

# Decade of Muslim Emphasis

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the importance of a focused decade of outreach to the Muslim world through prayer, literature, and community engagement.*

**Duration:** 29:38

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5

**Topics:** "Muslim"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights the importance of the audiovisual department in spreading the message of God. Despite its low profile, the department has made significant contributions, such as purchasing copies of the film 'Unlocking the Door of Islam' and distributing them to teams and ships. The speaker urges for more opportunities to present the challenge of Islam and emphasizes the need for vision and action within the organization. The sermon also mentions the speaker's involvement in Keith Green concerts, where they speak about the importance of global outreach.

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## Transcript

This is the beginning of the year and it's great to give out little requests and pray and we believe in that But I'd like to lay one of the greatest burdens that's on my heart on your heart. Some of you already have it Maybe even more than me Because it will enable us to even Focus our praying one of the greatest problems we have in a lab though It's a blessing problem is that OM is not one thing. I gave a very important message on this at the conference I'm not sure It may have been the last week And if some of you would like some of the messages from the evening of the last week We can get them and I talked about God's strategy and OM strategy And there's a lot of fuzzy thinking about one strategy because it is unique OM is not a carbon copy.

It's something that came before and In this strategy we brought out how there are certain major emphases like right now we're trying to emphasize the Muslim world more and Yet we already have the ships which automatically are a huge emphases And now they tell us and we agreed on it This year is the foundation now that we're going to suddenly emphasize the foundation Now as we get a new burden and a new emphasis what happens to the old ones? They keep going on And we try to emphasize in that message That God has led us in each one of these fields we're involved in and that as we go into new things We don't want to neglect the old things. We may change them We may even be led of the Holy Spirit to make big changes as we did in Spain in Italy But not generally to totally abandon something that the Holy Spirit

has been doing And we then try to you know, give a little clarion call for places like Mexico You know, which isn't a Muslim country and it isn't The most un-evangelized country in the world and yet the Lord led us there and things are happening there I just talked to Dave Hicks on the phone About some of the blessings in Mexico and I'm trying to work out in my schedule to visit Mexico City But early in this decade we announced that we wanted by the grace of God to make this a decade of Muslim emphasis of emphasizing the Muslim world and we'd like to carry that on at this time Including right here in Braunlee That in our prayer meetings we continue to have this emphasis in our literature distribution We continue to have this emphasis. We produce some tremendous leaflets, books A lot of material is now available.

We need more but often even what we have Doesn't get distributed as well as it could. If everybody had this vision Then there would be seldom a literature table where there wouldn't be something that could really emphasize The Muslim world. We even resurrected my old booklet of the challenge of Islam in South Asia The story of that, supposedly it was going to be 20 years ago, a chapter in a book from Moody Press They asked me to write it and the book Was never published So we published the chapter On our own and now I've just republished it and it's amazing How many people even within OM don't really understand all that's happening and all that's available If they have a little vision and a little get up and go to to move forward and I hope that This burden as I share it with you will help in that direction both in praying and in action because I don't think we should Share one from the other.

In trying to emphasize this decade of Muslim emphasis It came to my mind that if you're driving a car down the road 30 miles an hour and you increase it to 40 Most people would not notice it Even sitting in the backseat you might not notice it much less standing on the road I think OM's Muslim thrust as we came into the 80s was going about 30 miles an hour With a number of dangers that could have moved it back to 20 miles an hour and further and we decided to sort of have some kind of program some kind of challenge that people could you know, somehow see And with that we declared this decade of Muslim evangelism. We didn't I'm not sure get 100% Unity about it and we certainly have in wrestling with so many other things We certainly have failed to to drive it, you know deeper into the fiber and the being of the whole OM body, but I think we have shifted from 30 miles an hour to 40 but it's a little hard to notice and I thought before I share some of the challenges for prayer and some of the Really devilish opposition we're having to this forward thrust. I might just mention a few of the victories A few of the answers to prayer that we have seen that are very very encouraging It's easy to take things for granted the Berlin team Just take for granted.

