

Keeping Om Youthful

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the need for mission organizations to maintain their youthfulness and relevance to effectively engage younger generations in ministry.

Duration: 1:17:10

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, Acts 4:31

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of remaining youthful and open to learning in our faith. He encourages the audience to continue reading and listening to the Word of God, especially from the perspective of younger people. The speaker also highlights the significance of having close friendships with younger individuals. He mentions the need to stay grounded in biblical principles and not be swayed by worldly influences. The sermon concludes with a reminder to hold onto the basic doctrines and principles of the faith, despite any intimidation or pressure from Satan.

Transcript

I never cease to be amazed after ministering for the last 30 years, I've just had my 30th spiritual birthday a few days ago, how the Lord in his mercy keeps giving new messages. Of course, I'm not afraid of sharing old messages, and this morning I was just reading and praying, and this new message came to my heart, and I wanted to just share it with you. It's not a message just for India, it's a message for all of OM, and I'm wondering why I didn't get this message before, because this subject has come up again and again, similar related subjects, and though I've spoken a little about it, and have answered sometimes questions, and this afternoon we will have, or maybe this evening, a question-answer session sometime, I have never given a message just on this subject.

Of course, usually when the Lord gives me something, that doesn't mean it's perfect, it doesn't eliminate the human factor, it's not a revelation or anything like that, it's just a burden of biblical principles and ideas that often just clarify something we've already seen in the word of God. I want you to turn to the book of Timothy. There are a number of cassette messages from our time here in Butwal, some are down in Gorakhpur being reproduced, and I would be grateful especially if any of you who are leaving OM in the future, you could listen to the seven major blunders.

Some of you have heard the seven major emphasis and the seven major messes. Seven major blunders when people leave OM, and believe me, when they go home after their time on OM, they make big

mistakes. Blunder means big mistake.

So we shared about that, and then the day before yesterday we shared further thoughts, a few more thoughts on the seven major emphasis, the little leaflets in Hindi and other languages. This morning I want to speak on how OM can keep its youth, how we can remain a movement with youth and vitality. You see, many mission organizations, especially in Europe, have run into difficulty because they're very traditional.

They got many of their ideas in the 19th century. By the way, we are now in the 20th century, for any of you who are not moving fast. I was reading in a letter this morning from one ex-OMer who has just been made an assistant to the director of one of these older missions.

He was just sharing the problem of trying to make the mission movement contemporary, so it will attract young people, because the old people are dying. And if the young people think this movement is just dominated by old people, and they're having so many old traditions, and they don't like our music, they're not going to join. This is why many of these missions are actually looking to OM, to give them workers.

In fact, more than ever before, over 100 different groups looking to a small or larger degree to OM, different parts of the world, for workers. And as you know, one of our goals, one of our main goals, is not our own growth. Most groups, their goal is their own growth.

Our goal is other people's growth. It's the most very radical concept. This past year, a number of the American mission groups have announced they want twice as many workers.

When one group announced it, then another group announced it. And then different people said, this is the year for big expansion. And they're all crying for workers.

We have not yet released our statistic, because God hasn't given us a particular number. But I think that one of our goals should be to supply workers for all these other groups that are asking God to double their numbers or increase their numbers. One of the most beautiful things about the ministry of OM, even though some of us are not very young anymore, God has given us the ear of the young people.

You will have to evaluate this in India, but if this was not true in India, I don't think there would be 400 people down at the AIC. Young people are happy to join OM, want to join OM. They feel when they're in OM, people are listening to what they're saying.

They're not just working as hired helpers for the older people, but they're co-workers, co-workers together in the battle. Now as OM gets older, we've passed our 25th anniversary mark for the work, if we go back to the earliest years, it wasn't called OM in the beginning. It was called Christian Youth Committee when it was there in the high school.

I think you know the story of how OM was born. Then it was called Send the Light, and I'm glad to see you're taking notes. Then you'll be able to pass the examination I give at the end of the day.

I'd like to, but we never seem to have time for that. But when the early days in Mexico, which goes back 28 years, was called Send the Light. But this September marks the 25th anniversary of the work in Europe.

And before OM arrived in Europe, it was very, very small, just in Mexico and a few of us involved. But it was in Europe in 1960, 61, 62, that God really worked in a special way and we took on the name Operation Mobilization. And soon we were known as a youth work.

People even described it, International Youth Organization. I always would try to correct that and would say OM is not a youth movement. It is a movement of people of all ages, but specializing in, of course, training young people.

From the earliest days, some of our key workers were not young people. We had never been against older people, saying no older people can come. And, of course, from the earliest days we put ourselves in subject to older people who became different prayer boards and different boards of directors.

And so OM is not a youth movement in that sense, but certainly its specialty has been among the young people. And 37,000 have had some kind of training in Operation Mobilization. Now that we have been going for more than a quarter of a century, most of you were not born when OM was born, we need to give thought to this important subject.

Why wait until 10 or 15 years from now when it will be a greater problem? It is only a small problem now. Better to start thinking about it when it is a small problem. And then we can understand what the Lord wants us to do and how we can keep our youthfulness and vitality.

I was always glad that we did not have the word youth in our name. Some movements have the word youth in their name and when you go to their meetings, everybody on the stage is over 50 or 60 years of age and it seems a little strange. This is not such a problem in Operation Mobilization.

I want to just read those words from 1 Timothy 4. We are not mainly here by the way today to listen to messages. This is the only message you will have, though you will get one message in the evening as we meet together with the missionaries. Tonight is the night, the one night a week the missionaries here meet together and I am speaking at that meeting.

