

# Ict Devotions 22 March 1996

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of engaging the Korean church in America and the challenges faced by young Korean Americans in missions.*

**Duration:** 49:28

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:15

**Topics:** "Devotions"

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## Description

In this sermon transcript, the speaker reflects on the challenges and differences faced in the present day compared to the past. They express gratitude for the vision and events organized by the church, praising the generosity and specific works done overseas. The speaker also mentions the goal of increasing the number of missionaries in the field. The sermon transcript concludes with expressions of gratitude for the warm welcome, uplifting fellowship, and the positive response received during a recent trip to Korea.

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## Transcript

I thought I might just begin by, since I found this here in the pulpit, read a few of the feedback quotes from the Christian Leaders' Luncheon we had yesterday. First of all, thanks to all of you who made that possible, including some people who are not here this morning. I don't think we can measure the importance of that kind of meeting.

In fact, it might be good to just say that in the birth of O.M. in Britain, pastors' meetings were at the very heart of the whole strategy. It used to go throughout the whole country, I can remember well, since I took a lot of them. Having these pastors' meetings, because of course as the work was being born, people were frightened, there was considerable opposition.

You sometimes wonder whether those days when there was such opposition had advantages over the day that we now live in, where O.M. has tremendous credibility and is accepted as a major missionary force in the country. Because I guess in those days, people either loved us or hated us. Hated would be perhaps too strong a word.

But today, the bigger problem we often find is indifference. What's new? At the same time, we've got to bloom where we are. We can't turn the pages of history back.

But I praise God for those of you who have this vision, to have this event and other events. George Burwer for Prime Minister, comment here. Very helpful and motivational.

Thanks for your--I hadn't seen this before, by the way. Thanks for your generosity and specific outline of works you're understanding overseas. Next time, make it an all-day affair.

Useful and stimulating for vision. An enormous encouragement as sending church. We have 12 on the field, wow.

We have a goal of 24 by the year 2004. Very brilliant, excellent, superb meal. Great presentation, challenging talk.

Thank you. Helpful information. Looking forward to the visit of Chaco Thomas later this month.

Everyone was so cordial, helpful, sweet, and lovely. All in all--watch your cynicism. All in all, the time, including listening to George Burwer and Associates, was both beneficial spiritually, very well spent time-wise.

Praise the Lord. Thank you very much. Impressive fellowship.

Most everybody added some kind of a thank you. Thanks for the invite. We'll be working toward furthering the vision.

Wonderful welcome and meal. Most impressive time. Wonderful hospitality.

Very uplifting. God is a God of the impossible. We continue to lift the 1040 window in daily prayer.

Enormous encouragement is ascending church. Let's just have a couple of people give thanks and pray concerning yesterday. Amen.

I'd like to just say a few words about our recent time. Graham and I in the States, because if I don't say something now, and this tape is going out to other team members who can't be with us this morning, then probably it won't get said because next week is the area leaders meeting. There's just so much to share.

I think, to be honest, one of the highlights of our trip to the States was in connection with what happened just a few days with the Koreans. Just to give you a little background, there's an enormous number of Korean churches in America, actually a couple thousand. 500,000 Koreans just in Southern California.

500,000. But up to now, there have hardly been any Korean Americans going into missions. The mission trust has all come out of Korea.

We even started OM Korea a couple of years ago. So far, the results have been small. Of course, Stephen is studying at the same time as leading that work, Stephen Choi.

Young Chu is working with him. But it's amazing what happened just in this past weekend. When they decide the Koreans are going to do something, they generally move it on a little higher level than the average situation.

As we were greeted at the Hotel Sheraton and welcomed back to Los Angeles, we had been down to San Diego for a day. Suddenly it dawned on us that something, as they said in the opening meeting, historical was happening. That this was to be one of the breakthrough events in which the course of history of the

Korean church in America would change.

I don't believe overstating that. Because in Korean culture, it's only when main senior pastors make a decision to do something that things begin to really move. I'm not saying that nothing happens before that.

But we had this dinner before the main evening rally. There was significant publicity for this rally. They were aiming at getting 1,000 people there.

I don't know if they had quite that many. It was aimed very much at the 1.5 generation. That's a new term that they taught me over supper.

That's people who are not second generation. To be second generation, you have to be born in the United States. 1.5 means you were born in Korea and you came over when you were just very, very young.

