

# Lahetyskonferenssi 2001 (Pt2) (Dutch)

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon challenges believers to step out of their comfort zones and engage in global missions with radical commitment to Jesus.*

**Duration:** 1:05:47

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Luke 9:23, Hebrews 12:1-9

**Topics:** "Dutch"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of ministering at a meeting in Germany. He talks about speaking for an hour and a half, with the young people listening attentively while an older man in the back seemed impatient. The speaker emphasizes the importance of giving and going, and shares a story of a man who donated his watch during the sermon. He then introduces the concept of vision and the need to have a global perspective in fulfilling the task that Jesus gave us. The speaker expresses gratitude for the opportunity to speak at a mission conference and highlights the declining popularity of missions in many parts of the world. He encourages the audience to be willing to leave their comfort zones and to be disciplined in prayer and good deeds.

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## Transcript

I'm going to sing a song called Ahti kurjen johdolla. I've been here in Oulu for four years, and people often ask me how I like living in Oulu. I like it very much, because I go skiing with a bear, I go running with a bear, and I like to hang out with a squirrel.

Ahti is one of my ski buddies, and her bear Hanno is really good at this. Next I would like to introduce not my own followers, but foreign guests, but they seem to have gone home already. But while waiting for them, we ask God's blessing for this meeting.

Thank you, dear Father in heaven, that we can be in the name of your Son, the Savior Jesus, and thank you that you are among us here. We thank you today that we have received a new life through the gospel, and thank you that today we can believe in you, and that we can be friends of your work, and that we can pass this message on to others. Thank you, Lord, that you have given us great opportunities today to tell good news.

Thank you, Lord, that good news is spreading all over the world, and that we have received good answers. Many have received a new life, they have received forgiveness. Life has changed, even the lives of the

people have changed, Jesus.

Thank you, Lord, that we can be a part of this work, and thank you that this conference is also helping us to move forward in this world-wide gospel work, Lord. Thank you that you are blessing us. Bless the near ones, bless the far ones.

Bless us each with our own part. In this long chain, when we are our own disciples, Lord, strengthen us, fill us with the Holy Spirit, inspire us, give us a new vision, a brighter vision, give strength to the tired. Thank you, Jesus, that these days can be such moments when we can accompany you and receive a new vision and strength for the coming days and years.

May the great singers and preachers, the far ones and their brothers and sisters, thank you for being with us. Amen. Stay well.

As soon as we pray, great prayer answers happen. Now we have the privilege to present the day to our foreign guests. The head of the organization, Arto Hämäläinen, will present.

He knows them. Arto has been with us in Oulu as a pastor for 20 years. I was there, but did not know then that Arto will present and that we have all these foreign guests.

God's grace and peace to you all. It is a great pleasure to be here in the former home congregation. The young member of this congregation, Mark Tossavainen, is now my predecessor and the head of our organization.

I am pleased to introduce the foreign guests who are here. Our main speaker, Jonsi Weverin, whom I introduced earlier, is one of the most significant and influential people in the world. His service has influenced the lives of millions of people.

It is a great privilege to have him here in our congregation. We have with us, if we look a little further, Yoshida Takashi from Japan. Could you please stand up there? Please come here.

Yoshida and his family were the first family to send a letter from Japan to Hong Kong. He has served in several Asian countries, including Mongolia, which is also our destination. He is now traveling around Japan holding seminars in different Asian countries.

Then we have Paolo Ramos from Brazil. Please come here. This is a historical event.

We have someone from Brazil in our congregation. Finland has also been a part of the Brazilian mission before. There is a huge wave of 14 million people, one of whom is now one of the representatives in our congregation.

You can see the message in the upload in our congregation. Our brother is here with us. Let's go to our own country.

We have a guest from the Eastern Empire. His name is Kristanel. He is a young worker in the Nonkirchen congregation located 50-60 kilometers from Vienna.

Klaus Korhonen and his family started pioneering their work. This month there were 60 people in the congregation. The hall is getting smaller.

Our sister can serve in that office. In this conference we would like to bring the German-speaking world to a new level, to a stronger awareness, to the spiritual challenge that exists there. We have our brother John Goeschal from Bristol with us.

He represents the Campus Ministry, a student organization. He has been running it in many different countries, and also in our country, this need has been met. It is slowly getting stronger.

Our brother will tell more about this on the channel. We should have Sibi Marchek with us. Has she arrived already? Yes, please come here.

There is also an increase in the enthusiasm for the message. We are happy to have had this contact with Puola during previous conferences. Let's ask for a blessing to these guests.

Please stand up. May the Lord bless them and us through them. Thank you for this international group.

We would like to especially bless our guests on the stage and our main speakers, Josh Waverly and his interpreter Mika Yrjölä. May the Lord bless their service, bless their presence here. Help the Lord so that a fire can be lit here that can spread to other parts of the world, always to the borders of Asia and even to South America.

Thank you for wanting to awaken Europe and help us to find your will and your way everywhere in the world. In the name of Jesus, we also ask for a blessing on this occasion. Amen.

Please sit down. Now the choir will sing. Josh Waverly, dear friends.

Today I have the privilege and honor to be here on behalf of the Church of Christ to publish a new book, a message. Out of the comfort of the night, this book does not leave us cold. We would like to thank Josh Waverly for his cooperation and willingness to publish this book in Finnish with us.