Ray Eicher is going to be giving a word of testimony in a report about India, which I have just told him. And that we believe is going to be a blessed time. We appreciate prayers.

Tomorrow night we speak to the young men working in the hostel here. Most of them are not believers. We appreciate your prayer for that.

Here is the verse that you have had messages on many times. Let no man despise thy youth. 1 Timothy 4.12 But be thou an example of the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity.

Very, very important. Listen. Now, I want to speak on how to maintain our youthfulness.

What do I mean by that? Do I mean how do we make sure that everybody in OM is 19 through 25 years of age? No. That is not our goal. I think in the work of God we see that a spiritual movement will come into maturity.

And it has taken OM many years to come of age. Actually, if we are 28 years of age or 25, that is just the time in the life of a young man that serious things often can begin to happen. So our burden is not to turn back the pages, start all over again, make the same mistakes and go back to spiritual babyhood.

But our burden is to keep our youthfulness. The better way to express it really is that we may have always what the Holy Spirit wants for us today. Not last year.

Not ten years ago. Today. We want fresh, continued work of the Holy Spirit.

Some youthfulness can be just foolishness. And we don't want foolishness. On the other hand, if we overreact to some of the foolishness of youth, we will end up in the refrigerator of dead orthodoxy and traditionalism.

We don't want that either. We want to find a balance between dynamic youth and wisdom, understanding. We want to see many people going through OM as a training program and going on to work in other missionary groups.

But at the same time, we want the right mature men to stay with us for a longer term so that we can increase the effectiveness of the training program. And, you know, for years I was praying, God, give me the right man for England. The first man the Lord gave for England had difficulties with his wife.

I never made him the director, but I was thinking about it and he left. Another man then became, he seemed to be God's man for the work in England, Keith Beckwith. God was using him and God used his life to touch Peter Maiden.

Keith Beckwith was killed in a motor accident with the other British leader, two of them together. The administrator and the key leader killed in Poland. It was at the funeral service of Keith Beckwith that Peter Maiden, who was a backslider, rededicated his life to Jesus Christ.

But he did not join OM for a number of years. And at Keith Beckwith's death, a brother named Derek Virgin became the leader. And he led the work for a while, but he was led to leave and to take up a secular job.

Then Mike Evans was leading the work in France. We didn't have any money and so much responsibility kept coming back to me. And then Mike Evans, who was leading the work in France, he led England and France at the same time, traveling back and forth.

And that was not the best. Then Graham Scott, who was helping to pioneer the ministry of the ship, became the leader in Great Britain. He also was not convinced that was his ministry.

He did it for a couple of years. And then, in God's mercy, this young man, who had not been in OM very much, had been in the summers, just somehow I had met him one of those summers. I was corresponding.

I was praying. I had his little picture. He was so young.

That was Peter Maiden. And he took on this task, I guess, almost eight or nine years ago, and was the fulfillment, any many years of praying. Somebody who would stay in the same job so he could get to know Britain, OM Britain, the problems, the people, the ex-OMers, the policies, so we don't have to keep learning all those things over and again.

There are plenty of other things we can learn. There's no lack of things to learn. Even Peter Maiden, who now has become my associate international leader, that doesn't mean helper.

That means a co-leader, not a helper. He's like Alfie and Ray in one sense. A little bit different because we're all different.

We work in different ways together. So we thank God. There have been thousands of British people who have come, who have been trained.

They are back. Many now are pastors. Everywhere I go I meet pastors, vicars.

One church in Cambridge, a curate who was an OM graduate. In the morning I met him. In the evening I met another curate.

He was an OM graduate. We thank God for that. But we thank God for the few who are willing and get God's call to stay.

So we need the balance between the short-term training and the long-term trainers. People who do the training. People who help maintain the continuity.

Continuity means the smooth running of the work. Now we know no matter how much we want the work to go smoothly and decently and in order, there'll still be problems. There'll still be mistakes.

But if there are not some committed men, like Brother Ray and Brother Alfie and Joseph and Divakrum and Chaco, who stay, then it becomes much more difficult. In fact, at times it becomes impossible. In Spain, when there was no key leader to really carry the burden and the vision that we had, we had to close the work in Spain.

Or we let the work change and go into the churches. And it was just only a summer work. Now in the past few years, we have a Spanish brother, Pedro Arbalet.

He is at least staying there all year. There's more continuity. There's more wisdom and understanding.

So that he now leads the summer campaign and prepares throughout the year for the summer campaign. So we want to keep that youthfulness because we want to attract youth in order to train them. There's no glory in just being young for the sake of being young.

That's not the goal. We want to be able to attract youth. We want to be able to see youth coming to our meetings.

What if they don't come to the meetings? Because they think the music is old-fashioned. The preaching is old-fashioned. It's the same thing they've been saying for 25 years.

We don't want to go to that meeting. We want to go to the latest new meeting. There's a new Christian singer down the road with the latest music.

That's where we're going to go. We're not going to this OM missionary meeting. They're showing the Lagas film strip that they made 15 years ago.

Many of the missionary meetings, listen, many of the missionary meetings in churches and mission societies, the young people do not go. Many times now they are begging me to speak in their meetings because they know if I speak the young people will come. Recently, one mission group, a famous group in Africa, they've experienced some revival, very famous, with the older people, the Rwanda Mission.

Their speakers at their conferences for the last few years have always been over 60 or 70. The main speaker, a dear man of God, Joe Church, he's a great man of God, but he is some 70 plus and not able to always stay in contact with what young people are thinking and all this kind of thing. So very few young people were coming to their conference.