So you are fluent in English. Someone else referred to it as the bridge generation. These pastors were giving me orientation over the evening meal about the 1.5 generation and how important they are.

Now that, I spoke very briefly at that meal, had to be interpreted into Korean. But at the rally, as these young people came together, you could feel yourself leaving Korea and arriving in California. The music, the way they dress, the way they speak.

For the first time in my life, I spoke to Koreans without any interpretation, which meant a couple of the pastors maybe didn't understand too much. But the young people have no problem understanding. I was really in my more relaxed mode.

It's harder to use humor when you're speaking through interpretation. But the response was quite overwhelming. Many, many of them stood to make a specific commitment.

It's clear that there are many of them that would be willing to go. They met us at the airport when we flew out the other day and gave us a big thick pile of these decision cards because some of them put a note on the back. I just didn't share about world missions but shared about making Christ Lord and some people wrote feedback in connection with that.

This summer, there is a huge gathering in Wheaton of Korean-Americans and some from Korea, again in connection with world missions. In an amazing way, some months ago the door opened for me to be one of the speakers at that conference, which is a little bit interesting as I have to go from Singapore to Chicago and then back to Finland and back to Korea. But I would like us just to take a few moments to really pray that the Spirit of God may fan this fire that is ignited.

I'm not saying it got ignited during the weekend we were there. It was already ignited, but what happened this past weekend is a significant breakthrough. And it's interesting, again, to trace God's working.

The senior pastor of the church that I spoke at the next morning, I spoke at two out of four of their Sunday morning services, five, six hundred or so at each service. And the senior pastor of that church was greatly impacted at Network 94. Sometimes when we meet people from another nation, they just look like ordinary people that we met before from that nation.

And yet often, being out of their own culture, they may be very quiet. We may not even get a conversation with them. But God is doing something, and that man is chairman of the Korean American Board of Directors.

Just quite amazing. Let's just pray concerning the Korean challenge. Dr. Ok in Korea, chairman of the board there, has asked Stephen to return to Korea as our work has grown so fast there, is so complex, he is really needed there.

It means finishing his studies. He's studying at Fuller back in Korea rather than in California, and that will bring, I think, a fair amount of challenge. So let's just, before I share anything else, just pray, especially for this Korean situation.

And let's give thanks. It's the end of the day. It's more work, including more work for Tyrone.

There are other things that we really need to see a breakthrough in, especially the financing, the financing of this. They were very generous to us on that weekend, which is always encouraging. But it will take a lot more finance to get especially career missionaries out, and there's a long way to go.

It's just a whole new movement being born. And the fact that so much is happening in Korea will not automatically mean that it will happen among Korean Americans. And you can imagine the cultural collision there in the minds of many of these young people.

As often their parents do not speak English, they come from very traditional homes, not all of them, about 20 percent they estimated the Koreans in the States may be Christian. And then the great California culture. You can almost feel the collision in the meeting.

Of course, they're quite happy to speak openly about it. They have their own Korean American English magazine. In fact, after all these meetings on the Saturday, I was just about falling over, and then there was a big food spread I was supposed to go to, and then there was these people wanting to interview me, this girl with this huge camera, and another girl with a tape recorder.

I said I couldn't possibly do that, but then after trying to figure out how we could do it on the Sunday, I decided to do it anyway. So late that night we did this interview for this magazine. Last month it was Tony Campalo.

I never had this woman with a camera. Just doing this brief interview, I must have taken about 35 photographs with the hope that maybe one of them would be of any value. I was totally jet-lagged and wiped out and probably looked pretty disgruntled by then.

But anyway, Tony Campalo, who was on the issue that was given to me as a sample, didn't look so good either, so maybe that will balance out. Let's pray for the Korean challenge there in the States. Yes, Father, we thank you for this 1.5 generation and the second generation of Koreans there in the States.

We just think of the potential. It's quite staggering. We think of how Koreans even generally are known in California for being business people and hardworking, and yet we know there's also great complexity, great prejudice between different groups in the States.

Lord, we just cry out to you. We thank you for this huge meeting of promise keepers, 40,000 pastors a couple of weeks ago, and the impact this is having, yet we see Satan counterattacking, trying to bring division. Lord, we just pray for our own operation based out of Tyrone and now the new base for the ship in Oregon.

