

Cd Gv502 Grasping the Vision

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of prayer and grasping the vision of Operation Mobilization in spreading the gospel and making disciples of all nations.

Scripture: Matthew 9:35, Matthew 9:37-38

Topics: "Personal Evangelism", "Faith And Perseverance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the lack of hunger for God in today's society and the superficiality of modern Christianity. He discusses the importance of personal evangelism and the various methods that can be used to reach the lost, such as literature, videocassettes, and drama. The speaker also shares his own experience of starting a movement to mobilize young people and the church across Europe. He encourages the audience to have a personal vision and to persevere through challenges and discouragement, emphasizing that great faith is not the absence of difficulties but the ability to overcome them.

Transcript

Thank you, praise the Lord. What a joy to be back in Birmingham, almost two weekends in a row, just some time in Germany in between. There's about 800 at our Easter evangelistic thrust in Bonn, Germany, where I've just come from, the capital city, a city that has about one tenth as much evangelism as you would have in Birmingham.

It's hard to even believe the situation in many German cities, even to find churches that are really alive and preaching the gospel. Pray for Germany, very needy country. Do I have to put any of these mics on? Anybody know? Technical? Use the one in front of you, George.

Okay. Praise the Lord, it sounds the same voice that was here last year, and the year before, and the year before that. Amen.

Let's just pray. Lord, time is so valuable, we're just, we live in such an awareness of time, and we're conscious of that word in Ephesians that says, redeem the time, because the days are evil. And Lord, we want you to grip us with the vision that you have, that you have for a lost and dying world.

And we know, Lord, that you have brought us here in your providence. We thank you for answers to prayer, worked out the details of our lives to bring us to this particular junction. We're trusting you to make

this time here in Birmingham a valuable time.

We're trusting you for fruit, not just decisions, but disciples, men and women that will go on for you. Help us to function in love and unity as we come from different backgrounds and different churches. We find ourselves going in different directions in some ways.

Enable us to flow together this week and accomplish your purposes in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Let me just say a few words of introduction. Number one, I don't like just coming and then going. I guess there are some people who would counsel me in the light of other responsibilities that I shouldn't come at all.

You read some of these books like *Ordering Your Private World* and you wonder just, you know, what you're doing. And I guess I built on the philosophy to some degree that a little is better than nothing. I've been on more of these training weekends and spent many, many, many hundreds and hundreds of hours doing the same work that you're doing and I still do some of that.

But Operation Mobilization has grown from a little fellowship of three of us that went to Mexico in 1957 to about 1,700 plus all their children, a new baby every week and quite a run on twins lately. And to be quite honest, if we dare to be honest as a movement, we are way over committed. We don't have the leadership to carry the responsibilities that we have.

We're trying to help supply leaders to other mission agencies and many of our best leaders have left and are working with other mission agencies, which is great, but we have to find new ones. And the world is a lot more complex than it was 20 years ago. Just tax laws, government regulations, vehicle regulations.

Of course, we have ships. We had one now. We had two, now have one.

We really at times find ourselves quite overwhelmed. I would ask you to especially pray for Peter Maiden, who he and I sort of work as partners to try to keep OM going day by day. We're on the phone almost every day, sometimes 10 times in one day.

I now carry a phone with me, so I was talking to him from the train. And it is incredible what happens in just one week in Operation Mobilization as we're stretched out across the world. And so I do, after I preach this tomorrow morning, have to get back to have lunch with a board member, a new board member of OM at a station in London, and then back to my team that I'm part of, that now is located in Forest Hill, 10 minutes from London Bridge.

What are some things you could be praying for? And this fits in to the message tonight of grasping the vision. We've just heard that about a dozen or more of our people in Turkey are now been issued. What's the word I want? They have been arrested and they were released, and now they are being summonsed.

There's another word I want, it's just not coming to me. But basically they're going to have to face court charges on some obscure law about religion and money in Turkey. Because there is religious freedom, but the Muslims are on the war path in a lot of these countries.

And that is a big item of prayer, both nationals and internationals. Out in Pakistan, where I've just come from, and if any of you are interested in Pakistan, I'd be happy to send you, if you write to me or put on a piece of paper a request for a cassette tape that's just being duplicated right now, called Asia 88. I share

on this tape this recent trip to Asia, Asia 88.

But we've just heard that in Peshawar, in our work among the Afghans, one of the most beautiful, lovely believers, a blind man, has been kidnapped by fanatic Muslims. And he has been severely beaten. He may be dead.

We hope he isn't. We think we may know where he is now. But I'd ask you to pray for this dear blind Afghan believer.

There's another crisis there. As one of the couples, the woman has gone through considerable struggle. Somebody was just murdered outside the front of their door.

And this woman emotionally and mentally just needs to leave. She's from New Zealand. She just needs to get some time out of that heavy pressure situation.

The problem is her husband was set to take over the leadership of the team. In the absence of the team leader, Gordon Magney is going on a six-month trip to find recruits. Very few single men recruits for our Afghan work last year, especially evangelistic work.

Quite a heartbreaking thing for Gordon, the leader, to go to the O.M. September conference and not get any single young men. So you can make that a matter of prayer. We had a married man join the work this year.

Worked in Delhi and just died of spinal meningitis, just like that. Pray for his widow. Her name is Kim.

That happened a couple of months ago now, but it seems more recent than that. There's another crisis with the Dulas in Indonesia. Basically, there's an open door there.

