

Challenge of Turkey

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of prayer, prioritization, and cultural understanding in the mission to reach Turkey with the gospel.

Duration: 58:20

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 13:47

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages listeners to push open doors and seek God's will in their lives. They emphasize the importance of using technology, such as email, to spread the word of God and share information about countries like Turkey. The speaker acknowledges the danger of focusing too much on the Word and not enough on the Lord, but emphasizes the need to speak out about specific situations, such as Turkey. They express gratitude for those who have prayed and given to Turkey, and hope that this message will be an encouragement to them. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of ongoing supervision, accountability, and mentoring in the mission field.

Transcript

And I think the first thing I want to say to you and to people in different parts of the world that are listening to this tape is thank you for praying for Turkey. I know that many of you have prayed for Turkey for years, some of you for decades, and it's my prayer that somehow this little cassette tape will get to people who have been praying for Turkey and giving to Turkey, and that it will be an encouragement to them. It's always a struggle between how much to think on what God has done, and how much to thank people for what has been done, all of which is important, and how much to speak out about the situation which, if this was the situation in Britain, I mean there would probably, I don't know what there would be, probably a revolution among God's people.

I think of the things that people speak out about and get excited about here in Britain and in other countries, God's people. And I guess it all fits in as we attempt to build a kingdom, there's room for so much. But it's my prayer that this morning we may somehow realize we've got to prioritize.

If you're, for example, going to give some more time to the cause of reaching Turkey with the gospel, you'll have to take that time from somewhere. You will not get a 25-hour day because you've heard this tape or you've been here this morning. You'll have to say no to something.

About 10 days ago I sent one of the more, I think it'll be one of the more famous no memos around the world to just mainly O.M. leaders about just why I was not able to get involved in a very wonderful project. I was under considerable pressure to get involved, raise money, not particularly an O.M. And I wrestled with this for over six months, perhaps over a year, and made a very hard decision that I just, really in the light of all that I'm trying to do, and we're trying to do because what I do creates more work for all of you, and I'm more aware of that than you may imagine. Sometimes I feel like running away.

And I put this into the e-mail, this memo, and I've had the most encouraging barrage of communications certainly in the last one or two years of people sympathizing, people understanding that we are and I am attempting to do so much and we're trying to raise money for so many things. And we do, we do even within our movement seemingly shoot ourselves in the foot and we've learned to get healing and help for that. And so that was a great encouragement.

It's a long story really of how I ended up going to Turkey at this time, but I think we can thank the leader of O.M. Turkey for the way he went about inviting me because he just had so many invitations. Which ones do you accept? The fact that this men's retreat was going to be canceled, this of course sets off a spark in me. I'm giving away now some of my trade secrets.

I shouldn't do that. But last year one other group sponsored this men's retreat. And a very close friend of ours, somewhat named after the famous African missionary, was there speaking last year and it went quite well.

And I was under conviction that I used to go to Turkey so regularly, in the 60s and early 70s almost every year, but then I had this great step into greater delegation and the conviction that I should leave these things to people who were more equipped and backed off some of that kind of journey. But I had this very clear invitation and then he pursued me by email, by other methods, and it just seemed that I should go. Also I felt strong in my heart that instead of giving so many, I still will give weekends to work here in the UK, but instead of going all the way to Scotland for the weekend, which I have done many, many times with some results, wouldn't say overwhelming, why not go to Turkey for the weekend? The only difference is really the cost.

So I hope to do more of that in the future. To make a long story short, they went ahead with this conference. They got an overwhelming response in terms of numbers, especially when it was done last minute, and about 140 men from all over Turkey arrived for this men's retreat.

The roots of this retreat, and I only found this out, go back to the early conferences that our fellowship began way back in the 60s. And apparently they got so big and there were so many complexities, and I guess connection with children and other things. Some years ago, it was divided and the women had their conference and the men had their conference, and I guess one might take care of the children so the one can go to the particular conference.

A very encouraging thing in Turkey is that there is a relatively good unity among all these workers, and that I really believe goes back to the tradition and the vision that some of our people, men and women, had way back in the 60s, including some of the Turkish brothers and sisters, that somehow in Turkey we can move together and esteem one another and attempt to work together there. So thank you for praying for Turkey. There are many different ways to attempt to talk about Turkey.

One would be the very negative way. You look at all that has to be done. You look at the amount of witness.

I estimate Turkey has one-tenth of one percent of the witness in the amount of Christian ministry that we have in Great Britain. I really don't believe that's an exaggeration. One-tenth of one percent.

There are only probably 500 active Turkish believers in the nation. Some may give a little higher statistic. But this is a nation where people profess the Lord but don't necessarily go on with the Lord, which is true, I think, in most countries.

