

Being European 1994

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the need for integrity, commitment, and a global perspective in fulfilling the Great Commission in Europe.

Duration: 1:05:20

Scripture: Matthew 9:35, Matthew 9:37, Acts 13:4-5, Acts 13:9, 1 Peter 5:2, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of feeding and overseeing the flock of God with willingness and a ready mind. He encourages humility and submission to one another, as God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. The speaker also highlights the significance of sending in missions, stating that sending is just as important as going. He shares his own testimony of how one woman's prayers and commitment to sharing the Gospel led to the distribution of the Word of God to over 500 million people through OM teams in 60 nations.

Transcript

I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 14. We're going to look at a number of scriptures, but I'd like to start with Luke 14. Thank you for blowing up the world.

These globes, I find, are so tremendous, especially for the children. Try to show them where these countries are. We use generally flat maps, but they're distorted.

Tomorrow night I'll be wearing, actually, my own global jacket, which doesn't go so good on me because I'm so skinny, because, of course, the world is round. But for fat people, these global jackets are really right on. We're now the agents for Great Britain for those jackets.

But what a challenge, as we think of Europe, and as we think of the whole world. But the first passage of scripture I wanted to read was from Luke 14. And to me, this passage is just so important.

Whenever we have a conference like this, whenever there's great vision and great plans and great ideas, this passage is important. I recently became the chairman of the tract in the 82,000 movement for the mobilization of new missionaries. Never has there been a movement, it's really a network, with such high goals and aims.

At least, I have never seen in my 38 years of walking with Jesus. When I first heard of 82,000, and I brought some copies of their amazing handbook, 82,000 handbook, I felt some of it was just so over the top, if you know the expression. But the closer I got to some of the people, like Louise Bush, the coordinator, the more I felt the Holy Spirit, despite all the weaknesses and the complexity, was in this movement.

With a goal of giving everybody in the world the gospel by the year 2000. And seeing a church planted in every unreached people's group. I think they had a bit of discussion about the 2000s, and so changed the name of the movement to AD2000 and beyond.

Because we know the work will continue, and we can't easily predict exactly all that's going to happen by the year 2001. But as I think of these various challenges, and in our particular tract, we're praying, and we can't say God just gave us this number, but we're praying for a doubling of the mission force in the world today, in the next decade or less. Parry Rickard of YWAM is the coordinator of this tract, I'm just the chairman watching him move forward.

And of course, we don't think we're going to do this, the Lord is going to do this, through all the different agencies in the world, whether they network with AD2000 or not, that's not our first burden. Just to see, to see it happen, in answer to prayer. So as we wrestle through all these things, this passage of scripture becomes very, very important.

And as we think of Europe today, and as we want to prepare ourselves to be more effective in Europe with the gospel, this is such a relevant passage. Let's start at the 25th verse. I usually read from a modern translation, but this morning I have my old Bible in a bit of a rush.

But I think it's fairly simple. I know many of you are Christian leaders and missionaries, and have spoken on these things yourself. Verse 25, And there went great multitudes with him, and he turned, and he said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, his wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, in his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it? Lest, perhaps, after he hath laid the foundation, it is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.

So, likewise, whosoever he is of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple. Salt is good, but if salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

I remember once ministering in Germany, a land where people are very punctual. I guess I was going on a little bit too long. It was an OM meeting, so I felt somewhat free.

The young people were just so responsive, listening intently. I guess I went way beyond the one hour mark. But a man in the back held up his watch, trying to get me to stop.

And I was speaking about missions, discipleship, forsaking all to follow Christ. And I saw this man holding his watch up, and I stopped the meeting. I said, praise God, look at this dear man donating his wristwatch for world missions.

I believe all of us here this morning, as God's people, have a commitment to integrity. Integrity is one of the great words in the English language. I know there are people here from different countries.

English may not be your first language. What is integrity? To me, integrity covers so much. Honesty, truthfulness, openness, being the kind of person that can be trusted, pure, moral, straightforward, on and on we could go.

And as we attempt the impossible in a complex world, with a highly complex church, and as we attempt the impossible here in Europe, we need that commitment, that ongoing commitment to truthfulness and integrity and honesty, reality, whatever the cost. Because we need to understand that the church, to a large degree in Europe, has lost its testimony. There are beautiful exceptions, individual churches, that have a wonderful testimony.

There is still a salt and light ministry on the part of the church as a whole, despite all those weaknesses, because God is sovereign. God works through his church. I feel that some people describing the church in Europe describe it in a way that it makes it look too weak.

Other people describe it too optimistically. I haven't met too many of those. Usually they're talking about some individual movement that they're excited about, that they think this is going to be the answer.

Having lived in Europe now for 32 years, my wife and I still praying about that first furlough, but we decided to just become citizens instead, which is a little complicated, though we have all the papers, because you have to stay in the country so many months a year, and I'm all over the rest of Europe and the world, so this citizen thing may never happen. How many of you are British? Let me see who's British. Good.

When you just look, you don't know where you're all from. So you've already got that privilege you probably inherited. Didn't even work on it.