It's miraculous, really. We haven't been able to get back to Indonesia with the ship in the last 15 years. But there's very heavy security because of the tensions between Muslims and Christians.

And so they put a whole load of restrictions on us. I've never known the ship to be in a country with so many restrictions. We can't even speak.

Cannot even speak on our own ship about Jesus. They just stopped even question and answer session. But you know, God is using this because we got a hold of some outstanding Indonesian speakers.

And they know the language and can do the job better than us. There is complete freedom to come to the ship, to go to the book exhibition, to buy Bibles. A lot of the books being sold are Indonesian language books.

The ship next week goes into Jakarta. We have to leave early because of Ramadan, the Muslim fast season. And they say there's going to be 45 security guards assigned to the ship when it comes into Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, next week.

Not this week, but next week. So that's a big item of prayer. I talked to Mike Strachura on the phone.

I'd ask special prayer for Wayne Thomas, brother that some of you know. We just had news that his father has suddenly died. Wayne was coming back to this country in a month, so he's probably coming back early.

And I will be with him at his parents, his dad's funeral probably on Thursday in Pembrokeshire, Wales. And on and on and on and on I could go. All over the world as the troops of God go forth to battle, there are the struggles, there are the crises.

Not anymore in OM than there is in any other work. It's just that we got more people. We're in more countries.

And so perhaps we have more, in terms of volume at times, flack from the enemy. I hope that during these days together, one of your priorities will be prayer. Peter Maiden will be here to lead.

I believe the Holy Spirit leads the prayer meetings. But to be one of God's vessels to share with you prayer burdens. And I'll be back helping in the night of prayer in Bromley.

We would appreciate prayer. As the two teams in Bromley are now further apart, international coordinating team that I'm part of, we're over in Forest Hill. Though a lot of us live around Bromley in rent-free places and short-term accommodation, we have an accommodation nightmare.

Maybe we should move to Birmingham. Then you'd have a nightmare. But STL is still based in Bromley.

This literature display is all put up by STL. David Armstrong's with STL. Pray for them.

They always have staff needs. We have a terrific crisis in terms of our vehicles. Probably a third of all the vehicles of OM worldwide, over 400 vehicles, should be replaced.

Some people might say they're not even safe if you travel in some of them here. I was thinking of having someone pick me up at the station at New Street. I thought, no, I think I'll come out.

Actually, believing it or not, I was going to take a taxi. I thought it was just a short trip. But then when I discovered where it was, I decided to come out by train.

I don't like to pay more than a pound. So we'd appreciate your prayers, really, for the situation in Bromley as we try to serve the whole work around the world. You know, I took a little tour of the exhibition, a rather quick tour.

I was so excited to see all these Operation Worlds. But I found one of my favorite pamphlets. One of my co-leaders doesn't like the terminology, but sorry about that.

I think it's great terminology. *Unsung Heroes*. This is by Melody Green, who we're hoping is going to be involved in Love Europe, the big new OM push starting the summer of 89.

We're all getting excited about that, to say the least. But we hope Melody Green is going to be with us for that. We hope you'll be with us.

This is the largest effort OM has ever attempted in Europe. But she has written this leaflet, it's almost like a book crammed into this little space, on those who labor behind the scenes. I wonder if you've ever thought of giving one or two years for behind-the-scene ministry.

Maybe packing books, maybe typing letters, maybe as a bookkeeper, an accountant. What about a mechanic? If I could pay mechanics, if I could change OM's policy and pay mechanics, I'd pay them £100,000 a year. That's what I'd do.

Because these people are so valuable. When you're trying to mobilize God's people and you don't own British Rail, somebody came to me and said, why don't you have ships, why don't you get a jumbo jet for Jesus? I mean, the ideas that people have about OM and George Furwer, you know, great man of faith, you know, just walks out to the airport in the name of Jesus, name it, claim it. Woo! You know, I don't want to disappoint any of you, but it doesn't work that way.

It takes years of prayer and toil and hard work. In any case, we'd have to find at least a pilot. You know, you wouldn't just say, well, David Armstrong, you know, name it, claim it.

You pilot the plane. So we need unsung heroes, and I hope that you... Is this free? A couple of pence. But I hope you'll get one of those.

Let me see if I got my pocket here. I got some money here. This is to cover this.

These are free now. So go over there. Ten pence isn't bad in the States.

They sell for at least 13. Let me mention a few books. Now, I know Dave Armstrong, he is my, you know, he's my competition.

Since we both work for the same fellowship, it's not a great problem. But I don't have much time with you, and I want to emphasize a couple of books. I want to re-emphasize Operation World, which Dave has already mentioned.

This book, 500 pages of information, is equal to a year missionary course at any seminary or theological college. Some of the theological colleges don't teach anything about missions anyway. So I want to commend that you get this book.

Even if you give a post-dated check, I will cover all post-dated checks right into 1990. But I want people to get this book. Are you giving this map free with it? Dave, I can tell by the grin on his face.

I've been watching his grin for over 20 years. He's in a very generous mood. And he's giving free these maps, which must be worth at least 10 pounds.

Or one pound, anyway. Pray there for the Lord of the Harvest that He'll send forth labors into the harvest. How many were at the leadership conference last week? That's encouraging.