So we could be quite negative in terms of describing the situation. Unlike some of the other countries where we hear of just small numbers of believers, we're not talking about small population. I think it's always important when you hear a figure about a country, how many people are there.

Albania now has more workers than Turkey. And Albania, all that's happened in the last couple of years, last few years. I think the number of workers in Albania is moving around the 400 or 500 mark, which now we're getting a lot of feedback.

Oh, this is so many. Oh, they're standing on top of each other. Everybody's doing a lot of negative things I'm picking up from Albania.

And there are positive things. But it's interesting, if we have 500 workers laboring in southeast London, which we do, put together full-time Christian workers in southeast London, I never hear anybody say about that. I never heard anybody.

There's so many workers in southeast London. Oh, they're bumping into each other. And there's several of them go to the same church.

You don't hear things like that. But when it comes to a country where we're not so familiar, like, say, Albania, suddenly we hear this number of workers. Because, of course, when that number of workers goes into any new country, there will be negative things happening.

But, of course, there are negative things happening in southeast London. Maybe you're so busy you didn't notice. Might even be some in your own church.

So I feel that sometimes the generalizations that are made about these countries, the enemy really tries to use so that then somebody gets up, and most of us have heard this, and make the rest of the world look like so much is happening in comparison to the situation here in our own country, in your own country, maybe, Canada, the States, or Australia, somewhere else. So it's not easy, is it, to give the full picture. My feeble presentation this morning is just an effort to give us a better picture of Turkey.

It's 38 years ago that the vision came for Turkey. I like to share this because people often get the idea that visions have to come in very emotional moments. I was on the top of the tree when God gave me the name Operation Mobilization.

So that's a great story. That's a great story. I can weave that into a lot of sermons I get.

The failure in the Soviet Union coming out on the day of prayer, God giving me those words, which is true. The brother who was with me that day was with me on this trip. In Turkey we flew separately, but he was there.

We had some great fellowship. He lives just a few miles away. I hardly ever see him, but in Turkey.

We even went on a tourist. They twisted my arm to go on a tourist trip. For Monday morning, I went to Ephesus.

I just wish I could arrange for everybody on our team to have the Ephesus experience. Here's a city 2,000 years old that was destroyed by earthquakes, and they've rebuilt it with a lot of the original materials. The huge amphitheater where the big protests came about Paul and hindering the worship of Diana.

I then walked a little further, being led, of course, by the OM leader to the church where the Council of Ephesus took place around the year 300-something. A very famous church council where Mary was elevated to a higher position in the church. It's interesting that happened in Ephesus where the whole history is linked about the worship of women, in particular, Diana.

Interesting history. Interesting challenge. I've never seen so many people in one place at a tourist attraction.

There were literally thousands of people. Of course, it's quite a large, long walk. You get over the top and you walk at it.

Somebody picked this up. I guess one of the highlights, a bit strange, but suddenly I was surrounded by some Americans who graduated from the Master's Theological College of John MacArthur. This guy got so excited.

He insisted on autographs. He was mentored by Rob Provost, who's now in Albania. Rob worked here as my helper quite a few years ago now, married and doing a great work for God in Albania.

Another man, this other fellow's father, was an owner of quite a few radio stations, radio stations in the States that I don't think had ever, for various reasons, I won't go into details, given any exposure to Operation Mobilization. Things like that at a place, at a time where you never expected to be, all of us have these experiences, it's quite encouraging just to know your steps are ordered of God. I would have thought we will definitely get some people for Turkey as a result of that little link up and what will follow up on that.

Again, they were so ignorant, these tourists. Tourist ships come very near there. Ephesus actually was once a port.

It's all silted up, so now the water's about eight miles away. But other tourist ships come to some other nearby port, closer than Izmir, which is about an hour's drive away. It's amazing, I don't know if this is true of all tourists, but how little they know of what God is doing in a place like Turkey.

To be able to share with them that one of the very best fellowships in Turkey was right there in Izmir and that we were going to be speaking there that night. You just get so surprised that there are Turks who have come to know the Lord Jesus and they are going on. That fellowship is led by Turks.

I had lunch with the leader of that fellowship. I've heard about him for years. Glenn Garner lived in that city for years.

I'd heard about this brother and it was just exciting to meet him. What are a few of the things I think we should especially thank God for? Firstly, the number of workers. We've been praying for 38 years, some of

us, that the Lord would send forth workers.

I was going to share how the vision began, so I better just finish that. It happened in a library at Moody Bible Institute. Couldn't think of anything more boring.

I was just reading through these books that tell and give information like Operation World. I stand amazed at the number of copies of this book that have gone out, praise God. I also stand amazed at my surveys, how few people use it, at least regularly.

Let's encourage people. Part of my sharing this morning, I'm just going to read from this book about Turkey because with all my exposure to Turkey in the last few days, when I opened the pages of Operation World, I learned some things that really I didn't fully grasp when I was there and I was doing a lot of talking and asking a lot of questions. The vision for reaching the world with the gospel was already in my heart by the time I was at Moody.

