

Riding the Rollercoaster Trends in the Church

by George Verwer

This sermon emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation among Christians from different backgrounds and denominations, and encourages listeners to be open-minded and humble in their approach to evangelism and mission work.

Duration: 53:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:3, Romans 14:1, 1 Corinthians 12:12, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Ephesians 4:2

Topics: "Trends"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares ten points of wisdom for living a life of faith and service. These points include the importance of loving and helping others, even when they may not appreciate it or attack you. The speaker also emphasizes the need to stay focused on sound doctrine and biblical principles, rather than getting caught up in exceptions or new trends. The sermon encourages listeners to think big and not be discouraged by opposition or criticism. Overall, the message emphasizes the importance of persevering in faith and doing good, regardless of the challenges that may arise.

Transcript

Riding the Roller Coaster. This is really a talk about trends, present trends, ups and downs, things happening in the Church. And one of the reasons, one of a number of reasons that this work has gone forward is our deep partnership with local churches.

Now that is sometimes a complicated partnership. A man wrote a book on the whole issue of para-church agencies. We don't accept that term, but people give.

Groups like Youth for Christ, the Christian Union Movement, OM, YWAM, Gospel Recordings, even things like Whitcliffe. A para-church. And there's a book called Church and Para-Church Uneasy Romance.

Quite a challenging book. Praise God for a high degree of churches that do fully accept missionary agencies as part of the Church. But one of the significant things that's happening in some of these new churches, and I'm going to talk about that more in a little while, is an increased interest in world missions.

And our burden in this session is not to bring more disunity by emphasizing the things that divide, though we will touch on some things, but to try to emphasize the things that unite. Because especially we in mobilization are committed to an interdenominational forward missionary thrust. Why do we feel that a

worldwide missionary thrust should be and can be interdenominational? I have a whole long message on this.

I want to try to just cover it in five or ten minutes. Number one, I would say, being interdenominational as a missionary fellowship, which is what we are and what many other missions are, is to acknowledge history. We want to be, as much as possible, men and women of integrity who will acknowledge history.

I believe history shows that God has used different groups in different ways. You may be very denominational. We are not anti-denominational.

We acknowledge that so many of the denominations have very good roots. Most denominations today of the older denominations are split into those who are very faithful to God's Word and those who would tend to lay God's Word aside. When we think of this whole area, we need to realize that many of the really outstanding church planting agencies were, in fact, missionary fellowships.

So God uses different groups, different churches, different agencies. We also see how God has used different methods. Now there is a tendency for each one to feel that his method is best.

We have a very strong message today in the area of evangelism that without signs and wonders and miracles we're just not going to really get on with evangelism. But Billy Graham has chosen a different road. He never got into what some people describe as signs, wonders, and miracles.

I was converted through Billy Graham's ministry. I would have thought that's even a greater miracle than getting healed. God uses his Word.

The real author of conversion is the Holy Spirit. God uses different evangelists in different ways. Billy Graham is not John Wimber.

John Wimber isn't John Wesley. John Wesley wasn't George Whitefield. Why can't we be a little more open-minded as to how God works? Because we live in a complicated world.

We need to organize. We need to get our act together. There needs to be some leadership.

The key is that as we go forward, we go forward together. That was the title of that conference in December. Another point under this acknowledging history is the simple fact that there is so much truth in the Word of God and different people emphasize different truths.

A second point under this that I want to share is that being interdenominational helps to build unity, not just with a few. Some only emphasize unity within their own group or within their own church or stream. We need to emphasize that if we're going to see our local church function, but we need to emphasize our unity with all believers.

Also, the kind of unity that speaks to unbelievers in evangelism is when they see Christians of different backgrounds and different churches or whatever working together. An example of this is Turkey. In the land of Turkey, we don't talk about OM.

We don't talk about Campus Crusade. We don't talk about Presbyterian churches or Brethren churches or new churches or house churches. We try to just come across to the people as believers and followers of Jesus Christ.

Do not think for a minute that we do not reproduce on the mission field the same divisions we have back here in Britain. It is one of the toughest missionary problems we're dealing with. In fact, there are some fellowships that are not sending out proper missionaries who learn the language.

They just send out speakers who speak in English. And when they come with special doctrines, homegrown British doctrines, they split churches and they bring a lot of confusion at times to the mission field. Just to go into a country speaking English through an interpreter without a knowledge of the culture, without some training, without the sensitivity comes with that training is less than best.

