians.

I buffet my body. I bring it into subjection. Lest after preaching to others, I become a castaway.

That is not a way of bondage. That is a way of liberty because the Apostle Paul demonstrated the way of liberty and the way of victory and the way of the Holy Spirit. Be not fearful of a little bit of buffeting of the body.

Not in terms of asceticism, but in terms of basic discipline, which is so important, so absolutely important in our Christian lives and in our walk with God. What about the area of discipline when it comes to food? I never hear anybody speak about, preach about gluttony. Do you? Oh, that's a rough one.

Billy Graham does. Billy Graham speaks about gluttony. Even thinking of mentioning gluttony, I thought, wow, somebody that's a borderline anorexic.

And I say a word about gluttony, I'm liable to push him further into anorexia because I've heard that sometimes anorexia is linked with guilt over eating. That's certainly only a minor part of it, but it may be tied in. And the fact of the matter is it's because of what we experienced in OM in all these years, the complexity of life, that we are hesitant.

We are hesitant to speak about things. I'm incredibly hesitant to speak about hell. Because I know when you speak about hell, some sensitive person, some young Christian sensitive, sometimes gets really just blown away by it.

And they have dreams about it. And in some cases there are people who have had a nervous breakdown thinking about hell. I can't remember specifically in OM, I think maybe years ago it did happen.

I remember just touching right here in a conference center in Holland on the subject of forsaking all. And a woman who was emotionally disturbed in the meeting, got things confused, went back to her house, this is not a tale, took a good part of her possessions and dumped them in the canal. As many a time I've said, you may not believe this, as many a time I've said, I don't want to preach anymore.

Preachers are attacked anyway, especially in the 70s. We were told it's got to be dialogue. Praise God, Lloyd-Jones helped keep preaching somewhere up in some kind of acceptable level.

But there was a lot of talk in the 60s about preaching is the worst form of communication. You need dialogue, you need drama, you need round tables and square tables and all kinds of things, films. I believe in all of it! But I still see in the New Testament the preaching of the Word of God.

And we have to take that risk. Grace is risky in the sense that Christian life is risky. There are verses in the Bible, even if you just read them without any comment from a preacher, people could get them wrong and end up doing stupid things.

If we can't trust a sovereign God to somehow, with the help of His people, put together situations that may get out of control because of something we say, then I tell you, I would be afraid to be a missionary. I want to ask you, are you disciplined in your eating? When I see someone who's heavy, that is no problem to

me. That person could easily have a metabolism problem.

Part of the reason I'm skinny, doctor told me, I have a high combustion engine. I can put in, I can't get much in anymore, I don't know what's happening in my stomach, but whatever I put in seems to just burn up. So if I see someone who's heavy, that doesn't bother me.

One of my great illustrations is D.L. Moody. Secular Encyclopedia said D.L. Moody, overweight American evangelist who depopulated hell by 2 million souls. One of the great speakers we had at O.M. back in the 60s was Eric Hutchings, a man with a mighty anointing.

I mean, his stomach was nigh onto that balloon, but he was a mighty man of God. Not quite. Mighty man of God.

I'm thinking more of my old balloon. But if you are gaining weight because you are snacking and you're eating too much, you have a problem. I'm not wanting to bring a heavy thing upon you, but you have a problem.

And eventually the one that says something to you probably won't be me. It'll be your heart. It'll be your heart.

Gluttony is a sin in our society. We don't need to get all uptight because this message is about grace. It's about mercy.

It's about forgiveness. Sins of the tongue. We're not picking on any one sin tonight.

We're giving you quite a range so you can just put on whatever shoe fits. But I believe that in the work of God, unless we deal seriously with sin, not just the sins that we find easy to combat, but the sins that we don't even like to admit, then God, in some ways, will be hindered in what He wants to do in our own life. What about this whole area of sex? What about the whole area of pornographic videos? And I would say at this point, my first burden isn't even to tell you not to do that.

My first burden is if you are doing it, and plenty of men and maybe some women are, are you walking in the light about it? Do you have anybody that you're talking to about it? It is much easier to get into pornography in 1994 than it was in 1964. And the number of men and women of God that have shared with me is just amazing. And I even run away from it now.

I run away from it. We have Lois Mowdy, the author of The Snare, coming here. If you want a copy of The Snare, you can have it free tonight.

I'll probably withdraw that offer at midnight. But those of you who are going and will not hear Lois Mowdy speak, and she may not even speak on that subject, pick up her book, The Snare, because there's wisdom, there's nuggets of wisdom in that book that would keep many a man, many a woman from playing the fool. Brothers and sisters, you can pray for deliverance.