The British passport can get you very easily into a lot of countries. It used to get you into India, which is really my first love. Sorry about that, Europeans.

It used to get you into India without a visa, and the whole work of OM in India was pioneered by Commonwealth people who didn't need a visa. They're no longer allowed. Very hard to get visas now, but because they taught Indians and disciplined Indian leaders, OM India now has an army of 400 full-time people, almost a completely indigenous work.

But that was partly due to the fact that British people didn't need a visa going to India. I believe this is a significant conference. Probably those who've organized this conference have discovered how uphill it is to promote world missions here in Kent.

God gave me a vision for Kent back in 1963. I was living in the north of England and I said, this place, Kent, and I hardly knew anything about it, this place, Kent, is so close to France, so close to Belgium, surely they should be more involved in reaching out. I was very naive, very idealistic.

So I sent a young man and his wife to, I think it was to Folkston, it may have been to Canterbury, to mobilize for missions out of Kent, 1963. Well, praise God, some went. There are great churches in Kent.

Missionaries have gone from Kent and surrounding counties for many, many years. And I think one of the things I always like to do when there's something new going on and there is something new going on is to esteem those that have gone on before us. And as we talk about developing a European mind, let me just say that there's nothing that has hurt the work in Europe as much as people coming in from the outside with pride and arrogance and lack of humility.

Of course, for many years living here in Britain, I discovered that most British people didn't really think of themselves as European. They were British. In 1963, British people were British people.

You didn't talk to them about being European. No, they would acknowledge that ultimately. But that was not the main bang on the drum.

And we found that the average British person didn't have really a very good attitude toward the French. I don't know if anyone here from France, as God's people were supposed to be different. One of the most depressing things is to discover how so many of God's people aren't very different.

But present company, of course, excluded. Praise God for many British people who through the power of the Holy Spirit now for many decades have gone to France and churches have been planted in France. And I think, I know my friend Paul, where is he? Has he arrived yet? Dear brother was with us in the early years.

We'll be here sharing about France. If they had that attitude toward France, it didn't improve much when you came to talk about Belgium or you came to talk about other European countries. People had tunnel vision.

But not the kind of tunnel vision we're here to talk about. When Ernst Ferdus heard of this conference tunnel vision, I thought, oh no! I've been preaching for 30 years against tunnel vision. Now this group comes along, they're having a conference tunnel vision, this must be insane.

But you see, words change their meanings, don't they? And the tunnel vision we're talking about is not you living in your small little narrow world only seeing your own little church or your own little garden, but it's through the tunnel. This tunnel just down the road here, I can't wait to go through it. If I had known about these sportsmen, I'm a jogger, nobody invited me to run through the tunnel.

I would have gone with them, probably would have collapsed halfway. The first train came through yesterday, did you see that on the television? Didn't have time, you were all here getting blessed. The first train came, nobody was on it.

Already I'm scheming how I can get to Paris faster and how I can get to Belgium faster. I prefer train over air for a bunch of reasons. It's exciting, isn't it? But of course, if you talk among many British people, they're against the tunnel.

Some are still against the tunnel. Some don't believe it's going to happen. Some are telling me I'm going by ferry.

Now everybody's talking that the price is too high. The price is too high. Typical, small-minded 19th century.

Isn't it amazing some of the church is just slipping in to the 20th century. And I had to tell some of my slow-minded friends, actually, excuse me, we're about to go into the 21st century. Were you aware of that? Why is it that the church is often so slow to grab on to new opportunities, to respond to new challenges? And I'm not saying that because I'm negative about the church.

I'm very positive about the church. But as part of the church, including the failures, we are committed to integrity. We are committed to honesty.

And we know that the church in Britain and in France and Belgium and throughout Europe needs a fresh move of the Spirit of God. A fresh commitment to vision and to being God's people. Now I'm going to read another passage of Scripture because there's not time to expand this passage though I would just plea with you as you dream, as you make plans, as you and your individual ministries expand, count the cost.

Count the cost. Don't just say things because it seems nice to say or it grabs people's attention. You know, we're going to plant 10,000 churches in France next week.

It's great. Wow, what a man of faith. Must have an anointing.

No, he's an idiot. We need to count the cost as we speak, as we dream, as we make plans and we need to look into the Scriptures and realize also the real situation in Europe. Brothers and sisters, if we are to fulfill these burdens and goals we have for Europe, some of you have heard of the new plan, Hope for Europe.

Some of you know of the many, many plans in Great Britain like Jim and all kinds of things that are happening we need to count the cost. We need to realize that even the difference between getting an initial decision for Jesus and getting a disciple, seeing a church planted, seeing people go on for God. We're going to look at another passage but I wanted to stop for a moment and mention some of these books because our time is limited, we have so much to cover and I'm convinced that the books that we've been able to bring and others have brought are a vital part of this thrust.

And firstly, the book Operation World, which I'm sure has already been mentioned. This is probably the most significant missionary book of all times. The section on Europe alone is worth the price of the book.