It's gonna just go on and on and on Well when I visited Berlin and visited that team two years ago, I tell you I was a bit shocked because in fact, it's a tough team and That year hardly anybody on the team was thinking of permanently going on into Turkey there were a couple Because they discover that it's tough and they fell that wasn't their calling This has been the history of OMS thrust into the Muslim world that we get a lot of young people very enthusiastic But when they see what it's gonna cost in terms of perseverance They see that some Muslims don't come to Christ even after praying continually for them for one year or five years. They don't come All kinds of problems come even doubting the very faith One man that we sent to Turkey many many years ago is not even a Christian today so Let's not take for granted that somehow the Arab team is still going on in London and now has expanded its satellite units to Belgium and to Italy and That the Berlin team is still going on though Very locked into a separate culture and out of the mainstream of OM with Larry Oren carrying the leadership all these years In that same difficult city sometimes last time I was there. There's only a mile from the Berlin Wall, which is enough to depress anybody So let's not take for granted what the Lord's done Over the years and even these last few years as there has been a definite Increase in some definite breakthroughs though Some of them may

be small, you know one of the most significant messages at the conference was from the leader of the work in Pakistan and Muslim country and You know one of the reasons he's still persevering out there in the Muslim world when others have returned is because he has this concept and that is to think positively and To see the little things that God is doing that may at times go unnoticed especially if we're studying it from a distance and Certainly the growth of the work in Pakistan all of which has been in the last three or four years is One of the most exciting breakthroughs that we've seen As we move forward with this vision and we want to thank the Lord for that and pray for that even today the 70s within OM well, the Muslim vision continued the 70s was definitely an era of ships and Toward the end of the 70s and early 80s.

I haven't got all the dates. We had even thought of a third ship Which brought no small amount of trauma into the OM body and in which we had to wrestle things out where are we going and as leaders we decided we can't go everywhere and That now as we've emphasized the ships and we want to continue to emphasize the ships because you can't start something that big without continued emphasis That by the grace of God we wanted the 80s to be an emphasis for the Muslim world We felt we don't need new projects. We don't need new countries To any large degree.

We don't need to buy a gospel. Somebody came to me again Have you ever thought of airplanes for Christ? I get that question almost every couple of months Yes, we have thought of airplanes for Christ trains for Christ buses for Christ donkeys for Christ But we feel that this is the decade to somehow reinforce the existing work no matter how unglamorous the Muslim world may be and to throw our time and effort and talent and those STL Prophets into the Muslim world now that fits with the original vision of STL prophets Which was India because there's a hundred million Muslims in India And it's one of the areas where we've reached the most Muslims We've given more Muslims the gospel in India than all the other countries almost combined and have done the least to follow it up because you need specialists and one of the victories of this emphasis is that there's now a Nucleus of young men wanting to return to India to work only among Muslims just as this seems to be coming in reality We talked about the new strategy in Katmandu this year The visa thing which would provide the foundation to do this Hits us on the head like a runaway train. Let's not however be discouraged by that It does mean a change in strategy It does mean that even for in-depth Muslim follow-up in India We are going to have to count on the Indians more than we had Just eight months ago in Katmandu That's something we need to keep in mind keep keep also in mind that as we went into the 80s South America was born and going strong also, there was a strong push that we begin a major assault in the Far East and Taiwan Korea, Japan many other countries were coming into the OM binoculars and with this Coming at us from different sides Miraculously the Lord gave us unity To make this emphasis of Muslim evangelism this decision has Enabled us to make many other important decisions Within OM including the decision to stop quite a few things Now that may be only the initial stage, but you see unless you clear the way for what you want to do you will do it and so some of the Implications of our challenge for the Muslim world and this strong emphasis some of them have been negative and some people haven't liked it but God somehow has continued to give us unity and We're going forward and we hope that everybody in Broadly, especially will have this vision to help Forward this burden this challenge, whatever name we might give it the first step in this emphasis is linked with what we're doing right now prayer and There was a proposal set forth I looked at the old coordinators minutes from 1982 and there were some proposals made which actually I don't think they ever got completely agreed upon They were in some ways general goals.