We just cry out to you that somehow they'd be strengthened in the work. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Just a few other words about that USA trip. I think most of you know it was Biola University that brought me over on the last week. Again, they have one of the best mission conferences of any university in the United States.

They even dismiss all classroom activity so that people can give themselves to the mission's event. I won't say much except we had a huge response there, written response. I discovered that we actually some years ago started the prayer concert as part of the mission's conference, and so they carried that on, little mini prayer conference, fairly good attendance.

Again, when you go to the universities in the United States or colleges, you have a very different audience facing you today. The increased number of people of ethnic minority background is just quite staggering, and this will also be true at Urbana coming toward the end of the year, something we've been promoting everywhere we have gone, especially with that special tape that we made. So Biola was a challenge, and it was a big response.

Of course, many different mission agencies are all there trying to get recruits. One thing we know, there is no lack of people showing initial interest in getting involved in missions, at least among the young people. There must be at least 50,000 in America.

I've just increased my figure from 20,000. It's purely a guess based on my experience in many different colleges, and just multiplying that, considering all the other colleges and all the other places and considering the fact that we probably will have 18,000 people at Urbana. But statistically, it's shown that only a small percentage of those who show that initial interest, raising a hand, coming forward, when they're often rather young, ever become career missionaries.

I guess because we as Americans can see the complexity in our own country, we're quick to grab on to some of these fantastic statements that are being made about Latin Americans coming and about people of other cultures coming, all of which have elements of truth. But it's certainly, as someone who ministers in all these different places, to leave out the Americans or the British or any of these other western countries where missions is a bit old hat would be a fatal mistake at this stage. Because the amount of structure, missionary, healthy structure that's in place in those countries is so significant and so ready to take people and train them and put them in a structure where they can function.

Whereas in many other countries, these structures are just being born. They're just being born with all the complexity of that. We see that in our own work in every one of those lands.

So let's not think either or as we look toward a great number of new missionaries. But it's got to be both. Again, we continue to get feedback from Wheaton College, another pace-setting college, and it's very, very exciting.

I don't have time to say more about this, except that a lot of our blessing over on this trip didn't come just in these meetings. It came in talking to individuals and it came on the telephone, including a phone conversation with a man who's now set up a matching fund that will produce 200,000 New Testaments for India. He will supply half of the money.

If we raise \$35,000, he will give \$35,000 more for Project Light, specifically for New Testaments in a variety of languages. This particular matching fund has less limitations than other funds in that it doesn't have to be business people. It can be churches.

It can be anybody. It can be somebody on OM who wants to give to Project Light. The money will be doubled.

Pray for us as we try to sort out how that works. So it was an encouraging time. If I don't seem overly as enthusiastic as sometimes I am, it's because of getting up at this particular time and being jet-lagged and only getting myself to sleep at about 1.30 by use of a sleeping pill, something I haven't done before, but it certainly is relatively effective.

Working late last night, I came across a letter, March 22nd. What's today's date? Amazing. March 22nd, 1995.

Dear friends of ICT, this is a pure coincidence. I was watching this most fantastic video my wife has recorded on rollercoaster mania and discovered that Blackpool is way beyond anything I've ever calculated. How Blackpool could be such a center? I knew they had this one huge rollercoaster, but such a center of rollercoaster mania and how I missed that, I don't know.

But this was just an incredible video about rollercoasters. Unless you think it's irrelevant, the main star in this documentary was a vicar who kept slipping in his testimonies about Jesus, including his Jesus T-shirt. And he's one of the leading rollercoaster extremists in the world.

He shared how he met his wife and they got engaged on a rollercoaster. And then he went to America and traveled on every wooden rollercoaster. And at the end of this feature, they were on this incredible rollercoaster at Coney Island, where I've had the privilege of also almost having my back permanently ruined.

They're sharing about Jesus and about their Christian faith. It would be very interesting to know, get a survey of their reactions, the general British public to this rollercoaster vicar. But it was very motivating.

As I was doing that, I was going through some back papers. And I came across this letter, March 22nd. Dear Friends of ICT, It looks like April will be one of the worst months ever for finance here on ICT, which includes both our London and Carlisle preparations.

We usually forget, don't we, some of these things? Maybe we don't forget. Support for our people and team has taken a sudden drop. We have large amounts of overdue bills, not enough money to give people their basic allowances.