Now I've been living in England for 22 years. Never once have I been invited to be the speaker at this famous, very traditional, wonderful conference. Three years ago, they booked three years in advance.

Three years in advance. They wrote to me, will you speak at our conference in 1984? I was back in 1981. I love these people, I love their work.

Roy Hession's life was turned around through that great missionary work. So I agreed to go. And this year, the number of young people at the conference was five times.

The whole conference was full. There was no single seat, not a single bed. And many young people, some made commitments even to consider joining that mission.

Well, they have waited a long time. Whether they will be able to turn the clock back and get the workers, they desperately need workers in Uganda, in Kenya, mainly Uganda, Burundi. Whether they will be able to do that, that remains to be seen.

Of course, they are an Anglican mission society. They have openings in some churches that even we would not have. Many mission societies are experiencing the same thing.

They have very strong policies that they developed in the early part of this century. Their attitude toward divorce, their attitude toward short-term missions. Some up to recently, nobody could come short-term.

We believe in life commitment. They confuse geography with reality. We believe in life commitment, absolute commitment your whole life to Jesus Christ.

We are one of the many groups preaching this message, but we don't believe that's a geographical message, that you must be in OM for life. It's not an organizational message. There's no scriptural basis really to say you must join the same mission society and remain only in that mission society all of your life, even when that mission society gets thrown out of the one country that they're working in.

What happened to the China Inland Mission when they all had to leave China? They had to change. And I had just met with the director of the China Inland Mission. He asked me to come for lunch.

And his question is, how can we gain the young people of today? Also, some of the missions only allowed people from the West. Nobody could join from third world countries. They can only come as paid workers or they can be hired nationals.

They are nationals. We are paying them a small salary and they are doing some work. And there has been this double standard between where the missionary is and where the national is.

And that may have been good in 1925, but not in 1985. Coworkers from Singapore, Malaysia, India, Africa must come in as equals. They may not have the same amounts of money.

There will be different kinds of problems. It's not a simple matter, but our goal must be that we work together as equals. I was interviewed by a leading missionary magazine.

The subject was radical contemporary recruiting of youth. That magazine, they took almost the entire interview, published seven, eight pages. That has gone all over the world.

And I'm continually getting letters connected with that article that was found in the Evangelical Missionary Quarterly. You see, we are making a lot of mistakes in our missionary recruiting that is driving the young people away. Another example is that many missionary societies, the older societies, were anti-charismatic.

If you spoke in tongues, you could not even join. You could not even join. And God led us, because as OM was being born, at the same time the charismatic movement was growing, the Lord led us to maintain a loving, balanced attitude toward this new movement which became the fastest growing movement in the world.

And so many young people from the charismatic movement were happy to come on OM. They accepted that, that our roots, our roots were not in that movement, but that we were happy and they could speak in tongues in their own church. We are not teaching that tongue-speaking is of the devil.

They can speak in tongues in their private devotions. We only said for the sake of unity, for the cause of world evangelism, because so many believers are still very much afraid of this whole area. And in OM, where everybody is, this becomes a major thing.

Half of the churches that are linked with us will close their doors. They will close their doors. That means no recruits, no opportunities to bring spiritual revolution and to bring to them an understanding of these other kinds of Christians.

God often uses OM as a middle position so that brethren Christians can understand Pentecostal Christians and Methodists can understand the Salvation Army and Baptists can understand Anglicans. And there is a cost, there is a price to pay to maintain interdenominational integrity. We cannot say one thing and do something else.

We cannot tell the Lutheran churches in Germany, as we do, send your young people for training. But when they get on OM, we have a special program to de-Lutheranize them and to turn them against their church. That is unethical.

That is saying one thing and practicing something else. Of course, we cannot hinder different influences. Once a person is in OM, many influences will be there.

He will have to think through the issues. He will have to read his Bible. People will change when they're on OM.

This is why people are afraid sometimes of OM. They're thinking, we send our little young person who we have in our little denominational box with our label on his forehead to OM. He is going to change.

But you see, even if they do not come on OM, they are going to change. Modern young people cannot be kept in a box. Maybe a few, you can tie them to the coconut trees in Kerala.

Maybe a few, you can keep them in the paddy fields of Bihar. But young people are reading, young people are thinking, whether they join OM or not. They will discover there are other kinds of Christians.

They will discover there are other kinds of doctrines. They will discover some people are speaking in tongues. They will discover some people believe that speaking in tongues is the devil.

They are casting out the devil from those speaking in tongues. All kinds of people. And it is so sad that some of our churches are very narrow.

They do not want young people to learn about those things. Or if they learn, only what they say. This is why so many churches in India, each church is condemning the other church.

So many brothers I have spoken to, over one hundred people I have had personal conversations with here in Nepal, Kathmandu and Budhwal. So many, their churches are fighting, fighting. And this is sad.

We do not have to agree with other people. Let me teach you a basic doctrine of OM. You may not know this.

Some of you are young. OM teaches compassionate disagreeing. Have you ever heard that word? Compassionate disagreeing.

See, people do not understand that. They feel, if I disagree, it must be militant. This is from the devil.

This is false doctrine. This is evil. He is deceived.

And they are just speaking without thinking. And we as believers, we have our doctrines. Brother Ray Eicher's doctrines are not exactly the same as mine.

Actually, we have not had that much time to go into details about our little differences in doctrines. We are not all the same. Somebody from a Methodist background is not going to be to someone the same as a Presbyterian.

They are going to have differences. I am reading in these days, John Wesley. I also read Whitfield.

