

A Revolution in Evangelism 11.1.1969

by George Verwer

George Verwer calls for a personal revolution among Christians to effectively engage in world evangelism amidst a global crisis.

Duration: 30:35

Scripture: Romans 10:11-17

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, George Verwer shares his experiences of preaching the word of God in various locations, including Grace College, Wynona Lake, Honolulu, Washington, Los Angeles, and Mexico City. He emphasizes the importance of the Lord going ahead of them and preparing the way for their ministry. Verwer also mentions the challenges of speaking to a critical audience and the limited time he is given to speak. He highlights the need for the church to wake up to the crisis in the world and take action to rescue the perishing. Verwer quotes A.W. Tozer's book, 'Born After Midnight,' to emphasize the urgency of the situation and the need for extraordinary measures.

Transcript

This is session number one of an international student rally held at the University of London Students' Union on Saturday and Sunday the 11th and 12th of January 1969. In this recording George Verwerth speaks on a revolution in world evangelism. Several times during the message he moves away from the microphone to indicate items on a map.

As he does so, the amplification of the recording equipment is increased to maintain the level of speech and this results in a pronounced increase in the background noise at these points. We trust however that it will not disturb your meditation on this vital subject. Here now is George Verwerth.

There's a verse in the Old Testament that speaks about how we can experience being mounted up on wings of eagles and over these past weeks um as we've had so many meetings and have been in the midst of our crusade in Mexico. This is what we have experienced and we know many of you have been praying. How many of you have been praying for the crusade in Mexico? Raise your hand.

Quite a few of you. The Lord probably gave us the biggest campaign yet for this two-week period holiday period. We had 240 universities and college students from all over the United States and Mexico target in on probably one of the most sinful or wicked cities in the world, the city of Juarez.

Some estimate one out of every three women in that city is a prostitute and it's just a complete Sodom and Gomorrah situation. El Paso and Juarez and yet night after night in the meetings and in the door-to-door and personal evangelism, the Lord brought men and women to himself. We have experienced his mercy there.

There's a great flu epidemic. The Hong Kong flu I guess it's probably here as well and this looked like it was going to wipe us out. Some of the schools where students were coming from were completely closed before the campaign and yet in among all these 240 or so young people we had hardly a single case of this flu and the young people came safely down some of them making a trip of two and a half thousand miles to get there.

It's a bit of a run for Chris's season and the Lord kept his hand upon each car and each person and during this time we of course before this time and since this campaign we've been having many other meetings and God in answer to prayer has just opened up all kinds of unique opportunity to challenge face-to-face many thousands with this message.

On Sunday we were in Milwaukee Wisconsin and God brought great numbers to the meeting and then Monday in Wheaton where we faced a thousand five hundred students in the Wheaton student body and then on Tuesday in the Moody Bible Institute again a thousand or so students and Wednesday in Grace College in Winona Lake and in each one of these places it's so obvious and I don't just say this so easy to give say this but the Lord had gone ahead of us just sense it and I have never sensed in my ministry such liberty in speaking especially in difficult situations you get a thousand five hundred students most of them ultra critical to say the least and you're given 22 minutes to speak well if any of you know me 22 minutes to speak you might as well put me in a bird cage and ask me to whistle and

yet in that one situation I'm thinking of I actually had finished I could already believe it but before the 22 minutes was up I didn't have anything more to say my heart was empty and I was ready to sit down and let the Lord work from there and we believe that the same Lord who's been with us in Honolulu and Washington Los Angeles and Mexico City where many hundreds of Mexicans came I've hardly spoken Spanish for eight years and yet the Lord just brought all the words back and though we devoured the grammar we communicated and it was a great blessing Graham Scott has been a terrific impact as well in all of these meetings giving his testimony and challenging people about the ship and I would say that interest in this ship in the United States has tripled in the last three weeks and there