It's not easy to share this. But I felt most people who get this letter, this letter, by the way, only goes out to our ICT, went out to our ICT prayer list, who get this letter would like to know the truth. It's not easy to understand finance in God's work.

Many major Christian groups are in financial difficulty. It's not just OM that has this situation. I won't take time to read the rest of the letter.

God heard our prayers and brought us out of that. Kept us out for a few months, then we sunk back in again and brought us out. I don't have any specific news about finance for April.

I may have on Monday morning. But I do have some news concerning something that impacted us in a huge way last May, and that is the New Era collapse. I talked to a top lawyer involved in that, and it looks like they're very close to a settlement which will put approximately 50 cents on every dollar into the hands

of those who lost money.

This is being made possible because groups that receive positive money are returning it. Now, not all those groups are doing that, which is creating some tension. Of course, some of them, they don't have it.

They can't raise it or whatever. Well, I'd like us just to pray, and I'm going to lead you in prayer because of the shortness of time, that somehow we may see this settlement. I mean, this will be a phenomenal financial breakthrough, not just for us, but hundreds of organizations, even though it's only half.

Keep in mind that many other organizations already received huge amounts of money. So let's just pray because of the time, and if you could possibly keep this in prayer. It is a dimension of spiritual warfare, this incredible situation.

And also, I'm going to lead in prayer for Jack Bennett, the man who's the CEO of this company. A lot of the accusations against him have proven to be false, but he is a man that is still devastated. I talked to him on the phone again a couple of weeks ago.

I'd like to pray for him and his family. Many other groups are still struggling to recover from this. It doesn't always happen quickly.

Lord, I just pray for the men and women who are involved in trying to settle a New Era situation. And Lord, if we could see even half the money that got invested in this going back to us and to Christian agencies, this would be a huge, huge victory. Maybe a partial victory.

I don't know what to call it. We do continue to pray for the different lawyers and people involved in this. We know so easily a setback comes in, and we're back to square one in certain ways.

We pray for Jack Bennett and his family as they, of course, live with this daily over their heads, not knowing about the future as the court case, civil case still goes on, possible jail sentence. We cry out to you that somehow there be a supernatural infusion of grace in this situation. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. By the way, this one lawyer I spoke to still believes this is the biggest thing facing American philanthropy. He made a statement which I'm not going to repeat because I think it was exaggerated, but he just felt if we don't get this nailed down and get this breakthrough, it will continue to affect giving to philanthropic agencies, not just Christian, there in the United States for many years to come because there have been several other major fiascos, the Jimmy Baker thing, and then the United Way.

Some of you would not know, but the United Way is a way that people give charitable income to the United Way, one gift, and then they distribute it to all the charities. It's largely secular. And one of their top men about two years ago discovered major fraud, and that is huge news in philanthropic circles there in the United States.

So let's continue to battle on that, and that certainly will have a big impact on OM if we can see that breakthrough. I wanted to close just by giving some practical ideas on how you can help. Again and again I have felt and have seen that most people on ICT, whatever their particular financial struggle, have seriously wanted to help the situation.

And many weeks ago I just listed 13 things that anybody on the team, even people outside the team, but I was thinking internally, could do to help in this situation. I think most people realize that I consider this

every single day, seven days a week, a major task that God has given me the privilege of being involved in. Firstly, the overall financial health of OM and helping raise the finance through prayer, faith, and action.

And then secondly, ICT and special projects. I'm very motivated in this. I can't say it's always easy.

Some of you have expressed, how could you help? Apart from just working on your own finance and even in connection with that. So I was somehow allowing a few creative juices to flow, which are always mixed juices. Straw and wheat often coming together.

And I wrote these 13 things down. And I hope you would consider these because it certainly will build unity. I think some of you are aware that we're dealing with some very significant pockets of disunity in the movement right now.

Some of them, one particular case we've worked on now, Peter Maiden, almost every other day for a month and we've not yet seen a breakthrough. And I know that financial pressure often is one of the key things the enemy tries to use to bring disunity because so many different people have different ideas about what we're supposed to do. And the unity somehow, in the midst of all of our struggles here on ICT, the unity we've been able to maintain through this is really more encouraging than money.

If I had to choose between money and unity, I think I would choose unity. That's probably not a practical statement in some ways because without the money, you have difficulty living. But I think you know what I mean.