Dale and I and one other brother, Walter, had already gone to Mexico from this other college where Dale and I had met. Dale's vision was Wycliffe Bible Translators and then he was moving from the Wycliffe vision to the Open Brethren movement that was quite active in Wheaton at that time. But my main thing was just unreached people, though I'm not sure we used that term then, more into the unevangelized.

So wherever I could find literature that could give me information, I would try to get it. In the library, I can remember, though that's a long time ago, being hit by the need in Iraq. I'd already been hit with Afghanistan through Oswald J. Smith's book.

The introduction to Oswald J. Smith's book, Passion for Souls, which is still being distributed. It's been rewritten and different chapters have been altered, put from other books. That's a long story.

Oswald J. Smith got the vision to mix all of his chapters up and produce new books. But the challenge of Passion for Souls was Afghanistan. Let's remember, Afghanistan is still, as far as any survey I can understand, is still more unreached than the land of Turkey.

We can't really say there are active Afghan-led fellowships in Afghanistan. There are believers. There may be two or three studying the word together.

I think if we exclude foreigners, we have to say that Saudi Arabia is more unreached than Turkey. I was just listing some countries that are probably more unreached than Turkey because someone said, well, Turkey's the most unreached nation. It is, if you put the word, largest.

But if you go to the small countries, I don't think Tunisia has near as much as Turkey. I don't think Libya. What do we say of Libya? How many people do we hear praying for Libya? Again, we always know there are things that God's doing that we don't know about.

Some brother may be working in Libya with an oil company. Maybe he's led half a dozen people privately to Jesus. Maybe we'll only find out about that in heaven.

I think that's also true, of course, in Turkey. That despite the surveys, and a brand new survey just came out. I have it here in my hand.

That's brilliant in terms of information. But I'm sure no matter how much we get into these surveys, we can't get all that God is doing. To make a long story short, one of the next countries I read about in the

library that day was Turkey, and it just exploded.

I don't think my life was ever the same. Shortly after that, I went out to Wheaton College to challenge Dale to forget about these other things and to go to Turkey. And I, as has been true in all my life, with often a sense of struggle and inadequacy, perhaps was nervous to give Dale that challenge.

I was a lot more, I think, aggressive and choleric in those days. I think I challenged him about forsaking various things also that I saw around his room. But then Wheaton College went bananas on the forsaking all thing.

If you've never heard some of those stories, they blow your mind. But somehow, in God's prominence, there was another man, an older ex-missionary from Turkey who was there in Wheaton. I don't even remember his name now.

But he got in this equation. And through all this, Dale made this decision to come back into OM, which wasn't called OM at that time, it was just being born, and to go and pioneer Turkey. It would be interesting to share with you some of the challenges that we threw out before we felt we should go.

The amount of money you had to trust God for, the number of prayer groups, especially targeting Turkey. He was born at that time in Chicago. Another one was soon born in California.

And it was obvious that this all wasn't happening so quickly. I remember a conversation, this is after both of us were about to graduate, in which Dale decided, or we decided together, he should be the assistant pastor at a very live Presbyterian church in New Jersey and continue to work to lay the foundation. I'm bringing this in because a lot of us here this morning are involved in laying foundations.

And just rushing to these countries prematurely, without support, without the foundation, really is not God's answer. And I believe one of the reasons God brought me to Turkey at this particular time was with all my vision about Acts 13, Breakthrough 2000, and the burden to mobilize 200,000 missionaries. And I always like to say it doesn't mean we're going to do that, but that's our hope, that's our prayer, and that the body of Christ worldwide would get involved in doing it.

Many are already doing it, having never even heard of this. And that's fine, because it's from the Word of God. But I think one of the reasons God brought me to Turkey was just to remind me that it's got to be quality people.

It's got to be prepared people. And God brought a young Kurdish believer, converted him to Britain one year in Jesus. And he had been recently at a big event in Istanbul that all the Westerners thought was really great.

And it was great, a big sort of music praise event. But during that time, apparently he saw foreigners, visitors, doing things that, in his mind, are very, very offensive to Turkish and Kurdish culture. And they have some differences in their culture.

And so he said to me, why don't these people get any orientation about Turkey before they come here? The old George Fowler immediately moves into defense. And I said, well, I'm sure. Some of them must get, I'm trying to think of our own fellowship, some of them must get some orientation before they come here.

And then I just realized as I was talking to him, there's no need to try to argue with his dear brother and point out that at least some of them get orientation. This is a typical Verwer defense thing. Just listen to him.

He's one year in Jesus. He's a Turk. He's a Kurd.

He wanted to get this off his heart. He's probably been hurt by somebody. But I think whatever, there's certainly an element of truth in this.

