

# Cd Gv497 the Challenge of Bangla Desh, Nepal & India

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer shares about the unique approach to Muslims in Bangladesh, the importance of prayer, and the future of the work in Bangladesh.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8

**Topics:** "Missions Work", "Global Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses various aspects of the work of God in India and Bangladesh. He mentions the challenges faced by missionaries and the need for support and prayer for leaders like Ray Eicher and Alfie. The speaker also talks about the acquisition of a rent-free property in Gorakhpur and the potential it holds for expanding the ministry. Additionally, he highlights the importance of reaching out to the Muslim population in Bangladesh and the need for strategic projects and resources.

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## Transcript

Let's just pray and then I'd like to share a little bit about Bangladesh and Nepal. Sharing a little bit and then we can pray and I'll share a little bit more because we do want to focus on prayer. Father, we thank you for the ministry of intercessory prayer.

We thank you for the privilege of being where the action is. And we know the action is when your people are praying in faith. Help us to see this, Lord, and to live this way.

Even though so often there seems to be a lot of opposition to living a hundred percent a life of prayer. We thank you, Lord, for all you've done over these past weeks and for the privilege of being instruments in your hands. Father, give us thankful hearts even as we see the problems and we see the difficulties.

We still lift our hearts in thanksgiving for yourself, for this great salvation, for each individual that is being drawn to yourself. Lord, I thank you for this team or teams right here in Karachi for their wide range of ministry. In the streets and in the churches, in their homes and in the highways.

And I just thank you for each one of them. We pray, Lord, especially as the weather gets hotter. Sometimes our nerves seem to be a little bit under pressure.

We may rest in you. We thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Guide us now as we pray for Bangladesh, for Nepal, for India.

Amen. Well, as you know, I went from here to Bangladesh. I guess we had to leave the house about 2.30 in the morning.

That was the day after they had the fire in Karachi airport. Anyway, we arrived there and Bangladesh really was a very important time. I've been thinking a lot for a number of years, at least 5 years, about this whole somewhat new type of approach to Muslims.

And as you know, Phil Parshall, who wrote that very controversial book, is an ex-OMO and a very close friend. And I read that book a long time ago. And it certainly caused me to do some thinking.

I've always been strong in my thinking that generally God doesn't work just one way. And so I've always, when I've met people extreme on contextualization, I've always just, you know, held out a little bit. Because, in fact, the brothers and sisters in Bangladesh would be the first ones to say that it is very much beginning stage.

In some ways it's almost like an experiment. And a lot of things, even that are written in that book, they are not putting into practice completely. But in spending on this trip, and I'm so glad that I've been out here in this part of the world for over 2 months, because it's so different from just passing through.

And it's difficult when you're just passing through to really get enough time with people and leaders and be able to ask the questions you want to ask and make an in-depth evaluation. So I had a good time with Brother Heather, who is the converted Muslim, and has been really one of the very key figures in this whole special work of God in Bangladesh. And I won't just say that we really don't have things written in any public literature about what's happening there among the Muslims.

Because that can be a great hindrance. And if any of you are privileged or in God's providence hear this message, I pray that you'll be very, very careful in what you say. But our work in Bangladesh is at a turning point.

Mike Leith, the leader of the work, is back in England. He's got a lot of unique ideas. He really would prefer to return and have a job in agriculture.

We have Phil Bushel, who's quite different. He feels it's no problem what he's doing there. People come to him, the Muslims come to him.

They say, what are you doing? I'm a teacher. They accept that. Muslims, in their thinking, they have an acceptance level that you're a teacher.

And I wish Phil could be here to share with you some of the things he shared with me. Because some of them are quite revolutionary. For example, his experience is that Muslims are not on to Christ so easily on just a friendship level.

Friend with friend. Of course, some come. We don't despise that.

But he is finding that people are more open when they remain within their own culture. And they see you more as a teacher. They see you more as a teacher of the Injil.

And that you know the word of God. So Phil, he doesn't visit the homes of these people. They don't come to his home.

He meets them in his little room. Where he sits. Dressed as they dress.

With the word of God, the Injil, up on a little platform. As Muslims, of course, treat the word, what they believe is the word of God, the Quran. And they treat the Injil on a much higher level.

In fact, one of our controversies we can pray about for Bangladesh. And what I'm sharing with you, believe me, is tremendous meat for prayer for many years. But the brothers, there's about four on the team, converted from Muslim background.

They're very offended when they see the Christians leaving the Bible on the floor. Or touching the Bible with their foot. And President Hubble gave a strong exhortation on this.

There's definitely, definitely tension. Even on our own teams. Between those of Muslim background and those of tribal, nominal Christian or Hindu background.