are people that are united with us to believe that this ship will be on sea in this year 1969 and God is pressing us very much in that direction there's so much I could speak to you about but you know the thing that has been so thrilling in these past days in this trip is the Lord has been continuing to teach me what I believe is the true secret whatever way you may come to it of living for Christ and that's total daily dependence upon him in my flesh there's only one place I want to be and that's back with my wife and family some of you know I can't stand airplanes I hate them with a passion and they make me nervous in the flesh the Lord usually calms it over but especially when we start to drop a few feet up there seems to come right back despite all of my faith so I have a long way to

go yet but each day without my family plus so many of these flights I've just seen that it's just complete dependence on him and that's the Christian life he won't let us he doesn't want to let us or allow us to get to any other place than that place of complete absolute dependence on him not on noam not on machinery but on him praise God now if our boys can eventually get up here with this map we'll go into our

first subject for this morning entitled a revolution in world evangelism and I hope that some of you will um maybe all of you take some notes about some of these things please turn in your bibles to that famous passage Romans chapter 10 Romans chapter 10 that famous passage on evangelism and on the gospel ministry beginning at verse 11 for the scripture says whosoever believeth on

him shall not be ashamed it's a wonderful verse isn't it for there is no difference between the jew and the greek for the same lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him for whosoever shall call upon the name of the lord shall be saved how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things they have not all obeyed the gospel precise that lord who hath believed i report so then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of god so many times i have read uh this passage of scripture and it has spoken to

my heart again and again when we think of the task of world evangelism and we look at this map of the world which represents three thousand million people we can easily become overwhelmed very easily because we realize that it's an impossible task in some places evangelism continues to go backward at an enormous rate not because there are no missionaries not because nothing's being done but because of the gigantic population explosion that is taking place around the world in india for example this little country over here it looks new compared to africa and south america there are 13 million more people every year this means an area or a population equivalent to that of london more actually is added to india every year recently i was in pakistan in east i was in east and west but i'm

especially thinking of east pakistan east pakistan that little area under my one finger much smaller than the british isle equivalent to perhaps the land of scotland has 60 million people i don't know if you're aware of the fact that right now many are starving to death in east pakistan i was meeting with a british engineer he was traveling to east pakistan uh working for a marine company that charters small ships to go out to these huge american wheat ships to bring the wheat into chittagong which is important it's too small for these huge super freighters and he was telling me how many they estimate are going to perish from famine in east pakistan but this exploding population makes it almost impossible to uh catch up with the problems that face these lands of course when we think of

south america we also think of exploding populations where we were in mexico recently there are now 40 million people some ways mexico in terms of its poverty and suffering seems the same it was same way it was when i was first there 10 years ago during the cold time in northern mexico where we were people were dying in the night because of the cold and we could take an enormous amount of time this morning um talking about country after country and discussing the impossible situation that has come to pass because of population explosion prince philip some time ago said that half the world was going to bed on a diet that would reduce the average westerner to skin and bone perhaps it isn't as true in 1969 as it has been previously but there's still a lot of truth to that statement and i

believe that this world situation that we face demands some intensive thinking i believe that the church must wake up to the fact that we are living in a time of crisis in tozer's book born after midnight i copied uh this quotation in times of extraordinary crisis ordinary measures will not suffice the world lives in such a time of crisis christians alone are in a position to rescue the perishing we dare not settle down to try to live as if things were normal nothing is normal nothing is normal while sin and lust and death roam the world pouncing upon one another till the whole population has been destroyed to me it has always been difficult

to understand those evangelical christians who insist upon living in the crisis as if no crisis existed they say they serve the lord but they divide

their days so as to leave plenty of time to play and loaf and enjoy the pleasures of the world as well they are at ease while the world burns and they can furnish many convincing reasons for their conduct even quoting scriptures if you press them just a bit how true it is that we live in the midst of this enormous crisis many of us as if no crisis existed and the first stage of revolution in evangelism must always be revolution in our own personal lives without any doubt all over the united states and mexico in the past few weeks i have been reading a very devastating quotation two devastating quotations one of them is from c.s lewis and the other is from jb phillips jb phillips in his book ring of truth said this and i believe it represents the core of the problem here is the first and