And I'm going to be trying to maybe circulate this more widely, but I really believe that it can be an enormous hindrance to the work of God if people go to these countries without any cultural orientation. Just basic things. Because especially if you move out of a place like Istanbul into a more rural area, Istanbul, they're used to a lot of foreigners.

I'm not saying it's not important in Istanbul. But as we get beyond Istanbul and we get with people who are from villages or towns, the understanding of Turkish culture and Turkish ways is just so important. And to be really honest, this brought a great burst of enthusiasm in my own heart about what we are doing short term on the field of training.

Because in all that I've read and so many people I've talked to, this is surely, many missiologists agree with this, many trainers agree with this. I was just talking to one of the leaders of the WEF training module, long telephone conversation the other day. And so many people do agree that on the field training, especially when it's done right, is the best way to prepare long term people.

It doesn't exclude academic studies. It's not either or. It's got to be both.

But the fact of the matter is that some of these things are very hard to learn until you actually get there. We need to have orientation, of course, before they get there. But ongoing supervision, ongoing accountability, ongoing mentoring, ongoing evaluation, I just think it's so basic and so important, especially out in a situation like Turkey.

Well, for 38 years we have shouted about Turkey in some strange situations. And at least for myself, many times discouraged, battling discouragement. So the Lord brought some people there at this men's retreat to encourage me.

Brought me somebody who heard my voice on the radio driving down some road in the United States. Heard me on the radio for three minutes talking about Turkey. And God zapped her.

She's a long term missionary in Turkey today. Another fellow came up to me. He was there in a van in 1987 when I took out my binoculars, most people having a laugh.

And I said, is anybody here going to Turkey or are there any Turks here? I forget exactly how I said it. Many of you have seen that little binocular thing, sort of an icebreaker. Doesn't remember anything of what I said that night.

All he knows is that at that moment God called him to Turkey. He's a long term missionary in Turkey today. Probably half of all the workers in Turkey today could trace their vision to go there back to OM directly or indirectly because of the multiplication effect.

I mean, I could give the name of someone and then I could give the name of someone in Turkey. He wouldn't even know that person. He wouldn't even know him.

Steve Richards is now in glory. But it's someone who Steve Richards touched that touched him. And that's so exciting when we think of our own ministry here and hopefully your own ministry wherever you are that often somebody that you influence, that you minister to, that you encourage and you may only give them a book.

There are people because of the book, My Big Father, which unfortunately has gone out of print in some places. There are people there of all kinds of different ways the Holy Spirit has worked. Worked through the printed page, through cassette tapes, through somebody being willing to talk about Turkey.

You know, it's interesting. I had someone try to lay this guilt trip on me again just the other day. That if you talk about Jesus, you're considered spiritual.

But if you talk about the work, that's really not so spiritual. That's okay. We have these tremendous messages.

I know I've given them. And I had to repent in the last couple of days that in my life sometimes I get too focused on work. And so I have to somehow repent, get myself sorted out to focus on the Lord.

But I believe that the Lord wants us to speak about Turkey. He said we're to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. And that's 2,000 years ago.

So surely we shouldn't put these things at odd. If we speak about Jesus... In fact, this came up in the question and answer session with the OM team called Marmalade. So in the team meeting where I was sharing about Acts 13, I only had this one team meeting.

I didn't feel I should give them a major devotional about Jesus and His atonement. One time I figured they probably already have that and salvation and all we have in Jesus. I just had this one opportunity.

So I shared my vision, Acts 13, break through 2,000, and a lot of other things tied in. And one of the questions came... I won't mention what country the person's from. It's a distortion.

But isn't there a danger in OM that we will not be focusing on the Lord enough and we'll be focusing on the Word? Of course that is a danger. That is a danger also back home. That's a danger for all of us.

But we must not conclude from that that speaking out about Turkey in meetings, at Urbana, the main thing we speak about is the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of the messages are about the Lord Jesus Christ. My message that night was about the Lordship of Christ.

But I thank God I took two minutes and gave a shout about Turkey. And I hope every one of you who's here and who here gets this tape, and of course one of the ways you can shout about Turkey, just give them a copy of this tape. Then you can go home and do something else.

Because a vast percentage of all the Christians in the entire world do not have a vision for Turkey, let's be honest. They would have a great problem finding it on the map. And Turkey, of course, is fairly famous compared to some other countries.

In answer to prayer, there are now over 400 workers in Turkey. A high percentage of them either long term or wanting to be longer term. In this amazing survey I have here, it breaks down what these workers are doing.

It also breaks down their proficiency in language. There's only about 160 who are really proficient in the language. And one of the major prayer burdens is for those who are there.