And we want to make that a specific prayer target. Now keep in mind, our work in Bangladesh is two-fold. There is the somewhat traditional arm work called young Christian workers.

They go in their little boat down the river. They go on their bicycles. They go in the van.

And they are doing a phenomenal job of distributing the scriptures and gospel books. And we have better books than ever before. Most of our books now are geared toward the Muslim.

And have their type of language. And they go out, of course, and they've been over Bangladesh again and again. We have 90 million people there.

Of course, many are illiterate. That's another item of prayer for various groups that are trying to be involved in literacy work. Then we have the other work under Hubble and Phil Bushell.

Which is very specialist. There are none so far of Christian background, tribal, nominal Christian or Hindu background. Who are in that work.

Who are Bangladeshis. There are those of Muslim background and foreigners. We work with International Christian Fellowship who really have pioneered this together with us.

And they go out into a town. They live in a town. And they actually don't do so much work in that town.

They go out of the town. And they sit in these little rooms. And there the Muslims come.

And they open the word of God. And they share the message of salvation. In a way that they can understand it.

The miracle is that between 100 and 150 Muslims. Most of them heads of families. In some cases whole families.

Have professed faith in Christ. Are remaining in their villages. Worshipping Jesus in their homes.

Only a small number have taken baptism. And even when they profess Christ as Lord and Savior. They don't come and just immediately announce this to everybody.

We very much emphasize in Bangladesh. Being listeners. Even when you are witnessing to a Muslim.

If he is not open. If the Holy Spirit is not prepared. They don't press much further.

They go back. And then after the person comes to Christ. They teach this new believer.

To be a listener. Each Muslim has his stream. Islam is very divided.

And we are dealing with folk Islam. We are dealing with Sufism. We are not dealing with what you read in a little book in England.

The five pillars of Islam. And they all have their little gurus. We say that's the wrong term.

Their peers. And their leaders. And I'm sure from what I've studied.

That Islam in Bangladesh. Is easier than Islam in Pakistan. And that's why to just think.

This is the thing we should move into in Pakistan. Might be a great mistake. We need a lot more research.

We need some more people like Phil Bushel. Who speaks the language absolutely fluent. And therefore is accepted by these Bangladeshis.

And until we get some people like that here. I don't think we are even ready for the experiment. Because if you carry out this experiment.

In the wrong environment. We will not be able to prove anything. And in some ways.

They have found an ideal environment. There are not many churches around. With nominal Christians.

And even other kinds of Christians. Who easily of course do not understand this approach. We don't want to bring these new converts into their church.

And once they get in that church. Most of these churches. As it has proven for dozens and dozens of years.

For most cases that will be the end. Now I understand that in Bangladesh. There are other individual Muslim converts.

Who are in the churches. A few. And we praise the Lord for that.

I met with some of them. One from Pakistan background. He now has an American name.

He is a leader in a pirate church group. And he shared some of his burdens. So that is working in different ways.

But I would like us to pray right now. For this work that Phil and Abel. The ICF workers are doing.

They are in about 3 or 4 or 5 centers. Out from those centers are these groups of believers. Some of them have baptized each other.

We know the enemy could counter attack this. They could be driven from their villages. You know the whole thing could go out of control.

But so far that has not happened. And as I was sharing with you. They try to share with their Muslim friends.

Who are their close friends. And who will listen to them. And hopefully not turn against them and persecute them.

They have even been able to have good conversations with Muslim leaders. And to just give you a little idea of how different it is in Bangladesh. One leading Muslim peer.

Who has thousands of followers. In his sort of set up. Even has a little group of Hindus that meet.

And they talk about Jesus. It is interesting that Maritan Joy. Who is one of the main leaders of the other side of our work.

The distribution teams. His great grandfather was a Muslim convert. In one of these same districts.

When the Anglican missionaries went there. 100 years ago or more. There was a group.

A group of Muslims. That came to the Lord Jesus Christ. And there has been in a small way.

A similar thing. Here. In the past.

In Pakistan. Another key player request. Is who is going to be the field leader for Bangladesh.

Because really Phil Bushell. He wants to get back to the villages. Roger Atkins is helping Maritan Joy.

Pay for him. In the distribution work. Roger is working on the language.

He really is also more interested in this other side. Mike Leith wants to come back. And really get into agriculture.

And be a self-supporting tech maker. And Phil does not feel that in that position. It would be easy.

To be the field leader. Because the field leader. Has relationships with the churches.

We still have relationships with the churches. Even though some of the churches are opposed. To this form of Muslim evangelism.

Some of them are opposed. To the Muslimani translation. That our men have sold more than 50,000 copies of.

That for some time was the best selling book in Bangladesh. This is a very hot controversy. Now they more or less agreed with the Bible Society.

To let the book be published again. But they want to change the cover. They want the word Injil on the cover.

