

Called to Compassion

by George Verwer

The Macedonian call is a reminder of our responsibility to help others and to share the gospel with those who have not heard it.

Duration: 47:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 16:6-7

Topics: "Compassion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of being a student and now standing in front of the audience to deliver a message. He mentions seeking God's guidance and being surprised by the positive message he was given. He briefly mentions a popular message he has preached at Bible colleges titled 'Seven Things They Didn't Teach Me at Bible College.' The speaker then transitions to sharing seven things that God taught him while he was a student, but does not go into detail about what those things are.

Transcript

Welcome to Founders Week 1998. The theme of this year's conference is called to compassion. George Verwer, founder and international coordinator of Operation Mobilization, comes to us from Kent, England.

Let's just seek God's face together for a few moments. Let's just take a moment for silent prayer in our hearts. God wants us to have a spirit of expectation, spirit of faith.

He wants to bless you. He wants to bless us. He wants to bring greater vision.

He wants to teach us more about spiritual warfare, faith. Let's just have a few moments of silent prayer and then I'll pray. Our God and Father, it is such a privilege to be here, to hear this ministry, to have this time for worship and praise.

We would especially thank you for the alumni, the alumnus who have gone out across the world, from Chicago to the ends of the earth, declaring your gospel, building your kingdom. We thank you, God, that by your mercy this great institute, with all of its many ministries, has remained faithful to your word all these years. In this age of confusion, in this age of compromise, in this age in which so many things seem to be getting watered down, even the very basic doctrines of the faith, that somehow this institute has remained faithful to your holy word.

And we would not take that lightly. We would not take that for granted. And we come with praise in our hearts and with a spirit of faith and expectation that you are going to continue to do great things through all these ministries and all these people.

Speak to us, O God, from your work tonight. Speak to us from the reality of history. Increase our vision, increase our faith that we may be your mega-motivated, proactive people, and that the church may be planted in every people's group in the world, and that every person on this planet may at least have an opportunity to hear and to find out about salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we pray.

Amen. I think there's always something unusual for a student who maybe now many years ago sat in the audience to now switch places and be up here. For many, many decades now, I have lived on the precipice of being overwhelmed by the challenge, by the responsibilities, by the opportunities.

I especially had that in Korea a couple of summers ago when I stood in the Olympic Stadium and spoke to 80,000 people through an interpreter, when I told everybody, because he had never seen anything like this as a Presbyterian mega-dignified pastor, and when I had my huge six-foot-wide globe, which I forgot this night, this evening, probably because of jet lag. It's now three in the morning on my watch. But when I had this Korean edition of Operation World to show all those people in the Olympic Stadium, he got so excited, he didn't interpret anything at all.

So I'm not sure if they know that book yet exists in Korean. We do have it in English, and I think most of you know and you need to know that one of the greatest ministries of Moody Bible Institute is Moody Press and all the other literature ministries, which were a huge impact on me when I came as a student and met people like Ken Taylor and Peter Gunther and became their friends. One of the books that Moody Press publishes, I consider one of the most important missionary books in this decade, People Raising by a man named William Dillon.

It's probably sitting out there somewhere. If you're going to go into mission work, and I know many of you want to do that, you need to know what's in this book and how to release finance in the work of the kingdom. In most missionary fellowships, you have to raise your own support, and that will challenge you right out of your socks and back again.

An amazing percentage of people who are wanting to go to the mission field from Korea, from Brazil, from all these nations, including America, are finding it difficult to gather together that support. Praise God. Sometimes you can go as a tentmaker.

Many of our people in the Middle East countries are tentmakers. But I thank God for this great book and this book that has prayer requests on every nation in the world and the children's edition, which is great for adults of the TV generation as it's mainly pictures and I know that some of you will want to use that book. It's a very awesome, challenging responsibility for me to have this chance to share with you.

I don't take it lightly, even though I've been a number of times over the years. I really wrestle with God as to what I should share. Sometimes in my approach to ministry, I actually don't know what I'm going to share until this particular point.

Then I make a decision because you have to at that point. But somehow God was merciful and he knew that I did not want to stand here in front of my friend Joe Stoll, not sure of what I was going to speak about. So at about 5 o'clock this morning when I was seeking his face in prayer, he gave me the message that I

was to deliver to you from his word.