The rest of you can come next year. But get one of these maps, put it in your house right over the front of the television, and start interceding for the nations of the world. But anyway, they're giving that free with Operation World, and I hope you'll take advantage of that.

I know there are people that don't have money. If you're unemployed, you're totally broke, you can't buy that book, but you're committed to pray through it. You see Dave, he will give you a copy, and he will charge me.

We want people to have this book. So if you really are legitimately broke, that shouldn't be any kind of a stigma. It's a privilege to be able to give.

It's hard to know when to give, because we prefer to give to India and Africa, to be quite honest. But we want you to get this book. And so you give a little note to Dave and say, I'd like to take advantage.

If the tide comes in and you become a millionaire 20 years from now, you know, just write me into your will. I'll probably be gone, but write it into O.M.'s will. But I want you to get that.

I wonder how many got the point about that book. How many feel you understood what I was just trying to communicate? Raise your hand. Very encouraging.

Praise the Lord. A.W. Tozer. How many have been blessed through the writings of A.W. Tozer? Raise your hand.

About one third of you. You know, it's so great to be in youth work, even though O.M. is not just a youth movement. It's a full-fledged missionary fellowship for about everything you can think of and some things you've never even thought of.

But we always have new people, and they haven't even heard of these great books. A.W. Tozer is probably the most prophetic writer of this century. And I would just commend especially his two earlier books.

All of them are good, but these two are classics. The Knowledge of the Holy and The Pursuit of God. If you can read those and don't get challenged and inspired and encouraged, well, you write to me, and I will apologize and send you ten free books with my apology.

Take My Life is the strongest book I know on discipleship. Look what it says on the cover. One of the truly great Christian books of our time.

George Berber. Anyway, despite that destruction of the cover. Read Take My Life.

Here's a new book on prayer. Touch the world through prayer. Just published about a year ago.

Two hundred and fifty pages. How to pray. Spiritual warfare.

Intercession. Dealing with obstacles. Unbelief.

Pride. Just a thrilling book on prayer. Oswald Sanders book on leadership.

The greatest book on leadership that I know. I was just with this man in one of the most exciting, mega-motivating nations in the world. New Zealand.

Is anybody here from New Zealand? Would you stand up? I mean, these people are hard to find. Anybody here from... Oh, there's a lady from New Zealand. You're going to be sure to want to meet her.

I noticed she has a camera. You'll want to get pictures of her. Everyone here should try to get a picture of her.

Because she's been driving me crazy for five years taking my picture. Touche. OK.

Lastly, there's this packet of books. I can't believe that they put all these books together for that low a price. There must be some kind of a con.

Maybe they're just covers. There's nothing inside. Let's just check.

I've heard about these guys. You just give your... No, there's content. Content.

Oh, I see the problem. They snuck a Verwer book in the middle of it. That's why it's so cheap.

I get so excited about books. Can you imagine I've been excited about books even before my conversion? In fact, before I was converted, I was reading the Gospel of John. I got so excited about it that I started to raise money to buy Gospels of John.

I didn't even know Jesus yet. And I showed films about this movement called the Pocket Testament League, born right here in the Midlands, and raised money to send out to buy Gospels of John for Africa. It's exciting.

There's also probably a display of OM literature somewhere. Where is that? Over there. And I want to add something to it.

Are any of you ex-OMers? You've been on an OM summer campaign, year program? Raise your hand. Keep your hand up if you received the ex-OMers newspaper. Keep your hand up.

This shows how efficient we are. This is an ex-OMers newspaper. It's free of charge.

Pick one up on that table. Fill this out. Find out about the ex-OMers reunion mid-July this summer in the Netherlands.

You're invited. It costs a bit because it's a proper conference center. If you can, come with us if you're not booked into the regular OM campaign.

So I'm glad we brought those. We also brought a lot of cassette tapes. That's the only thing we carried up with us from London.

Here's one not for mixed audiences. It's an old way out. This is a way out message on sex I gave about 20 years ago.

It's so out of date that it's up to date because it doesn't change. Had a lot of feedback. Here's the challenge of Lagas' final days just before Lagas went down.

Susie Burton, a little photographer from New Zealand, was there at the time, if you want to find out how that felt. She took a lot of the pictures. She did not arrange that in order to get these special pictures.

That was in the providence of God. And I might just say God gave us 17 years with that ship. That's more than we ever envisaged when we got it.

And God gave us 400 ports and 100 nations. So, you know, we don't have a great sense of remorse over this. That's not the way we approach the living God when He allows something like this to happen after 17 years and saves the entire crew.

No one was lost in that terrible accident. And that's a message I gave within, I think, 48 hours of the ship accident. And you'll find a special cassette tape table.

I don't know where it is. Somewhere just outside. And you can pick most of these up at a reduced price if you're interested.

Praise the Lord. Vision. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 9. And many of you are new to Operation Mobilization.

How many of you, this is your first OM event? Raise your hand. 75%. Approximately.

So I want to be quite basic. And I want to share some things that have burned on my heart since my conversion. Almost my conversion.

And I trust that they will somehow also hit your heart. Matthew chapter 9, starting at the 35th verse. Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

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

Let me just share something of the vision that God has given us. You know, Em, we have some policies and principles. I'm just making a restudy of the discipleship manual.

Because I hear echoes that with Love Europe, they're going to drop it or change it or insert it in some kind of wonderful Love Europe handbook. And I heard that it needs to be revised again. So I want to read it.