We must give equal importance to those who are there with our efforts to get new people there. In fact, I would say the average person in OM, or in our fellowship, in their praying should especially be praying for any people they know that are in Turkey and attempting to get the language. In this meeting I was at, this retreat, and the Lord worked in a very wonderful way in those meetings, but in one of the meetings, when I was encouraging them to learn the language, which is so important, I had those who were able to testify or speak in Turkish stand up.

It wasn't a very large number. Many are working on the language. I was reading a document about missions for busters and next-generation people.

There's a lot of material coming out on this. And I think we have to face the reality we have a different generation of people. And it is harder to get this generation, the busters and the exers, as they're sometimes called, to make the long-term commitments.

That is definitely harder than it was, say, in 1960. But we must not be intimidated by that. There are baby busters.

There are next-generation people there in Turkey. They want to learn the language. And that is going to happen.

So we thank God and we praise the Lord and give thanks for the number of workers. There are perhaps a dozen or two dozen places in Turkey where people are gathered together, worshiping, apart from minorities. If you look in Operation World, you realize there are minority groups in Turkey.

There are Arminian Orthodox, even after the horrendous things that happened many years ago. According to Patrick Johnson, there are 27,000 Arminian Orthodox. There are Assyrian Orthodox, about 6,000.

There are Greek Orthodox, about 4,900. There are other tiny groups. There are Eastern-Writ Catholics, about 6,000.

There are Latin-Writ Catholics, about 3,600. It also gives the total number of congregations. Most of these people are in a totally separate world from the Turkish people of the majority religion background.

That doesn't mean we can't pray for revival in these churches. I've heard that in the Arminian Orthodox Church there has been a touch of revival. Many, many years ago, there was a tendency as people got discouraged working among the Turks of the majority religion.

As they got discouraged in that, they would end up working among nominal Christians or people from these minority groups. It's not for me to judge that or say that that's wrong. But our thrust and the thrust of most of these workers I've just referred to of all these different groups is the majority community, including, of course, a fairly large segment of Kurds.

There are 29. In Turkey, they refer to things like our little fellowship. They refer to us as companies.

There are 29 companies. The 1994 survey showed 405 workers, which was expected to increase in 1995 to 487. That does not include people who just come for a few weeks or a few months.

They are not in those statistics, but it probably would include people who are there for a couple of years. Not many, is it? For a land of 60 million and climbing. 60 million people, larger than the population of the British Isles.

So you can get some very interesting comparisons when you compare Turkey with Great Britain because the population is similar. This particular survey puts a strong emphasis on trying to get facts about church planting. Of all the people laboring in Turkey, only 28% are preparing for a church planting ministry.

37%, and that's increased lately, are involved in a church planting ministry. And 34% are involved in other ministries. I told the leader, a close friend who I hadn't seen for some years, who was involved in a very, very small Bible school, cultural center, training center.

Partly a vision from a woman who was with us and now with another company. And they had the building. I visited the building.

Don't want to mention where it is. But they phoned me back that evening, his wife, and said, please do mention this little Bible school that they're not really calling a Bible school. They have just a small number of students.

They really would appreciate your prayer. I'm sure there are other little mentoring and training Bible things going on around Turkey, but I don't know of anything like this previously. So that is a specific item of prayer.

The international update this month, you might imagine I started writing it sitting in Ephesus. I thought that might attract people's attention. I always wonder if people read my international updates.

I do get some assurance that they do. So I open my international update and probably give that to you on Monday. I'm sitting here in Ephesus.

A little later, I'm sitting here in the public toilets in Ephesus. They have amazing toilets in Ephesus. There are about 30 tourists all sitting there.

Some of them are sitting on the little, what we call in the States, the john. I'm listening to the tour leader expound about this famous public toilet. I don't know what the full results will be at this time together.

Probably everybody will want to go to Ephesus and visit the public toilets. But most of the letter now that's going to go out, it's already on e-mail, will be about Turkey. I'm just thinking that sometimes in the future, maybe in my update, instead of so much variety, information per request, usually about 10, 15 different places per letter, that sometimes I'll just focus on one country and give some prayer requests.

I give about 10 prayer requests for Turkey. Another thing to thank the Lord for is that the Word of God is going out. The Turkish New Testament, many of you know about that project, is going out in an amazing way.

One brother from a particular Asian culture stood up and surprised his whole group on the number of New Testaments that he had seen go out in just one area. People didn't even know. Some of our own people, especially in Ankara, are really seeing a lot of New Testaments go out.

And they have some pretty big goals. Though it's still a small percentage of people. When you had 60 million, a small percentage that had ever had a New Testament.

Also, the use of the Jesus film in Turkish, and now I think it's available in Kurdish, is another major strategy. And some very unusual open doors have come for the Jesus film. So that's another important prayer request.