It can be done. It can be a blessing, especially if the person sticks to the basics. But once we get into highly controversial things and we start bringing in things that may be culturally acceptable in England but not culturally acceptable in England, in India, we get a lot of problems.

So we have taken this position of working interdenominationally in order to have fellowship with a wide range of believers, in order to have a united testimony to unbelievers and demonstrate through love. Jesus prayed that we would all be one. We have also realized that in an interdenominational situation, we are still able to train people who go back and work with their own fellowships and churches.

And this is something that we are excited about in OM. We don't want to just do our own thing. It's true.

We're pretty excited about wanting to get a lot of you to come for a year or two on OM. We have to be honest about that. But it's not just to become part of OM's permanent staff.

That is a need. That is a challenge. OM is both short-term and long-term.

But it is also to give you training in cross-cultural communication, in the Word of God, in the disciplined life, in prayer, in spiritual balance that will enable you to be sought, to be a blessing, to eventually be a leader back in your home church, whether it's a good old Anglican church in the corner, or whether it's a little new church that's just growing up in one of the housing estates. So I would say to those of you who are even quite narrow in your thinking, a year or two on OM wouldn't kill you. You may have to fellowship with someone who doctrinally you don't agree with, but that is a good experience because if all of our conclusions are made only on the basis of what we read in books, without any personal experience with these different kinds of Christians, it is often lopsided.

The alternative is also true if all of our conclusions are based on our fellowship with people, which is at least semi-subjective, and we never study, we never research, we never read books, then we can go off balance the other way. We want to stay as learners, thus building humility. We may have a set idea, but we want to remain open.

We want to keep from dead orthodoxy or becoming too rigid. We want to learn how to take the best that we can from different movements, fellowships, and denominations. Another reason for this commitment on our part is we feel it's the only logical way to reach the Muslim world.

I hope as many of you as possible will pick up some of the literature about Islam. I don't think you have to look too far. You will realize the great commitment we have to the Muslim world.

We have 450 people in this subcontinent. A lot of that is among Muslims, over half of it. We have 250 more committed to Muslim evangelism in other parts of the world, including Europe, even little church planting teams as nearby as Bradford or Coventry.

And some of you know about the FFA work. How can we go to the Muslim world in disunity, in backbiting, in confusion, in division, and in extremism? There is a place for our particular doctrinal issues. There's a place for these personal convictions.

But if we are going to evangelize the world, then some of these smaller, controversial convictions have to be put in the right priority. Otherwise, let's forget it. We're not going to get the world evangelized.

And we are committed, building our theology and our strategy on the Word of God, we want an equal commitment to love and to truth. I believe a united thrust, an interdenominational thrust, is also the best way to cope with liberalism, unbelief. People are bitter and sour and skeptical and cynical as they see so much in-house fighting and so much confusion.

One of the greatest things that concerns me about Operation Mobilization are the people who we hurt every year. Now, if I saw there was some other way to do this, I would leave Operation Mobilization and start something else. But the moment there's a group of people trying to do something together, there is potential for hurt.

So if you don't want to be hurt, I'll give you a little advice. You're on the wrong planet. It's so easy to think that you are the main person being hurt.

Everywhere we go, people are being hurt. I even hurt my dear wife, who I love so much and who I've been committed to for 28 years. Sometimes the one we love, the one we are closer to, we are more vulnerable with, and we hurt.

This is a great burden, and I hope that somehow, as a result of this weekend, you can have a more realistic view of life on planet Earth, a more realistic view of what it is to get among God's people. Someone said God's chosen. Often they're God's frozen people.

Maybe sometimes you feel that Christians are a bit of a pain in the neck. Try to be positive. Thank the Lord you're not a giraffe.

Now, let me just inject something here that will just--a little more of something that's very much on my heart, that is tied into this subject that I've been asked to speak on. This is called the paradoxical commandments of leadership. This is called the paradoxical commandments of leadership.

Some have criticized our conferences because we call them leadership conferences, at least a few years ago. It's interesting now that the Lausanne Committee and that great Congress of World Evangelism, a lot of other missiologists and theologians are saying the great need right now is training younger leaders. OM has been one of the few groups that has said that training must begin when people are 17, 18, and 19, when possible.