most deadly casualty in our modern pattern of thought you might want to write that down that we do not seriously believe that god is willing to penetrate the inner springs of human character and begin a solitary revolution there this disbelief is our incalculable loss so perhaps hear that quotation again before this weekend is through but this is the core of the problem and this is where we must begin this morning in this first hour of our weekend together with the conviction that god can bring to pass a revolution in our own lives otherwise talking about evangelism talking about india talking about the middle east is all a gigantic waste of time it has to start on a personal level tozer said the popular notion that the first obligation of the church is to spread the gospel to the

uttermost parts of the earth is false her first obligation is to be spiritually worthy to spread it to spread an effete degenerate brand of christianity to pagan lands is not to fulfill the great commission revolution and evangelism firstly involves a revolution in our own lives a revolution in our living a revolution in our thinking a revolution in the way we approach such things as the race problem as some of you perhaps know there'll be a huge demonstration today in london though we tend to move out in the streets with literature i'm afraid there'll be something 20 times as large as us as there's going to be a race demonstration black power demonstration and some other combination of demonstrators i only heard about it on the plane in the center of london today i'm sure it's not a

coincidence that we have gathered at this time and may god give us that wisdom and strength as we go out uh even this afternoon wherever we go we see these demonstrations i i can hardly believe when i'm back in the states that i'm in the same country i left 10 years ago it is incredible the riots that are spreading now into high schools the dope addiction that's spreading into high schools and the immorality that is just accepted as the common day the universities in california the boys men and women are living together and no one is saying anything about it it's just as much a part of school life as drinking and people are just shocked in many of our cities now it's absolutely impossible to walk through the streets cook county reported last week this is the county around chicago that

last year more were killed with weapons than with automobiles some 20 or 40 higher in the 600 bracket were killed with lethal weapons by accidents and by shootings last year and we see that uh it is an hour in which we realize revolution is absolutely necessary billy graham said we are dangerously near to saying to the prodigal son it's not necessary to return to your father in home we can make you comfortable in the pig pen we are so totally concerned with material comforts rather than the proclamation of the good news which he so desperately needs and i'm convinced that this revolution in our personal lives must touch every area of our living it's not just going to be some uh pseudo-religious uh glow coat it's going to be something that penetrates the very inner springs of our heart as

jb phillips said something that goes to the very depths of our personality and brings to pass a vital transformation it was eric fife an englishman who is one of the leaders of inner varsity in america who said today we have perhaps a higher standard of academic preparation for the mission field than ever before but it is unfortunately true that there are very few candidates get that there are very few candidates whose prayer and conversation are such as have a heartwarming quality revolution and missions absolutely essential where does it begin it begins in our personal lives we'll be talking about this revolution in our personal lives in quite a few of our meetings this weekend but with this as a foundation and the background of our thinking let us turn our eyes to this little map of

the world let us try to picture some of the situations that we're facing over here in these various areas of the world now some of you know i'm living at present in bangkok when i went to bangkok thailand i um thought well this is a country you know i certainly don't want to work in missionaries have been here for years and i was there only as a faith for india and because i had to go to singapore to take part in the asian congress on evangelism there are many missionaries in thailand just before i left thailand i was sitting down at the uh at lunch with the director of weck in thailand and we were discussing evangelism we were discussing the need to reach the masses he told me how very few people were working in evangelism in the city of bangkok where there are several million people

missionaries are mainly in the tribes in the north and in other parts of the nation the great urban area the massive city of bangkok is relatively unreached there's been hardly any massive evangelistic effort in fact he told me that he didn't know anyone hardly in the entire nation of thailand that was engaged in door-to-door evangelism or any kind of cold portage work and the flow of literature out across that nation is unbelievably low yet the nation is so wide open to the preaching of the gospel we americans don't even need visas and there are tens of thousands of americans in thailand which as some of you know is the main american ally in asia where all the bomber bases are and no om is not planning any official work in thailand i would appreciate your prayers as i've been asked to

