

# 19 Reasons Why I Am Going to Urbana

by George Verwer

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*Urbana is a movement of the Spirit of God, a true event for students and young people, and a great opportunity for fellowship and bonding with people from across the globe.*

**Duration:** 46:09

**Scripture:** Psalm 100:4, Matthew 28:19-20, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, Romans 12:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Timothy 4:12

**Topics:** "Urbana"

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## Description

The video is a sermon transcript about the Urbana event, which is an international, interdenominational, and interracial gathering focused on spreading the message of the gospel. The speaker highlights the impact of the event, particularly in terms of the Lordship of Christ, and how the message has reached a wide audience through videos and tapes. The video emphasizes the importance of faith and expectation leading up to the Urbana event, as well as the need to be positive and praise God for the work He is doing in the world. The speaker also mentions the opportunity to learn about God's work in different nations through first-hand reports and missionary exhibits.

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## Transcript

I'd like to share with you about the great Urbana Convention coming up at the end of 1996. I'd like you to consider personally the possibility of being at that convention. And if you're not able to be there, I certainly would like you to get something of the vision and be involved in a ministry of intercessory prayer.

As we're hoping for some 18,000, mainly students but not exclusively students, to come together for that important event which has been going on every third or fourth year now for 50 years. This will be the 50th celebration of the beginning of Urbana way back in Toronto in the mid-40s. Let's just pray together.

Father, I thank you for the privilege of being involved in your work. We thank you for what you're doing around the world and especially in the student world. And we long for many hundreds of thousands, college and university students, to catch the vision for the great fields that are still ripe under harvest.

Lord, help us to really take ownership of this great event that has gone on these 50 years and that has propelled so many students and others out into the mission fields of the world. We're looking to you, Father, as we share this vision with others and as we carry out the challenge of being mission mobilizers for your kingdom. For we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. I've written down a number of reasons why I believe you should consider getting involved in Urbana. And if at all possible, being there when it comes again, the end, right after Christmas, 1996.

I've just returned from a two-and-a-half-day prayer and planning conference for Urbana. I went to Chicago to be involved in that event. And it was quite a challenge and encouragement, especially to meet many of the people who will be involved in 1996, including students and younger people who really also have a great vision to see Urbana being used of God in a mighty way in the months and years to come.

I'm making this particular cassette tape back here in London now, not just in order to get people to go to Urbana, as important as that is, but to get people to pray. For we know from Matthew chapter 9 that we are clearly instructed by the Lord to pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth workers into the harvest fields. One of the prayers that was repeated again and again during our recent retreat was that the Lord would send the right people to Urbana.

When we pray this, it doesn't mean in turn that we somehow sort of sit back and then just expect people to automatically go there. We're living in a day in which there's a huge amount of information coming at people and especially students from every direction. One of the reasons I'm putting this on cassette tape is because I know some people use these tapes to redeem the time when they're stuck in their vehicle traveling somewhere or maybe when they're doing something else.

And I'm hoping that you'll not only listen to this but feel free to make copies or to pass the tape on one way or the other to other people who may catch the vision for what is still the largest missions event in the world. I'm aware when I say this that there have been one-off single events like the great stadium missions gathering in Korea last May in which there were more people than at Urbana. But I don't think we can compare a one-off meeting with a convention like Urbana where for a number of days there is such phenomenal input and phenomenal opportunity for growth in the whole area of evangelism and missions.

What are some of the reasons why you should be involved? First of all, because I believe the worldwide movement of InterVarsity, IPHES, UCCF, however it's referred to in your country, is a movement raised up of the Spirit of God. It's not time to go into the amazing history of this movement but surely in nation after nation it has been one of the backbones of the spiritual life of the nation and of the church. So many tens of thousands have been converted to Jesus at university and have later become missionaries or key people in their own local churches and fellowships.

I don't think we can measure what the Spirit of God has done through this great movement. We know the Urbana convention is only one event of this great movement which above all else is really people, students and young people and others allowing the Holy Spirit to work through them for His glory and the accomplishment of His purposes. We see in the book of Acts very clearly that the Holy Spirit is the chief executive officer of all missionary work and it's because I'm convinced the Holy Spirit has raised up this Urbana event and all that goes together with it that I'm so extremely excited about being involved myself and wanting to get other people involved as well.