We know that you're not going out of here, most of you, to be elders of churches or apostles or pastors, but you need to realize that there is a leadership vacuum in the Church of Jesus Christ, and that in God's work he uses all kinds of people, including characters like you. Plus, to just be a father in the 20th century, you need as much leadership skill as you do to be an elder in the Church. We don't want you to go from here and say, I am now a graduate of OM's leadership training.

For us, it's a 10-year program, but it is needed, and the sooner you get started, the better. Here's one of the little quotations I've shared with leaders in our training courses through the years. Ten points, I'm going

to read them to you.

Number one, people are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered people. Love them anyway. Isn't that good? Number two, if you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Do good anyway. Three, if you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.

Four, the good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Five, honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway. Six, the biggest men with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men with the smallest minds. Think big anyway.

That really helps me. Seven, people favor underdogs, but they follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

Eight, what you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway. Nine, people really need help, but may attack you if you do help them.

Help them anyway. Ten, give the world the best you have, and you might get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

Many times God has used that to encourage me along the road of spiritual combat. And what are some of the big trends that we're going to face in the church today? First of all, I think we can speak about the charismatic renewal. Billy Graham, a man who I was converted through, has made some very positive statements about the worldwide charismatic renewal.

I'm sure some of you are only here today because of what is called the charismatic renewal, a renewing of emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. I personally believe the greater strength in that movement was not just the renewed emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, but an emphasis on love. We talked about that together at this conference I was at.

Because I will tell you, if your fellowship has gifts of the Spirit, but you're not loving people, you're not caring people, you're not reaching out, you will end up in a counterproductive situation. You will end up with a lot of hurt people, and you will pray and lay hands on those hurt people, and they will not be healed. You will then become discouraged because we now have literally millions of discouraged charismatics.

That's why God brings in characters like me, perhaps takes me beyond charisma, to be able to minister to people who have experienced great things in the Holy Spirit, and yet are basically discouraged, maybe even bitter, maybe even having passed through something like divorce. I want to say it very, very clearly. There is no simple one answer to you running the Christian race all of your life.

You need the whole counsel of God. Satan, of course, has counterattacked this. Every time God is working, Satan is counterattacking.

So a lot of people have got into extremism. We tried to communicate this in the 60s, and of course we were still young. We still didn't understand all that God was doing.

Some of you have read my old book, Extremism, which we're revising, and I think we miscommunicated and gave some people the idea that we were just negative about everything, because the basic roots of

Operation Mobilization don't come out of the Charismatic Movement. We're many years down the road in regard to the Charismatic Renewal, and so now it is very divided. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal split in two.

The American Charismatic Renewal split in a number of pieces. The biggest split came later, after the old line Pentecostal churches were born. They were born because with their particular methods of worship, their emphasis on the gifts, the rest of the Church was not able to handle that, generally speaking.

They started their own churches. You need to understand that Pentecostal people in North America, the United States, and other parts of the world actually were persecuted. They actually were persecuted by the Church.

That's why it is so good that today they have been considered, in most places, in most nations, there are a few exceptions, as a main part of the Body of Christ. That doesn't mean we all agree. It doesn't mean we all understand.

But it means that at least we know we're members of the Body of Christ. In the Evangelical Alliance in Britain that we belong to, led by Clive Calver, you have Evangelical churches, you have Charismatic churches, you have Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal agencies. The roots of YWAM go back into the assembly of God.

My roots and the roots of OM go back into a wide cross-section of Evangelicals, including some people who are Pentecostal and Charismatic. The first churches that let me preach with my terrible Spanish in Mexico were the Pentecostal churches. And I just fell in love with those people.

And it was so great because my Spanish, they often couldn't understand it, but they were so excited about Jesus, they kept saying, Amen, praise the Lord. I kept getting more and more excited, and wonderful things took place. And I've been ministering with Pentecostal churches all over the world ever since.

But 20 years ago, 25, 30 years ago, a new movement came in. That was labeled originally Neo-Pentecostalism, a term that got dropped, which is good. I think I may have used it in my old book.

And then the word Charismatic movement came in. The great split that came in that movement was between those that felt they should remain within their established churches and those that felt they should come out. Most of the house fellowships in Great Britain and new churches can trace their roots back to that split.

They don't like to, but they know that's true. They came out. The Anglicans perhaps have suffered the most because because tens of thousands have left Anglican churches and formed new churches.

People have become bitter, angry, all kinds of things that have happened. But I believe in Britain and in some countries, we are seeing a settling down of this controversy. That is a trend I would say we're facing right now.