They want Holy Bible. Of course the word Injil is very important. In working with Muslims.

So this is a major controversy. And people are getting very hot under the collar. So let's pray for the church.

My life has been a peacemaker. It's been a great help to the overall world. Holding these two different approaches together.

Holding the believers together. A Muslim background. With those of tribal Hindu and nominal Christian background.

And you know very few. Only those of you sitting in this room. And a few here in the state.

Actually understand much about this work. Because it's something we must be very careful. To put in the writing.

Though of course Phil Parsher without mentioning Bangladesh. Put this book in the print. Which by the way upset many workers in Bangladesh.

And it's interesting now he has moved to the Philippines. To work among Muslims there. So we are perhaps on the edge.

Of something very significant. And very historical. Among Muslims.

There's no way we can not talk about this. Because everybody in missionary circles. Who's interested in reaching Islam.

They are talking about this. They are trying to analyze it. And I know Phil wants me to emphasize.

It's very small. It's very beginning stage. We don't know where it's going to go.

And above all else. We need a lot of prayer. We are about to make a decision.

After agreement with other leaders worldwide. To increase the work among the Muslims. This will involve supporting converted Muslim national workers.

On a small scale temporarily. There's no way at present we can expect a church to support converted Muslims. The church in some cases is against these people.

Now understand the church is much smaller. And has much less vision for Muslims than the church in Pakistan. I've been amazed in Pakistan.

The number of Pakistani leaders who have a vision for Muslims. They want to reach out. They realize some of these problems.

We don't have that very much in Bangladesh. Though there are some Bangladeshi church leaders. Who do want to do something.

They don't agree with this approach. They want it to be in their church. I say praise the Lord.

Let them go ahead. Let them go ahead. But we feel.

And I think internationally we're going to get an agreement on this. That God wants us to throw a little more manpower. Both foreigner and really mature, trained, culturally sensitive Bangladeshis.

Not just anybody. They must go through a lot of basic training. Either a foreigner or a Bangladeshi.

Before they go out in one of these specialized situations. So we need to pray for that training. Language learning and cultural adaptation is absolutely essential.

And I believe as Phil Bushell is really pressing us to do this. And we have basic unity in the Kathmandu level. That means subcontinent areas have unity.

This is the way forward for Bangladesh. And believe me this is one of the most hot issues in O.M. strategy and growth worldwide. Even though it may seem small.

This is a decade of emphasis among these special people. And if God has given us a crack as he has given us in Bangladesh. We must at least move forward to the degree that God allows us.

And again it will not be easy. So let's pray Phil Bushell will be returning after some months. For a short time in U.K. Pray for Abel as he will be more on his own with a few other Bangladeshis.

And the ICF workers. Some of whom are ex-O.M.ers. And I would love to talk to you about some of those people. And I am just as excited about the distribution work.

We have better books now. And the work, the strategic work we have in O.M. Of giving people basic training. And seeing them come back at other mission societies.

We want to do both. But ICF will not receive national workers into their fellowship. But they want O.M. Because we are linked with them completely.

They want O.M. to receive national workers. And to work together with them. And that is our strong point.

It has always been. The heart linking God gives us with nationals. Live with them, work with them.

Practice a similar lifestyle. Now there, though it is not in a simple little way. One, two, three.

Some real meat for prayer. So let's spend a good chunk of time in prayer. Before we go any further.

At this time. Let's pray. Father we thank you for what you are doing.

In Bangladesh. We thank you for this exciting news. Because we really don't get so much communication.

Between these two countries. Which were once one country. And before that one country were all Indian.

And though we can't easily go there. There are great differences in language and culture. We feel a unity.

With these brothers and sisters in Bangladesh. Lord we pray that. No wrong publicity would go out about that work.

That each one who knows these things. May handle it prayerfully and carefully. And it may never be exaggerated.

We thank you for these worshipping groups. We pray that many more. Will take the courageous step of baptism.

We pray that they will continue to multiply. That they will be able to remain within their own communities. And somehow will eventually.

Be accepted by their community. Keep your hand on the whole Bangladesh government. Which is highly unstable.

We don't know what's going to happen there. We pray for others who are using other approaches. To Muslims.

We thank you for that. We thank you for the work of World Vision. I thank you for that tremendous opportunity with our staff.

To share the gospel with them. As some of their staff are Muslims. And nominal Christians.

And pray as they now have a burden. To reach out cross culturally. That you would strengthen them as they had such a large work.

In Bangladesh. Guide us now as we pray together. In Jesus name.

Amen. Okay. Let me just share a couple of other.

Specific requests. For Bangladesh. Keep in mind that there is.

Considerable response in Bangladesh. Among tribal people. And Hindus.