We couldn't force people to do these things But we presented it as a challenge It's interesting to look at this and see some areas where we've been very successful areas where we have failed and This is one of

the things we want to pray about now. What does the Lord want us to do right here, Brown? Because the first step is mobilizing the church and Mobilizing prayer We have not seen as many recruits at least for certain countries as we would have liked But that was not The only emphasis of this thrust it was to mobilize the church to mobilize prayer and to bring it out Muslim awareness now a lot has been done in that area. It's not time to tell about it But I tell you sometimes it's like trying to hammer a nail into granite and This is why we want to pray even today and why I'm praying this little message will set the pace For prayer throughout the year a couple of things specifically to think about and pray toward meetings and seminars We have taken literally thousands of meetings these couple of years presenting this burden in this vision and Seminars I remember when the ship was down in the south coast going down and I was asked They've got other people better at this than me to speak on the challenge of Islam.

That tape is available somewhere And we saw you know, we every time we have these meetings and we we give this message It's often a part of an overall message for world evangelism And the prayer cards go out and upper world goes out and challenge of Pakistan goes out in the Middle East brochure goes out There are always some victories And we praise God for that In fact, there's not a single mission society working among Muslims that has not felt to some small degree the impact of this push because they have got recruits and There's an increase of recruits and during these last couple of years a whole new mission has been born Founded by an exo ever that is getting many many inquiries They are going to learn as we have learned that not all these people are ready for in-depth long-term Muslim evangelism, you may not feel that's your cup of tea But believe me and this is none of the purposes for this plea and it is a plea what we do here affects this vision More than almost any other field because the vision was partly born here partly born in in this environment Wrestling with all the information all the challenges even the gospel submarine for evangelism in depth and We need your commitment the audio-visual Department which is in shared with us at least from his sharing seems to be leaking and limping Has still had a a a major contribution the purchase of three or four copies of the film unlocking the door of Islam Some of copies of which have been used again and again and again other copies of which suddenly end up on a shelf And then I think it was even put into videocassette. There's much more going on in this little AV department Then probably anybody knows Because it hasn't a high profile Because the work the real, you know action is out on the teams. It's out on the ship It's out where they get these videos and they get these films and they get this material only a small part of it Is back here where it's visible Let's pray for more opportunities to present the challenge of Islam You know the Keith Green concerts that I have to speak at I have to speak about going into all the world They're gonna give me any other choice.

That's great. And I tell you there's potential recruits there We've been battling to keep the bookstalls last minute. We almost lost the book tables.

They wanted to take it back and we Held out because we want to be able to put some of these key books that are on our hearts about the challenge of Islam I'm not saying anybody would oppose that On these tables and push I just read in the STL leaders minutes That some of these unreached people's prayer cards and dropped is that to ten pence because we're trying to sell them for one pound fifty I think when they first came out We want just on a memo hundreds of those prayer cards the vision of the prayer cards is Key in presenting the challenge in Islam as they emphasize to a great degree the unreached Muslim lands literature tapes Leaflets even that printing press downstairs, which we should be able to get a printer for all can have a part in this emphasis and You are involved in that do not detach yourself from this vision if you are in OM you are part of the Muslim emphasis and What you do faithfully enables others who may be more directly involved to do What they have faithfully some of you are selling books to bookshops Do

you try to get bookshops to take any of these books about the challenge of Islam not generally the fast-selling books. I Don't know how well Goldsmith's book going with his name. That should be a top seller so literature books Leaflets prayer cards operation world many other related things Are all part of extending this vision and then of course I touched on it films also speakers We've had men into our conferences like Charles Marsh Lionel Gurney Tom Brewster Who of course maybe main burden isn't just a Muslim world, but his tool is directly linked Contextualization and how to learn languages and really get among these people made enormous impact Working that out on the field.