Ten years in the making by Patrick Johnson, 650 some pages or 660 let's see what it is, two to be exact of information. Now some people don't buy one of these because it looks so big. How many of you have an encyclopedia? Any of you have any kind of encyclopedia? You can get them cheap now in some of the supermarkets.

Most of you have. Okay, how many of you have read the encyclopedia through from A to Z? Raise your hand. Nobody.

You don't do that with encyclopedias but you have them. This is an encyclopedia of missions. Information, facts, prayer requests on every nation in the world.

It's incredible. It's put in the form of a prayer diary so some of us are praying right through the whole thing and reading all of it. This is my third time through.

Every time I learn more not of this edition but the old edition. And I would just urge you, all of you who are missions, not just listeners but missions mobilizers to get copies of this book. And this morning is your opportunity.

It's nine pounds. Or two for ten. Did you hear that? Two copies for ten.

Because I have a motto. Anybody who doesn't have two of these because immediately someone's going to buy one the moment you get home they're going to want it. Anybody who doesn't have two copies is a backslider.

So we hope you'll take this opportunity to make it a little easier. You can give pay-by-check. You can give post-data checks because we're in the 82,000 movement up to the year 2000.

And I am not joking. I have a check from a lady in South Africa where I was ministering a few months ago. It's dated January 1st, 2001.

And on top of that I lost it. We have a little motto on our book table. It's more blessed to give than receive.

We want these materials to go out. We don't have huge quantities. Some of you I know men of faith you're going to go right, I want 100.

That's at the price of 50. A little more or less. But we could bring them down bigger quantities when we come back tomorrow night.

Operation World the section on Europe. Really we should make it required reading for this conference. This is something just almost as amazing.

And this is going in many European languages. This is going into German, French, I'm not sure yet about Dutch, Spanish, the prayer cards that are just out. We don't even have copies yet.

These little prayer cards you've seen them in the past taken from the book. This is the new edition. I'm going to be referring to some of those.

We're hoping they'll go into all the languages of major languages of Europe. Now this is the children's edition. Jill Johnston died of cancer but completed this just before she died.

It is absolutely the most amazing children's book ever. People's groups, countries, fascinating. In fact, the average adult would do well to study this because their knowledge of missions probably would not go beyond this.

And you're going to want to get some copies of that as well and they're available at a special price. Let me mention just a few other major missionary books. Europe Reborn.

This was written just a couple years ago starting to go out of date but still highly relevant. There are not that many Christian books written about Europe. Again, we should have almost given all of you this copy free for coming to this important vision conference.

Forward by Stuart McAllister who is now the Secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance and part of the powerhouse about to launch Hope for Europe. Europe Reborn. A Christian perspective on a continent in change.

Very much in line with what I'm attempting to share this morning. Serving as senders. If you're committed to world missions again, you're going to want to get five or ten copies of such a book because, brothers and sisters, we are not right now lacking Europeans who want to get into mission work.

There are far more Europeans who want to be in the missions full-time than there is money or sending energy from the churches. Now that doesn't mean we don't challenge to get more because a lot depends on what church they're from. And I don't know what church they're from when I see them out there so I keep challenging them to go even though I know there's so many seemingly waiting to go unable to get that sending.

The finance, the prayer, what it takes to send out workers. In fact, right now in a number of places in Europe, including Britain, missionaries are returning and not going back to the field because of lack of financial support. A mission agency, isn't this amazing? One of the few mission agencies based in Kent just closed.

Just down the road. Central Asian Mission. Just closed.

And when they closed, there was over 70,000 pounds of back support for missionaries never sent in. They closed their door. That's a little amen from heaven, that bell just, you know, cause you didn't say amen.

I had the man ring that bell. But I hope you'll get a copy of this book *Serving as Senders* because if you're serious about missions, you have to understand sending is just as important as going. Romans chapter 10, verse 15.

How will they go unless they are sent? And of course, what happens is in the general challenge, try to understand this because it's very important. In the general challenge, many young people begin moving toward Christian service. But to move in Christian service out of your own culture and out of your own church takes a lot more inertia.

You may be able to go for a summer, even a year. But long term career, most of the money in a place like Britain is within the church. It's for pastors and assistant pastors and all the things that are within the church.

And of course, that is important. So when it comes to overseas, and I've had 32 years in Britain analyzing and studying this, a high percentage of the young men and women who I've watched for 30 years, 2 years in this country, wanting to go overseas, most of them are all here. They're all here.

They're pastors. They're in their churches. Many of them, of course, had to take up secular work in order to survive.

But they're here in their own country. Let us understand, it is only a tiny percentage of people who are going from Britain, Europeans' number one sending country. It's only a fraction of people that are going out to the unreached people.

Whether you talk of the unreached of Europe, or go beyond to other parts of the world. That's why when we have a great conference and we challenge young people to recommit themselves and to go, we need these teaching tools, we need a balanced message, we need discernment, tremendous discernment. Mission work is more complicated than ever before in history.

The church in Europe is more complicated than ever before in history. The false cults are moving at an unbelievable rate. And we need, A.W. Tozer once said, the greatest gift needed by the church today is discernment.