And that's very encouraging. And of course people who have been taught. The church growth principles.

They tend to work. In that area. In fact.

One church growth leader came and said. A couple of years ago. Really you should not work among the Muslims.

Because really the response here is among the tribals. Garo tribes. Other tribes.

And among the Hindus. And if you work among the Muslims. You're just going to upset the government.

And then maybe we won't even be able to continue the other work. So you can imagine. This is a country of tremendous contrast.

And great differences of strategy. So let's pray for that work as well. We have a number of ex-OMers.

In that kind of work. One of the things that's been discouraging for Mike Leith. Mike's perhaps a little more idealistic than.

Myself or Phil Bushel. Is that so many of the men trained on OM. A couple of years.

Are now back working with different mission groups. As sort of paid salaried workers. Now that can sound negative.

It really depends how you think. But we had an ex-OMers reunion. And I met with some of these brothers.

And I think. In the light of the situation there. This may be a temporary measure.

Some of these mission groups are doing a good work. These OM trained brothers. They are called young Christian workers there.

Some very good men. Some of them are leaders. Some of them are assistant pastors.

Others have gone back to secular work. Keep in mind that Bangladesh. Is largely sustained by relief.

Much poorer country than Pakistan. Much poorer. And.

Someone said that about 75% of everything. Directly or indirectly. Has its roots back to relief.

Masses. Masses of money. So sometimes considering the problems in the country.

We become a little bit idealistic thinking that. You know these brothers when they finish OM. They are going to become self-supporting.

Dynamic nationals. Turning people upside down and planting churches. Some of them of course are interested in planting churches.

They called me into a little special meeting. And they said look. You are planting churches among the Muslim converts.

Why are you not. You know speaking of OM. Planting churches among these other groups.

So they think. OM we are favorites. We are favorites toward Muslims.

Very complicated. So I explained look. Everybody else is doing this other work.

Most of the missionaries in Bangladesh. We in OM can't do everything. We are only a small group.

So we are specializing in this. They seem to. Understand that.

But pray for Maritan Joy. Who is the leader of the distribution work. Because he really feels now.

He should get more schooling. Now this is another thing to pray about. After people have been with OM a couple of years.

And they have good training. All the different groups want them. And they promise scholarships to the Philippines.

Scholarships to different countries. To get in their denomination. Because their denominations have their schools in these countries.

And so some of our men. Have gone that route. Though praise the Lord.

Generally they have come back to Bangladesh. And they are being used. Of God in Bangladesh.

One came back with a Filipino wife. But still I mean. You know the work goes on.

And you know I think there is a real sense. In missionary work. That we must avoid.

Becoming any narrower than God. And I sometimes find the missionary strategists. They are more narrow than God.

And if I believe in missionary strategy. I believe in the degree of contextualization. I believe in a lot of things.

But I don't want to get any narrower than God. We have a big God. And he is working in many different ways.

And if we become too idealistic. And we have all of the world. That we feel our workers must follow.

And then they go some other way. And maybe they get into some other situation. Maybe they are not narrow enough for us anymore.

But God won't give up on them. And God has plan A, plan B, plan C. Someone said to me well. You know what happens after plan C? I said you know there is a lot of other letters in the alphabet.

So God is great. And we want to pray. For all the work that is taking place.

There in Bangladesh. Pray for those that are in literature production. We are involved in that.

And we need to see the Lord supplying finance. Let's ask God for finance. As the Bangladesh field is in the red.

This little strategic field is actually in the red within OM. Because not many people. Think about sending their gifts to Bangladesh.

There is a tendency in OM. For the smaller fields to get neglected. The publicity often is released about the big things.

And it captures people's attention. And we don't want to neglect the small places. Within OM.

And let's pray that God will bring in finance. For the work in Bangladesh. And encourage them as they see their field credit.

Go into the plus. Because there are really a number of strategic projects. Especially in the area of literature.

We need to get into. Please pray also. For the few other foreign workers.

We only have a few foreign workers. On the distribution side. Some of our teams in Bangladesh have no foreigner on the team.

Only Bangladesh. A very different strategy. In Pakistan.

In fact the Pakistan strategy was built. On the basis that we have lots of scope. In OM subcontinent for nationals.

India is built on nationals. Bangladesh is built on nationals. Nepal is totally unique.

We'll talk about that later. And that here in Pakistan. We'd have to go a little slower with national workers.

And believe that if God wanted them. The church would send them to us. Because we got to somehow keep this whole thing together.

Here in the subcontinent. And it's gotten very big. Over 400 full time people.

And with many many hundreds coming on special efforts. We had over 60 leaders. Men and women.

Come up from all over India. Some spent days. Several days to get there.

From Kerala. From Bangalore. People like Chacko.