I was at this meeting with these men who are mainly from house fellowships and new churches, but in that meeting was Michael Harper, a leader in the Anglican church. And there have been a few brave people who have constantly tried to bridge the gap. David Watson, now with the Lord, was one of those persons, and I could give you many more.

Now when we come together in something like Operation Mobilization, we have young people of a Charismatic persuasion from new churches sitting next to a young person of Charismatic persuasion of an Anglican church who might be sitting next to someone of strong Evangelical non-Charismatic persuasion from All Souls Langham Church, Langham Place. Some of you may be old enough to know the controversy between John Stott and his vicar, Michael Harper, a long time ago. This controversy is still going on.

If you read Christian magazines, I go through in a very light way, reading heavily certain articles, about 50 Christian periodicals of various kinds, you realize this battle is still going on. It has increased recently with the entrance of these powerful seminars led by John Wimber and his teams. This has resurrected some of the things that previously had died down a little bit, and books like Power Evangelism.

And I think we need to understand, especially a movement like OM, where we're trying to keep on the middle road, that in some ways it's not getting any easier. There are so many voices, there are so many seminars, there is so much intimidation. And young Christians, many are confused.

Many Christian unions have gone through heavy division. In some cases people left the Christian union and started their own particular group. Praise God, I know of cases where they closed that down and went back into the Christian unions.

We should never be surprised by disunity, controversy, misunderstandings and confusion. They had it in the New Testament. We should never be surprised by disunity, controversy, misunderstandings and confusion.

They had it in the New Testament. But I hope that you, by God's grace, will learn to compassionately disagree with those you may not agree with, rather than arrogantly, in a judgmental and critical way, condemn other believers, or make them into second-class citizens because maybe they don't speak in tongues. My experience in Pentecostal churches all over the world is that at least 25% of young people reared in Pentecostal churches have never spoken in tongues, though they have been taught that all of their life.

And I have had to counsel some very heavy cases where those people have deep psychological problems because they feel that they are rejected by God. God gives different gifts to different people, and we cannot allow this second-class citizenship to come in, especially when those people love the Lord and they want to serve the Lord. Quite a few feel they could never be a missionary because they don't have a full dose of the Holy Spirit, because they don't have the same gift that another brother or sister has.

That has caused more grief and more heartache than almost anything I can think of. It's not right. It's not biblical, and it's not right.

You will find that there are different degrees of trends and emphasis in every country. For example, in Great Britain, the charismatic emphasis is more dominant than most of the nations I've been in the world. I would say probably 70% of all that's really alive and doing anything has probably been influenced directly or indirectly by the charismatic movement.

But what about the minority group, the sort of mainline, born-again, loving Jesus evangelicals, the kind that go up to the Keswick Convention? Are we now going to persecute them as maybe their grandfathers persecuted Charismatics or Pentecostals? Or are we going to accept that God works in different people in

different ways? In North America, the live, non-Charismatic churches still dominate the scene and are sending out far more missionaries. Do we want to exclude North America because they're not Charismatic enough? My own belief, of course, is that we're all Charismatic. Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and that's the core of the Charisma.

That's where it all comes from. It's not something you copy. It's something you catch.

And if we could only realize that, then people of different backgrounds who have been influenced by different trends in different books and different teachings would be able to function together. Another major trend that you may not be aware of is the growth of Reformed theology. I'm sure some of you are influenced by that, maybe firmly in that camp.

Actually, this is something that some people have difficulty with in connection with OM because OM has a deep Calvinistic streak. That may frighten some of you. We may have a deep Arminian streak.

Some of you don't even know what that is. No problem. That's why you came to this session.

Don't be afraid of theology. Don't be afraid of church history. How many of us understand what's happened in the Orthodox Church? Do you know how many Orthodox churches there are? When I was in Melbourne, actually staying in the home of the Archbishop, he was sharing with me the tension between the different Orthodox churches--the Greek Orthodox, the Syrian Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox.

I couldn't believe the number of Orthodox churches right there in Melbourne, Australia. It's a movement that we in OM have not related to very well. They actually persecute in Greece evangelicals.

Some of you know about the court case that YWAM was in. That doesn't mean there are no believers in those churches. It doesn't mean there are no open doors.

What about the Coptic Church? I mention this because sometimes in England we tend to think the Church consists of this many groups and this many streams, but it's much bigger. Do you know how many denominations there are according to a very, very big survey? It covered almost the whole world. Do you know how many denominations, and if you want to call them streams, over 22,000.