It probably does need to be revised. But I can assure you that as long as a few of us are around Operation Mobilization, we are not going to throw away the basic principles of discipline and commitment, of crucified living, of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and many other basic principles that this movement stands for. We are not just a missionary agency.

We are not just a youth training movement. But we believe that by God's grace, to Him be all the glory, that OM is a movement raised up by God and directed by the Holy Spirit. The moment that's no longer true, I'm out.

Plenty of other things to do. And we know that a movement can become a monument if it's not careful. We know from history that that can take place.

And so as we come here, you might be a little frustrated that we have these teaching times and that we may not have as much time in the streets as some of you would like. Some of you will have more time in the streets than you ever dreamed or ever wanted. And probably, if you're honest, you're dead and scared.

You know, fear hath torment. But at the same time, battling fear is quite normal in the Christian life. And I hope that you will go in to this kind of work, though it may be with a little fear and trembling, that you will go in with the reality of Acts 4.31. When they prayed, the place where they were gathered together was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

Just last weekend, or the weekend before Easter weekend, on the Saturday night when we gave the invitation for commitment and the crucified life and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, there must have been four or five hundred who stood up because they want to know greater reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives. But as you're filled with the Holy Spirit, that does not destroy the human factor. That doesn't mean you're not going to battle a little bit of fear or a little bit of nervousness as you go out in evangelism.

And I pray that you will not allow any failure this week to cause you to make a premature decision about your own future in regard to missions or evangelism. It takes seven years in medical study to become a surgeon. So, if you don't become an expert soul winner and witness and evangelist to Muslims or Asians or whoever in one week, I hope you will not get discouraged because that would be very foolish.

And this kind of work that you are being thrown into, in some ways cold turkey, is rough and is tough. Don't prematurely try to push people to make some decision that won't last. Be His witness.

Share your faith. Acknowledge your own need. Tell people you're in a training weekend.

No problem being honest. And leave the results with God unless you feel that tug of the Holy Spirit that that person is ready for a decision which hopefully will be a conversion. With all these principles and all these burdens and all these ideas that we have, I've probably written over 100 memos propagating my ideas and burdens, hopefully, that I've got from the Word of God.

Some of them perhaps are out of print and that might be good. But, you know, these principles without vision become drudgery, becomes bondage. OM, being in OM can become bondage.

I've counseled OMers in the grip of bondage in the middle of the OM year program. Couldn't have their quiet time. Couldn't love people enough.

Couldn't pray long enough. Weren't witnessing hard enough. Couldn't live up to the principles.

Being part of any spiritual fellowship is no carte de blanc to being spiritual. Spirituality comes through personal communion with God. It would be my prayer that being with like-minded people, moving together in prayer and evangelism, certainly should set some people on fire.

OM may help you get set on fire, but only God Himself will keep you going. Because before you know it, you're gone from here. Before you know it, you're back in a hostile world, in a hostile pagan job, or wherever it may be, with all the pressure that can bring on you.

I know people who've become OMaholics. They couldn't live without OM. We've got people in our shipment who are shipaholics.

They do great when they're on the ship. The moment they're home, their back's flipping within a week. I get letters from them.

That's not a reflection on the ship ministry or on OM. It's a reflection on spiritual warfare. It's a reflection on the fact that it is just as tough to be in a secular job in a factory in Birmingham as it is to be working on our ship in Indonesia.

And this idea that those in full-time work are going first class. Sometimes, I must confess, I go first class on the train. On the weekends, you pay the little supplement.

Get this whopping big desk, spread all your papers out, set your telephone up, and really, it's like renting an office. British Rail is the greatest rail system in the entire world. Really.

I see some real skeptics here. You're too young to understand these in-depth statements. God wants us to have a vision.

When we have a personal vision, when we absorb some of this vision from the Word of God that I want to share with you this evening, then when we're with a group or whether we're on our own, we'll be percolating for God. We'll be rejoicing. We'll be pressing on.

We'll be bouncing back. We'll be dealing with a discouragement effectively. We'll be dealing with lust effectively.

We'll be dealing with fear. We'll be dealing with other things. Great faith is not in the absence of these things, but as we battle through them.

Let me share some of this vision, vision that is upon our hearts. First of all, God has given us a vision for the lost. Just after coming back from Germany, I went to Diel for a little conference, very small conference in a town that's always been very special to me because we had one of the first international leaders' meetings in OM's history there in Diel.

And so I was down there on the weekend, just ministering to a small number and a small fellowship. And I just thank God for that little group as they moved out into the streets of Diel and had their open-air meeting. And as I was giving out tracts in Diel, Saturday and then again on Sunday, once again, that vision for the lost, which I've never lost since my conversion, it just burst upon me.

And I again just made that recommitment that I've made thousands of times to be on the cutting edge of reaching the lost. I don't want to just be speaking to Christians. Nothing wrong with that.

I don't want to just be exhorting Christians. I don't want to get caught up arguing about 100 theological tidbits that people are arguing about these days. I want to reach the lost.

Jesus said in this passage, the harvest is plenteous, the labors are few. We see an emphasis on reaching lost men in the word of God. We see that emphasis even way back in the book of Ezekiel where God speaks about the watchman warning the wicked.

And if we don't warn the wicked, if we don't witness to the facts recorded in God's word, the Bible says the blood of these people will be on our hands. Now I must confess, my vision for the lost at times totally overwhelms me. I heard on the radio this morning that in 15 years there will be 10,000 million people in the world.