You can have hands laid on you until your head's gone flat. You can do all kinds of things in connection with a battle you have with impurity or excessive romance or codependent situations. But we'll never keep on keeping on without discipline.

And it touches many different areas. Discipline life, it's not bondage. It's freedom.

What about the discipline of our body in the area of exercise? We have all these jokes now about the early days when people sort of had to exercise. I don't think it ever was totally compulsory except in maybe a few conferences. But I think just having some kind of exercise program, even the most meek, mild, milquetoast program, is better than nothing.

Because you'll find that with good exercise, somehow you learn how to process oxygen better. You probably won't need to sleep as much. That's another whole area of discipline.

Remember Alan Redpath coming? Boy, talk about a grace killer. No, he wasn't, but boy, he could preach pretty hard. And he said, you remember that? If you just cut one hour out of your sleep, cut one hour more out of your sleep, you'll get the exact number of years more you'll have to serve Jesus.

And you know, O.M. is naive as a bunch of newborn chickens. We just sat there and took that whole thing and we all tried. We were already not sleeping enough.

We tried one hour less. And you know, we got the kind of team we had up here in the fun night. This thing was too close to reality to laugh, man.

But I will tell you, it's years ago that I stopped having so much trouble getting out of bed. I guess I fought it 20 years. And guess how I helped solve it? I just learned to get a little more sleep.

If you get to bed a little earlier, don't yap so much. And snack so much. That puts the real weight on.

You know, snack just before you go to bed. It doesn't have anywhere to go. Just go.

But if you sleep a little more, probably you'll wake up earlier and you'll find it'll revolutionize your life. You'll find very few men and women of God that don't know how to get up in the morning. The exceptions to that are rock musicians.

See the balance? They're up all night at some gig blowing people into the kingdom of God with heavy metal. Then they've got to sleep a little longer than the average evangelical and we'll give them that kind of a permit. As long as plenty of people are being saved.

The disciplined life is exciting. Don't run away from it. Don't think it's not for you.

Don't feel you have to copy anybody. Everybody's original. And one of the most beautiful things about the disciplined life is that we can laugh about it.

We don't lose our sense of humor. We learn to smell the roses. People think they know George Burrough because they've heard me preach.

You don't know people because you learn to preach. You come with me. Come with me on my canal boat holiday and watch me watch the birds.

Not the women. The feathered birds. Dirty minded Englishmen.

No, excuse me. I love flowers. I love birds.

I love nature. My favorite place is the Grand Canyon. I hiked twice the Grand Canyon this year alone.

We're all more complex than we look when we're standing behind the pulpit or we're leading someone to Christ or we're in a night of prayer. And the message of emphasis on the human factor in OM in the past 7, 8, 10 years I believe is one of the greatest fresh air, Holy Ghost winds that has ever blown at least through my life. I hope it's blown through you as well because you see, no matter how filled you are with the Spirit, you're going to do stupid things.

Now, one of the guys I like to pick on is Billy Jones because he's getting on in years and he's just one of my closest friends. Billy Jones is a Spirit-filled man. I've been with him, what is it, 30 years, Billy? Married a Spirit-filled wife.

But Billy Jones, for those of us who have lived close to him, he is as human. He is as human. He is as a clay pot as anybody that has ever walked.

No matter how filled you are with the Spirit, you're incredibly human. This is why sometimes people emphasize the Spirit and don't get balance from Scripture and they do, they become weird. Have you ever met any weird people who claim to be, you know, totally zapped with the Holy Spirit? You know, I mean, apart from me.

Have you ever met any? Oh, I just wish there was more time but we're getting close to the goal post. This treasure is an earthen vessel. Do you accept that? I find a lot of false guilt still around OM in 1994.

This is supposed to be the age of freedom. This is the age of the fun night. This is the age of the global balloon.

This is the age of dancing. This is the age of the everlasting bowling club. This, you know, OM's got a better sense of humor.

We got better ministry. We got better music. We got better movies.

And yet people are still carrying around false guilt. What is it? What are you reading? What are you reading? Are you still stuck in Raven Hill? I don't know. But let God set you free from the false guilt.

Let God set you free from putting yourself down. This amazing book, Don't Let the Jerks Get the Best of You, should be required reading for every jerk in the place. But probably you don't classify yourself as a jerk.