Of course is more difficult than listening to the lecture in Belgium and there's an ongoing discussion about that Praise God for the new slide sets that have come out about different Muslim challenges like Pakistan But sometimes they just sit It's a great burden on my heart And I hope that we can all put our hands to the plow in a firmer way and go Forward as you know, we launched this decade And it was a very personal thing to me as well as a group thing I made four major trips into the Muslim world one in my little Ford Which now Bob hitching is the owner of through the Middle East and we produced a Middle East prayer film that wasn't quality enough for wide distribution though has been continually used and Then I took the North Africa trip and the letter I wrote from North Africa Some have written to me. It's been one of the strongest Challenges they've ever had for that part of the world I don't know if any of you have seen that letter But I was broken to pieces riding across Algeria when I dictated that memo that went around the world And then the two trips again into the Gulf area and last earlier this year three months out mainly all in Muslim countries From this we released a whole series of tapes again part of the ministry here that have gone all over the world In fact between the memos and the tapes Thousands and yet at times we had no money even to pay for these tapes And I cut back Alec Brackett had to increase the price on the tapes because he was in financial difficulty and I was Motivated though, we still sent them out. We've had tremendous response I don't think we can ever measure what God does through literature films and tapes that go out right from here And to me, this is one of the most motivating things about being involved here a quick rundown on some of the growth We've seen actually in the work.

I Think it's normal for the first couple of years of this kind of thrust that Foundation laying literature communication recruits stirring of hearts. It's been a tough battle There have been some victories at the same time out in the fields a phenomenal growth of the work in Pakistan Despite many assaults from Satan and a number of people who now have made a decision Through their short term in Pakistan to go life term long term in Muslim evangelism there or somewhere else The victories and the growth of the work among the Afghans Again, something that just is a name within our serve For a few people is a lot of work and a lot of money In a very indirect form of evangelism because it's really it is legitimate relief work It's the first major religion relief work that OM has ever been involved in Why do we do that when generally we don't go into that kind of thing ever leave that to others? Why because it's leading unreached Muslim country that's been on our heart for 28 years That's why we roll the policies down the river and started a relief work giving it a different name Pushing it outside the OM technically even though most of the people are all OMers and it's been a rough tough long-term battle And right now Gordon Magney Desperately needs a couple long-term right-hand men both in administration and evangelism there Praise God for what has been done as we move forward to do more the growth in Bangladesh the decision Even recently to increase the number of longer-term nationals discipling Muslims and church planting among Muslims The increased thrusts that we've had in the subcontinent several major major thrusts have gone among Muslims and OM with all the things we do It goes almost unnoticed big push recently among the Bengali Muslims at the same time We still don't have the trained language-speaking men to engage in the kind of follow-up, which is the second stage And the stage we need to move into more seriously in the coming

months Of course, the second stage is not always possible without the first stage I think the Middle East and the Arab world has had some of the toughest assaults from the enemy Because we haven't been able to get an increase of recruits to any great degree except within Europe. Well, let's praise the Lord for that Suddenly Italy has got a team working among Arabs London has persevered and seen some phenomenal breakthroughs And now we have even a team among Arabs based in Zaventem.

Who would have ever dreamed this five years ago? This is partly made possible When people heard about this I tell you there was opposition But we can do it because this was the decade of Muslim emphasis And so we try to during this period go the extra mile and when there's four things we want to do We want to give priority to that thing that touches Muslims Not to liquidate those other things but to try to give priority. We want to do that financially We've been able to put tens of thousands of pounds into Muslim literature Especially out of special projects which then dried up until a couple weeks ago when we had a nine and a half thousand pound gift for it Then back to North Africa as you know, we now have a small team going into Nisha again I think one of the exciting things about North Africa have been the interest that others now are showing in that area including Spanish-speaking people Working among North Africans, especially some who know Spanish in places like the Utah That's an encouragement. It's small, but it may be the beginning of something bigger And of course as we go forward in this At times it's really almost overwhelming What are some of the setbacks been that we can pray about? Number one the lack of money This vision for the Muslim world came simultaneously with the biggest financial crisis in the history of LM.