You see why characters like me, somehow, I prefer the interdenominational position. It's just very difficult to me to believe that one of these denominations is the denomination. I know some of my Anglican friends that try to give me that idea.

I have great respect for the Anglicans, especially the evangelical born-again ones who love Jesus and his word, and some great Anglican churches. I just preached a cathedral in Sri Lanka, but I think most balanced Anglicans would not claim that they are the true only church. They are one denomination, and the Presbyterians are another, and the Assembly of God is another, and your little newly formed house stream with your leaders and apostles and teachers just battling for survival, maybe in terms of the whole world of ecclesiastical combat, they are another.

And if you don't have a sense of humor through all this, you're liable to just deny the faith or decide to parachute off a high building with an umbrella marked, Jesus saves. God is working in different ways in different people. It's interesting that churches that were closer to the charismatic movement in some ways, like the old holiness churches, actually collided with the movement more than churches that were very, very, very completely different.

For example, in America, well, I won't go into too many details about the states. I don't have time. I would recommend, rather, a book called Love Covers.

I used to be giving out all kinds of free copies of this book. If you write to me, I'll send you one, but I hope they have some on the book table. I'm famous for recommending books that they don't have on the book table, because until I share, I don't know all the books that the Lord is going to bring to my mind.

What are some of the other big trends that are really hitting us? One of the biggest today is Kingdom Theology. If you get into Kingdom Theology, you can get into Dominion Theology, you get into Dominion Theology, you can get into Reconstructionism. By that point, I'm sure I've lost you.

But there's a group of people today--Kingdom Theology is very, very divided, all different levels. Charles Colson's latest book touching on this is probably a masterpiece. I haven't finished it, haven't even started it, read the reviews.

I've looked at it. It's dynamite, and most of the things that Chuck Colson says, I like to read. But there are other people, especially a character named Gary North, who's considered a leader of the Reconstruction movement, really believe that the Church must move in the realm of taking over nations, ruling and dominating and taking over nations.

This controversy is destined to be one of the most divisive, one of the most heavily argued controversies in the next five years. A lot of people are talking about Kingdom Teaching and Kingdom Theology, and I also use the word Kingdom, have not done the research of what this is all about and are coming out with some very interesting statements. This is a big trend.

This is linked with the fact that Christians are getting more involved in politics. I say hallelujah. Surprised you, didn't I? To me, one of the reasons it's difficult to discern what to do with these different trends is because in most trends there are strong elements of truth, and there are things that you and I would say yes to.

In reading Gary North's book, I just thought there were some things and they were absolutely tremendous. He hit Liberation Theology, one of my favorite enemies, absolutely with a dynamite knockout punch. If you have any thought that Liberation Theology, this mixture of Communism and Christianity, is the real answer to Latin America or any other part of the world, just try a little bit of Gary North and Reconstruction Theology.

But of course, as I read on, I found out it went off into things that I just, I found very, very naive and very difficult to believe. Doesn't the word of God say, narrow is the way and few there will be who will find it? Isn't there some truth in the extreme, but we must avoid going to the other extreme and get into things in which ultimately we're going to get depressed and discouraged and into foolishness, thinking that we can just sort of take over whole nations. We can influence nations through prayer.

We can influence nations through being the Saul. We can influence kings and governors. We have tremendous power, but it's so easy when you have a little power to become power crazy.

And I tell you, you know why a lot of people are discouraged? Because God is not answering their prayers. All kinds of wild prayers, all kinds of prayers born out of excitement or reading the latest book and they're not seeing the answers. And you know what bothers me is sometimes we're very dishonest about just saying we've not seen the breakthrough.

We've not seen the answer. So-and-so was not really healed. It looked like they were healed in the meeting, but actually they're back ill in bed.

And there is a lack of integrity. There is a lack of honesty in the present day church scene. I feel that very, very strongly.

We need to be guided by the Holy Spirit as to what we should pray for and how we should pray. Of course, some of the goals we have in prayer with our burdens about the kingdom and our burdens about the world situation are wonderful goals. And I basically move with a lot of these goals.

We want more righteousness in the nation. We want to see abortion stop. We want justice.

We want truth. We want more godly men in the right places. But that's only part of the other part perhaps could better be seen if you were living in a country where Christians are persecuted and in prison.