My despair level just went... I just cannot handle population explosion. So I want to say that whatever vision God gives you for the lost, when it gets to that point where you feel overwhelmed, you must give it back to God. You can't carry it.

You can't carry it. You're a feeble, finite human being. OM is one of the movements that God has raised up that lives perpetually in the light of population explosion.

We try to reach 24, 25 million people a year. I'm not sure if we're still doing it, especially with Lagos down. We've been able to give the gospel across the world in 30 years of history.

It all started very small and slow and really exploded in 62 and 63 here in Britain. I arrived in March, 62. By June, 90 British had signed up for something they didn't even know what it was about.

The Holy Spirit had just put it on their heart to go. By the summer of 63, 900 British people crossed the Channel. It was that Channel crossing by over 100 vehicles that we bought mainly in the scrapyards of

London that I got initial thoughts about getting our own ship, save a lot of money crossing the Channel.

That really, of course, never ended up much of the vision. But I can tell you, we need to understand the reality of a world of 5,000 million people. It took until 1830, approximately, to get the first billion, we say in America, 1,000 million people.

1830, now we have 5.5 billion, 5,500 million. We have been privileged through what the Holy Spirit has done to give the Word of God to some 350 to 400 million. We are not proud of that.

We are aware that it could have been if we were more committed, if we had more love and more vision, if we understood spiritual warfare more, I'm sure we could have reached 800 million in these last 30 years. You know, if you think of joining OM for a year or a summer or two years, do not think you are just coming to be trained. No.

If you are just coming to be trained, do me a favor, don't come. You are coming to serve. You are coming to reach the lost.

When I look in the Book of Acts, I find that the Holy Spirit didn't give them much time for the kind of academic training program that we specialize in in the 20th century. The Holy Spirit saved people and thrust them into battle. And they learned on the job.

I'm not against other methods. We live in a big, complicated world and I'm in favor of getting the Word of God. I went to Bible college myself.

But I believe that Satan does not give you some special period of time in which you can be trained so that you can spiritually punch him in the nose. He attacks you from the moment of your conversion. Now is the time for you to get serious about spiritual warfare.

Now is the time for you to know how to deal with sin in your life. Now is the time to understand the whole armor of God. Now is the time to develop vision and get on the cutting edge of what God wants to do.

I was on that cutting edge because God is merciful and graceful. At 16 years of age, it was at 17 when I said, God, I only want one thing in all of life. I want to know you and I want to commune with you.

I had no vision for ships. I had no vision for a great organization. I just was panting and thirsting after God.

We need some young men and women today who will hunger and thirst after God. Someone asked an old Hindu, how do you go about becoming hungry for God? He took the guy down to the river and he held his head under the water for about a minute. Picked him up out of the water.

And he said, when you want God as much as you just want an oxygen, then you'll begin to know Him who created you. There's so little hunger for God today. There's such a flippant, superficial brand of Christianity that's been manufactured in our interesting backslidden culture that sometimes you wonder if it's what you're even reading about in the book of Acts.

God has given us a vision to reach the lost, rescue the perishing, care for the dying, use literature, use the videocassette, use your mouth, use drama. Give people part of your life. Perhaps I made a mistake by writing a book called Literature Evangelism.

The only reason back in the early 60s I wrote a book called Literature Evangelism is because there were already 30 books on personal evangelism. I've always believed that personal evangelism was more important. I actually say that.

I believe in this book. It's been many years since I've read it. Would you pray as we come on our knees tonight and throughout the week that the Lord will give you a vision for the lost? That doesn't mean your heart is going to always be pounding in love.

That doesn't mean there aren't going to be times when you want to run away from people. This battle to maintain spiritual reality and be on the cutting edge of evangelism is an ongoing lifetime battle. That's why we see evangelists knocked out.

That's why we know that yesterday's victory doesn't guarantee tomorrow's reality. The second vision God has given us, and this isn't necessarily in order of importance, but the second vision is for God's people. OM is committed, we are committed to see spiritual reality among God's people.

I prefer to use the word reality because the word renewal has been worn out. We've got people claiming to live in renewal whose lives are about as shabby as a back-slidden rhinoceros. The word renewal has lost its meaning in the 80s just as the word revival lost its meaning in the 50s.

I'm not saying we never use that. You'll hear me use it. But I just want you to make sure you understand where I'm coming from.

We want reality. You may experience renewal in a weekend. You may be filled with the Spirit and experience the blessing of God.

But when I talk about reality, I'm talking about a lifetime, a lifetime of service, a lifetime of love. I'm talking about a marriage that comes together and stays together if God leads you into marriage rather than Holy Spirit-controlled singleness. I'm talking about people who put their hands on the plow and don't turn back.

I'm talking about teenagers who are rejoicing in Jesus Christ here today and will be rejoicing in Jesus Christ 20 years from now and 40 years from now. Spiritual reality, a lifetime of walking with God. Better to slow down and pace yourself and be a marathon runner than somehow with some kind of neurosis end up a short-term evangelical sprinter.

God has called us as a fellowship with our much weakness to minister to God's people. I believe God wants to use you this week to encourage people. You may meet a Christian on the doors.