It's a miracle that survived at all And we need to pray specifically for money for the Muslim world every Muslim country It wants more money for projects except I think Turkey has money And again, this is interesting you get such a great variety of countries, but Turkey has literature money there are other holdups there So the lack of funds has been big number two the lack of prayer there is a lack of prayer There is a lack of prayer people say why are the prayer meetings so long if we don't have extended prayer meetings we can't even get to some of these places and People there's so many different images we get people always want worship worship worship. We want worship So we give the whole first hour maybe the prayer meeting to worship The third setback has been the state and the indifference in the church, you know It really bothers me at times that in LM we tend to certain however others know take the blame for everything ourselves and And people really get discouraged feel everything is our fault But you know as one member suffers we all suffer and a lot of people out in the churches They think we're the most alive aggressive sharp thing that's working in the mission world today most of us in LM don't feel that way because we see our sins and our failures and our weaknesses and most of us so Idealistic it seems compared to the task what we're doing seems so small But if you go too far that way and get discouraged then what you do It's gonna be even smaller pretty soon. You wouldn't even exist spiritually speaking and I feel we must realize the church does not have this vision for the Muslim world We are at that guard.

We are radicals. They don't even want us to come many church doors are completely close to me And one of the reasons there's a fear I will challenge people to go to the regions beyond They wouldn't necessarily say Muslim world it to them anything outside of their own church would be dangerous in terms of their thinking especially with an interdenominational ragtime charismatic non-charismatic You know, I mean they just and and I don't think we realize how much gossip there is against OM What we're seeing in Venezuela is is, you know, that's a peak we see them the continued into innuendos the gossip Get back to the churches and they decide they don't want to send any recruits anymore or the Muslim world is too big a challenge They can't get their people to even evangelize down the road. It's the either-or mentality.

We're constantly fighting and It's something we must pray against in a stronger way and realize our responsibility Then there's the setbacks through visas children's education illness people being shot at the doorstep people dying of weird diseases at night and the setbacks and We must take courage that despite these setbacks Somehow we still got these armies in these various Muslim countries all over the world and the reinforcements by God's grace are coming Another setback, of course is the fact there are so many burdens so many challenges We are interested in the abortion issue, we are wanting to be good Christian citizens I filled out my forms this morning to get my ballots You know, I couldn't even understand the form But my faith fill out and I get my balance so I can be a good American and vote for you know, I mean who am I supposed to vote for maybe you can let me know OM is a movement that is trying to preach the whole counsel of God Now if you preach the whole counsel of God and you try to live the whole counsel of God You're gonna be a busy person and you're gonna be frustrated how many of you have ever been Frustrated with so many burdens so many things you long to do never been frustrated. I was a major disease on planet Earth Then of course another major setback has been the disunity there has been disunity even within OM This year was the year of some of the greatest disunity I've ever seen in terms of basic philosophy Not personal and personality is always some of that but basic philosophy basic ideas even in connection with the Muslim world It's impossible to agree on one strategy. There are many different strategies.

There are many different kinds of Muslims and When David Hicks launched a real heavy Challenge in that magazine OM world and released it to every prayer partner in the United States Presenting the vision of the Muslim world watch the 20,000 people of course There are a few things there for security reasons shouldn't have been mentioned and the memo started to come on his desk that you know I'm sure he found to some degree difficult, but you see that's part of the problem. We're dealing with heavy security areas One mistaken literature and propaganda can cause a lot of difficulty So one hand we want to emphasize the Muslim world motivate the church Motivate God's people make recruits. On the other hand, there's still a small voice that says don't say too much Don't say too much and those with a mouth like me that has an ability to get in trouble Be easier just to not say anything because I don't want to get in trouble the security guys.

I've already been in jail for that for the Russians, of course, not the OMers, so This is a this is a challenge and the enemy has Continually tried especially this year to bring disunity to bring in use gossip and differences of viewpoint to slow us down Endless hours time days weeks of discussion to get the the ship of God in a sense all of OM I'm speaking of back on course and I feel that through the last weeks It's not perfect But I feel perhaps more of my soul than I have in a year a couple of years That by God's grace OM both the ship side and the land side is back on course It's not perfect and they'll never be sort of the simplistic total healing over all that we've been through Because there will be scars but I believe the OM ship is back on course and I pray that these two teams here will commit themselves through love and work and Christ centered living to help keep it that way and that will enable us to have the greatest forward thrust in The Muslim world together with the other societies that I believe the church has ever known up to now. Let's pray

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