And it was a bit surprising to me what he wanted me to share, especially because it was so positive. I tend to have a little bit of a negative streak. And all over the world, I have this message which brings some of the greatest response.

I first gave it at Prairie Bible Institute. It's entitled, *Seven Things They Didn't Teach Me at Bible College*. And I will tell you, I've preached that.

I've never met anybody that's spoken at more Bible colleges than I have all over the world. I even have a tape, a cassette tape. I'll send it to you free.

Why go to Bible College? But this message does sometimes bring miscommunication, especially with the faculty. And so I was praising God this morning that he gave me a new message. *Seven Things God Taught Me at Moody Bible Institute*.

Allow me to read from the word of God from the book of Acts, NIV, chapter 16. You know, we're a land of many, many strange Christians. I don't know if you've met many of them.

One of them wrote me a letter recently and told me to throw all the - we have these two ships that distribute Bibles and books all over the world. And he wrote me a letter that I should take all the NIV Bibles and throw them in the ocean. It's amazing.

If you can imagine some of the letters I have received over the years. I receive notes sometimes when I'm preaching as well, which can be very encouraging. George Whitfield, a great revivalist, a couple of centuries ago, he would receive notes when he was speaking.

Somebody would write up, saving faith has just flooded my heart. You know, that could get you going when you're preaching. I'll never forget my first note.

It was here in Chicago. A man handed me a note while I was preaching, and I opened it. It says, your time's up.

Sit down now. I had another man in Germany, one of my favorite countries, at least in the top 100. And this man also tried to get me to stop speaking, because I was going on so long.

I'm known as the longest speaker in the whole of Europe. But it was mainly young people, and it was our own meeting, so I figured we could go on. Some of you know this story, but this man tried to stop me.

He was sitting way in the back, and he started waving his watch at me, trying to get me to stop speaking. And I was speaking about world missions, the need to give, the need to pray, the need to go. And I saw this watch.

I said, praise God. Look at this man. He's donating his watch for world missions.

The book of Acts, chapter 16. I'm glad there's no one here from the Ukraine. Paul and his companions, verse 6, traveled through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

When they came to the border of Mycenae, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go. So they passed by Mycenae and went down to Troas. During the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, come over to Macedonia and help us.

After Paul had seen the vision, he got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. In many ways tonight, I also come with a Macedonian call. The Macedonian call is not a call to go into missionary work.

I'm sure the Lord could use it that way. They were already missionaries. In Acts, chapter 13, five men waited upon God, the Holy Spirit spoke, and the church sent Paul and Barnabas out into the harvest field.

That's a great chapter to study. But as they headed out in their missionary journeys, they at times struggled as to what was priority and where they should go. And so God used this Macedonian call to direct them geographically over to that new missionary field.

And one of the key words in that particular passage is the word help, come over and help us. My wife and I were married 38 years ago this past Saturday. I graduated from Moody Bible Institute approximately one week or two weeks before that.

And my wife and I have not lived in the United States ever since. Within three days, we crossed the Mexican border. From there, it was Spain.

After that, it was France, and then Italy, and then Britain, and then Holland, and then India, then Nepal, then Thailand. Then God gave us ships. We lived on the ships for a couple of years and ended up settling in the international city of London.

We're still praying about that first furlough. We just haven't been able to fit that in yet. We've had the privilege of seeing 90,000 people trained in OM on the field training and campaigns.

Those 90,000 generally working on teams have given the word of God to over 900 million people face-to-face, excluding any radio or television. If our present thrust in India, a land of 900 million people, is successful, and it's a bit rough right now in which we're targeting another 100 million people using literature and video and dozens of languages, then somehow by the end of the millennium, this feeble fellowship would have given the word of God directly to 1 billion people on planet Earth. So you can see when I come to a meeting like tonight, the tendency is to get a little bit excited.

What God can do through one person or one small group is absolutely mystifying. Whenever I come to Moody Church, it's a bit of an emotional experience. I guess I tend to be a bit emotional.

But it was here in this church that I sat under the ministry of Alan Redpath, who became one of my closest friends and associates. I was at his funeral some years ago. I remember when Alan Redpath organized nights of prayer here at Moody Church.