Are we saying these people don't know anything about the kingdom? These people don't know how to pray? These people don't know how to reign and rule and carry forth God's will in their nation? That is simple as some people would make us think. So that's a major trend. We're going to have to wrestle with it.

And I pray that we'll again understand God will lead different people in different ways. Another major trend that is so exciting in the world today is the growing emphasis on world evangelism. All of us would acknowledge that this is a positive trend.

When I think of the book Operation World, and I hope every one of you will get a copy of that book, if you want to understand what's going on in the church, if you want to understand some of the problems in the church, read Operation World. 500 pages of facts and information. I'm sure they are giving some kind of bargain or something free with copies of Operation World.

I forgot to bring my copy with me. I'll probably wave it at you tonight. I don't know if you've heard of the prayer concert movement, not so well known in Europe.

One of the main leaders, David Bryant, part of InterVarsity in America, now launching out into a separate fellowship to emphasize prayer concerts. They are Knights of Prayer, one of the main practices of OM, since our foundation was Knights of Prayer. Now they call them prayer concerts.

Great. We will also use that name when necessary. Extended prayer time.

It's an exciting movement. How many of you were with us at TEMA about a year and a couple of months ago? Any of you were at TEMA over in Utrecht? They're coming up again in 1990, or just before 1990, 89 leading into 90. I've been asked to go back again and lead that prayer concert.

Several hours of praying for the nation. You can start a prayer concert in your own fellowship, sharing about the nation. This is a modern trend.

It's a good trend. You can incorporate some of these other trends. Praying for the nations, praying for leaders of government, praying against abortion, praying for justice, praying for the South African crisis, the Nicaraguan crisis.

God's people, through books like Operation World, through the Ministry of Tapes and Cassettes, are becoming more conscious of the whole world. I believe that's true. They are becoming world Christians.

Now they still may be a remnant. I think we've got a little more than a remnant now. I just spoke at the Urbana Convention.

18,000 men and women gathered at Urbana. The one whole focus of Urbana was world missions. Their main route comes out of the main evangelical world of North America.

A student movement in America that has its roots completely in the charismatic camp, Maranatha Ministries, had a similar conference, not as many, I think somewhere else in the United States. Now you may think, well, you know, why doesn't God just lump us all together? Why doesn't God just give us all on the head and get us all to become the same? We've got 2,000, yea, 4,000 years of history to prove that's not the way God works. I think that's pretty strong.

That even may be stronger than a new book on the subject of ecumenicalism. A couple thousand years history. God's unity is in the midst of diversity.

We're going to waste a lot of energy if we try to get everybody to be the same. If we try to get Maranatha Ministries to close down their conference and go to Urbana. If we try to get one of the new fellowships with these live summer camps, with the praising and the dancing and the hand-waving and the leaping and the healing and whatever, get them to close down and go to Keswick, or get Keswick to close down and go there.

We've got a couple thousand years of history that show basically you're wasting your time. Better to pray the Holy Ghost moves in power in Keswick, the Holy Ghost moves in power in Spring Harvest. I'm one of the few characters that spoke at both places in the same year and survived.

Let the Holy Spirit work through the Restoration Movement. Let the Holy Spirit work through the Anglicans. And you know when we get to heaven we'll compare the results.

Actually when we get to heaven we'll all be more humble, we'll all be more loving, and all these things that we see darkly, and that's why we can't fully understand it all, we'll see face to face. Now God's leading different people in different ways, and my plea is for greater understanding and integrity and honesty in our attitudes toward one another, because this attitude of arrogance and pride that one believer has toward another believer is not from God. That doesn't mean God won't bless that person.

Do you think God only blesses you when you're perfectly clean, no wrong attitudes, no wrong ideas, no sin, no wrong this or wrong that? The Word of God teaches that this treasure is in earthen vessels. Being successful and being blessed does not prove that you are walking as holy as you should be on that particular day. I've seen great blessings in my ministry of preaching and teaching on days when I had displeased the Lord.

Preaching and teaching is only one aspect of the Christian life, and it is overemphasized. And that's why we turn people into heroes, and that's why we can't find enough people to work behind the scenes in ministry, typing letters and keeping the books and driving the cars and fixing them. Our movement is going through a nightmare from the lack of technical people and mechanics.

We have so many preachers that we can't even find enough meetings for them. I don't know, maybe they're not good enough. So praise the Lord for this great trend.