This is why I believe when people go out in OM, they shouldn't just carry books for the unconverted. Carry at least one book for believers. When I was going door to door to the unconverted back when I was 19 years of age in my hometown, I met the sister of John Beekman, the famous Woodcliffe missionary.

She became a lifetime prayer partner, introduced my name to her mother, one of the greatest intercessors I've ever known, out in Zambia, used to pray all night. They introduced me to John Beekman who I met in Mexico City and became one of my counselors and advisors. There's now a film, by the way, about John Beekman's life.

That was going door to door selling books to the unconverted. So God may use you this week to bless a believer, a believer that may be discouraged. They may be encouraged just seeing you out in the street or

seeing you share your faith.

God may use you in a church. Now we know the church, this church especially, may be used to bless you. Or some Christian you meet going door to door may bless you.

We're constantly edifying one another, aren't we? Iron sharpens iron. I get ministered to by the new people who join OM. A lot of the older people on OM often have come to me with their complaints.

They've got problems and that's legitimate. You know, you have to listen to people's burdens, people's complaints. But some of the new people, they come and share their testimony.

I had another sister from New Zealand who got spoken to in a meeting I had in Auckland two years ago and apparently she fought against it for a year. And then God got a hold of her. Here's a girl in New Zealand who spoke fluent Russian.

And somehow she walked by my coach, my old converted bus. That's a summer campaign over in Belgium. She was delivering something from Singapore and she came in and she shared her testimony.

I had wondered, you know, I'd only visited New Zealand on that trip for 30 hours. I thought, you know, had God done anything in 30 hours? And here I meet this girl speaking fluent Russian and I was able to help her also go off that summer and serve God in the Eastern European countries. We bless one another.

We encourage one another. God has given us a vision for the lost. I could speak to you about that all night.

Some of you are worried about that. Reaching the unreached people. Reaching out to the Muslim world.

But God has also given us a ministry to believers. We want to see the church mobilized. How many of you ever heard the story of how God gave me the name Operation Mobilization? I don't know if this story is widely known.

Dave's heard it. How many of you have heard the story how we got the name Operation Mobilization? Raise your hand. Oh, look at that.

I can tell an old story. This story illustrates that failure is often the back door to success. See, when I first came to Europe, I lived in Spain.

I had a vision for closed countries. Spain was under Franco. It's a fascist closed country.

The Muslim world, the communist countries. I was studying Spanish, teaching English. That was a joke.

And learning Russian. Learning Russian. ■ ■■■■■■■ ■■-■■■■■■■.

The next summer of 61, I launched into the Soviet Union with this phenomenal plan to evangelize the Soviet Union. I had literature hidden in the car. I had a printing press hidden in a very special place.

Small printing press. Another young man was with me. He was very strong.

He was going to print the material. We had Gospels in the cornflakes boxes. We were crying out to God.

And amazing enough, we got across the Czechoslovakian border. We were pitching out Gospels through the window in the night in Czechoslovakia. We got across the Soviet border.

And in the Soviet Union, we were right near Chernobyl. We had decided not to try anything foolish like throwing the Gospels out. We knew the Russians would catch us.

We were going to send it all through the post. So we had been doing that in Spain very effectively. But some Gospel, one Gospel, got some butter on it.

And I said, well, we were discussing what to do with this Gospel that was all dirty or covered with butter. And the friend who was with me, he was printing the literature in a little hotel room, and I was typing up. The first group we were going to send the Gospels to, because we couldn't find any addresses, and I found a book called The Post Office.

Post offices in the Soviet Union. This is the truth. So I said, we'll send a Gospel to every post office in the Soviet Union.

Of course, we wouldn't even get one hundredth of them. So I'm typing away in this Cyrillic type on this old typewriter, and he's printing away. We found this Gospel covered with butter, and he said, let's flush it down the loo.

Now, my grandfather's from Scotland, and I tell you, I like to take care of money. I don't like to waste any money. So I said, you know, how can we flush the Word of God down the loo? I came up with plan B. Tomorrow, when no one's looking, I'll throw the Gospel of John out on the highway.

Somebody will get that, and praise the Lord, they may be saved. Tremendous vision. Tremendous vision.

So the next day on the highway toward Moscow, though we were still way down by Chernobyl, I threw this Gospel of John out the window of the car when I thought no one was looking. Right, that's out in the middle of nowhere. Most of the Soviet Union is nowhere.

I threw this Gospel out of the window. Within a few miles, they had a roadblock. Real royal reception.

And we were arrested. The policeman already had that Gospel of John on his desk in the police station. To this day, I can't figure out how he got it.

Somebody must have phoned. Motorcycle man must have raced after us and given that Gospel of John to that policeman. We were taken back to the nearest big city.

We had nationwide publicity. Pictures, the whole works, and promise of long-term holiday in Siberia. I think they were just trying to scare us.

Thought we were spies. After two days, they decided we were religious fanatics. Took more pictures, found more literature and the printing press.

Took it all, confiscated. We're going to take the car, but decided we needed that to get back to Austria. And gave us a submachine gun, guarded escort to Vienna.

George Verwer's adventures in the Soviet Union. I tell you, I was really, really knocked down by that. I thought so many were praying.

We had planned. And I went away for a day of prayer. In Vienna, I had been giving out a lot of literature in the streets and I thought, this is a slow way to reach people.

And I was at a youth hostel and this is where my vision for Great Britain was partly born. I was born in three different places and never dreamed that I'd ever end up living in Britain and becoming a permanent resident. This is really my home now.