Not too many came, and that was a great burden on his heart. He was often a criticized person because he spoke so strongly, and he spoke about the need to make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, a message that was in deep impact upon me. And I can remember those nights of prayer, usually in a different room.

I especially remember when Oswald J. Smith came. I only remember him speaking on one occasion when I was a student. He was one of my heroes.

I had read his book, *Passion for Souls*, when I was at a liberal arts college, a very liberal college, before I came to Moody. And his book, *Passion for Souls*, and the challenge about Afghanistan, which was destined to be one of OM's main fields of operation. I even have one of my own nephews in Afghanistan right now, was spoken about in the preface of that book.

And my vision for Afghanistan came from that book of Oswald J. Smith. So you can imagine, when he came here to minister, it was a very special experience in my life as a young student. And when he gave the invitation, it was a very unusual meeting.

No one responded except one character. I had already been to Mexico. I had already been esteemed by some people as some kind of person of prayer and student leader.

But when Oswald J. Smith gave that message from this pulpit in this church, it was as if I was completely alone. And even though pride was trying to keep me seated where I was, as we sang the invitation hymn, and I was there with the woman who was destined to become my wife, what would she think if I, you know, responded to repent and recommit my life? Somehow I forgot everything and came forward and went into this back room and wept and wept. And when the choir came back there, it was a little embarrassing, I ran to the basement and I wept my way back to the cross as I allowed the Spirit of God to convict me of sin in my life, especially the sin of insensitivity toward other people, other people who were different from myself.

So it's quite an awesome thing to come back 38 or 39 years later and to stand in this place and to attempt to share my heart, which is so full. I want to give a Macedonian call again tonight for Afghanistan. The church is almost still non-existent.

There are a few believers. Some of them have been martyred. Fanatic Muslims have taken over the country under the Taliban leadership who have some good things, but it's a complex situation where so many have been killed.

There's so many minefields. There's so much suffering. It's just hard to describe it.

But I want to give that call, a Macedonian call to come and help the Afghan people. Many of them live in Iran. Some of them live in Washington, D.C. When I was there at the Promise Keepers event with a million men, I marched around the entire million men with my big globe.

Whenever anybody asked me what that was for, I said it's to remind the Promise Keepers of the neglected promise, which is the seventh promise concerning the Great Commission. But I went to buy something that day, and the man selling the food was from Afghanistan. I had to jump in a taxi for a quick appointment somewhere.

That driver was from Afghanistan. God has brought the most amazing range of people, even from throughout the 1040 window, even from many of the most unreached places in the world, right into our midst. Why we are not doing more among these people in our midst is beyond me.

I can't think about it too much. I get depressed. A Macedonian call for Afghanistan could be in Washington or New York or Chicago as well as Afghanistan or Pakistan, where many of the refugees are.

I want to give a Macedonian call for the land of Turkey. We now have 70 people in Turkey. Many other agencies have also got involved.

It was actually right here in the library of the Moody Bible Institute that God gave me the vision for Turkey. Before Turkey, He gave me the vision for Iraq. Before Iraq, or at that time, the vision for Yugoslavia and Russia.

Some people say, well, unless you go to all these countries, how can you have a burden of vision? How can you be bonded with these people? But I can tell you, God met me in this place, in this institute, and completely, utterly revolutionized my life. And I believe God has brought you here as a student, not to just fill your head with little bits and pieces from the Bible, not to just somehow give you a little education and a piece of paper you may be able to show to your grandmother. God has brought you here to radically revolutionize and change your life that you may never, ever be the same again.

I want to give you a Macedonian call for the land of India. It's amazing how we can get misinformation about different countries. When I was here, a famous Indian speaker came to speak named Bakht Singh.

Little did I know that he would become one of my closest friends in India, that he would accept me almost like his son and let me speak at some of the biggest meetings in all of India back in the mid-'60s. But when I heard about Bakht Singh and he ministered here, I had the idea India must be well taken care of with a man like that. And so I blotted India out of my thinking.

I wanted to go where others were not going. Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Algeria, other places, and then the communist world, which was so closed at that time. But in God's providence, he gave me a Macedonian call to India.

He sent an Indian to tell me about India. And I asked Dale Roton, who was linked with me from the earliest days when we went to Mexico together with my brother Walter, who lives in Chicago most of his life and who's here tonight. We were the first three to go to Mexico just before I came to Moody when this work was born.