I read Finney. I read different men have different theological roots. John Wesley emphasized before he died the need for compassionate disagreements.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones, who was a strong Reformed preacher in England, the most famous. You read his book, Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure. And he believed even if you didn't agree, even if you felt that brother had false doctrines, you should always respect him and treat him with love.

And until we do this, in the Church of Jesus Christ, we are going to continue to grieve the Holy Spirit. We are going to continue to hinder what God wants to do. You don't have to agree.

You don't have to join that church. Some, when they leave OM, they are so proud, I don't agree with OM. I don't agree with personal money.

I don't agree with driving trucks. Driving trucks is not in Bible. I don't agree with social permission.

Social permission, not in Bible. They are going off, boop, boop, boop, just making much noise. Probably because someone stepped on one of their toes, spiritually.

Maybe they weren't appreciated. Maybe they weren't loved. Maybe the girl they wanted social permission with, they were not granted the permission.

Other brother was granted. I have not been granted. These people are playing favorites.

This movement is dominated by Americans or Malayalees or maybe CIA or maybe these birds. Many birds have been here throughout the meetings, listening, carrying messages out to other parts. Some people, because of their own spiritual problems, they just go and they speak nonsense.

The answer is to be able to compassionately disagree. You are not going to agree with everything OM does. You don't have to.

Do you think you are going to agree with everything your wife tells you when you get married? You are in for some big surprises, brothers. And if you don't have spiritual balance now, when you are married, you will get spiritual balance or you will be balanced. Someone once said, I think it's the title of the book, Adjust or Self-Destruct.

Adjust or Self-Destruct. If we are going to keep this youthfulness, there are some basic things we need to remember. I have listed five things with some subtitles as well.

Very quickly. We must remain learners. We must remain learners.

This means, number one, we keep reading, we keep listening, especially to the youth. Keep reading, we keep listening. Number three, we have close friends among younger people.

Close friends among younger people. Don't be ashamed if you do not get everything I am saying. We fully accept that some of you are learning English.

Don't worry about that. I am amazed how good English brothers are learning after one or two years in O.M. So never be ashamed that you don't understand everything or you can't write everything down because I am amazed at the brothers and sisters here in India, how much they are getting and learning, even some in one year, enough to have a conversation with my English. Sometimes I speak a little fast.

So number three, keep close friends among the young people today. I find now as a man of 46 actually just as easy to work with people 21 and 22 than when I was 22. In fact, it was more difficult then because I was more immature.

I would easily upset them with my strong temper and now I offend less young people. I work actually better. I always have one very young person working with me as my assistant.

This year it's Mark Soderquist. Last year, Dirk Roth. The year before that, Mark Parsons.

And we are just having tremendous sharing and fellowship together. I don't accept this idea that as we get older we cannot work with young people. That is just satanic intimidation to bring the generation gap, to get people to retire or get discouraged as they get older.

To think God can't use me, young people don't want me. It's a false feeling often of rejection. Many young people want contact with some older people.

They have young friends. They want those young friends. That's good.

It's not either or. It's not only young people or only old people are going to be my friends. It's both.

Both brings balance. You can learn much from your friends, including some foolishness that you need to talk to some older, wiser people about before you swallow it as your doctrine. And it's so key to have some

close friends of different ages.

When I was very young, at 19 years of age, I gathered a group of older men and I put myself in subject to those men. And if I hadn't done that, I'm not sure I would be here today. And then number four, under point one, new ways of expressing ourselves.

Now, any words that are in the Bible, we can use them the rest of our life. But should it be the King James Bible? You know, brothers in India, if you are still mainly using the King James Authorized Translation, I personally think you're making a mistake because many people are not understanding that. I use that.

But I always have with me, it's there in my room, a modern translation. And when I read the word, I use both. But many young people today do not understand these old translations.

Now, some very special, super spiritual type says, no, I am reading this old translation. If the Apostle Paul read this translation, then I will read this translation. The Apostle Paul did not read that translation.

He was not reading English. And we are making a big mistake if we don't use modern translations. Also, in expressing ourselves to young people, we need to use communication, words that they understand.

So we need to be listening. That's point one. Or point two, we need to be listening.

Reading. Today I was reading the Nepali newspaper just to continue to have the feel of Nepal. Now, I'm only here a short time.

But even in a short time here, things I've learned about Nepal, the little I know, come into my messages. Last night I was speaking at the youth meeting. Number two, the main number two, we have to keep changing.

We have to keep changing. Not our major doctrines. The OM doctrinal statement, which I hope you have studied, will remain.

It's based on the Word of God. The Word of God does not change. But society changes.

Culture changes. Now, in the villages of India, it's not changing the same way as in Bombay. So the way I would preach in an Indian village and the way I would speak to students at Bombay University would be two different forms of communication.

I still speak often to high school young people. I just had five days spiritual life meetings of young people ages 13 to 17. The response was greater than I can remember 25 years ago.

It's not your age. It's your heart. It's your mind.

It's what you say. It's how you say it. And of course, young people today are especially interested in honesty.

This is one of the marks of this generation. They are tired of playing religious games. They want honesty.

They want people to speak the truth as it is. Not everybody, because we have a wide range of people. And even among young people, you will get Pharisees.

You will get young people who are more old-fashioned than older people, more rigid, and only authorize translation. They have their traditions built into their lives before they are 25, and they don't change. They're young, but they are inflexible.

They are immovable. And we've seen some of this rigid kind of young person in Britain who are a minority group often cause much disunity and much grief in the body of Christ. Some of the people who oppose Billy Graham and Luis Palau when they came to England were young people who by 22 years of age were absolutely confirmed reformed in theology.