The second reason that I believe you should be involved is because over the years InterVarsity and Ithes have been so faithful to the Word of God and Urbana represents an ongoing phenomenal commitment to world evangelism. I remember listening to a tape by Billy Graham when he preached at Urbana way back in the late 50s. That was such a strong message in the early days of my Christian life that I think I ended up listening to it 15 or 20 times over the years.

For many years most of the people who came on Operation Mobilization listened to that great Urbana tape when Billy Graham shared that powerful message about commitment. Little did I realize back in the late 50s that by 1967 I would be one of the speakers at Urbana. What a great experience it was and when I had the privilege of giving the invitation and seeing about 4,000 people stand in brokenness and repentance and recommitment before God, I could honestly say it was one of the highlights of my Christian life.

Urbana, of course, is very much teamwork and in 1995 as it was way back in 1967, I was just one member of a tremendous team of people committed to see this event accomplishing God's purposes. I was again privileged to speak at Urbana in 1986 or 87 and it was just amazing. It was a much larger number at that time and men like Billy Graham and Tony Campalo and others gave powerful messages.

I had the privilege at that time of speaking on the Lordship of Christ and the video of that particular message has probably been distributed more than any one single video or tape I've ever made in my life. The influence of Urbana continues way beyond the event and one of the purposes of this particular cassette is to help us build up a spirit of faith and a spirit of expectation and also realize there's so much we can do in the months between now and the Urbana event. Praise God that this organization and this movement in the United States coordinated out of Madison, Wisconsin has remained faithful to the Word of God and the commitment to take the message of the gospel to every person in the world.

It's been a joy to be involved with Dan Harrison, the coordinator of Urbana and he was with us at Korea in the great Jokowi event which was an encouragement to many of us. We praise God for the leadership of Steve Haener, the head of InterVarsity in the United States and the leadership of Lindsey Brown, the international secretary of IFES which is the international network of InterVarsity and UCCF movements throughout the entire world. People will be coming from many different nations to Urbana.

The very fact that the main Bible teacher is a Latin American is something that to me is just so exciting. In the past they've had Ajit Fernando of Sri Lanka and many, many other men and women sharing from the Word of God in such a powerful and relevant way. The third reason I believe you should go to Urbana is because it is a true event for students and young people with a major focus on the Lord Himself.

Let's be honest, in the United States today there are not that many really large events that are totally biblical and Christian, especially for students. Many individual colleges have missions conferences and I've spoken at many of them. I've just recently been at Bethel College.

About this time last year I was at Taylor University. In the near future I'll be at the Biola Missions Conference and the Wheaton College Missions Conference. Recently I was up at the Briarcrest College Missions Conference.

We praise God for these missions conferences and of course for missions conferences that go on in local churches. In no way is this a competition with anything like that. This event only takes place now once every third year and we can be assured that the main focus is on the Lord Himself.

Much of the ministry will be aimed at drawing all of us closer to God, to know God, for it's only as we really get to know God that we can make Him known more effectively. We'll not just be dealing with missions out in the regions beyond, but we'll be dealing with that vital important topic of how we can be an effective witness, which is one of the key words of this coming event, how we can be a key witness in our own college, school or university. It's something really exciting.

Fourthly, this is truly an international, interdenominational and interracial event and we've seen in the past just how God can so wonderfully use such events. Careful follow-up is done, especially with those who make some kind of commitment at Urbana. I was amazed at the statistics and information presented to us at our recent retreat.

I was also amazed to see the great cross-section of speakers, both men and women from various backgrounds, nations and denominations, all of course building their message and building their life on the Word of God. Fifthly, I believe Urbana and the InterVarsity Movement across the world is on the cutting edge of what God is doing in the world today and this particular event is a pace-setting event. We're hoping that people will come from different countries who are wanting to launch similar student events around the world.