But I asked Dale to go to Afghanistan to spy out the land, and I said, if you're in Afghanistan, you might as well keep on going and see what's going on, especially among the Muslim peoples of India. And he sent the most amazing reports back, that within six months, we got on our faces and sent a fairly large team overland in three or four vehicles to India upon receiving an invitation from the Indian churches. Today, there are 600 full-time OM people in India.

There are thousands who have been trained or working with almost every major group and almost every major organization and church denomination in the whole of India. And yet India today, a land of 900 million, has a challenge baffling to the imagination. Some of you feel called to Chicago.

And surely in the next three days with our brother Ray, you will be challenged about Chicago. But let me just give you some information that you will never discover unless you go to other places and live where some of us have lived. And it's not that we feel we are any better or our work is any more important.

Because to be called in the marketplace ministry of Chicago, which we certainly need, to me could be just as important as church planting along the Ganges. But the cities that burn on my heart, that I want to give you a Macedonian call to, most of them have less than 5% or 1% as much witness as Chicago. Chicago is a needy city.

We need to shake Chicago for Christ. God revolutionized my life as a student here partly because I was out in so much evangelism, door to door, down to the jail, with the children, with the drunkards. And God

used that outreach to take what I was receiving in the classroom and burn it into reality in my life, which became the whole foundation of Operation Mobilization, working in partnership with hundreds of colleges and schools across the world, realizing the need to balance academic study with practical, dynamic evangelism out in the streets and the highways and hedges.

Many cities of the world, much less conglomerate, unreached people's groups, which we're attempting to focus so much on in what's called the Joshua Project, would have less than 1% of the witness we have in Chicago. Brothers and sisters, one of the reasons I thank God for Moody Bible Institute and have never ceased to pray for this great ministry is because you have never lost the vision for the unreached, and you've been able to maintain the balance of acting locally and impacting globally. It is possible to do both.

I have many other Macedonian calls. Sudan, Algeria, Angola, Mozambique. What can we say of those countries of Central Asia? Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan.

Some people, in their ignorance, thought these were new pizzas. These are nations. These are nations where the door is now opening with the collapse of communism and where they are giving us a Macedonian call to come and help them as the harvest is plenty, as outlined in Matthew 9, and the laborers are few.

But I must move on and share that message God put on my heart this morning. And I've got to do what I know very quickly. Seven things that God taught me while I was a student here.

Of course, I came here as a baby Christian. I was converted in a Billy Graham meeting in New York City where Jack Wursten had invited Billy Graham to an anniversary rally in Madison Square Garden. I wasn't from a Christian background.

My grandfather from the Netherlands was an atheist. My other grandfather, my mother's father, he was Irish, Scottish, and English mixture. This is sort of toxic.

He was an alcoholic. But somehow, as I was living my own broad road, a woman near my high school put my name on her Holy Ghost hit list and prayed for me. She not only prayed that I would become a Christian, that was bad enough, she prayed that I would become a missionary.

Can you imagine? She didn't even discuss this with me. New Jersey people are known for being rude. I didn't even get a phone call.

Praise God for that woman who changed the course of my life. And so I am a result of the prayers of one woman who we consider the founder of Operation Mobilization. And through her influence and the godly influence of Billy Graham, who emphasized prayer so much, we started our little nights of prayer and other prayer meetings in that high school.

So I knew a little bit about prayer before I ever arrived here. But it's here that I met other men and women of prayer like Alan Redpath and a number of my teachers, and especially Dean Broman, who persistently emphasized the need to pray. I thank God for those little prayer bands.

I don't know what you call them now. It doesn't matter. Wherever two or three are gathered together to pray, he is in the midst.

And I felt convicted as a freshman my first year at Moody that one of the most important things going on on the campus were the little prayer meetings in the dormitories, in the rooms, and those missionary prayer meetings that took place at various times, and I tried to get to at least two or three of them every single day. It set the pace in my life for prayer that I've never departed from a single day in 42 years of serving the Lord Jesus Christ in much weakness. God taught me a lot about prayer at MBI.

If you miss God's school of prayer at MBI, then you have missed perhaps the most important part of what God has, because prayer involves worship. Prayer involves personal revival. Prayer involves knowing God, knowing Christ.