It's been going on for a long time. Those of us in modern missions are following in the steps of awesome characters, from Hudson Taylor to C.T. Studd, from Jim Elliott to Amy Carmichael. And we ought to walk with great humility, and we ought to learn from these saints.

Let's not just read the new books published by the latest half-converted gospel cowboy with a flying wonderful testimony, but let's dig a little bit into Andrew Murray. Let's spend a little bit time with men like A.W. Tozer. We may even go on, want to go back before that into some of the mystics, because a lot of Tozer is rehashed mystics way back many centuries ago.

It's exciting. I was touching on this emphasis of Reformed theology and wanted to, in mentioning that trend, emphasize the great leader of the Reformed movement in Britain, now with the Lord. I remember the day when he came to speak on the ship Dulos in London, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

You may not agree with everything in his book, and some of his disciples have carried some of his things into extremes, but this man was the leading theologian in Britain for a couple of decades, in my mind, together with John Stott. They actually had a strong public collision once in a meeting in London. Later on, I think there was some dialogue.

But certainly when Lloyd-Jones called people to come out of the churches, because the churches were uniting with the World Council of Churches, and terrific compromise, the way a man like this would think, the way American fundamentalists would think, John Stott, I mean, Dr. Lloyd-Jones called people to come out of their churches, started up the Evangelical Council, which is a parallel thing to the Evangelical Missionary Alliance and the Evangelical Alliance. And John Stott, of course, gave a strong rebuttal in that meeting and challenged, especially, people to be loyal to their own existing churches. What happened back in those years in the 60s happened before that, and it still happens.

God's unity is in the midst of diversity. Today, more often than ever, we don't have pure theological lines. I don't think you could claim that Lloyd-Jones was a pure, took a pure Reformed line.

Read his books about the Holy Spirit. It will blow your circuits. His roots go back more into Wales.

It goes into Calvinistic Methodism, and the Methodists preached and teach an experience with the Holy Spirit. So today we're living in the age of cocktails. If you want any mega trend, it's the cocktail trend.

You don't find pure Calvinists. You don't find pure Arminians. Can't even get people anymore to agree what that is.

You find people are a mixture. And so you, you are the children of the cocktail generation, and who in the world knows what you're going to come up with? Even in the area of eschatology, there are many trends in the area of eschatology. Traditionally the Church, a large segment of the Church, had a very strong bias, for example, toward the Jews.

Certain segments of the Church, of course, just the opposite. But especially as American Christianity became dominant throughout the world, and premillennial teaching, dispensational teaching, the Scofield Bible, all kinds of things in that area, we found some people going extreme and making incredible strong statements about Israel that were more Zionist than the Zionists were stating. Now we're seeing a new

resurgence and a number of books coming out countering this.

And I tell you, this controversy is really heating up. And I think it's something that you're probably going to end up reading about in the coming few years. I have said to a number of people who are strong on both sides, I have intimate friends absolutely on both sides of this controversy, pulling me.

And I have said we cannot let these arguments about Israel, about the Palestinian question, about premillennialism, about the real place of the Jewish people, and other issues like the rapture, and the thousand-year reign, and the non-thousand-year reign, divide and destroy our evangelistic thrust to preach the gospel to every creature in the world. You know, if I see a Muslim saved, it's such a miracle to see a Muslim saved. And that is another trend, an increased interest in reaching the unreached people and reaching the Muslims.

And it is such a miracle to see a Muslim saved. I, forgive me, am not too worried if he is premillennial or postmillennial. I am not too concerned whether he speaks in tongues or does not speak in tongues.

I may have my preferences. We all have our preferences. We also all have our prejudices, brother and sister.

And anybody who has no prejudice, I would like you to sign and autograph personally the back of my Bible under the section marked hypocrites, sign here. God has been working on my prejudices since the day of my conversion. He was very gracious to me.

He started working on mine before my conversion. And I'm still learning. I'm trying to understand the South African question in an objective, balanced way.

I'm not sure how far I'm getting. I probably, from my childhood and what I heard in school and what I learned as I stood and saluted the American flag as a little loyal, 100% go-go American, developed a slight bias. Now, none of you would experience that in your country.

You're all more balanced and more disciplined and more set free. He's the first man to come and sign my Bible. Thank you very much.

So there are many trends. There are many, many trends in the present-day church. I have touched on only a few of them.

The trend increasing the ministry of women, very important today. The trend towards small groups, house groups. This exists both in the non-charismatic and in the charismatic fellowships.