Some of you perhaps realize that I'm the chairman of the track in the AD2000 movement for the mobilization of new missionaries. Perry Rickard is the coordinator of that track and our burden working with the body of Christ throughout the world is to see 200,000 new missionaries mobilized by the year 2000 or shortly beyond. We know humanly speaking this seems so impossible, especially when we consider some of the financial obstacles we're facing right now.

But as we see the task, as we see thousands of unreached people's groups, we feel we must aim high. This doesn't mean we are going to be mobilizing all these people or any one group or any one network. This is just a burden, a goal we have for the whole body of Christ throughout the whole world.

We at the same time know that if this vision is going to become a reality, there must be a major missions movement among students and Urbana we believe is at the heart of that missions movement. Other similar conferences are taking place like one that's about to take place right here in Europe under the sponsorship of TEMA at Utrecht, mission 96. So it comes at the end of 95.

We don't see a competition between different agencies and different groups. And we just praise God that somehow the Holy Spirit, in his own unique way incorporating all of our weakness and humanity, is able to coordinate these events across the world. Sometimes I've heard people criticize an inner varsity group in the United States or even a Christian union group in England.

But as someone who's been visiting these groups regularly and ministering not as officially part of the organization, but from the outside, I'm absolutely convinced that the inner varsity chapters and the Christian unions are on the cutting edge of what God is attempting to do. That doesn't mean they don't have struggles and problems. It doesn't mean one group isn't much stronger than another.

As often they are very much student-led. And a lot depends on the spiritual strength and the ability of that leader. I'm just crying out to the Lord that many of those student leaders will be coming to Urbana because I believe that through Urbana they will be more effective in carrying on their leadership role back on their particular campus.

Sixthly, I believe the exposure to the mission agencies and missionaries borders on being overwhelming and can be very, very significant in the life of the individual who gets involved. Many have caught the vision for long-term missionary service through going to Urbana. Many come there seeking the Lord's mind.

We are aware, and this came up in our retreat, that it's not easy to determine, at times, God's will in these matters, especially in the day and age in which we live. In the past 20 or 30 years we've seen short-term missions come into its own and play a vital role. Surely, as we see false cults sending out tens of thousands of people on their two-year programs, the Church of the Lord Jesus should be sending out many, many more short-term missionaries.

Statistics have shown that through short-term missions many have caught their vision and received a confirmation from the Lord about longer-term missionary service. Both these aspects of serving God and many other aspects, like being a tentmaker, will be emphasized there at Urbana. There will be all kinds of seminars so that young people and others can choose the seminar of their choice that fits in with something that they sense the Holy Spirit has put upon their heart.

The seventh reason I want you to consider going is because this conference can be a model for similar events around the world. I've already touched on this, but if we are going to see a massive new mobilization of missionaries, we are going to have to see a lot more missionary events. It's amazing how many big events there are in the Church, especially concerts and other things along that line.

We're amazed to see the phenomenal gatherings of men at Promise Keepers. We're amazed to see all kinds of conferences and large events. But only a small number of these events going on around the world and especially in the States and Canada are really focused in a major way on the completion of the Great Commission and world evangelism.

We need more missionary events. I'm extremely aware that events in themselves are not the total answer, but they are part of the answer to see the work of world missions and building the Kingdom internationally going forward. I could spend a lot of time speaking about this particular point as I've seen it proven again and again around the world.

Even in our own ministry of Operation Mobilization where our specialty is going out into the streets, into the homes, in evangelism, in training experiences, in church planting, we've discovered the important place of the big event like that great Love Europe Congress that took place in the summer of 1989 with 5,000 or more and has continued in different ways in the summers ever since then. My 8th point is that Urbana is a great opportunity for fellowship and bonding with people from across the globe. To be quite honest, I tend to find many Christians very narrow-minded.

I know the way is narrow, but why do we have to specialize in some cases in making it narrower than it actually is? I believe when we come out of our own little denominational ghettos, we come away from our own little group of peers and friends into a bigger situation like Urbana that it is often a life-changing experience. It is also an extremely valuable educational experience. Whether we ever go overseas or not, Urbana can help lay a foundation of godliness and biblical maturity in our lives.