It's so easy to talk about these things, but to know this in the depth of your soul so that God is as real as this pulpit that I stand behind, that is what we want to have outlined in such majestic chapters as Isaiah chapter 6. Before we have a missionary call, we've got to have a deeper experience of God himself, and that was to be my privilege for two years as a student in this institute. Secondly, God taught me more about repentance. He taught me more about repentance, more about being real, more about facing up to my own failures.

At 16, I had been hooked on pornography, and after my conversion, I was trying to believe that I was delivered, but I don't think I was sort of totally delivered, and I struggled with pornography as a student in Chicago. I struggled with it even when I came back from Mexico, having seen God do great things. And it was here, through the Word of God, through the prayer meetings, through the books, as books have been such a huge influence in my life, that I got the victory over the lust of the eyes that has been my personal reality every single day.

A mission society recently took a survey and were stunned at the number of their missionaries hooked on pornography on the Internet. Pornography and addiction to pornography is out of control in our society, and the first step is we've got to face up to it. It is not the same as adultery, and people don't need severe kind of discipline if they're willing to repent and walk in the light and stay away from it.

Just as God uses alcoholics, God uses ex-drug addicts, God can use pornoholics as they learn the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit. I was in an airport in Oregon. I think it was Portland some weeks ago.

A pastor came out with his son, who's actually studying here at the institute, and gave me this book, which was destined to become my number one book for 1998. I just happened to have a copy with me because I just purchased 5,000. The title of the book is, When Good Men Are Tempted.

It's interesting that with what's going on in the White House, which is par for the course throughout the whole nation, in case you didn't know it, this interesting character, Bill Perkins, is having some very great opportunities with radio interviews, just as I did this afternoon on primetime, offering this free of charge to every radio listener throughout the nation. As they handle the inquiries tomorrow, I forgot to tell them I was going to do that. I got very discouraged at times in my Christian life, but I just decided that for a character like me, discouragement might be worse than impurity because once I got discouraged, Satan would be able to get in and perhaps even destroy me.

And so I declared war against discouragement. And I've never had a fully discouraging day since I was a student at MBI. I've had some mighty miserable minutes, however.

And not time to go into them. Learning how to repent, learning how to humble yourself. A book came into my life which became a Christian classic by Roy Hesschen called Calvary Road, sort of a forerunner to the greatest book on grace I've ever read, Charles Swindoll's book, Grace Awakening.

I just bought 10,000 of those as well and would be happy to send you one free. We need the message of grace. We need to understand that personal revival is plan A. Any other kind of revival is plan B, C, D, or E. And it is our privilege in Jesus Christ to live in personal revival every day of our life.

And I share without any boasting, for we can only boast in Jesus Christ, that from the moment of my conversion 42 to 43 years ago to this night here in February of 1998, every single day, I've experienced something of the grace and the love and the power of God to weak, struggling sinners like myself. If a loud-mouthed son of a Dutch immigrant from New Jersey with so many struggles and doubts and I've only just touched the tip of the iceberg tonight can walk for Jesus and live for him and his grace every day for all these years, then let me tell you this is going to make you uncomfortable. You don't have any excuse.

And some of you know you've been excusing your miserable prayer life for quite a few years. You've been excusing your lack of passion, your lack of evangelistic zeal, your lack of personal revival, your lack of walking in the light. You've been excusing your shyness.

You've been excusing lots of things. And I believe God wants to just minister to our heart and say no more excuses. He can use you.

He can enable you to overcome these weaknesses and these difficulties. We're not talking about perfection for the victorious life is not perfection. The victorious life is Jesus by his Spirit living through you which means according to his word knowing what to do when you do fail, when you do sin, when you do blow it.

Brothers and sisters, I thank God for my two years in Chicago because I learned how to repent. I had to go into Dean Broman and admit that I had broken some rules that I didn't understand. I became a bit of a rebel about certain things and God dealt with me about my attitude.

And I learned how to repent of bad attitude. Here I am 43 years later still repenting of bad attitude because I can tell you some of God's chosen generally frozen people wind me up big time. But when I find that the Lord's people seem to be a bit of a pain in the neck, I just say, Thank you, Lord, I'm not a giraffe.

It may sound silly, but it helps characters like me. In my Christian life, even when I was at Moody, it was so easy for me to see the negative side of things. I thought half the students at least were backslidden.