That is going to increase your discernment in connection with world missions. There's another book that fits right in with that challenge. This is a YWAM book by Betty Barnett, for by Lauren Cunningham, Friend Raising, building a missionary support team that lasts.

Some of you are missionaries, some of you are planning to be missionaries, some of you are going to be standing behind missionaries sending them forth. In the bigger sense, right, we're all missionaries. That's why language is so interesting.

We walk out this door and we face a mission field. Do you know how many Muslims alone there are in Great Britain right now? 1,500,000. Muslims have targeted Britain right for conversion.

One of my close friends was just in that big mosque last week. It tried to convert him to Christ. Cat Stephens is one of the leaders of the big mosque down in London trying to win English people to Islam.

And some are so ignorant of their own Christian faith if they aren't Christians, they get caught. We brought a book reaching Muslims for Christ. We need to get every Christian in Britain and I believe the whole of Europe.

There are more Muslims in France than there are in Great Britain and with the situation in Algeria, who knows what is going to happen with more coming out of Algeria in that horrendous mess that country is in right now. So here's just one of a number of books about Islam reaching Muslims for Christ. But just to finish my comments on this book, this helps young people who want to be missionaries to raise that support team, praying, godly, committed senders.

That book is worth its weight in gold. I had wished we had that 30 years ago. I cannot tell you how we learned the hard way.

Do you know how many people have had training in Operation Mobilization? Do you want to take a guess in your mind? 82,000 have been through conferences similar to this. You cannot come on OM unless you go through a mega training conference. Nights of Prayer, study groups, Operation World Books.

It's an intensive thing. Usually in the summer now we're getting 4,000 or 5,000 at our conferences for a whole week. But one of the lessons we learn with those 82,000 people all over the world is again, as I've already touched on, how hard it would be for them to raise the support.

And how much cold water would be put on them by their own churches, by denominational leaders, especially if the movement as OM is, was interdenominational, truly interdenominational with people from all different churches that love Jesus and that base their thinking and their doctrine on the Word of God. This book is gold. And if you and I are committed to world missions, if we are really wanting to see an impact in Europe, we're going to get some of these tools and we're going to become distributors.

And that is going to make a difference. Let me share my own testimony at this point. I may repeat it in a mini form or maybe I'll make it mini now and repeat it tomorrow night when other people are there.

I'm here because of one woman. I'm not from a Christian home. My grandfather was an atheist from the Netherlands.

By 16, my life was women, money, business. But a lady had put my name on her missionary hit list. She not only prayed that I would be converted to Christ.

I was in trouble with the police, trouble with the headmaster. I'm from New Jersey, just outside New York City. She heard about me.

I never met her in those days. But she prayed for me that I'd become a Christian and that I would become a missionary. She didn't even discuss this.

She prayed for me for over two years. She prayed for this ungodly high school. Auditorians have a very special place in my life.

She prayed for this ungodly, drunken high school for 15 years. 15 years. She sent me a Gospel of John through the post.

That started my pilgrimage. Other things were involved there as well. And then Billy Graham came to New York City just for one night.

It wasn't even a crusade. One night. And I didn't understand what that kind of thing was.

I heard he was a hypnotist. I actually brought my binoculars. You know, we had one little Pentecostal church in our town.

Everybody in the town that I met thought they were all completely crazy. Their communication skills were a little weak back in those days. And I don't think hardly anybody ever came to Christ there.

Just the same people. I know because later I preached there. Later they moved from that little location.

God did a new work through some real heartaches. And that is quite a good church today. Last time I inquired.

It was back in my hometown. People didn't understand. Billy Graham? This is emotionalism.

Anyway, I went there one night. And I heard the Gospel. I heard the Gospel.

Jesus Christ died for me. Just the message you're trying to carry to the whole of Europe. He gave an invitation.

I've never heard of such a thing. People get out of their seat. I never saw that in a church except if people had to go to the toilet or something.

He called people to, you know, come up forward and repent. I did it. I got out of my seat.

And I went forward crying out to God to save me, cleanse me, use me. I don't remember what I prayed. All I know is lightning came into my soul.

Spiritual lightning. Found out later His name was the Holy Spirit. And I was saved and filled.

And I share this without exaggeration. Every single day for 39 years since that lightning bolt hit my soul I've known the power and the reality and the joy of the living Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is the message we have.

This is what we're talking about across Europe. It's not religion. It's not churchanity.

It's not religious nonsense. It's the Holy Spirit of God invading the heart, changing a man and sending him out as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. And if God could take a struggling, needy, weak, over-sexed, loudmouthed I won't give you any more descriptive words because some of them are illegal.

And somehow keep me going every day for 39 years. You can imagine the flack I had in those early years. Nutcase, religious zeal.

Imagine when I first came here at 22 years of age. I lived in Spain first, Mexico before that. And I started preaching much stronger than this.

Now at my age I've had to mellow down. But when I first came and I started preaching people just wrote it off. He's a nut.

He's a wild Pentecostal. And yet at the same time God just started to touch people's lives. I arrived here in February of 1962.