The small group is one of the heartbeats of Urbana, focusing especially on Bible study and tying in with the theme of that day. Some huge number, way over a thousand, small group leaders have to be prepared just for that one aspect of Urbana. The people you meet, especially when you go around and visit the missionary exhibitions, is another phenomenal Urbana experience.

The people you meet over the meals, the people you meet as you travel there and travel back, all of it will be part of something that God is doing that in fact is being saturated with prayer right across the world. My tenth reason why you should go is that I believe Americans and Canadians need to hear a clear challenge

concerning the need to go. There's rumors around that Americans and Canadians are no longer really needed in world missions.

We have a similar rumor here in Britain. British people are no longer needed in world missions. I've recently written an article about this that is being published soon in a Christian newspaper that I'd be happy to send to you.

But I'm convinced it is dangerous and it is wrong to put national in a sense against international in terms of the Great Commission. There are many unreached people's groups where there are no nationals. So how can the nationals reach those particular people's groups? We hear of phenomenal work done by nationals and we praise God for that.

But in some countries and in many people's groups it just doesn't exist. Do we realize how many people's groups where the church doesn't yet exist? This has been one of the major emphasis of the 82,000 movement and it's something that we hope to stress once again at Urbana. In my opening night message I hope to stress with all my heart that Americans and Canadians and yes, people of all nationalities are needed as much in the task of world missions today as ever before.

This is especially true because of population explosion. It's especially true because of all that we've discovered about unreached people's groups. It's especially true because 90% of missionary work today is still mainly among people where there has already been some degree of response.

There has already been established some churches and hospitals and many other ministries. Urbana 1996 is going to have a strong focus on the more unreached people of the world. We'll be talking about the 1040 window but we'll be talking also about creating other windows down through the southern part of the 1040 window to make sure Indonesia is brought into picture.

Further north of the 1040 window to make sure all of Central Asia gets in the window. And if you don't like those windows you can of course make your own window. The 11th reason why I feel you should consider going is because of what I call Operation Discovery.

Discovering what God is doing in the world today. Tremendous things are taking place. More people are coming to Jesus Christ today than ever before in the history of the church.

This is something we need to praise God for. And people will be there giving us first-hand reports of what God is doing in the particular nation that they represent. It's so easy in our day to be negative.

There are many negative things happening in the world, in the church, everywhere. But I think if we're going to be God's praising, Spirit-empowered people we need to attempt to be more positive and to learn how to engage in times of praise and thanksgiving for what our God is doing. As you go around to the missionary exhibits, as you meet with different people and go to different seminars, you'll discover a range of open doors that will be staggering to the imagination.

Somebody said Urbana is like trying to get a drink out of a fire hose when it's operating to the maximum degree. I don't think we should worry too much about this, especially if we know how to maintain biblical balance and we know how to cast every care upon Him. Every event any of us as Christians ever organize will have both negatives and positives.

And we certainly don't want to present Urbana as some kind of guarantee, cure-all for whatever may be spiritually bothering you at this particular moment. You may not find Urbana the place where you fully decide what God's will is for your life. You may even find it, especially as a young Christian, a little bit overwhelming and confusing.

But it's still something worth being exposed to. And I'm convinced the opportunities to meet with missionaries and Christian workers and Christian leaders who come in very large numbers from around the world is something that you should not miss. There are a number of other aspects of Urbana that are not always emphasized.

For example, there's a special guest track for business people and professional people who are concerned about being senders, who want the opportunity to mingle with students. There's a special track for pastors that will be going on simultaneously as they have some of their own meetings and then, of course, will come into other major events. You will discover at Urbana all kinds of tools and materials to help you in your own ministry and your own vision.

Again, I'm amazed of how ignorant the average Christian is, even committed Christian, as to the tools and the materials available for missions mobilization, for spiritual growth, for spreading the vision. When you see these tools and materials, audios and videos, books and leaflets, you will be amazed. And you will want to, in the future, make use of such tools in your own work and ministry.

The twelfth reason you should go to Urbana is because of the whole concept of networking. Networking is a key concept in the world today. We should not allow new age people to rob the church of basic, beautiful terminology.