But I saw this Methodist youth group, at least they claim to be Christians, living in this youth hostel. And I thought, if I could get these people, I think the word mobilize may have come to me then, I'm not sure. If I could get all these people giving out the literature, it would go out very quickly.

With that seed thought and other things that had already happened in O.M. Mexico and in O.M. Spain, though it was not called O.M., it was called Send the Light. I went for a day of prayer and it was in the top of a tree, worshiping and singing and praising God. I used to like to climb things.

Then I remembered the war. My father, my wife's father had been killed in that war and the word mobilization came to me, which is a war term. And I thought if there could be a mobilization of hate that would kill six million Jews and six million Gentiles, could there not be a mobilization of love? Couldn't God raise up Germans and French and English and Americans to move out together and to give out millions? My mind from almost my earliest days thought in millions.

It cannot be explained apart from what God can do in a feeble, weak, stumbling, needy individual. And two words came into my mind at the top of that tree. Operation, mobilization and a vision to see young people and to see the church mobilize across Europe.

The rest in one way is history. The next summer, there were 200. The next summer, there were 2,000.

And it's continued to spread across the world. Failure can be the back door to success. This week, for some of you, outwardly, may be a failure.

Maybe things don't click. Maybe you have a relationship problem. Maybe you don't get on with your leader.

Maybe you have an accident with a vehicle. I hope you don't. Maybe you fall down the stairs and break your arm.

I hope you don't. You see, God wants to speak to us in many different ways. God wants to speak.

Watchman Nee summarizes this in his book called Release of the Spirit. And he speaks about how God speaks to us through revelation. I'm trying to share something from the Word of God.

Something from my own heart. Paul went to the churches in much exhortation. My ministry often is not a ministry of expounding the Scripture.

I believe in that. But a ministry of exhortation. Whitefield taught all of his men to be exhorters.

And they went everywhere exhorting God's people to repent, to have greater faith, to love one another more, to be more biblical. And I tell you, if you can do as well as Whitefield this week, Birmingham will remember it for many years to come. Failure can be the back door to success.

Don't be intimidated by failure this week. God uses revelation. I hope he will reveal things to you from the Word, from the speakers, from your fellowship.

Examine what you hear here. But God will also use, as Watchman Neat points out in that same book, God will use circumstances. That's God's great teacher.

Sometimes we cry out against it. Rough circumstances. Broken romances.

Broken situations. Hard situations. Things that seem to go wrong.

Prayers that don't seem to get answered. We can all sing our choruses and praise the Lord, but when we go out and find out that someone has let air out of all of our tires when we want to get home and we're tired, are we still singing the chorus? Some hooligans attacked the teams over in Bonn and they took the license plates off the cars and switched them around, which in Germany is a major crisis. We don't know what little diabolical trick Satan may be trying to bring as we move forward in this campaign.

It is a mystery why God allows some of these things to take place. Why did God allow that lovely ship to hit those rocks? You get people asking this kind of question continually. Why didn't God answer my prayer about my aunt before she died? Why did I pray for this friend with leukemia and instead of him being healed he died? Why do we have so many mentally ill people including people who are dedicated Christians who have been prayed for many, many, many, many times by people of every different philosophy and ideology you can ever imagine? The mystery of suffering is unfortunately not understood very much until people hit their 40s.

When we're in our 20s we don't believe in that. But you know, if you could develop the zeal of your 20s and your teens and combine it with some of the wisdom and maturity that normally you only get when you're 40 or 50 or whatever, I tell you, you would be an unstoppable combination for God. And the reason, one of the reasons OM has gone from strength to strength is not because we were a bunch of young people but because as young people when we were teenagers we submitted ourselves to those men in the 40s and the 50s who counseled us and advised us and rebuked us and called us to repentance so that we got their wisdom and our zeal.

We hope it was God's zeal but sometimes it was our zeal. And that's a beautiful combination. God has given us a vision to mobilize the church, to see renewal, to see reality.

And we hope you will join with us in that vision even if it's mainly through prayer. Thirdly, God has given us a vision. God has given us a vision for the uttermost parts of the earth.

Acts 1A Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and ye shall be witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. Surely this is one of the strongest distinctives of Operation Mobilization. Not that it's exclusive.

Wycliffe had it. Gospel Recordings had it. Many groups had it before OM ever came along.

Praise the Lord. We've learned from all these groups. But the job is so big and the tendency is for people to get bogged down in their own country.

So that when you talk about Kurds, you talk about the Baluch, you talk about the Uyghurs, you talk about the Wolof people, or you talk about the Turkmen, people don't know what you're talking about. That's why

we encourage people to get that book Operation World and begin to pray for the unreached people of the world. How many of you have ever prayed for the Kurdish people? Twenty million of them.

Some of you since the Leaders Conference as I talked about it back then. Good. God is calling us to obey the Great Commission and therefore reach out to every unreached people's groups.

And brothers and sisters, the doors are wide open. The doors are wide open. And the door is as open and sometimes more open for short-term people, young people especially, as it is for traditional missionaries.

There are many areas where we are working with tent makers and short-termers that traditional missionaries cannot even go. And the churches and the national churches when they exist in those places are asking us for young people. They're asking us for young people because the job is so big.

It's not that they can't do it. It's not that they are not able to do it often better than we can. But it's because the task is so big.