I wasn't much sure about the faculty as well. My one confrontation with Dr. Culbertson as to why he wasn't praying more for Billy Graham wasn't my most favorite day in my Christian life. And I will not go on about my amazing relationship with the Dean of Women, Angela Datuma, who also became a long-standing friend.

Yes, God taught me to repent and to be honest. I had to stand up in my missions course and admit that I was the person that had asked offensive questions of visiting missionaries. Thirdly, God taught me during those two years, he taught me how to love.

There's not time to go into detail, but those of us who are visionary and who are focused and who are somewhat choleric in temperament, which according to the Tim LaHaye books is the worst kind of

temperament, in all my life I basically had people inferring that I was going to backslide by the end of the week. It's amazing how God's people have a ministry of discouragement to characters like me. Many of them are discouraged, quite a few have gone on to heaven.

Learning how to love, learning to understand people, people much older than yourself, taking time to get to know them. They may sound like basic things, but they're important things. For 1 Corinthians 13 is surely a Mount Everest of Scripture, and if we don't have what's spoken about there, which is really what Charles Swindoll's book is about, then we don't have very much.

Fourthly, God taught me more about reaching the lost. I wish there were more time, but I want to say this. The emphasis that Moody has on doctrine was very important in my life.

I didn't come here as someone with a lot of teaching, and as I look at the world today, I see tremendous confusion because there is a lack of emphasis on sound doctrine. I know in some places they go extreme on that, and they almost shoot you dead if you're not using the same translation or if you're not a triple separatist or whatever else. I believe the balance that has been emphasized here at the Institute has been one of the main factors that has enabled you to stay on the cutting edge of where young people are today, and that's why more people want to come and study here than are able to get in.

Hallelujah for such a victory in a day when Bible college attendance is basically decreasing in many places and many parts of the world. John 14, 6, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

I already sort of believe this, but here at Moody it was confirmed. Jesus is the way. There is no other hope in any other religion.

I love other cultures. I appreciate other religions. I am not a religious bigot, but I have to stand on the truth of God's Word that there is no other name given among men whereby ye can be saved.

Only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a privilege to have as part of your curriculum going out to talk to people about Jesus Christ. How many institutions in the world can this be part of what you're supposed to be studying? No wonder.

Somehow in my life during those two years everything started to come together, and I talked about this on the phone with my wife this morning, and she will acknowledge that basically most of what happened in my life happened before I left Moody Bible Institute at 21 years of age. Of course I needed refining. I needed growing, but I had the foundation that I and this whole movement was able to build upon and therefore become one of the largest missionary evangelical biblical agencies in the world today.

No wonder I'm excited about what God can do in your life as you allow the Holy Spirit to have full sway in your life. Forgive me for speaking so loud. There is no purpose speaking loud when you have this kind of sound system and you're on the radio.

And when I first moved to Great Britain one of my greatest desires was to become quiet. And living in Great Britain I thought all spiritual people were quiet. Fortunately, I did have Alan Redpath as an exception.

And I prayed a prayer after reading these books Quiet Talks by Mr. Gordon. Oh, Lord Jesus, from now on I'm going to be quiet. Help me.

Lord, help me to be quiet. God, help me to be quiet! It was a beautiful day in my life when I really began to accept myself. That's another thing that God taught me at Moody, but that's in the second set of seven.

Fifthly, the Lord taught me to preach. I remember as a young grammar school student and a high school student being so frightened of speaking in public. And people who listened to me were also quite frightened.

Never did I dream that soon I would be speaking 900 times a year. That by this ripe age that I'm about to arrive at I would have spoken 25,000 times in 60 nations to millions of people across the globe. It was here at Moody, going to youth fellowships, going to churches, studying hermeneutics, studying homiletics, getting a chance to open my heart that God taught me how to preach the word.

God gave me the privilege of listening to dozens of men and women who came to Founders Week, the missions conferences, and other special events. People like George Duncan who also became a close friend. And he taught me how to wait upon him, how to get messages from his word, and then how to in my own way with all my struggles and weakness to open the word of God.

Last year, because I'm trying to cut down, it was only 420 times. And I certainly hope 1998 I can preach less. Somebody said to me, what about a greater emphasis on quality? Thank you very much.