And it does concern me at times that when a brother may even have a slip of the tongue in regard to the use of a particular word, someone is quickly ready to judge and claim that there is some kind of new age connection, which we discover later is generally completely ridiculous. As the body of Christ, we must acknowledge our oneness. Some of you know, wherever I go, I'm pushing Charles Swindoll's book, *Grace Awakening*, and especially because of some of the chapters in that book that show us how we can be more grace awakened toward people we don't particularly agree with or understand.

We're not expecting the people who come to Urbana to agree with every single aspect of what is going on, either there or anywhere else. Our unity in the world today has to be in the midst of diversity. I know that for those in InterVarsity and IFES around the world, doctrine is important.

It's a false accusation that this great movement has moved away from sound, biblical doctrine. And my heart goes out when I hear people say things that I know aren't really true. Let's network together.

Let's agree to disagree on some issues and see what can be done to obey our Lord who gave us those words in Acts 1.8, that when we receive the Holy Spirit, we will receive power to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. Which, by the way, is one of the key texts of Urbana and the one I'll be speaking on during that first evening. My 13th reason is that people often come to Christ at Urbana.

Not everyone who comes to Urbana is a committed believer. Sometimes people come with a friend. Sometimes they come out of curiosity.

Only the Lord knows all the different motives that bring people to Urbana. But being a rather cold place in the middle of the winter, I don't think we have so many there with totally false motivation when there are many other things that students can do that seem a lot more attractive in the middle of winter. I remember when Billy Graham shared at the Urbana I attended and spoke at in the 80s.

He brought a message of salvation and many responded. I think there was a similar response to the ministry of Tony Campalo. Once again, we expect some people to come to Christ at Urbana.

And we hope you'll especially keep that in mind as you pray. My 14th reason, and I'm trying to give these numbers for those of you who may be taking some notes, is that many who take part in Urbana and speak at Urbana are not necessarily famous people, but they're often very ordinary people that are being used of God in various ways. I think it's important to understand this is not a gathering of famous missionaries or famous speakers.

There are so many such people across the globe that of course it would be totally impossible to bring them together and to give them all an opportunity to share or speak. I'm sure there's so many other people that the organizers of Urbana would love to have share, but the time is limited and they have a vision from the Lord which involves small groups, involves prayer, involves seminars, involves time to visit the missionary exhibits and do many other things. I'm excited about the very ordinary people who will be involved.

Yes, even on the main platform at Urbana sharing their testimonies, presenting their particular aspect of the work of God. Urbana has a great emphasis on multimedia and audiovisuals and we've seen that in the past and I know we'll continue to see it in the future. My 15th reason why you should come to Urbana is because we need to unite together to help put world missions on the map in the United States, Canada and around the world.

I've already mentioned the fact that there are so few really major missions events. Many churches also no longer have any kind of missions conference. Quite a few churches that have been strong missionary sending churches are having difficulty financially or difficulty in other ways, perhaps because they've not stayed on the cutting edge of what's happening in the American or Canadian culture and therefore the amount of money they're putting into missions and their sort of sending horsepower is actually decreasing.

Unfortunately, many new churches seem to be very much wandering away from the word of God when it comes to the challenge of world missions. Some churches have entered into a more universalistic kind of philosophy where they believe basically everyone will go to heaven, even though they may not say that with their lips. Their lives and how they use their time and money indicate that that seems to be their philosophy.

The average American and Canadian today is basically ignorant about world missions. There are beautiful exceptions. There are exceptional churches and we know some of those churches will be sending dozens of people to Urbana because a live committed missionary church, I believe, knows a significant event when they see it.

And that's something that we feel is important. One of the reasons I'm sharing this on cassette and distributing this cassette is because we need to start publicizing Urbana now. Many young people do not know about Urbana or they maybe have only just heard about it.

We need to get literature. We need to arm ourselves with the materials that will enable us to share in a powerful way the challenge of Urbana. There are some tremendous videos that can be used in your InterVarsity chapter, in your church, in your youth group.

Many people come to Urbana who are in their senior year of high school and preparing to go to college or university in their next year. And I think that's exciting because to me that's such a strategic age to hear the voice of God. My 16th reason is sort of in the form of a question.