Who was one of the leaders on the ship. Is now a member of the board of trustees of the work in India. And we spent some really good time.

In prayer. But then also in different discussion groups. And we discovered.

That the work in Bombay. Especially is just getting too big. And because.

It's getting so big and complicated. The literature work. They just had a terrific.

Christian booksellers convention. The first in India. Over 200 came.

Philip Morris. Together with others. Really put this together.

And Jerry Davey was there from England. A number of men who used to be in literature work in India. Came back to India.

Just for that occasion. But with all that's been happening in this literature work. The Bombay operation has become very big.

We have a lot of longer term families there. Among the Indians. And it's harder and harder.

To find any place to live. Then because of the lack of personnel. In typical Indian fashion.

We started hiring workers. To do all these different jobs. And suddenly we found out.

This is evolved over the last couple of years. Because I haven't visited Bombay. We have 25 paid workers.

Who are not OEMers. Mainly they're believers. They're not OEMers.

It's a job. And one of the great decisions in Kathmandu. Is that we will have no more paid workers.

These people are on a one year contract. So pray for them. Because they're all looking for other appointments.

For one year. Now they are being given the opportunity. To come into OEM as OEMers.

Some of them may do that. Another major decision we made. Is to establish OEM associates of India.

Now there's been pressure on OEM. To do this in different parts of the world. People who are linked with us in heart.

They're linked with the principles. But they're financially separate. Or they have some other special domestic situation.

Like perhaps their wife might be working. And therefore have a bank account and a checkbook. You know all the paraphernalia that goes with working.

But it does seem that the Lord has led us. To have a new category of people in OEM India. Of associates.

We discovered. As is usually the case in the work there. We already had a number of them.

Because of special situations. So it may be that some of these people who are just working for a salary. They may eventually.

Though in Bombay they don't want to do that right now. They may become associates. Where they live at home.

They get at least some of their money from another source. Let's really pray about this. You're one of the first groups outside the subcontinent.

Of course you're in the subcontinent. To hear about this. And the Lord may be leading us to do this.

On an international level. Because life is so complicated. And there's so many different kinds of people with different backgrounds.

And we're getting a unique number of people who are OEMers. And yet they can't go along with the basic. Some of the basic practical things of OEM.

Because of their situation. Some retired people are like that. And it may be they'll fit in to that category.

Another important decision that was eventually held up. Is concerning personal support. We still don't have unity about how this should take place in India.

Partly because the work started 20 years ago there. And the whole vision of the work. Was to support nationals.

Firstly by then going out and selling books. That's the way the nationals have lived. But now with a lot of nationals in headquarters situations.

Families. They're not living by the book sales. So it is having to be subsidized.

We need the Lord's wisdom. Because we want to move in. Into this situation where our Indian brothers and sisters.

Are seeing personal support. But the transition is very difficult. Because we are committed to these other people long term.

They've given up good jobs. They're now in their mid years. They don't have in depth relationships with churches.

Many churches in India would never think of supporting anybody with OEM. Because they think OEM has got ships. They got millions of pieces of literature.

They're rolling with money. They want to support. If they do support anything.

Something that is totally Indian. Something that they feel if it doesn't get their support. It will die.

They somehow feel with or without OEM support. Church support in OEM will go on. We spend hours and hours.

And you know we thought we had full unity. And we experienced a tremendous check from the Holy Spirit. And we just stopped.

There was a time of prayer. There was some confession. There was some tears.

And we sensed we were moving away. From what the Lord wanted. And you know it's so easy for us to get together as human beings.

And we hear this voice. And we hear this possible answer. And we hear how it worked in this country.

And suddenly we're in the process of making a decision. That's not really from the Lord. We found out later.

Some of the brothers who were very unhappy about this. Were afraid to express it. And you know some of us from the West.

Working in India. We have made some of the Indians feel second class citizens. Because they're living off the book sales.

Or they don't see their yellow slips. They don't see their personal support. And there's such an emphasis in OEM on personal support.

If you're not seeing it. You can really feel less than best. Ever had that experience? We don't want this in India.

Because we believe these brothers. Who are living off the general fund. National support.

Which was the backbone of OEM from the earliest days. You know we feel they're the key. They're the key.

And the first thing in the work of God is not money. The first thing is people. The right people.

Honesty, integrity, reality. And of course money has its place. So let's really pray.

As all those brothers are now back on their teams. And back in their bases. We've been able to cut the numbers of workers in India.

From 400 to 300. Not by disappointing any longer term people. Who have a long term commitment with us.

But by not allowing many new people. Who would like to join OEM India. We don't allow them to join.

They have to join other groups. They have to leave. Because they know that when they join.

Otherwise it would just get bigger and bigger and bigger. Because so much is happening there. In that great country.