My first way that we can help in this is to try to understand. Try to understand what the leaders of OM are wrestling with. Try to understand what our churches are wrestling with.

Your own church that may have lowered your support rather than taking a reaction mode to try to take a proactive mode in your correspondence with them, in your understanding of them. Because believe me, local churches are really going through the fire in many, many places. And I think as we attempt to understand and have discernment, that is such a huge help.

Number two, let's be thankful for what we have seen. This is especially complex because God has been so generous with OM and to be quite honest, many of the groups we're in touch with and individuals are not experiencing that same degree of blessing financially. So we're in a constant state of struggle because the moment we see that we want to give and yet we have to control our giving when in fact we are still in debt.

It's a great frustration. It's unfortunate that some Christians especially are judgmental of business people. One of the ways we're judgmental of business people is by making these little super spiritual statements about never going in debt.

That's considered very spiritual. Which immediately condemns 80% of the entire business community in the world because there's no business people that are operating without borrowing money, including STL big time. That's just normal.

It's almost impossible to be a farmer, for example, in modern society unless you borrow money. And in many, many other businesses. So if someone has a personal conviction for themselves that they never go in debt in the modern world, I try to respect that.

But if they stand in judgment of other people who operate differently, that becomes to me a grace killing mechanism. So we give thanks for what we've seen in OM. God has so blessed this movement financially through the struggles because that in itself is not always just a simple black and white thing.

And I like to be careful. I'm crying out to God. I think you know this.

Be careful what I say yet without somehow getting in total bondage and ending up not saying what needs to be said. Thirdly, free finance, directly or indirectly, is a real encouragement. In my life, I'm sure it's true in yours, little things are a great encouragement.

Some of the little notes that some of you have sent me over the last years concerning these things have been a great source of encouragement. But as we attempt to see finance not only come in for basic survival and the things that have to be done but also for special projects and to help people all over the world, there's nothing more important than prayer, personal prayer, spontaneous prayer, praying without ceasing in our prayer times. Fourthly, taking your own situation seriously but not allowing guilt or bondage to come in or overreaction.

It is completely normal, completely normal for us to have some financial stress. Ex-OMers generally, the ones I have met, have more financial stress than OMers. There is a lot of care in OM.

There is the value of being able to share. On our very team, it's people's extra finance who are seeing extra money come in and that changes from year to year. That's helping those who maybe aren't quite seeing enough.

And we know that verse in Corinthians we've often read that indicates that that is completely biblical and happens within our society and within our churches. What a phenomenal thing if the wealthier churches in America, I use this as an example, would help a little more some of the poorer churches. You have tremendous diversity of wealth in churches in the United States.

And if there could be a little more of that kind of sharing that we've had the privilege of seeing, it would be an enormous help to the body of Christ. I may share more about that in another meeting because the recent Promise Keepers events in the States have launched in a large-scale way a movement of reconciliation. And one of the most exciting meetings I went to on this trip was a breakfast with people of different racial backgrounds there by the Mexican border.

And it was really an exciting meeting. I'll try to pick up on that some other occasion. Fifthly, being faithful in your own letters, your prayer letters, your phone calls, your thank you letters, having a specific goal.

It would be wonderful to hear from some people, a little more feedback about some of your specific goals in terms of adding new prayer partners and supporters. One of the beautiful things in what we're attempting to do is when we sign someone up to receive our prayer letter, whether they ever give financially or not, they are valuable assets for building the kingdom. I just hope that everybody on the team will be alert, have sample prayer letters with you wherever you go, or have some kind of a card with your address.

If you don't ever make it known that you're looking for specific prayer partners, then probably you're not going to get them, except in the odd occasion. Sixthly, we want to aim higher than for basic survival. We want to try to make efforts to see personal support coming in to cover at least some of those business and what we call sometimes gray area expenses, like going to the general council at the end of August, where

in a sense it's business, and in the bigger sense it's personal, and it's sometimes hard to measure.

We're thinking that if for the general council people can at least see half the finance come in, that we would try to find the other half from the general fund. That's sort of the general direction we're leaning in right now as people wrestle with going over there. But let's try to aim a little higher in terms of our basic support.

Let's make sure we're including, and a number of people have indicated that they are, the percentage that is taken out of our money before it ever gets to us. And we don't despise that, because those people who are getting that small expense percentage is not mainly for their personal support, it's for business expenses, huge expenses. We've seen in our team just what it is to get a good photocopy machine and all kinds of other equipment today that costs money.