And if you're some country, you'll probably run for the dictionary. But in that amazing book, I was reading a section that the Holy Spirit used to point to the fact that I still have a tendency to put myself down. And to say things about myself that are not honoring to Christ.

What do you say, for example, when you lock yourself out of your car? Is that your fun thing? How many of you have ever locked yourself out of the car completely? Look at that. Even Peter Maiden. Spirit-filled people.

Spirit-filled people with discernment, wisdom from above, Proverbs every day. Locked out of the car. What did you say about yourself at that time? Boy, aren't you clever.

If you did, it was with cynicism. You probably were upset with yourself unless you could in any possible way blame it on your wife. I'm very gifted in that area.

But as you read that amazing book, you will discover that as the Lord's people, we do tend in subtle ways to put ourselves down. To take on guilt. To take on blame.

To fail to really live in the reality that we're created in the image of God. We're kings. We're priests.

We're forgiven. God knows everything about us and loves us still. Let God lift false guilt.

Any of you had any good, real, great failures in 1993-94 O.M. year? Don't carry them past this conference. Don't carry it. Put it on Jesus.

It's gone. Has anyone really hurt you bad? Someone that's really hurt you very bad and if you're honest, you have not forgiven them despite what Louis Bush said to us because it's too deep. It's too real.

You can't. You say you've tried. Maybe you tried too hard.

I would beg of you tonight when I give this invitation to stand up and ask God to fill you and set you free from unforgiveness. You say, well, that person hasn't even apologized. If he or she apologizes, I'm ready to forgive.

I remember in Italy in the first or second summer, my wife and I had a row. I forget what it was, but it was a big one. I don't know.

I was angry. We lived on a 15-story building. I was angry.

My son was making a lot of noise. I wanted to throw him out the window. I mean, that's really bad.

I think I repented of that, didn't I? Then my wife and I got in a fight. I marched into the other room in argument and she stayed where she was. I thought if she comes to me, she comes and apologizes, I'm ready to forgive her and I'll probably take some of the blame.

Is that how you operate? It shouldn't be that way. I had read Calvary Road enough to know that I had to get on the initiative and I moved out of that room toward her to apologize. She was moving toward me and brokenness, tears, and repentance came in.

That's what's kept our marriage going for 34 years. I'm not the naturally happy married man. I'm not the naturally happy married anything.

But I found a well and do you know what DeBron means? It means the well. And tonight God wants you to drink deep from the well and experience deeper forgiveness. And you can forgive people before they ever come to apologize.

The forgiveness you give is supernatural. If they apologize, hallelujah, that's water over the glass. The more the better.

You get a lot, you can take a bath. But it's Jesus dying on the cross that gives you the grace to forgive even someone who has hurt you deeply and will not even apologize and maybe it's because they don't see it. I believe a lot of the things that we think are sinful in OM and there are sinful things in OM but my view is that a lot of the things we think are so sinful are in fact misunderstandings and how Satan loves to have a field day with the misunderstandings and the fact that we've got these brains on the top of our necks and some of them seem to operate like Macintoshes and some of them are IBMs and some of them

seem like old erector sets out of the 40s and we don't easily communicate to one another.

And I'm trying to learn this year and I hope Peter Maiden will hold me to account after reading Stephen Covey's book Seven Habits I'm hoping that I can be a better listener and instead of when I talk to people always want to be understood. You need to understand me man. Every nation with a gospel.

Here's a copy of Operation World. Boom! Here's a prayer card. How about a balloon? I want to somehow in the next 12 months learn to listen and try to see and understand them before I try to be understood.

How are your listening skills? The discipline of listening. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is for everybody. It's a normal Christian life.

It's not just for missionaries but you can get in on it. Grace Awakening is for everybody. One of the books we're giving away free tonight is called Personal Revival.

It's sort of similar to Calvary Road. It came out of the same revival. You can pick it up free.

We don't have enough for everyone but those who will read it. Many of you already have it. This became part of the message of OM in 1961.

Around there. Personal Revival. Revival is a big thing right now.

People are talking about it. Articles about it. New books about it.

I've always gone on record and I'm going to bring this to a close that Plan A is revival begins at Calvary when you're saved and never stops. Never stops. You don't need revival because you've had viable Ephesians, Jesus Christ alive in you.

The trouble is a lot of people do drift away. Got to be honest. A lot of people do grow cold.

Bitterness does come in. And then we do need revival. And we long for that.

But we don't have to wait around at least in regard to ourselves. For your church, how's it going at Hebron Hall? May have to wait a little while. But for yourself, for us individually, it's now.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

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