So let's pray for wisdom. That as the leaders meet again in July. And talk about this.

And as we do more research. We have the Lord's plan. Another decision was to move.

Probably one of the biggest decisions in the history of OEM India. Half of the Bombay operation out of Bombay. Bombay is so big.

The city is completely corrupt. Every property has linked with it. Black money.

Bribery. And we have to keep some of our work in Bombay. But we have decided.

What we don't have to keep in Bombay. We're getting out. This is thinking 5, 10, 15 years down the road.

And you know one of the reasons we meet together. And we've been doing this for years. Some people don't know this.

They think OEM just goes one year at a time. It's not true. Some things are better one year at a time.

You can get in a lot of cul-de-sacs. When you want to get plans. When God doesn't have a plan.

A lot of mistakes have been made in that area. But years ago. We made a realistic evaluation.

Of how many longer term people. We can really properly pastor. Care for.

And work with. And so we cut. And put brakes on the number of families.

That was one of the wisest decisions we made. Well almost 13 years ago. Because we're discovering.

That to be a family in India. To get the children into the right school. To even get them a job.

Is 5 times more difficult. Than in many of our countries. And we must stand with these families.

And help them. As they battle through life. Now the Lord has given us.

On a 5 year basis. Rent free. A huge property in Gorakhpur.

There's a lot of this old missionary property. Because the missionaries have left. That nobody quite knows what to do with.

And sometimes if you give it to certain people. They just live there. And put all their friends in there.

And they never leave. They never leave. So some of these mission groups like OM.

They like us. And so they know if we go in. When they ask us to leave.

We will leave. They know we are mobile. And so we have been given.

A huge property. Could easily house half the Bombay operation. We have the whole AIC there.

One or two of you I think were at the AIC. Tremendous conference. 3 or 400.

I know some from Lahore were there. We are praying about shifting part of Bombay to Gorakhpur. We are doing a feasibility study.

We are examining other parts of India. See if there is a better location. And we are excited about this.

Especially warehousing. No need to have a warehouse. In the center of the city where the land is worth the most.

And there is some trouble in connection with our warehouse. We feel that the owner of our warehouse may be paying bribes. In order that we can be there.

We are not happy. So this needs a lot of prayer. Another decision has been to move the AIC to March.

So I am committed to be back in Nepal in March. And I will be camping or living just across the border in Nepal. Only a few hours ride from Gorakhpur.

So most people who go to the AIC will be coming over border for fellowship. I will tell you I had so much fellowship in Kathmandu that I was fellowshipped out. Now I am wanting to do something else.

Dictate letters, pray, give out tracts. I had fellowship in Kathmandu with every single person who came from India. Over 60 people.

Even the women. Some of them of course this had to be 3-4 hours. These are people that I am perhaps closest to as much as anybody you know.

I have been involved with them for 20 years. So you don't just sit down for 20 minutes. You go for a walk.

And you have many hours of fellowship. It's hard for me to express just how meaningful these times with these brothers and sisters. As individuals how meaningful it is.

God has his hand on this work. There are problems. Things go wrong.

There are miscommunications. India is such a big place. We are working all out in about 6 states.

We have special efforts in other states. We are dealing with literature in over 15 languages. About 8, 9, 10 million pieces a year.

Ron Penny of the Bible Society flew to Kathmandu to talk to me about some of those things. It's a vast work. And as we listen to the reports of Go83.

We were really amazed. One team that sold 50,000 gospel packets. In a few weeks.

One team. On the other hand in Bihar. There is very little response among the staunch Hindus.

We were reminded in Kathmandu. That as far as response among Aryan strong Hindus. It isn't much greater in Bihar than you'd find among Muslims.

So we are involved in follow up in Bihar. And we ended up starting a correspondence school. That really didn't get proper permissions.

But it was born. Very typical of India. There is a momentum.

There is a moving. And some tremendous leadership. So it's not always easy to get the breaks.

On some of these projects. I think most of you know that I have two major responsibilities in OM. First is international leadership of the movement.