If it were you or your organization sponsoring this event, would you go? Why not get excited about it, even though you think of it as someone else's event? There's a real sense in which the leaders of Urbana have turned this event over to the body of Christ. They do not overly push the work of IFES or InterVarsity either in Canada or the States. So of course we hear something of that work and we want to.

It's just so important to understand the danger in America and Canada today of each group just doing their own thing. We've seen sad examples of spiritual empire building in our nations over these past years. We've seen some of these empire builders knocked down through immorality or through ego trips.

We've seen huge amounts of money thrown into every kind of property, every kind of building that one can ever imagine. I'm not saying all of this is wrong. But isn't it good once in a while to leave our own agenda at least to some degree and come together to honor God in an event that focuses on that which we know is on the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So easily we get excited about what we ourselves are involved in. I know I do. I'm very excited about OM.

I'm very committed to OM. But I praise God that by His Spirit He's given me the grace to get excited about other things. And that's whether I'm involved or not.

Sometimes of course when I actually get involved it increases the level of commitment because that's the way things are. And we're very human in all of these affairs. But I know some of the events that I've mobilized prayer for and I've mobilized people for, I was not a speaker.

In some cases I couldn't even go. By God's grace I want to be able to know a good thing when I see it. And I want to be able to get behind that good thing even though sometimes it's only in a small way and I feel my part in Urbana is really quite small because I sense this is something that's biblical and it's something that's beautiful for the Kingdom of God.

We Bible-believing Christians need to stick together. We are now supposedly in the age of toleration. We're hearing more and more about toleration.

We're hearing more and more about what is politically correct or incorrect. And I just feel it's so important to understand that at the end of the day, those who love the Word of God and believe that Jesus Christ is the way and the truth and the life often will not be tolerated. We need to stand together.

We need to learn to agree to disagree on some of the issues that are not central to the challenge and the cause of world evangelism and building the body of Christ and the church of Christ throughout the world. Urbana gives all of us an opportunity to stand together. Urbana gives us an opportunity to see those walls separating us come down so that we may unite in one heart and one mind as we're instructed to do in the Word of God.

This is clearly brought out in the Book of Acts which will be the featured book at Urbana. And I'm sure the Holy Spirit is going to work through the expository teaching on the Book of Acts and other emphasis on the Book of Acts to somehow cause all of us to become more New Testament in our commitment, in our vision, in reality, in spirit, and in truth. My 17th reason why I want you to go to Urbana is that I believe we as older people need to give the younger generation sometimes called the X generation.

We had quite a discussion about that at our retreat. We need to give them a vote of confidence. Many of the negative traits that are projected onto this generation are not necessarily true and especially among committed Christian young people.

Many of us feel that this new generation in the hands of the Holy Spirit of God has as much potential as any other generation. We cannot afford in the body of Christ today the division that so easily comes between younger people and older people. We see this, for example, in the whole area of music.

And I think it's beautiful that in Urbana they try to have the right mixture of older kind of music and hymns with newer contemporary music. They'll have a great worship group that will help lead us in worship and praise each day. And that is going to be another one of the highlights of Urbana.

There are many ways that older committed people can get involved in Urbana, often working at their favorite mission fellowship booth or in some other way. Let's get the word around and let's make it clear that Urbana isn't only students and young people because it's an event for the whole body of Christ and especially those who are concerned about obeying the great commission of our Lord Jesus. Eighteenth is simply the fact that more missionaries come to Urbana than any other event perhaps in the entire world.

This represents a tremendous amount of time and we know time is money. If all these missionaries are willing to come from all over the world, how much more should others be willing to give of their time in order to be with these missionaries? Sometimes the missionaries are encouraging the students and other times the students are encouraging the missionaries and often it's mutual spiritual growth together as the word of God says, iron sharpens iron. What a great opportunity to meet people.

Sometimes people these days don't like the word missions and I try not to get in arguments over it but let's face it, if you say you're not interested in missions then you're not interested in people. Ours is the people business to take the gospel of our Lord Jesus to the people of the world, to be concerned about the people of Turkey, the people of Central Asia, the people of Mongolia and Afghanistan, the people of India, the people of Latin America, the people of Africa, the people of Asia, the people of Canada and the USA and Mexico. We're interested in people.