I wanted to just mention for a moment the whole thing of literacy, because sometimes we forget. When we talk about these more unreached countries, and we think of literature, we don't realize that a lot of people don't know how to read. Literacy, according to the 1990 census, there are only 35% of the women of Turkey who are literate.

35%. By the way, when they say literate, that doesn't mean they can easily pick up the New Testament and read that. 44% of the men are literate.

It says, the following diagrams are based on statistics available in 1990 in the Turkish general consensus, according to the consensus, of 11 million households in Turkey. So when you pray, remember the sowing of the seed, remember the use of the Jesus film, and other efforts, and there are not that many people given to that. The whole thing of reaching large numbers of people with the gospel, regardless of whether they respond or not, is not the major vision any longer on the mission field.

It was certainly in our fellowship in the 60s. The belief we need to sow the seed. Everybody needs an opportunity.

And then from that, we'll plant churches and see people come to Jesus. The emphasis today, generally, is to go immediately to attempting to plant churches. But I did find in Turkey quite a balance.

And I found the church planters esteeming the sowers, esteeming those whose gift is sowing the seed. Some, despite all their efforts, don't become that proficient in the language. Is there any need for such people? Somebody sent me a letter.

A young man we were involved in recruiting is now going to join the ship. He's the son of somebody who was on OM in the 60s. That's always encouraging.

He sent a prayer letter out, and he put something in his prayer letter I've never forgotten. And I've used it. He said, for every one formula... We just had the Grand Prix in Monaco, I'm sure.

That's one of your big things. But he pointed out, for every one formula run racing driver, they have to have 50 people backing up that driver. And I think it's important to understand this.

And this is why I have fought that when we talk about mobilizing 200,000 workers throughout the whole world and missionaries in the years to come, we include backup staff. We must include backup staff. But something that came to my mind when I was in Turkey was that there are different levels of backup staff.

We need home country backup staff. Back there in the States or Australia. By the way, Peter Maiden is just back from Australia, and it was a very good time.

His time on the ship sabbatical went really well. Then there are the backup staff who are in operations like this, international coordinating team. We're not home country, but we're not out in the middle of India.

But it's essential. It's essential. But we need to remember that in those countries there is need for backup staff.

The leader of our work in Turkey has no secretary. And he has so much he's supposed to be doing. He's also the team leader for that city with quite a few people on his team.

I was talking to a woman, actually it was Steve Richard's sister. And she was sharing about her ministry. And a lot of her ministry has not been directly with the Turkish people, but it's been with other workers who are battling for survival.

And she mentioned something to me that was quite relevant because our daughters just had this baby and my wife's down there trying to help her. It's not an easy time when a mother has her first child. And this woman in Turkey is going to be with different people when they have their baby.

Because their mother or grandmother or whatever can't come in. It's not like when it's in your own country. Even there it can be difficult, right? And so one of the things she's been doing is helping people survive when little Junior comes along.

And just talking to her was an eye-opener to again realize there is scope in all these countries for people who are not great linguists. People in the ministry of hospitality. People who can maybe repair vehicles.

People who can help. They're crying out for help in Istanbul in the correspondence course of ministry. In fact, the leader of that ministry didn't come to the retreat.

They just have so much, I heard, I talked to him on the phone, just so much work. And they also set some book displays in the streets, which is quite encouraging news. And so many, thousands of people are responding to this correspondence course.

But where do you get the people to grade all these lessons? I say this because people shouldn't think, because they don't feel they're a great language learner, I don't know how many people do feel that, that there's no scope in countries like this. Why don't you push some doors? I don't want to lose half the team here this morning. But why don't you push some doors, those of you who are listening to this tape, wondering about God's will in your life, and write some letters.

Another survey I took in this particular retreat was how many of you are on email? And probably 60% more on the hands went up. I don't think there's any group of people except computer people themselves who are into email as much as our co-workers around the world in these countries doing what we're talking about this morning. And we thank God.

I mean, I had emails from the people sitting in that meeting waiting for me when I got back here. One of them was four pages long. But an email has its negative sides as well as many positive sides.

But it does mean also that it should be easier today for people back home, wherever that may be, it should be easier for them to encourage people on the field through email. Now you need to realize the security question. Some people feel email is more secure than letters.

Other people feel the opposite. One more controversy. But if you're just a general letter of encouragement, not mentioning especially organizations, then it can be a great blessing.

Why am I saying that? Because I want us to understand this morning we all can do something for Turkey. I know, especially as I speak here, we have many other people here committed. We have the Algerian crowd here.

We have the Egypt crowd here. Our team has different people committed to different things. But whatever our commitment, I believe we can all do something for Turkey.

Because we must acknowledge that Turkey is one of our most important and strategic fields in the world in terms of the number of people, 60 million, in terms of the number of co-workers we have there, over 70 plus children, and all of our concern about training, about pastoral care. Unlike places like India, most of our brothers and sisters in India are all Indians. So we're limited in what we can do, and yet we feel, most of us, there's a lot we can do for India as well.