By June I had 90 extremist Brits ready to go anywhere for Jesus. We united in Paris 200. By the next summer there were 2,000.

And OM has been going from strength to strength ever since. Now with 2,500 full-time workers reaching tens of millions with the Gospel. Only God knows how many have come to know Him but certainly many, many thousands.

One woman! One woman who was a missions mobilizer. One woman who decided to put into practice what she was singing about on Sunday morning on a Monday through Saturday basis that the world could hear the Gospel. And these feeble OM teams and we're more aware of our failures than we are of our successes but these feeble OM teams now in 60 nations have given the Word of God to over 500 million people.

That's an understatement. 500 million have received the Word of God. Some of you know we got a little help to do that as God gave us these 2 spiritual battleships Lagos which after 17 years we lost and so we now have Lagos 2. Lagos 2 sailed out of Britain just 3 years ago.

They just celebrated the 3 millionth visitor up the gangway. How would you like a church with 3 million coming through in a couple of years? That might excite even the biggest visionaries here. God answers prayer.

God answers prayer. It's not just missionaries that are needed. It's not just full time pastors and evangelists that are needed.

It's women, men and women like that dear lady committed to prayer. Committed to share the vision. Committed to spread the Word through literature, through every possible method.

Her praying of course was greatly based on Matthew chapter 9. I know you're aware of that great passage and I love to read it. The Word of God is sharp and if my words don't hit home this morning then it's my prayer that the scriptures will go like an arrow to your heart rebuking, convicting, challenging and stirring. Matthew 9.35 Jesus going about into all the villages teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

And when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them because they were faint and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then said he unto his disciples the harvest truly is plenteous but the workers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he'll send forth workers, laborers into the harvest.

That was her vision. Tell me is that your vision? I know it's the vision of this group but I want you in your own heart to answer individually. Are you specifically praying for workers to go out into those harvest fields as that woman prayed for me and as I caught this vision and began to pray for my fellow students.

When I went back to that high school we had a meeting in an auditorium just like this, a bit bigger. Six hundred students came to the meeting mainly out of curiosity. A big mouthful had got saved.

They wanted to know what was going on. This was in a school that's now illegal to do this in the United States. I just shared my testimony and the Holy Spirit just came in power.

A hundred and twenty five of those students stood to believe on Jesus Christ and among them was one older man, my old stubborn Dutch father, surrendering to Jesus. Now eighty-eight he's followed the Lord also ever since. Prayer, brothers and sisters, is where the action is.

If we're going to be on the cutting edge to reach people for Christ in post-Christian, pagan Europe, it's going to mean prayer. Not just prayer when we're all together with great music and enthusiasm, hallelujah for that, but prayer when we feel alone, when we feel that everything is against us and we haven't seen the answers to prayer that we prayed maybe a few weeks ago and so the temptation is to throw in the towel or give up or certainly not emphasize intercessory prayer. I'm reminded of the great missionary strategy so clearly brought out in Acts chapter 13.

Turn there very quickly. There were five men. It lists them there in the first verse.

We pick up the story at verse 2. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them. There's a biblical basis for what we want to do in Europe today. That's the way we're going to develop the kind of sanctified imagination, the kind of spiritual reality that's going to penetrate even the back streets of Paris, Milan, Torino, other bastions of unbelief that stagger the imagination.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. There's that little word again.

That's a mega word. Sent. They sent them away.

Verse 4. So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, the chief executive officer of all missionary work. So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit departed unto Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Seleucus, they preached the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews, and they had

also John as their helper.

Prayer is where it's at. Waiting on God. Being filled afresh with His Holy Spirit.

Sent out by the church, by the Holy Spirit. But my final passage of Scripture that especially ties into some thoughts along the line of our theme for this hour is found in 1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5. Now let's be honest. The present mood in Great Britain, even among the zealous, let's talk not about the dead Christians.

Let's talk about the zealous. The present mood when you talk about evangelism is all 90% Britain. British people, including the zealous, are not thinking much beyond Britain.

Now if you're different, hallelujah. I know the leaders here are different. Even as the dawn movement has come.

What is the dawn movement? Movement for the multiplication of churches. It's great. I've just looked through their three magazines.

I follow this movement. I believe in it. But of course, dawn for British people makes them even more into the British situation.

Because with that kind of vision you paint the picture so black in Britain that you'd be an idiot to think as a British person you should go anywhere else. They always end up comparing some great responsive country in Africa or Brazil or Korea or the Philippines. Always take the same countries.

And when you talk about these countries where there's phenomenal church growth, compare it with Britain, we look so miserable that we think Britain is the number one mission field. Now if you think that's the case, you certainly brought the wrong guy here today. Because the fact is, Britain is among the top ten nations in the world as far as resources and readiness for world missions.

And Britain itself has a relatively healthy church. Relative is a key word. Especially for dreamers like me.

Because the church I was dreaming about at 20 doesn't exist. I've looked for it in 60 nations. So we had to get back into the Bible as a movement and try to figure out what is acceptable reality for God's people.