address a large number of all the christian leaders in thailand on the 5th of february when i return but again i've received what i have received in nation after nation the unbelievable shock that though there are missionaries there dedicated missionaries the job is far from complete and i'm just overwhelmed when i get in the midst of such situations as i mentioned i was in pakistan for some time what a thrill it wants to meet with phil farshall in east pakistan phil is a young man who received his vision for the muslim world through attending our prayer meetings at moody back eight years ago god touched his heart concerning muslims and he heard me once give a challenge concerning east pakistan a country that has been on my heart for about 10 years he went to mexico with om and received

his training down in a very hot city with a similar climate as east pakistan on the same latitude and he's over there now after a number of years in which they felt no mass evangelism could be done they're literally begging us to come in with an om team in fact it somehow persuaded the southern baptist church to finance and pay the whole thing we're still not going but anyway he's there and is now the field director of his mission i mentioned this because the strategy of om in this revolution for evangelism is not to become a madman organization with all the answers that's going to do the job that that isn't the goal nor will it ever take place our burden is that somehow young people in training with us for a year or a summer though it's hard to do it in the summer may experience this

revolution may experience new life and reality in christ and that eventually may end up working with all the various evangelical societies and missions throughout the world and i'm convinced that this is a great or a

very important part of the strategy the lord has given us here's a young man trained with us here's a young man who received his vision with us and it was certainly a young man with a heart after god who was already after five years on the field appointed as the field director for his very well-known mission in east pakistan young people trained with om are now in more than 30 nations working with 20 or more various mission societies and evangelistic groups and i believe this is one of the ways that we can see revolution in missions and in evangelism and some of you know i

have been patient myself part of the time and may move there since i first meet in the land of nepal you've always heard talk about nepal being closed and you can't evangelize there nepal has 10 million people among those 10 million there are probably less than 150 who know jesus christ there the illiteracy is approximately not literacy illiteracy 95 95 there are almost no roads in the entire nation young men who are going to reach the nepali for christ is going to have to know something about exercises i doubt if the om 10 minute sprint at 6 30 in the morning is going to be quite enough to put men in shape for climbing the himalayas to reach these hundreds of thousands and millions of nepalese for jesus christ pray as we're opening lord willing a bookshop an educational bookshop as a

sort of a front for evangelistic work in nepal as some of you know i'm not able to get into india at present but being able to get into nepal actually is putting me in a better position for our work in north india than when i was in bombay it's hard to believe but from patna the center of br to katmandu it's about three pound 10 by air an incredibly street strategic place and we would appreciate your prayers as unbelievable open doors have come in that town or in that city and in that nation west pakistan is another unbelievable situation with a small number of missionaries per person afghanistan has 14 million people actually no one really knows the population they only figure it out by the tea consumption i don't know they learned that from the british or what but uh they know how many

how much tea is imported all tea has to be imported and they know how much the average afghan drinks and so they divide and what else and they try to come up with a population statistic and it's either 14 million or they're drinking more tea than they should just recently in mexico i was with gordon magny whose sites for eight years have been on afghanistan you know i believe this is what's needed in this revolution and evangelism men who not only point a finger to a particular difficult country maybe a communist land or a muslim land but then who are ready to go through the training the discipline the breaking the teaching that's necessary to prepare a man for that kind of work and so there's been seven years of breaking teaching more than that of course preparing gordon and his wife who

lord willing will launch out to work completely with the other christian workers who are already there this march afghanistan is a land of unbelievable need i was with christy wilson man considered the leader of christian work there over in the asian congress and evangelism became the little night of prayer that we arranged in the midst of the congress and i asked him to share something about afghanistan and very confidentially in terms of public news not in terms of sharing in a meeting like this he mentioned that there were perhaps less than five baptized believers among the afghans secret believers he said there may be another five how in the world can we possibly even begin to think that the task of world evangelism is over when we think of situations like this and yet in this

so-called closed country men like gordon magny have received a scholarship to study at the university of kabul and i believe that god is in afghanistan in these days to come it's going to take however a revolution in our thinking a revolution in evangelism

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