They knew God didn't use the invitation system and that God didn't need mass evangelism. Often, they have a mixture of biblical principles which may be the same as you and me, but they add to it their own criticisms and traditions. And so you can find even young people who are very, very traditionalists in their thinking.

I say that because, believe me, we're talking about a wide range of people. Don't be intimidated if one young person is upset with what you have said in the meeting because you cannot communicate without somebody being upset. 25 people may get a blessing.

They may understand. They may agree. But one or two, because they have differences of thinking, they may be opposed to what you are thinking.

Don't suddenly totally change your method of presentation on the basis of one person's criticism. Negative words travel faster than positive words. So you need to study criticism carefully and see what other people are saying.

Quite amazing what you learn from that. So we have to keep changing and we need to be aware of pride. What a great problem this is in the work of God.

Pride. And as we get older, we become rigid. God blessed this 20 years ago.

This is the way God must work today. It's a great mistake. It's a sad mistake.

Young people get discouraged because the key elder in the church will allow no changes. No changes. God has led us this way.

I'm not talking about doctrine, major doctrine. I'm talking about tradition. Make changes.

For example, we have a small committee that is responsible for the conference in Europe. I'm not on that committee. And every year they're making some changes.

Every year at least one or two of the changes. I'm not happy. But as I pray, God says, you let them.

You have kept control over the conferences with the George Berger long hand for many years. Let them, younger men, take over. Actually for 10 years they've been making changes.

Every OM conference in Europe has some new thing. We even now in OM conference having drama. Drama.

OM getting into drama. How dangerous. I think A.W. Tozer was opposed to drama.

I saw my own son was taking part in this drama. And he joined OM on his own initiative. And he joined the Belgium drama team.

What does the Belgium drama team do most of the time? Selling books door to door. They're only having drama part of the day. What a beautiful mixture of the new and the old.

Now, of course, whenever new things come, people will be talking. They made some changes in the handling certain services at the conference. Some of the old people big long faces.

We don't like this. Most of the new people they were quite happy. You never get 100% unity.

You're never going to get 100% unity. Not in a crowd like Operation Mobilization. So there must be maximum flexibility, adaptability, discernment, patience and love.

Adaptability, flexibility, discernment, patience and love. Are they big words in your vocabulary? You find the equivalent word in Malayalam or Hindi and get those into your heart. Number three, main number three, to understand and make use of modern means of communication and modern technology.

OM is one of the most advanced groups in Europe in the use of computers. We were into computers already 15 years ago. On the ship 7 years ago.

Maybe not 15, maybe 12 in Great Britain STL computer. We're not afraid of new technology. I've been using a dictaphone to dictate my letters since I was 20 years old.

We have been pioneering in the use of video, in the use of projectors, in the use of all kinds of modern technology. We also have had the faith to sometimes say it's not God's timing. Not God's timing.

Why do we have so many leaders meetings? Because we have to get God's mind on these things. We can't just go rushing into every new thing. We must get God's mind.

OM director. Who is the OM director? I wonder if you know. You have to study Acts 13.

The director of OM is the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit told them to go here. Holy Spirit said do this.

This is why we've asked in OM. Not rigidly, because sometimes they use the word director, but we have tried to use the word coordinator. Simply to communicate we are trying to coordinate, we are trying to organize properly what the Holy Spirit is doing.

So we are not sitting in capital. We are the directors. We will decide what to do and you will go and do it.

We are waiting upon God. We are discussing. We are praying.

We want the mind of God. That's why in OM we practice unity. People are asking who is making the decisions in OM? Is it the board? Is it the Americans? Is it the English? One man said there's a little secret group they are meeting and they are making the decisions.

This is pure nonsense. Even as we meet as area leaders, one man from each area. I represent your area.

I'm a representative. We are not making many final decisions. We have to take our thoughts, we try to put them together on paper, back to the other leaders and get the unity of the Spirit.

But my, how dangerous it will be if we get stuck and we are unwilling for change and we become afraid of modern technology, modern bookkeeping methods, modern vehicles. And there are many ways that we can use modern means of communication. Number four, we want to specialize in hot communication.

What's a word I want to use to communicate instead of the word hot, relevant? Let's speak what the issues are. Let's not be talking about the issues of the 19th century or the early part of the 20th century. What are the issues young people are interested in today? In Europe, it's nuclear war.

That is the issue that people are thinking about today. Nuclear war. Abortion.

Sex. Homosexuality. Why are we afraid to speak on the real issues? Instead, we're taking some obscure text out of the Old Testament and giving a Bible study because a few people are Bible study cuckoo cases.

They're not going to change their life. It's not that these texts are going to make them spiritual revolutionaries. They like Bible studies.

They fill their notebooks and they develop Bible knowledge pride. And in some of our seminaries, we have people with this Bible knowledge pride. Heads are becoming bigger and bigger.

Giant heads. Their hearts are so small you cannot see even with a microscope and their feet have disappeared altogether because the Bible says blessed are the feet of those who speak and take forth the gospel. And you know many people in some of our Bible schools, I do not know your Bible schools in India, but in some of our Bible schools, they actually lose their faith because they see so little reality.

They see academics. They see theology. They're learning Greek.

I am not yet convinced that down in Kerala we need to teach in our seminaries Greek, but blessed be all the Greek teachers. I know all the arguments for studying Greek, but we have people in India today who know Greek and cannot carry on a conversation with a Hindu or a Muslim because they know nothing really of their own culture. They are cultural freaks reared in Christian ghettos with Christian vocabulary and they may be able to spout Greek and they may become pastors of our churches, but they will win no Hindus or Muslims to Jesus Christ.