And a little book came into our hands. Later on we already had these ideas, but the book came a few years ago called Grace Awakening that has been like a thunderbolt in our movement to cause us to be a little less critical, a little less judgmental, a little more balanced in evaluating churches. It's very important.

We have some copies of that book as well. An American needs ten quid to buy that book. Because he's so famous, Charles Swindle.

But over here, he's not so famous. So they forgot the hardback, put it in paperback. And if any of you are Americans returning to the States, take a hundred of those at one-third the price of the American edition and you can go in business.

I think it's actually illegal to export them, but you can carry them in your suitcase as a person. I don't think that's a problem. Anyway, I'm sure you've got to be Grace Awakened to do that.

Brothers and sisters, we in Great Britain today have thousands of churches. We have at least a million believers that are committed to varying degrees. Now, don't misunderstand me.

I believe we've got to work in Britain more. In OM alone, our little fellowship, I don't know how many people we have working in Britain, but it's a lot. I think it's our third, fourth biggest nation in the world.

As far as numbers of people, that's partly because our international office is also here. So don't go out and quote me. People misquote me because I speak too fast.

George Brewer doesn't believe we should do much in Britain. Please! We got this on video as well. We are here talking about tunnel vision because we're concerned about what's on the other side of that channel.

We haven't got a tunnel vision conference so that we can just emphasize Britain. You don't need a tunnel to evangelize Britain. You just walk out the door.

We want that to happen. That is 90% of the mission's emphasis at present in Britain is in that direction. And we're here just to try to bring a little balance.

We're not here to judge anybody's work in Britain. We're not here to put anybody down. But we're here to try to get people out of their tunnel vision through the tunnel for the bigger vision of the rest of Europe.

Because as we get into places like Greece, and our Italian delegation just arrived, and we start talking about Italy or Spain, where I lived for a couple of years before I came to Britain, we are in a different world than Kent. Even London. We have thousands of churches and house groups in London.

We need more. We need to double it. We need to triple it.

But in the process of doing that, we need to get some armies of God mobilized through the tunnel. If they're scared of tunnels, they can fly. They can go by ferry.

They can swim. But we've got to get them over there to France, to former Yugoslavia, to Greece, and even beyond to the little land of Turkey, which isn't little. But the European section of Turkey is little.

The biggest mosques in Europe are all in Istanbul. They're huge. One of the strongest Muslim nations in Europe and Asia.

All the believers in Turkey. I'm getting a little sidetracked now when I'm watching the clock. It's good we're going to come back after the coffee break.

I hope you don't all run away after that. I know some people don't like a storm first thing in the morning. But as we think of Turkey, all the believers in the whole of Turkey could sit in this auditorium.

From a Turkish background. I'm not talking about American servicemen or tourists who know Jesus in Istanbul. I'm talking about Turks.

They could sit in this auditorium. So if we think London needs more witness than it does, if some of you think that Kent is one of the neediest places on planet Earth because you've never been anywhere else, what are we going to say about places like Turkey? And if you go into some of the other areas of Europe that we're going to focus on in these days, it isn't much better. Brothers and sisters, Britain has a phenomenal debt to the rest of Europe.

Now how is that going to happen or what is the European mind we need to have if we're going to, as British people, a high percentage of you today, are British? How are we going to do this? What kind of European mind? What in the world does that mean, a European mind? Let's read this passage. It talks about feeding the flock of God, which is among you. Some of you may be Christian leaders and you need to understand that probably the most effective way as a pastor, for example, in Kent, that you could help the missions movement is not firstly jumping in your car and driving off to Turkey, might be good for an exploratory trip, but to be a faithful pastor right where you already are, teaching the Word of God, grounding the Lord's people in His Word, and turning your church into a sending church.

We had a great book, Ten Sending Churches, went out of print. Who's going to buy a book, Ten Sending Churches? What's that about? Went out of print. That's why I'm so glad this book, Serving As Senders, is in print and this will not be going out of print.

It's going into German, it's going into Spanish, it's already in Dutch, it's in German already, it's going into Korean, and it's becoming a major handbook in missions mobilization. Verse 2, feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly, not by filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples of the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, I want you to mark that, and be clothed with humility. For God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. And what a balance suddenly comes in, because those verses could really get you uptight. Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you, be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Who resists that fast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. What is this European mind, this European Christian mind? This is what it is. It's a mind that has been humbled before God.

I remember as a young missionary in Mexico, I learned Spanish very quickly. God was working. People were being saved.

I don't think I was getting puffed up. With all the other struggles I had in life, I don't think that was my major struggle. I had read Calvary Road.

I was constantly repenting and humbling myself. I certainly didn't think... I don't think I thought too highly of myself, but that's very subtle. Probably I did.

Probably I did. Pride is very subtle, isn't it? How many of us just were very aware, very aware, I definitely think too highly of myself. I mean, come on.

That would look stupid. It's more subtle. But I was judgmental, especially of people who didn't do things my way.

And I was too ignorant to understand, though I lived in Mexico and I spoke Spanish, that my way was a North American way. It was the American way. And the last thing I wanted to admit, it took me two years to

do it, was that it was the ugly American way.