Becoming more complex by the minute. The second or more simple. In some ways more motivating task. Is the area leader for the subcontinent. If I had to sacrifice one of these tasks. It would be difficult decision. I don't think temporarily I have to do that. And I think realistically. Down the road somewhere. I'd like to see another man take over. Coordinating this area. Coordinating this area very much I see it as serving. As peacemaking. As being a voice for the whole group. When there is a united decision. Sometimes. I may have to use my. Some people call it veto power. If I sense. There really isn't unity among the body. That's generally when I use it. Even though some may not be able to express. Their burden or their disunity. So Kathmandu was a very refreshing time. I could talk to you about many other decisions. Ray Eicher stayed on. Worked till three in the morning typing up ten pages of notes. God's hand is on his brother. With Alfie for the overall leadership of that work. And yet when Ray goes overseas. As his parents are in the states. Though he has Indian passport. His wife is German. It puts extra pressure on Alfie. So pray for Alf. Pray for the other trustees. Joseph D'Souza in Lucknow. Divakram also leading. West Bengal in Orissa. Moving his office back to Orissa. For a bigger effort there. A.T. Chacko on a specialist team. Taking church meetings. Mobilizing the churches. He's the other trustee with Alfie and Ray. We have praised the Lord also for the women's work. Pray for Manjula. Converted Hindu. Dynamic leader. Actually resident in England. Most of her life in Uganda. India background. Pray for her as she returns to India. And as Linda Cowley. Carries a lot of the responsibility for the women's work. 70 or 80. Women. You know in India. Generally those teams are all Indians. With one foreigner. And they need our prayers. In that very very unique work. It was great to fellowship with Philip Morris. He's now going back to UK for 10 month break. And he has Madhu and Kurian. Stepping into his shoes. Madhu distribution. Kurian production. And they are producing more literature. Than almost all of OM put together. Apart from STL. Separate from STL. It's an amazing literature ministry. So many books. So many languages.

Because a number of the publishing houses in India. And we mainly want to work with others. We don't want to duplicate.

But since missionaries left these publishing houses. Because often they also took their money with them. These publishing houses have really run into trouble.

Gujarati barely functioning. ELD Bengali almost bankrupt. Karnataka very little.

Malayalam K.V. Kurian just went to be with the Lord. An ex-OMer Thomas Matai is starting a new publishing house there. So that's not a bad situation.

Hindi. One of the leaders said if OM stops buying books. We are out of business.

That's Hindi. The number one language. By the way if you speak Urdu.

And somehow you can't stay here. Remember Hindi is almost the same. And Nepali.

Some of you look like you go over very well in Nepal. Nepali is almost the same as Hindi. Which is almost the same as Urdu.

So you didn't know you were learning a language here. That's valuable in so many different countries. And I would like to motivate you in your language study.

Hot season. Good time for extra language study. You put a wet towel in the front of a fan.

And sit there with your cassette tape. And your language book. And you study language.

If it's too hot to go out. Selling books. Well that gets me into another area.

Let's stop here. And really pray for OM India. There's so much more I would like to share.

But our time is running out. And I want to share a little bit about Nepal as well. Prayer for OM India.

And especially with Thanksgiving. All that God has done. And especially also for the forward thrust.

We want to have among the Muslims there. 90 million Muslims in India. We've reached many of them.

But now we must follow up. And we are thinking about launching a similar thing. To Bangladesh.

At a very small scale. In one or two places in India. That led to very hot discussion.

And we want the Lord's mind about that. Let's pray. I'd like to now just share a few items about Nepal.

A land of 15 million people. Some of you I think are aware that. When I no longer could live in India.

My wife and I settled up in Kathmandu. Indians can go into Nepal without any visa. I don't even think they need a passport.

Stay there as long as they want. So it's a very convenient place. Especially for me.

In fact the whole concept of EBE. Which was then developed and became the company for the ship Lagos. Was really developed there in Nepal.

Educational book exhibits. Because being a Hindu kingdom. Proper kind of evangelistic work.

Missionary work. Has not really been allowed too much of a degree. And so we had years ago.

An educational book shop. Which became very famous. The man who is the present king used to come to our book exhibition.

And it was a ten making project. And a lot of Christian books went out. And this gave us some real roots.

Real links. With the Nepali church. And those links have continued.

Even though that phase of ministry closed. We have mainly been up there now. In a ministry of hospitality for India.

And a main maintenance base and parking lot. There are always between five and ten. Used to be more vehicles parked there.

Waiting for their permits to go back to India. Now with Pakistan of course these vehicles get. A wider use.

They are in Nepal. They are here. They are in India.

You know. I would love to talk to you for a time. There isn't time now.

Of the miracle of this whole transport system. God has given us. Right back to Zodington and Bromley.

Right on out to Kathmandu, Lahore. Now the new base in Lucknow. They built a tremendous place in Lucknow.

To keep over four hundred people. On the road most of the time. Now in Nepal.

Our vehicles are one of the main. Ministries of help to the Nepali church. They have no vehicles.

And they are supposedly in that country. They are non-existent. A Christian in Nepal has no.

You know we think of a minority community here. They are not supposed to exist. They are not recognized as a people.

So when they want to bury somebody. There is no way to do it. They have to just carry the person out.

To this little hidden plot of land. That supposedly doesn't exist. And there they are buried.

We often use the OM truck. For this kind of work. There in Nepal.

And our work in Nepal is very unique. And I think the beauty. One of the beauties.