So maybe some more people should be learning Hindi or Urdu and understand more of their own nation and become true Indians as much as possible and not speak negative things about India and give the idea that America is so great and England, that is sort of a little heaven where all the Indian people would like to go to because these places also have much poverty and sin and corruption and you're a lot safer in the streets of Bombay, I can tell you, than in the streets of New York City where God saved me by His mercy. So we want hot communication, relevant communication. In evangelism, often it has to be contextualized communication because we're not always speaking to a modern Bombay wala who's been to all the latest cinemas.

We may be speaking to a small, humble village brother in Nepal who has never seen a single cinema in his life. India and witnessing for Christ in India demands a high degree of adaptability, flexibility. That's why we need youthfulness within OM.

Young people are willing to change. Older people, some of them may be listening to this tape, I am not against older people, but often they are unwilling to change. They are stuck.

And a great spiritual movement, you take the movement linked with Brother Bakht Singh, that is powerful in the 1950s. Unless they change, it will be dead by the 1990s, except for certain exceptions. The Brethren Assemblies in England which have similar teaching in similar ways, many of them are now dead.

They refuse to change. They refuse to be open in their thinking. Many of them have no young people.

And every year they have less people. And there are churches all over England filled with young people. Thousands of new house groups all over the nation.

The church is growing in Britain. Some of them, of course, they have another problem. They get into extremes.

They have no older people to bring them into balance and to bring continuity and wisdom. Some of them, however, have been very wise and they have had a mixture of people in their new groups and their new movements. I'm amazed in studying John Wesley in the last few days, again, I've been studying him regularly over the years, his emphasis on reading.

He would read when he was riding on a horse. Every one of you men should be reading a book a week, at least a book a week, if you want to be a serious preacher. And not all the same kind of books, but a wide range of books.

And as you read, you can improve your own communication skills and you'll know how to communicate to young, to older, to Hindus, to Muslims, to Bombay wallahs, to village wallahs, even to an overseas drug addict that you may meet in the streets of Delhi. And then number five, our final point, in all of this burden to keep our youthfulness to be contemporary, to be hot, relevant communicators of the message, we will not sacrifice the basic principles that God has given us. Discipline life, prayer, the basic doctrines, the seven major emphases.

And this is very, very important because Satan also tries to intimidate us and say, oh, well, you've been going many years now, you're old, what you're saying is out of date, these old-fashioned doctrine of hell, this is out of date, this is 18th century, how can we modern people believe in hell? And the Bible, we know the Bible is filled with contradictions. How can we modern people, re-educated, scientific-minded people believe the Bible? We will not fall for that intimidation. There are great scholars, there are great men who believe the Bible is God's Word.

I just gave a message to the Nepali Church why the Bible is the Word of God. We are not afraid of the hard questions. There are great men like Josh McDowell, F.F. Bruce, Dr. Schaefer, he is now with the Lord.

Many men who have answered these questions. We have also great seminaries that answer these questions. Praise God for seminaries where they are trying to mix the fire and the academics, the discipline and the doctrine.

We need such seminaries and such Bible colleges. Let us pray that there may be more. So as we grow, as we change, as we keep the ears and the minds of this generation, which I believe we can do, we will not sacrifice the basics, we will not sell our soul to the devil or compromise our biblical principles on the altar of contemporary, so-called, modern thinking.

May God give us wisdom in O.M., wherever this message is heard, to find a balance in this difficult area and to build, not a youth movement, not an old people's movement, but a spiritual movement that in each generation will get all that God has for it. For that day, for that age, that the church may grow, we may be a people, a people of power and praise, able to communicate to this generation. Let us pray.

Our God and Father, we thank you that in your mercy you have given us a degree of wisdom concerning these things. And by your grace, we will move forward together to accomplish your purposes. Lord Jesus, keep even those of us who are getting old young in heart, praising you, seeking new blessings and new truths from your Holy Word, constantly willing to adjust and adapt and change and yet not sacrifice the basic principles you have given us through over 25 years of spiritual combat on almost every major battlefield around the world.

Thank you, Lord. You can give us wisdom and discernment, and our confidence is in you. For we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. There now follows a talk by George Verwer on the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, it is incomplete because the tape runs out before he finishes the message.

Let's just pray together Father, we thank you for this encouraging report about India. And we know that, Lord, you are working there. We think of the Bakhshin movement, the three or four hundred churches in Telugu and Tamil Nadu.

We think of other spiritual movements, and yet we know that in Bihar and UP not much of this yet has taken place along these borders where we are right now. We pray that your church in North India may also come alive, and that much more would be done. We just really look to you.

Now, as we look into your word together, thank you for these days we've had, some new friendships that have been born, meetings in the Nepali church. We thank you, Lord, for your grace. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, I thought since I don't come here often, I would tackle a difficult subject and have a little Bible study on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I think I'm good in having a Bible study on the Holy Spirit because I don't represent any one viewpoint.

I think United Mission is a little bit like OM in a number of ways, especially the combination of certain aspects of OM. For example, on our two ships, a lot of the people mainly have technical work all day long. And when we recently put in a new generator in the Doulos, believe me, it was 14 hours a day, it was seven days a week, and the risks were very, very high.

And when that Norwegian crane's emergency light started to flash as this huge engine was being lowered into the holes, I tell you, there were a lot of worried engineers. We had 24 engineers. They were all worried.

Somehow, the crane, the wires, of course, were all tested to extreme accuracy, but the crane, a little difficult sometimes to test the crane. But the new generator is in, the largest single project in the history of our work. I'd rather not mention what it costs.