Seventhly, being concerned about other people's situations. God wants to teach us not to just be burdened for our own situation, but for other people's situations. Not even just within OM, but outside of OM.

And praise God for the opportunities for generosity we've had. Eighthly, to help sell books. We have quite a large team.

If on Monday morning, everybody who's had some contact out through meetings turns in even 50 pound, it completely revolutionizes the first two days of the week, because there's a lot of people. We must not just think in terms of big gifts. It is mainly small gifts and small book sales and other things along that line that are keeping us going.

We know when it comes to selling books and the distribution of books is one of the ways that Special Projects helps to subsidize ICT as we do many other teams around the world for books that are often paid for out of Special Projects. We are able to keep 100% of that money. So even when we use a donation basis, those Special Projects may suffer through that depending on the way you evaluate it.

I don't evaluate it that way because one of the main ministries of Special Projects is giving away books. And unless we understand this paradigm shift that has taken place so that we consider it's just as vital, just as biblical to give away a book as to sell it. Different strokes for different folks, different strategy for different situations.

Keeping in mind also the fact that we are often able to get books at such low prices and God has been very, very generous with us when it comes to supplying books. So selling books and other related things like our globes, it's all an enormous help. And I think of OM in general.

If OM in general could take even a few baby steps in this area each month, it would make a huge impact on financial health. And in fact, we know what that is already doing around the world. Number nine, let's be good stewards of small things.

I know some people feel I have changed from the early days in terms of pinching pennies. You better praise God that I have changed from the early days because most of you have no idea what I was like in the 60s, much less the year I got married. It's a miracle my marriage even withstood my extremism, which is grace killing.

Quite ugly even though there's great humor about it because it's either a laugh or cry situation. We'll never totally arrive at the place where we're absolutely sure of every expenditure. But if we don't somehow sometimes spend money when we have some doubts, we will get ourselves into a very, very difficult kind of situation.

So it's an ongoing struggle. But I am committed and I think the whole team are committed to good stewardship. We'll never all agree on how that should work.

We're also all living with different amounts of time. Not everybody on the team has the same amount of so-called free time or the same ethos in terms of their time and how time affects money. One person might save an hour and produce many thousands of dollars.

Another person may save an hour and actually not too much money comes as a result of it. We may cry for fairness but we live in a world that doesn't seem to be very fair. So let's keep wrestling with that.

Good stewards in small things. It does add up. But neurosis, race killing, judgmentalism in one whack can do more damage and set us back more than all the pennies we have pinched for many, many months.

So it's a struggle and I'd appreciate prayer in that area. And then number 10, it's good for all of us on the team to especially have some kind of budget and to know what we are spending. We are doing that as a movement but we have no mechanism to force families or individuals to do that.

We can only encourage. Again, we are still learning what it is as a movement, especially on our team, to operate within budget restrictions. And this puts a lot of work on certain people's plates and we need a lot of grace.

Number 11, willing to share. Again, I long to see more happen in the area of willingness to share. Not so easy for fast lane people who are away a lot, who are traveling a lot.

Sometimes it's just simpler to have your own than try to share when there's other complexities that are interacting. We are not firstly a community. We turned away from that concept way back in the late 60s.

We are an evangelistic missionary fellowship that has a community. We hope a beautiful community element, but community will always have the harder elements and the difficulties as well. And we can always think that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence.

What if everybody in OM were all little totally independent operators handling all their finances privately? That may look appealing if you've just gone through some kind of relational hassle concerning money. But believe me, it isn't that simple on the other side of the fence. And relational hassles are taking place there as well.

And the financial thing is always very, very difficult when there is a shortage of money. Number 12, to avoid gossip and misunderstandings. This is where, above all else, we come back to the challenge of being more Christ-like.

How would Christ react to some of the tough situations we find ourselves in? Have we ever just sat down and thought and prayed through that? How would our Lord react? And to study the Gospels and to see the Lord speaking about money, to see Him handling situations that seem to be rather difficult, well, it's very distressing at times when we see gossip getting out of control in God's work. I'm hoping we don't have too

much of this in OM. We always will have some.