How much more when most of the workers are foreigners who eventually are back in the states? Another thought that God brought to my mind that I think is so relevant is linked with my campaign that the church doesn't think we no longer need American, Canadian, and British missionaries, and British workers, American workers. This is a bigger thing than you may realize. Even when I showed my plan for Act 13, Breakthrough 2000, to a very leading business person here in London a week or so ago, he thought it was all great except the number of Americans.

Do we actually think the church in all these other countries is that much greater than the church in Britain or America or Canada? I want to go on record, the 60 countries I've been to and the high percentage that I'm involved in, it is not that different from one country to the other. I read an interesting article just two days ago about revival in Argentina. Can it happen here? It's an American magazine.

Praise God, when I actually read the article, which was written by a friend of mine, the article was not exaggerated. The article was very down to earth. It pointed out there's a lot of church growth in those countries, but it actually didn't, unless I missed it, it didn't mention great revival.

But the cover, of course, they like hot stuff for the cover, so the cover communicated that there's revival in Argentina, but of course there's no revival in America, when in fact most people in Argentina say there is not great revival there, there is church growth. And a lot depends on your definition of revival. Have you found the enormous range of definitions of what revival means? Maybe you can help me on that, because there's still many people that run ads in the United States that they're going to have a revival starting on Sunday, the 25th of January.

Please all come. We're dealing with a very tricky word. And let me just tell you, brothers and sisters, this is not to put any other nationality down, but over 50% of all the workers in Turkey are from the USA.

There aren't hardly any Latin Americans in Turkey, despite blowing a trumpet about it for 15 years. There aren't any Indians hardly in Turkey. There are one or two from Spain, there are one or two from here, and, praise God, the Koreans who focused on Turkey for a much longer time do have significant numbers.

They are the next behind the people from the USA. Now we know that is going to change in the future, but people were saying that already seven years ago. And the fact of the matter is we don't want to get caught into this dilemma.

Is it the two-thirds world that's going to do the job, or is it the so-called Western countries, Britain and America, traditionally missionary-setting countries? It's obviously both. And probably some Americans are

listening to this tape, and I pray that you may consider Turkey. It also shows the distortion when we give the idea that the world can be evangelized by the nationals who live within the country.

This may be true in parts of India. Most people would say it's not true in all of India, and thinking Indians want farm workers to go to India, especially among the minority group of Muslims. Minority group of Muslims who number over 130.

I thought it was around 150 million. I've heard 130, whatever. So even India, I don't believe, is just going to be totally reached by people from their own country.

And of course India is an amalgamation of many people's groups, many cultures. And so when a brother goes from Tamil Nadu to evangelize Muslims in Uttar Pradesh, that is cross-cultural missions. And that's one of the reasons in my Numbers for Acts 13 breakthrough, we put the India and South Asia number at 15,000.

We need people from all different countries. But surely, when a country has as many churches as Great Britain, I just got the church statistics for London. The thousands of churches in London.

You say, well, many of them are dead, they're only small. Well, we don't have anything but small in Turkey. We don't have anything but small.

Izmir, with 3 million, has this little fellowship that I spoke at on Monday night. They had maybe 50 in fellowship. And a very high percentage of our Turkish and brothers and sisters are quite young and struggling.

And we just need to understand the whole thing just gets out of balance if we don't keep some of these facts in mind. To bring this to a close, I would just urge you to try to help us mobilize prayer groups for Turkey. We used to have specific prayer groups for Turkey.

Maybe if that's too narrow an aim, we could see a mobilization of prayer groups for the 1040 window. I'm thrilled, actually, when there's any kind of prayer group. If you know about prayer groups, why don't we try to get information to them about Turkey? Maybe we could get this tape into their hands.

Let's try to get more literature about Turkey. There's literature not just produced by our fellowship. We don't seem to have much.

But we can distribute literature that's produced by other fellowships. Country profiles. I was actually going to read part of Operation World about Turkey, but in the light of the time, I'm going to have to let you do that.

But it's in the English edition. It's on page 541, if you want to write that down. And around the world, between November 3rd and November 5th, people are praying for Turkey.

And it's amazing. There's about seven, six pages of information in Operation World about Turkey. Why don't you start there? And then maybe you can go and read a book.

When you talk about Turkey, there's a name that you must always remember. And I've been always trying to encourage missionary recruits to read a little bit of history. And I would encourage people in our fellowship, since this is one of our priority fields, I'd encourage everyone to read a little bit of Turkish history.

Why not get the encyclopedia out and read about Turkey? And even Operation World has just some amazing history and facts about Turkey that I just found so interesting. And the name that I was going to mention, that you will encounter everywhere you go in Turkey, is Ataturk. Let's be honest.