I'm very poor. And Doulos is headed for India. It'll only take about two and a half years to get here.

But the real thing that makes our work very similar is, of course, people on this ship are from all different denominations, all different groups. There is a very wide range of people. In fact, much wider than we even have in this room right now because we have a lot of African, we have a lot of Latin Americans, and we have a lot of people from the Far East and a lot of people from just such a wide range of countries.

And yet, for 14 years, they've welled together in love of the Lagos for seven or eight years, of the Doulos for 28 years in our work because the land-based operation is the same. It's completely interdenominational and is no more difficult subject than the subject of the Holy Spirit. So I thought I would take a difficult subject as I do sometimes on OM and just share some of my own thoughts but mainly look at some of the scriptures together.

Let's start in Matthew's Gospel and just look at some of these great verses together. Matthew 28, 19 and 20. Always a great pair of verses to read when you're out on the mission field.

Ready therefore, verse 19, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the age. Here we have the three persons of the Trinity. It's a difficult doctrine by the way for some people.

It's especially difficult in our work where our largest priority is among Muslims to try and explain this to a Muslim. And if you have any new ideas on that we would be very happy to receive them because just the concept of the Trinity is almost impossible for a Muslim to grasp. And we've been trying with some pretty highly trained people for 25 years, especially in places like Afghanistan, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Bangladesh, now more recently Pakistan.

Up to now there has been no major breakthrough anywhere in the world among Muslims except somewhat in Indonesia, the soft underbelly of Islam. You are seeing small breakthroughs in Bangladesh. Very experimental, very beginning stage.

Nothing you'd want to write a book about but someone did of course. And it all gets very interesting when you're really involved in that work because it was O.N. people who were involved with it almost from the beginning, especially one converted Muslim who in fact was converted to Christ in a totally different approach than what they are using out there in the villages. He was converted to Christ through the old fashioned gospel packet in the streets of Dhaka approach.

And now he's the leader of the more contextualized approach out in the villages. And praise God things are happening. But I do believe that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit represent the Trinity.

There is only one God, three manifestations, three persons. I guess the problem centers around the word persons and what our concept is of person. Third person.

But when we talk about the Holy Spirit as we are this evening, we have to acknowledge we are talking about God the Spirit. All right, let's jump over. We're going to jump by the Gospels.

As you probably know, the Holy Spirit, of course, is there in the Gospels, but perhaps not as outwardly manifest as after the departure of Jesus Christ. It talks about the Comforter, the promised Comforter. I'm sure you know those references in the Gospel of John.

Let me just read them. John 14, verse 26. But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you.

It's referred to also in verse 16. I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you. It's interesting.

And only when Jesus Christ left did the Holy Spirit come in his full power and full personship. Quite an interesting factor. And then turning over to the book of Acts.

A very significant verse, I'm sure we've all meditated on or involved in missionary work. Acts 1.8. Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. If you have a pen handy, you may just want to write in there next to the uttermost parts of the earth, as I do in my Bible, see Corinthians 10.16 and see Romans 15.20. To me, very important for those of you working in Nepal.

I'm sure Nepalese may not feel this way. It's good to have a few Nepalese here this evening. You're welcome to the tenth power if you know algebra.

Yes? The two verses you want me to repeat? Okay. 2 Corinthians 10.16 and Romans 15.20. And I was about to say Nepalese may not feel this, but those in Europe would definitely believe that Nepal is the uttermost part of the earth. Now, that is actually to be flattered because today admissions are thinking about the uttermost parts more than almost ever.

Not just the uttermost parts in terms of nations, technical nations, but those unreached people's groups, those neglected people's groups that exist in such areas of the world. And I think this is so beautiful really for those of us who have this burden to be in the sort of out of the way places that this is the final word of Jesus Christ before he went into heaven. And to me, it's exciting to be in the kind of work you're in.

And I think we as missionaries at times need to be reminded that this is a privilege. There are plenty of our prayer partners and our friends who support us who are busting their knuckles to give the expression. Who are busting their knuckles in some factory back in the west whose owner is a crook and whose money may be going into every kind of exploitation that exists in our western world.

And yet they have to work. That's a job. I meet a lot of people all over the world.

One of their biggest burdens is to quit their job. Very high percentage of people. But they press on because jobs are hard to get.

In England, I don't know about some of you from Norway. Maybe everybody's working in Norway. But over in England, I will tell you, they are out of work by the hundreds of thousands.

And it is a major, major problem. And in America, unemployment is a major problem. So jobs are not easy.

In fact, in our own work, even among westerners, job placement after short-term training in O.M. is a major part of our thinking. Because not all these young people who come out of O.M. are called or led to be full-time career missionaries. And many of their churches are not in favor of that anyway.

They let them come for two years. Don't think it's the young people who don't want to come career. It's far more the churches that are not willing to cough up money for such a large army of young people.

Because today, we're talking often about ten or fifteen or twenty or thirty thousand dollars, depending on what country you come from and where you're working. Certainly, it was a blessing this morning to get a haircut for only five rupees. I even gave him a two rupee tip.

Haircut. Because haircuts back in Europe are now, you know, four pound or seven dollars or fifteen dollars and I can't even manage to get the emotional strength to walk in a barber shop anymore. I have to look for somebody who will give me a free haircut.

Boy, I've had some really vicious attacks on my head over the years. Of course, on our ships, we have our own barber shop, we have our own dentist, some doctors we self-contain. So a lot of us go to visit the ship just to get our teeth taken care of.