Of the strategy here in the subcontinent. Is that each country. And I am not going to have much time.

To talk about Sri Lanka. Where officially we don't have a permanent work. But where we have a definite interest.

And a definite involvement. And a tremendous relationship with the churches. Tony Harrop.

One of our associates. Who is really with the Bible Society. He came to Kathmandu to meet with us.

About Sri Lanka. And what God is doing there. And we hope to keep teams going there.

We have one visa for Sri Lanka right now. And a real prayer request. If we don't get someone to take that visa.

Soon. It's really a Bible Society Methodist visa. We lose it.

But the unity we have here in the subcontinent. Is in the midst of diversity. That each country is developing.

According to the people we have. According to the culture. According to the historical roots.

According to what's already going on in other countries. According to the financial situation. Many other factors.

We do feel now. In the light of what God is doing in Nepal. That we should see a little more growth of the work.

We have these eastward bound people. And when they are not in Bangladesh, Pakistan or India. They are in Nepal or Sri Lanka.

And in Sri Lanka, in Nepal. They hike out into the mountains. With coolies who are used to hiking.

Because Nepal is a land of hiking and trekking. They carry these big packs full of gospels. Cassettes, records.

And our men, very low profile. Nobody hardly knows where they are. They go just hundreds of miles.

Carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. Really. If anywhere is Acts 1.8. The uttermost parts of the earth.

It must be Nepal. Sometimes they are at 10,000 feet. People live there.

And they, of course. Sell the gospels in the packets. Live with the people.

That is an accepted custom in Nepal. You can arrive at any house. You can live there.

Pay them a little bit for the food. And some of the places these went. These people went.

And others are now doing this work. A movement out of Switzerland. Which they wanted to become OM Switzerland.

They were OM at one time. But they had such a big vision for Switzerland. We said, better you start your own work.

And we will continue small. And that became New Life Switzerland. And God is using that work.

Heinz Strickler, very close friend. They have teams in North India and in Nepal. They have just been able to get another large amount of literature.

Into Nepal. Because most of the literature in Nepali is produced in India. Pray for more good literature to go into Nepali.

After a number of years, True Discipleship just came off the press. In time for our meetings there. And pray for these trekkers.

As they go out to these places. Some of these people have never heard of Jesus. They never heard of Jesus Christ.

They go out with film strips. We put a number of film strips in Nepali. And though our audio-visual work.

Working together with Bob and Barbara Hitching of Reach and Teach. Is very small. It's probably one of the most significant audio-visual ministries in Nepal.

You see these countries are neglected. These are the small places. Who is interested in putting a film into Nepali? Almost no one.

Who is interested in putting a book into Nepali? Almost no one. Then people hear there is 90%. Now 80 to 90% illiteracy.

That doesn't exactly motivate people in literature production. But what about the 10 and 15% who do read? So please pray as we have a number of key projects. And of course Nepalis generally can understand Hindi.

So we now have the Jesus film there in Hindi. And we pray we have a Super 8 edition. Because you know the projector is much smaller.

So pray for that ministry. David Turner is now really in a more recognized way. The field leader there.

OM has always been a field. But a lot of the expenses up there have been budgeted and built to India. Because of the complexity, the maintenance space.

And in the future it will be more Nepal. And David Turner and his wife there. Funds as they trust God will go into Nepal.

Special gifts will go into Nepal. And India will be built. So this is a real step forward for Nepal.

Again and you cannot get long term visas there. You have to have tourist visa. Unless you are in the United Mission in Nepal.

Or one of those relief social work agencies. Who are doing a good work. And we have a good relationship with them.

And a number of ex-OMers have joined them. Our bookkeeper from ICT, John Mason is now in Nepali training. And will become a bookkeeper with the United Mission.

In Nepal as in so many countries. One of the greatest joys is to see so many ex-OMers. Linked up with these different groups.

This of course helps us in our relationship with these groups. So that we don't come as a form of competition. We don't come as the ones with a total answer.

But we come as servants to work together with them. And of course one of our goals is to give some people training. Who will later join their particular mission.

I had five or six days of meetings among the Nepali believers. Very responsive. Quite a few dozens made some profession of faith.

I discovered there as here in Pakistan. Many don't have assurance of salvation. And in the 70's there may have been in the early 70's.

Maybe 600,000 believers. The mid 50's no believers. Now 20 to 30,000 believers.

Dozens and dozens of small groups all over Nepal. All from Hindu or Pagan and Buddhist background. Very little teaching.

Need to pray for gifted teachers. A number of ex-OMer Nepalis trained with OM India. Like Resham Raj.

Have very key ministry. And we need to pray for these people. To me it's so exciting to see what God has done here.

Over these last 20 years.

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