But it's a beautiful thing when people will practice Matthew 18, and if they have some question, they have something that's bothering them, to go to that person and try to talk it out. Some people say, well, I tried that, it didn't work. Most good things in life you have to try more than once.

Don't use an excuse of past hurt to keep you from attempting something new in the year to come. And then my final point, let's all of us, in our weakness and in our need, try to take ownership of this vision. ICT, special projects, what we are attempting to do here in serving the whole body, it is a particular ministry, it is a particular vision.

It takes an increasing amount of money to keep it going. We're including Carlisle, of course, in this. And we need more people who will take ownership of ICT and to some degree special projects, but especially ICT.

Sometimes we sense people on our team have taken ownership of other visions and other fields which we have always encouraged, but have sort of a standoff attitude toward ICT. Well, that's ICT, almost to the point of hearing, well, really, I'm sort of on that team, but I'm not really of that team. Or my finances are different, or, well, I never agreed with that anyway, but, well, they usually say praise the Lord at the end.

Let's not set ourselves back from this and think this is someone else's task or vision, but let's somehow take ownership. If the word ownership is too strong, I don't think it is. And in the whole task of world missions, one of the greatest needs is for the Church to take ownership.

And part of the heart of Acts 13 breakthrough is to put more of the ownership of the whole task back in the hands of the Church. And that's why these little pastors' conferences, which almost have been experimental, they were organized, and that vision came simultaneously with a vision of Acts 13. They actually didn't come one from the other.

But God knew they were happening at the same time, and He was putting different things on different people's hearts. You and I know that when people take ownership of OM and feel it's their movement, it brings fantastic breakthrough. It's interesting that in the midst of this, Quinta, for the first time in a long time, produced a basic letter written by me offering no turning back free to people who would write in and challenging them about a few other things.

We've had the greatest avalanche of personal letters through the general Quinta mailing, which is the really big mailing in this country, than ever before in recent years. And it's quite a task for us to process that. But as I've read through these letters, it's been amazing, the ownership, the sense of partnership, it's a better word perhaps, that these many of the very ordinary people who are our prayer partners and who carry this work.

I may put some of those letters together to read or share with you. So if people out there are taking ownership of this, partnership and giving sacrificially and financially, how much more those of us on the team should do the same? And as we're bonded with one another, and there are all different kinds of bonding. I feel a very strong bonding at times to people who because of my particular situation, I don't actually get that much time with them.

But when the crunch comes, when the crisis comes, when the difficulty comes, or some other special situation, that bonding then will become active. So we can be bonded with people without getting huge

amounts of in-depth fellowship within us. Most of us have so many other people outside our team that we're linked with and bonded with and ministering to or helping.

But if we're bonded together by faith, like-mindedness, commitment to the vision, to the word, then when the crunch comes, that bonding will hold. And we saw that on this team in a very real way in the process of Philip Morris being taken from us. And if that had been your situation rather than Philip's, that same bonding, that same commitment, of course in varying degrees, it would have been there.

And that is a much more significant, beautiful thing than we can measure and is worth more than all the money any of us ever sort of put into this work or raise or find in order to keep it all going. Let us pray. Father, we thank you for these just practical thoughts that we've reflected on over this time together.

Help us to contextualize these things into our own situation. And Lord, if each one of us can gather just a few of these things and begin to put them into practice in a better way, we believe the impact will be felt. We thank you, God, that as we look back over a year of considerable battle, not only financially, but in many other realms, that we can testify of your sovereign grace, especially through the home-going Philip and then Ted, and many other things around the globe that have impacted us in a huge way.

We give you the praise. We give you the glory. And though, Lord, I know, especially in my life, I so easily see the problems, so easily see the complexities, so easily begin to get intimidated by those things, we thank you for the challenge to be proactive, to somehow, when we see the difficulties, the problems, the misunderstandings, and all that sometimes can be connected with that, we make that determination to go forward and to believe you for the breakthrough.

And we just thank you for this past year, and we're trusting you to take us through, day by day and week by week, through the quite significant transition we're in as a team right now. And we pray for the Petra people as they move to Carlisle. We pray in connection with the changes going on here in the building.

We thank you for this tremendous news of a relatively very positive visit from the fire inspection people. We don't take these things for granted. And we continue to pray for wisdom, discernment, safety, and biblical Christ-likeness and maturity as we wrestle with a huge range of complexities on this team and throughout the world.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Thank you for your patience.

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