But just make sure you don't go in the barber to do that. This is to me one of the great verses for all of us in missionary work. Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And of course, we know these people waited in Jerusalem. They had a red hot prayer meeting. Everybody was there including the women.

Verse fourteen. And then in chapter two, the Holy Spirit came in power. Now the church is a bit divided from this point on.

There are some that believe we must wait and have a similar experience. There are others that believe that once the Holy Spirit came historically, he came upon all believers after that. And you get divided into many different categories.

And in OM, we're having endless discussion on all of these subjects. I think my challenge to all of us tonight are based on the words of Billy Graham when he spoke about the Holy Spirit. He said, I don't care how you get it, just get it.

I would say, perhaps make sure you still have that reality of the Holy Spirit five or ten years after that crisis experience. I know in my own life, and it's true of most of my friends, they believe the Holy Spirit does enter the believer at conversion or baptized into the body of Christ. But that doesn't mean there cannot be a special experience of the Holy Spirit later on.

I got a fantastic book out of this library. This is a precious little shelf here. If you're not gleaming anything out of here, then you must not be a reader.

Either that, or you've got a big supply in your own house. I got a tremendous little book out of there. Back when I was here in 74, I don't see it there anymore, it was about sexual perversions in the subcontinent.

That one's disappeared. But the book I got this time was about John Wesley, a little more tame. But of course you know what the Methodists taught about the Holy Spirit and the Salvation Army.

Not exactly the same as the Presbyterians and some of the people on the Reformed side of things. And today the church is still divided on this subject. Probably a church every week in Britain divides in half on this subject or a related subject.

And I wonder if that doesn't sometimes actually grieve the Holy Spirit. There it is, a great verse about us being his witnesses and the fact that it's not just Jerusalem, not just Judea, it's not just Samaria, it's right to the ends of the earth. That last, think of that brother walking five days after that little village.

That was on the heart of Jesus Christ when he gave, when he gave this promise before he went to heaven. Well, as you know, every other chapter in the Book of Acts is about the Holy Spirit. Maybe we could just turn over to chapter 4. We don't want to be too long tonight.

I'm known as one of the longest preachers in Europe. Some of you know my favorite story about the watch. When I was preaching in Germany, I was going on about an hour and a half.

Mainly young people there willing to sit all night, listen to messages. At least in most of our conferences. But one elderly man in the back, I guess he was a little nervous, wanted to go home and watch TV.

He took off his watch and he held it up trying to get me to, you know, close up shot. And I saw this watch. I was preaching about world evangelism and discipleship and missions.

I said, look folks, praise the Lord, here's a man in the back giving his watch as a donation for world missionary work. But feel free if some of you have an appointment just to quietly slip out and we'll try not to go long, too long. I don't have enough tape.

Anyway, I really ran out of tape. I'm recording this on two different cassettes. But let's look at Acts 4, verse 31.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken. Do you know some of those kind of good prayer meetings here in Putwald? That's the only thing that's going to make a dent in this kind of cross-cultural communication in which we're involved. Acts 4, 31 prayer meetings.

When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. They were filled. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Can you imagine that? They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they spoke the Word of God with boldness. I don't think I need to make a lot of comments on that particular verse.

To me, it's just so powerful and it so speaks for itself. Go over to chapter 6. This is very interesting because we get the idea today that the man's going to be a preacher, you know, like me. I preach 400 times a year all over the world.

Boy, I better have the anointing of the Spirit, right? You know, I don't want to go in there just with my own energy. But we don't always think that's necessary for technical things, right? I mean, engineers don't need to be filled with the Spirit. Technical people, people that work with turbines and plywood or, you know, like some of you may be involved in.

But just take a look at Acts chapter 6 in case you have that little twisted idea in your head and you'll maybe change. Because here they had to choose some deacons, remember? They had some problems in the church. The early church had problems just like the church today.

They had divisions. There was murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews. Grecian Jews, Hebrew Jews.

Of course, widows were neglected in the daily distribution of the food. So they're going to appoint some deacons, some practical men so that the elders could give themselves more to the ministry of prayer and the Word. So who did they select? Very interesting.

Wherefore, brethren, look among you for seven men of honest report full of the Holy Spirit. I wonder if you interview people for work down in the factory whether you would want to apply this particular principle. Certainly in the local church I hope you do.

The deacons, full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. For we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. I was interested.

I'm probably going to get in trouble now, but I won't be back for a few years. I was interested that your pastor, Brother Pandey, he's here, isn't he? He's also working. You're also working how many hours a day, Brother? Eight hours a day.

You know, it would be my prayer that this brother could be released full time for the work of God. Now, maybe I'm wrong. No problem.

But in the New Testament when men had the ministry of the Word of God, they were released to get on with the work. Fifteen million people here. We as foreigners are not going to reach too many of them the way we're going at the present time.

But the Nepalese are going to reach them. Maybe Brother Pandey should be working in a secular job. That's between him and Jesus and whoever else is in control here, I hope the Holy Spirit.

But I tell you in the Book of Acts men were released for the full time proclamation of the Word of God. And if our churches can support us out here and some of us it's costing quite a bit. And we're not getting too much preaching and teaching in.

We're getting some. And you don't have to think for a minute that I don't believe in your approach because I believe in all the approaches including ships. But what a tremendous thing when men are released not just from full time jobs but from also as many pastors are stuck in the work of the church.

The pastor is doing everything. Some churches even the janitor has to clean up after all the saints leave a mess. Or usually his wife handles that.

Here in the Book of Acts they appointed seven men. The Holy Spirit was in charge. Seven men were appointed to the practical work and these deacons had everything

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