Anybody here has never heard of Ataturk? Raise your hand. It's okay. It's like being living in the United States.

Someone said to you, have you ever heard of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington? Of course. Who are they? So let us all honor Ataturk throughout our little fellowship, read some Turkish history, get the feel of this country, and make a commitment to help find the recruits they need. We, of course, want quality recruits.

We want people that can crack the language and plant churches. You cannot have mission mobilization without straw. That's how I got chosen.

You can't have mission mobilization without straw. So we can't just hold back in the challenge of Turkey for the fear someone may go there who will be a problem. I mean, we might as well fold up.

God can sort these things out. And as I look back over our fellowship's 35 years of work in Turkey, I guess I have to acknowledge at times it was a ragamuffin operation. But since many of us are reading that book, we know that God uses ragamuffins.

You may feel inadequate. You may never have heard the challenge of Turkey before. You may not know who Ataturk is or even know where this place is on the map.

Here's the flag right in front of me. But that doesn't mean God can't use you in Turkey. If one woman could hear two sentences on the radio and be there now as a long-termer, if another guy could see somebody semi-clouding around in some big meeting looking through his binoculars to see if there's any Turks in the meeting, end up being called of God through that and laboring there as a long-term worker.

And I don't think you should limit yourself. God may want you in Turkey. I might just add this.

Turkey is to me a wonderful place to live. There are difficult mission fields where you might be living in a mud hut in the middle of the desert. You can't get your favorite food.

I just had an ex-ICT guy laboring in Mozambique. He can't get a decent meal. I took him to Carl Jr. for a hamburger.

I thought he was going to hallucinate. This was in California. He and his wife are really struggling right out in the booties of Mozambique with very poor facilities.

We tell these stories, don't we, as workers? Some of those stories are counterproductive because it frightens, especially some people in this generation, especially the women. I've got some men as well. Most missionary work is not like that anymore.

One of the persons who used to be on our team living in Istanbul, they said to me, we love it and we're very comfortable. These are modern European style cities. It's not the same, perhaps, as your own country.

But I think we need to knock out the idea that to live in Turkey is to endure some great hardship. I'm sure some of you are enduring hardships right where you are. That's normal.

So let's knock out some of these false ideas. You can be happy in Turkey. You can rear your children in Turkey.

They can go to a nice school. You can learn that language. You can eat all kinds of food, including Kentucky Fried Chicken, pizza, and McDonald's.

It's all there in Turkey. Of course, I'm sure that's not the major thing that's going to attract you to go there. Praise God for those he's raised up and sent to this country.

Praise God that at least a few millions over these years, only the Lord knows because there's some radio going into this land as well, but at least a few millions have heard. I don't think anymore we can say even what Patrick says in his book. But it's a long way to go.

And the goals and aims of AD 2000, especially the second goal, a church for every people, tied into the saturation evangelism concept, I mean, the possibility of that happening by the year 2000 in Turkey, I think most workers there would say it's ludicrous. But let's at least give it our best shot. Let's at least try.

And with a lot of changes that are taking place, God may surprise us. Let's be ready for some wonderful surprises so that at the year 2000 and thereafter, somehow there'll be perhaps hundreds of fellowships instead of 15 or 20, hundreds of fellowships. They might be small.

I have a list of all the provinces in Turkey. Most of the provinces have next to nothing. You can see it on this incredible report.

Let's believe God that things will change. Yes, even in the next three or four years. Let's pray.

Our God and Father, we thank you for the challenge of this giant land of over 60 million people. We think not only of the Turks but of the Kurds. I haven't been able to take time to speak about that work just across the border in northern Iraq where some of our co-workers are seeing some breakthroughs.

We're the little groups worshipping you from among those people. And Lord, we just pray for all these workers as they've gone back from this retreat, as many of them have made commitments in their heart, in their life in one direction or the other. And Lord, we pray for the Turkish believers.

I think of how many of them responded to the invitation for commitment in dealing with discouragement on the Monday night meeting. And we pray that they'll go from strength to strength. We thank you for Turks that are being reached outside of Turkey.

We think of Germany. We think of Turks that have been won to you here in Britain and are back serving you there now. Not many, but a few.

And Lord, we commit to you this vision, this burden to see everyone in this nation reach for the gospel and to somehow see a church-planting team in every unreached people's group and in every part of the nation in the very near future and strengthen us as we attempt to take ownership of this vision, as we attempt to move from just listening to prayer, to action, to mobilizing others, to sharing the vision so that there'll be tens of thousands of beautiful Turkish people someday worshipping with us in glory. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Perhaps you want more information about Turkey. Any OM office anywhere in the world could probably help you at least get started. And then keep in mind there are at least 25 other groups that are laboring there, and I'm sure they'd love to have contact with you and supply you with information about Turkey.

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