Somebody wrote a book in America, Megatrends. It talks about high touch, high tech, high touch. The more people are involved in the technical world, the more they need closeness.

And one of the things that's been a mark of most growing churches is intimate fellowship, emphasis on relationship, emphasis on healing, not only the body and of the mind. With that also there have come extremes, overemphasis, people digging into their past histories, all kinds of therapies and quasi psychological programs that Christians get drawn into. The fact that someone has been helped or blessed through this or that program doesn't necessarily mean it is a hundred percent scriptural.

There are basic psychological principles that to some degree work, I'm sure, for unconverted people. Look at the huge trend of self-help. Everything is self-help, self-confidence, self-this, self-that.

There's even a book, a big book on how to manipulate people. And as Christians, we need what A.W. Tozer said, more than ever before, we need discernment. There's discernment that comes to us in a supernatural way, but I don't believe that is the main kind of discernment that God gives today.

I believe that the discernment we need may include that, but it's built on a sterile knowledge of the Word of God. It's built on a knowledge of history. It's built on an understanding that the Holy Spirit gives over many years of experience.

I'm sure there are some exceptions when God works in unusual ways. I have my basic policies, my basic rules, my basic game plan, and then when I have, I have my exception department. And so if you had something wild happening in your life, probably as much as possible, I would not condemn that.

I would put it in my exception department and then try to keep you from majoring on exceptions and get on the main highway of sound doctrine, love, unity, and all the rest of the biblical principles that we hope we stand for this weekend. Now, who would like to ask a question? It can only be a person with a good voice, and I hope you will ask it quickly and briefly, no sermons as we have just six or seven minutes. Yes, a very good question, and I think we need to realize that there has been a trend in the church emphasizing worship, but I think we need to be fair that in some places it is emphasizing a particular interpretation of worship.

Worship is not a narrow thing, except we believe worship must be to the living God, but different people worship in different ways. And it is some of the people who have been into this kind of trend, they are now saying to us that it has become just as much a routine as the old sandwich thing they were preaching about 15 years ago. This is why we need to be willing for change, and this is why we try to emphasize balance.

Why can't we still sing some of those great old hymns written by godly men? Sometimes we change the tunes, also we can have choruses. There's a strong emphasis, God's doing a new thing. I've been listening to that for over 30 years.

Praise the Lord, it's an important cliché. God is, of course, doing a new thing, but the greatest thing God ever did was he gave his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins and to give the gift of the Holy Spirit to live within us. I believe the Holy Spirit works in many, many different ways, and an important factor in this is what I call the human factor.

There's always the error, to some degree in this world, mixed with truth. The less error, the better. The less error, the better.

But it is amazing how much blessing can come on a person or a fellowship where there is significant error, at least in my way of thinking. God is God. He will not be put into a box.

So there's another area where we have to work for balance. For a group like Operation Mobilization, with our somewhat conservative roots and convictions, the most difficult part of the Charismatic Renewal, in our attempt to relate to that, not from a distance, but mingled, because people in our work have been brought to Christ or come into help and blessing through that. Our biggest problem would be that whole issue.

We love individual Catholic believers. You know, I've prayed with priests, but we cannot see, in our particular situation, how we can work hand-in-hand with the Catholic Church in evangelism. I believe the

huge meeting in New Orleans has proven the point very, very well.

This was the biggest Charismatic Jamboree in North America, and 50% were Roman Catholics. And yet, if you read the research on what happened there, you will see that a high number of these people obviously did not know the Lord Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. And there is a lot of confusion.

So here again, what we are in as a fellowship is an ongoing process. We are learning. We are growing.

But we will not abandon basic Biblical truth in order to have more friends or more fellowship. And it's a tough issue, so if you don't agree with us on that, and there may be Roman Catholics here, that is no problem, just be patient with us. It's taken us 25 years to win credibility among Evangelicals, Charismatics, and Protestants in Europe.

Who were we? We were nobody when we arrived here. We can't throw that out of the window, the Evangelicals and Protestants of Italy and Spain and France and other countries so linked with OM. It's a miracle.

We can't just throw that out the window because we get excited about some new ecumenical adventure that some overly idealistic character wants to get us into. We can't do it. We've got other priorities to evangelize the whole world.

And most of the Catholic countries I've spent a lot of time in, most of the people don't have a real understanding of the gospel of grace and justification by faith that the Word of God teaches. That is all there is of this recording.

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