And I remember once coming home from preaching. You know, preaching can be such an ego trip. It really can.

You know, the crowd is there and they rush up to you. You know, autographs, sign your book. Well, you go away feeling great, you know, at least for a couple of minutes.

It's usually until you get home and talk to your wife. Anyway, I got... We had opened this bookshop in the ground floor of Mexico City, the first street-level bookshop in the history of that city. People thought this was great.

I guess I thought it was great as well. And a little Mexican brother that I was... You know, discipling, that's what we do, right? Disciple these little people. I put him in charge of the bookshop, and when I came back from my evening preach, he had done several things wrong.

And so I gave him a piece of my mind. Do any of you go around giving away pieces of your mind? You lose your cool and you give people a piece of your mind? Be careful because you can run out. It's a sad day when you come to the last piece.

I offended and hurt that young Mexican. And I realized within minutes I had sinned against God. Praise the Lord for that little book, Calvary Road.

You can't read that as a Christian and never be the same in my view. And I knew I had to repent and apologize to this Mexican. I just began to weep and apologize for my arrogance and my impatience.

I went back that night and I started an intensive Bible study on the subject of patience. Impatience among missionaries has caused more grief than we could ever know. We do bring with us our cultural baggage.

We do bring with us our impetuosity. And we often do a lot of harm. As I studied the subject of impatience, I realized there was more about that in the New Testament than there was evangelism, which of course was my big thing.

And God began to change my life as I asked him to fill me afresh with his Holy Spirit. After all, patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, patience, self-control against such.

There's no law. You think being baptized and filled with the Spirit is going to make all that come automatically the rest of your life? It's a great mistake. We're not clones.

For Jesus brought it into balance when he said, If any man come after me, let him deny self. That is the key to Biblical cross-cultural missionary work. Deny self.

That's where a lot of this is lingering. And when we deny self, take up the cross and follow him every day, I believe as missionaries moving through that tunnel into France, over to Italy, down to Turkey, we will be learners. We will be learners.

And I, though I had been a learner in Mexico, I thought, didn't somehow have that L-plate on straight. It kept falling off. You know, for those of you who are British, an L-plate is just basic, right? Americans don't have L-plates.

So when an American comes here, he sees this little L, he wonders what in the world that is. And it is especially difficult, as it was in my life, 20 years after I'd been driving, thought I was a fairly good driver, I had to take myself off the road because it was no longer, for me, legal to drive. And I had to take British, proper British driving lessons.

And I failed the test. And so I mobilized prayer throughout the world and took the test again and failed again. The third time after much prayer, and a lot of money for these lessons to learn proper driving, I got the test.

And then to make the whole scene worse, through this event, my wife, who was coming into a little more freedom as I tended to be chauvinistic, another problem in my life, decided she was going to learn to drive. And without my permission, got involved in learning how to drive and applied to take the test without checking with me. And so I said, Dreena, her name is Dreena, you're not going to pass this yet.

You're not ready. I failed it three times, darling. You've only taken a few lessons.

You're not going to pass this. You have to take it again. It cost a lot of money.

I gave her a real preach. She passed first time. Yes.

Guess who's sitting in the passenger seat? The L-plate is a beautiful principle. And when we go through that tunnel, or on the ferry or by the plane, we somehow put that L-plate on. We begin to learn how they do it.

We begin to listen. We begin to do a little more research before we open our big mouths. And it's not only Americans who are big mouths.

There are British people who are big mouths. And especially when they become Pentecostal, they become even more big mouth. Right? This is why the English Pentecostals are so great.

I mingle and work with the Pentecostal church all over the world. I think the British really are some of the best Pentecostals because they're generally so cool, so placid, so laid back, when boom, they finally get a little emotion, they move to a place where they can be at least considered fairly normal. And it's very, very exciting.

But as we move to other nations, we need the reality of what is written here. And let me read it again. In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.

Yea, all of you, be subject one to another. Be clothed with humility. Be clothed with humility.

That's the clothing we wear when we go through the tunnel. For God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. You go to Spain, and you go into a church, maybe your church is 200 strong in Newcastle, and you've been praying, and you're doing tremendous things.

You go down to Spain, and here's a church of only 15 people, and immediately you're giving them, boom, 10 ways that you can change your situation. That's how not to do it in modern Europe, even working with the church. You go there, esteeming, Philippians chapter 2, is that one of your favorite passages? Esteeming others better than yourself.

It may have cost them more. Somebody may have died as a martyr to plant that little church of 15 or 20. It may have cost them more to get that 20 than to get your 200 in Newcastle.

The situation in Great Britain is completely different from Extremadura, Spain, or from the provinces of Northern Italy, or Portugal, or Greece, or France, or Belgium, or Austria. I can only speak as a person who arrived in Spain as an ugly American. I can't speak about an ugly British person.

Only you can do that. When I came here, two years after my arrival in Spain, it was very interesting. But I fell in love with this nation.

I fell in love with the people here. Most of them were very different from me. And I found out that opposites attract.