And then Sixley. What about learning to finish on time? I'm sticking to my 45 minutes. Everybody relax.

But Sixley, God taught me about the disciplined life. It was at this point, under this topic, I wanted to say a little more about this whole challenge of our sexuality. By 16 years of age, I had had 32 different girlfriends.

I didn't just date women. I worshipped women. From age 5, I can remember going outside the grammar school waiting for this one chick to come and sharpen her pencil.

In my culture, back in the suburb of New Jersey, outside New York City, we were the age of romance. So though I was going steady at 13 years of age and went with that girl for a couple of years, mainly it was just a lot of kissing. It's changed a lot since then.

It was already changing back then. But I know there's hope for those of us who struggle with our sexuality. There's not time to speak more about that.

That's why I brought this book. But I remember Billy Graham speaking at Urbana in the late 50s. I wasn't there, but I heard it on tape.

Little did I dream that someday I would be speaking to those great crowds at Urbana. But Billy Graham spoke on the subject of sex. And he said, if you lose this battle, you lose the most important battle of your youth.

And I would urge any of you young men or women that are not walking in purity and reality and openness and honesty to come clean before God and come clean before your brothers and sisters and get into some kind of accountability fellowship where you can develop the discipline and the spiritual warfare tactics and all that the Word of God has so that you know the reality of holiness and abundant Christian living. The whole world right now is looking at the White House. Never has such an event had such worldwide publicity, and of course, in this age of the Internet.

But I believe God could use whatever's going on there to shake us, even we who are Christians. For when we point a finger at someone else, sometimes there's several fingers being pointed back at us. Those of us who claim to believe we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, those of us who go around singing all these choruses and all these songs, those of us who claim to believe the Bible is God's Word, we who are teachers will be more accountable.

Therefore, we must make sure that we have this part of our life under the power of the blood of Christ. There are thousands and hundreds of thousands of men and women who have proven it is possible to live in moral purity. We have had very little major immorality in our movement, and we are now 40 years old, and we are involved with one another.

We may have missed a few things, but generally, you find these things out. Of course, we have had some. Living a life of victory, staying away from pornography, having a godly relationship with your fiancée, having a biblical happy, solid marriage, I believe is for all who love the Lord Jesus and His Word.

And then finally, the Lord taught me how to give. I think I was a little extreme on this even before I got here, but it was here at Moody through different books and ministries and examples that once again I saw it was more better to give than receive. I just began to just give everything away that I could.

Many in our little OM fellowship, we weren't called OM at that time. That was the name given to us when the work exploded in Europe. We were called Send the Light.

We were mainly going to Mexico. Maybe we were extreme, but we had this one passion to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I don't think that is wrong.

I believe it is biblical. Yes, we made mistakes. Sometimes we got into judgmentalism.

Some of us had to battle through various kinds of emotional struggles, which is true in life in general. At the end of the day, as Brother Andrew once said, it's easier to cool down a fanatic than warm up a corpse. So I don't think, I don't think too much prayer is the biggest problem at Moody Bible Institute.

Too much evangelism. Too much compassion and love for one another. Too much forgiveness.

Hey, be careful. There's too much forgiveness going on. We better have a lecture on bringing this forgiveness business into balance.

Too much reconciliation. Watch out. Look at these black and white people.

They're getting into reconciliation. Well, there's Native Americans who are loving Latin Americans. And wow, there's a Korean in the middle being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Woo! Let's be careful here. A.W. Tozer, who was another major influence in my life, said to think that too much enthusiasm was the biggest problem in the average church was like sending a squadron of policemen to the nearby cemetery to guard against a major demonstration by the residents at midnight. It blows my mind to discover how many churches are basically unfriendly.

Rick Warren, in his amazing book Purpose Driven Church, exposes that in a powerful way. I personally feel the church in America is in a very difficult time and I believe it's going to be more difficult. And I believe unless there's more repentance and more prayer and more love and more reality in reaching the lost and more biblical preaching and more disciplined living and redeeming the time and more giving of our time

and our money and everything to the Lord, then we will never make it through the difficult years and decades that lie ahead of us in this nation or any other nation.

May God strengthen you, may God fill you, and may God use you for His kingdom and His glory. Amen. You've been listening to a message from Founders Week 1998.

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