Urbana is a gathering of people who are interested in people, who want to somehow break the normal tendency to be selfish or to be introspective and to get the bigger picture and the bigger vision. Make sure if you come to Urbana, you have a commitment to people. I could give many other reasons why I think you should be at Urbana or perhaps this tape has already gone on a little too long.

The great inter-varsity movement around the world, referred to here in England as UCCF and around the world as IFES, is a strong, powerful biblical movement. I personally count it a privilege to be involved in that movement and I've seen what God has been doing, yes, on the grassroots as I've had the privilege of going to hundreds upon hundreds of Christian Union meetings and inter-varsity meetings over these last 35 years. I think of what God has done year after year at Cambridge and Oxford.

I think of what God has done over in the Canadian and the USA scene and I just thank God. Yes, it's easy to criticize but the fact of the matter is God is on the move through this great fellowship and God is going to do great things at Urbana. I'm sure if you read some of the literature and watch some of the videos and if you've been already to Urbana yourself, you could add a few other reasons to those I've listed here.

But I'm praying above all else that I'm going to see some of you, I hope many of you, at Urbana. I know the people committed to this task working with Dan Harrison there in Madison would love to hear from you and be able to send you material that you can use to be Urbana, to be an Urbana and a missions mobilizer. I'm convinced only as we take this thing seriously and other similar events seriously across the world we'll be able to fulfill the great goals and aims that have been thrown up before us by movements like the AD2000 and beyond movement and other fellowships right back to 2000 years ago when the Lord Jesus gave the command and gave the commission.

Let's pray together. Our God and Father we thank you for what you've done at Urbana these last 50 years. We thank you for so many that have been thrust out into the harvest fields and the effective work they have done in ultimately bringing millions of people to a place where they can receive the knowledge of yourself throughout the world.

We thank you God that once again we're being given this privilege to gather there in Urbana, Illinois to declare your grace, to worship you, to speak from your word and to focus on the people of the world and especially those who have still not heard the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, quicken our hearts. Lord, bring us to repentance and brokenness concerning our lukewarmness, concerning our lack of vision, concerning at times our unwillingness to unite together with other believers and allow love to cover some of the differences so that we can move together of one heart and of one mind.

And Lord, in all of this, we'll be sure to give you all the glory and all the praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. My own address in case you do want to write to me is Box 17 Bromley, B-R-O-M-L-E-Y Kent, Great Britain.

It would be a privilege to hear from any of you and you can also always write to any O.M. office around the world or even through the InterVarsity office in Madison. Again, my address is Box 17. My name is George Verwer, in case you missed that.

Bromley, Kent B-R-1-3-J-P Remember, that's in England. May the Lord bless you. The following is just a short statement that perhaps can be used over your local radio station or maybe you even, if you only have a few minutes at a meeting, will be able to play this short statement at the meeting.

Once again, 1996 we find is an Urbana year. Yes, another great Urbana conference will be taking place at the end of the year. This is the 50th year of this tremendous student event.

So many people, especially missionaries and Christian leaders, not only students, come together for this huge event where they're expecting and hoping some 18,000 will gather together. We as God's people need to be praying more for this event. For one of the greatest needs right now is to see more people really becoming world Christians and catching a vision for what has been done around the world and what needs to be done.

Through these past 50 years, again and again, the Urbana convention has proven to be one of the greatest Christian events that takes place in the United States and Canada. People literally come from all

over the world. Because of the way the Holy Spirit works, they end up going out also all over the world.

I remember hearing Billy Graham, though in this case it was only on cassette tape, when he shared at Urbana back in the 50s. That tape was so powerful that we had almost everyone who joined our ministry listen to the tape as part of the orientation. Urbana is still on the cutting edge of what the Spirit of God is doing in the world today, especially in connection with world missions and world evangelism.

Every believer should be praying for Urbana. Let's also be spreading the word around and also trusting God for the finance to get the young people there who in some cases, when they're going to college, don't have the money to get there themselves. I believe 1996 is going to be an exciting year, and Urbana is going to be an exciting way to end the year.

So I hope you're going to be there.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/15/SID15451.mp3>

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