I'm at Cambridge University again this Saturday night. I've been going there regularly now for 30 years. Most of the people at Cambridge University are not like George Brewer.

I don't even have an IQ that can get me into Cambridge University. When I first was preaching there, I wondered, How did I ever get here, Lord? Then I found out most of the students there were wondering, How did they ever get there? So that brought some degree of balance. But again and again as I just humbled myself and shared God's Word, and my own failures, and my own struggles, and kept somehow the L plate on through many mistakes, and we need to be quick to acknowledge our mistakes, they responded.

Thousands and thousands and thousands of British people launched into world missions and Britain became OM's number one sending country, only to be bypassed eventually by India. And a lot of their sending, of course, would be within their own country. The Word of God has the key to what we're talking about here this morning.

I can only wet your appetite that brothers and sisters, whatever your nationality is, you may think it's an obstacle. British in France? Oh! Americans? In almost any country it seems to be humanly an obstacle. That's no big problem with God.

God is no respecter of persons. As you humble yourself, as you become more Christ-like, as you learn the way of brokenness, the way of esteeming others, as you keep that L plate on, that will so stun people, that you will find yourself being mightily used of the Spirit. One of the first persons I ever met in France was Larry Gannon, an American, former drunk.

Saved just before he was 50. I mean, let's face it, when I mobilized 50-year-olds to France from America, his French was atrocious. The people used to listen to it for entertainment.

Larry Gannon. Larry Gannon planted churches in France. A number of his disciples, as he's in heaven, are going on mightily in France today.

God is no respecter of persons. Don't go around with some kind of British inferiority complex or American inferiority complex, because maybe you're not quick at languages, or maybe because you find it difficult to drink cappuccino instead of tea, or whatever your particular struggle may be. Beware of Satan, the accuser of the brethren.

Beware of Satan, the master intimidator, always saying, you'll never be a missionary. You better not cross that channel. You can't even win souls in your own street, much less take some Albanian for Christ.

Well, Jesus had a little trouble in his hometown, so I don't think you should go around with a guilt trip, because your street hasn't yet burst out in revival. It all banged on your door to buy a copy of Operation World. God uses ordinary people, and God has brought us together these few days, because He wants to do something special in our hearts, and He wants to give us this European mind, but this biblical European mind of humility, of esteeming others better than ourselves, and bond us.

That's the new buzzword, but I like it. Bond us with those Spaniards and with those French, and soon we'll discover some of our best friends. My best friend became that young Mexican.

My son is named after him. Soon my best friend was a Spaniard. My second son was named after him.

And then this German girl knocked on my door in Madrid, running away from East Germany. She tried Paris, tried Italy, tried England, spoke three languages, the high life. She wanted a job.

I said, I don't have a job. I'll give you a book. And Krista Fischer was powerfully converted there in Madrid.

She's been serving Jesus Christ now for 31 years. My daughter is named after her. God is going to give you friends in many different nations of Europe, and it can start right here.

But it won't happen unless we're willing to humble ourselves and believe for a deeper work of the Holy Spirit, unless we're willing to submit one to another, unless we're willing to really learn, including as much as possible, the language. What a sad thing that so many people today still in Britain only speak one language. Anybody can learn a second language.

I had an Indian brother on our ship. I think his IQ was relatively low. You know, he wasn't really doing too well.

He did speak two or three languages. You know, he just picked it up in passing. We put him washing dishes.

I think he only spoke two languages, but by the time he left the ship he spoke four. You can learn a language. My Spanish teacher looked at me.

She just shook her head. I was supposed to read a book. I couldn't even read what it said on the cover.

Two months in Mexico I was preaching in Spanish. You can learn French. You can learn another language.

Now we have these Walkmans. The Walkman. It's the greatest invention since the printing press.

You can go around, you know, don't wear it all the time because you get in accidents, but you can listen to these language tapes. When I started to learn Russian, and I'll share about that tomorrow night, I learned a lot of that initially listening on these language tapes. Even when you show an interest in people's language and you learn some words that mean something to them.

How do you feel when somebody lives on your street from Pakistan and they say, I don't want to learn English. Urdu is good enough for us in Pakistan. Keep your English.

I bet that really warms your battery. We can learn a language. We can bond with other people of other countries.

We can walk in humility and reality and be God's cross-cultural ambassadors on the other side of that tunnel and right to the ends of the earth. Let us pray. We're going to have our break.

Living God, we thank you for the privilege of being together here this morning. We thank you for this new tunnel vision. Not down the back garden, but through the tunnel to France and the ends of the earth.

Three hours to Brussels, but Lord, we believe by prayer it's three seconds to Brussels. And as many perhaps are not able to go, we pray they'll be senders and givers and that they'll have the vision to send others. Oh, Jesus, we're praying for a new thing.

We know it's going to be an uphill battle all the way. And we know that greater are you who are in us than all that comes against us. And so we look to you and we trust you that we will not just have a European mind, but a Christ-like mind that will enable us to impact Europeans in a way that perhaps we have never dreamed.

We pray through Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.

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