Do you know how many live in India? Eight hundred million. How many of you have sought the Lord sincerely about those eight hundred million? Last night they showed Passage of India on television. I didn't see it because I already saw it in the cinema but I recorded it to show to the orientation group who go to India with OM in September.

It's a famous book. Some of you have read it. How many of you pray for India? Raise your hand.

Once completely ruled by the British Isles. That's not very many for a country that you're so linked with. I wouldn't dare ask there for how many of you have ever said to God, Lord, I am willing.

I've heard about India. I know that tens of millions have never heard. They've never heard and they never will hear unless something big happens.

Despite the size of the national church because much of the national church is asleep. Some of it is very alive. Eight hundred million.

In 1990, there will be a billion souls in India more than all the people who lived in the world in 1830. And when the missionaries talked about reaching the world in 1830, they were totally overwhelmed. They were totally overwhelmed.

I want to challenge you specifically because time is short and Christians specialize in being vague. I want to challenge you about this land you once ruled as a nation. When the great country of Britain ruled the world under that name, Rule Britannia.

You have left your imprint upon India. You can see it in every city. You can see it in the churches.

And I come to you with a Macedonian call. No longer can full-time missionaries go except in a few exceptions. But there's an open door for short-term.

My wife and I worked short-term in India for four or five years. It was a privilege with three children to commute back and forth, generally living in one room in Bombay. I would rather have short-term in India than long-term in Britain.

Maybe I'm a bit extreme, but it seems to me at times in Britain we're competing with one another. Sometimes churches on different corners even preaching against each other. Brothers and sisters, put India on your prayer mat.

Ask God to give you a vision of that country. You, if you want, can include Pakistan a hundred million to the west, Bangladesh another a hundred million to the east, little Nepal to the north and Sri Lanka to the south. Already in that area you have a billion souls.

And what about Bhutan? What about as you launch north of the Himalayas through Nepal into Tibet where there is no existing church and beyond into needy western China where you'd find the Uyghur people where there is no church and yet there's an open door for people like yourself to go and teach English. Would you reach out by faith and grasp some of this vision tonight? Would you reach out by faith and say, Lord, I'm going to be a man, a woman of prayer for the unreached people. I'm going to be involved in mobilizing the church and stirring the church through literature, through life, through love.

I'm going to be involved in reaching the lost right here outside the door of this church. Will you reach out by faith and grasp this vision and make it yours? I can share it, I can preach it, I can pray for you, but I can never force you. And God will not force you.

And in case you're a little nervous, God will never lay more on you than you can bear. So many people predicted that I would have a nervous breakdown before I was 21. You can't believe the letters I used to receive.

And when I first came here, I was one of the most criticized persons that ever came to the British Isles. By the way, I never even had 10 minutes of bitterness over that because I knew so much of my own folly was part of the reason. People say, you're going to burn out, you're going to blow up, you're going to have a nervous breakdown.

You can't take on the whole world. You can't think about the lost so much. You can't have nights of prayer every week.

You can't go out reaching people in the streets every other day or whenever. I've never had a nervous breakdown. I don't think I even got near one.

And to be honest, I've caused a few other people to have them. And really, that bothers me. That bothers me and I've tried to apologize and I've tried to make OM in the last decade a more balanced, sane, down-to-earth organization and attack super-spirituality and foolishness and extremism and if you don't think OM has changed for the better, then you write to me and I'll send you my little leaflet.

But I'll tell you the amazing thing about our fellowship. A lot of the problems we're wrestling with today and we've got plenty of them, are the same problems we were wrestling with 25 years ago. Sometimes, some of the new OMers come and they see some of the problems and they think, Boy, OM! Is this the way it used to be? Of course, things change.

But you know, a lot of the problems you're wrestling with in your life, if your parents are Christians and were Christians when they were young, same problems they wrestled with. Satan doesn't change that much. He's a liar.

He's a trickster. He tries to get us discouraged. He tries to get us into extremism.

He tries to get us into super-spirituality. He tries to get us to take on more of the burden than we can handle. And perhaps, in fact, it's the human factor and the emphasis on balance which especially exploded when I was on Lagos in 1971 in Indonesia.

That's written up as one of my books. Completely changed my life. So that now I know just how much to take and just how much to let someone else take or to just leave with God.

You could get blown away spiritually this week if you try to take on more of this vision, this burden, more of this teaching than you are ready to take at your age spiritually. So take what you can, receive what you can and leave the rest with Jesus. He don't want you going down the road with Operation World in one hand, a big Bible in another hand, a knapsack full of tracts in 35 languages, shoes that are three times too big and a few of the other bits of paraphernalia that sometimes we get into in Operation Mobilization.

We want you to go down the road rejoicing in Jesus, resting in His finished work, filled with His Spirit and realizing that it takes a lifetime. It takes a lifetime for God to do in you all that He wants to do. Let us pray.

God, You know all about us. You know everything about us and You love us still. And we realize we cannot, we cannot grasp this vision.

We cannot reach out and take this as our own unless You give us grace and mercy. And we know, Lord, that as we take this vision, as You fill us afresh also with Your Holy Spirit, it will not destroy the human factor in our lives for we acknowledge that we are earthen vessels and we can take no more than we are able to bear by Your grace, by Your mercy. So, Lord, set us free from bondage.

Set us free from neurosis. Set us free from our own striving, from our own fleshly twitching.

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