We would like to thank him and wish him God's blessing. I would like to ask Josh Waverly and interpreter Mika Yrjölä to come up to the stage with us. Yes, Josh Waverly.

You have been involved in the growth of Operation Mobilization for 30 years. Now you have written this book Out of the comfort of the night. We would like to thank you for your cooperation and for your willingness to teach this book.

It was a pleasure to build this book with you and Operation Mobilization. It is a great honor for Aika Oy. In this book, you deal with the main topics leading the mission, mobilizing the mission and the vision of the apostles in the 13th century.

Would you like to tell us a few words about the core of Operation Mobilization? Why have you chosen this term and how does it relate to the mission today? Well, we know that if we are going to get the world evangelized, but also, as we shared this afternoon, that if we are going to give ourselves to it, I believe it is easy to misunderstand this cover because the Lord may be wanting you to stay where you are. But he doesn't want you to be lazy where you are. He wants you to be radically committed to Jesus and filled with his Holy Spirit.

And Jesus said, if any person comes after me, let him deny self, take up the cross every day and follow me. That is the essence of leaving your comfort zone. One of the main messages of the book is actually the message of the grace awakening.

And I believe it is a revolutionary biblical principle that really changes lives and churches and impacts nations. So my prayer is that everyone will buy not one copy. That's for backsliders.

Everyone will buy five copies. Amen! Well, I think there are many people in a gathering like this that hopefully are ready. And many of you, I'm sure, have been an example in this concept.

But with the way our society is today, there are many who I don't think are so ready. So it's going to take a spiritual revolution and a great work of grace to get people to take those big steps of faith and discipline. And pray for me that I may never turn back from what the Lord has shown me from his word in regarding these things.

And that I would know biblical balance and not get into some kind of weird extremism. Because the Lord does bring comfort. We have the Lord's psalm.

I'm studying it this week. So he's also wanting to comfort us. That's the beauty of the paradox.

He's the one who also wants to bring creation and rest. And that's the beautiful paradox that's presented here. Our dear heavenly Father, we thank you that we have the privilege to walk in your presence.

We thank you for your servant, Sir Sparrow. Lord, we thank you that you have graced him to take the word of your love for all time. Lord, to every person in this world.

And we thank you that with this amazing love you have loved everyone. And Lord, we would now like to bring this book, the word of this book, before your presence. And we ask you, Father, in the name of Jesus, to pour over this word once again this evening such a heavenly blessing that everyone who takes this book in their hands, opens it, embraces the heart of this word, can experience that he stands before your presence, Jesus.

We thank you that we have the privilege to walk in your presence. And Lord, give us this day your blessing that we can step out of our comfort zone, see the world in pain and trouble, be sent, be gone, be blessed. And thank you that you still invite us to serve.

Lord, we pray that you really give the blessing of heaven and we ask you to be with us in every song of this book that will be delivered this evening and the days to come after this evening. Thank you, Father, for everything. Amen.

I would also like to say that the price of this book is 96 marks, but we came to you with the Council of Oulu so that during this event you will get this special price of 79 marks. Let's pray once again. Father, we thank and praise you for what you have called us into.

We thank you, you have called us out of our comfort zone into your battle zone, to win men and women for you all over the world, in every nation, in every people's group. Father, we know you have a great plan for this very night, for this weekend. Help us to be focused, help us to be really open to what your Holy Spirit, what your word wants to say to our hearts.

We know, Lord, the decisions we make this day will determine the destiny of people in other parts of the world. Lord, we look to you for great things, that these nations of the world that we have been talking about, they feel the impact of our gathering here and of our prayers. In the name of Jesus, amen, amen.

Jesus, just before you went into heaven, said, you shall be my witnesses. The Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. We need to remember his words tonight.

Again, as I said this afternoon, it's a great privilege to be back in Finland again. We've had many, many wonderful Finnish people on OM. And some of them, of course, are still there.

And we're honored to have the director of OM, Finland, with us for the sari at the book table. And we know that the captain of one of our ships for many years was from one of your churches. You have an absolutely distinct, amazing, no other nation like it, country.

You are very special, unusual, awesome, hard to explain people. And some very wise, trained OM men from many different nations have chosen some of our lovely Finnish disciples to be their long-term partners, known as a wife. One of the first Finns ever to come on OM back in the 60s was a woman named Anneli.

We were not even in Finland at the time. She was studying nursing in England. And she met a very, very extreme American character.

They have been married now for 35 years. He became with her the director of one of the other ships, the Dulaks. So we are so grateful for your prayers.

The original vision of OM was not for people to stay with us very long. To come and go back to their own church. We've had 100,000 young people come on OM.

And many, many thousands of them are serving in their own churches or their own denominational mission society or other mission societies around the globe. Now it's good to see so many of you here tonight. Because when I come to town, some people purposely leave town at that time.

Because the rumor gets out that if they come to my meeting, they will end up going to the mission field and they don't want to go to the mission field. So I'd like to believe that you're here because you're ready and willing to go to the mission field. Finnish people are known for being very serious people.

So you're not afraid of some serious thinking. About hundreds of millions that have still never even heard the gospel. And we know when someone hears once, that's not enough.

We can't say they're evangelized. But as Hudson Taylor once said, hearing the gospel once is not enough. What can we say? I'm never hearing even once.

I must confess I'm very excited about the emphasis you have on Christian books. So I went through the book display area. And I found a great book in Finnish by one of my favorite authors, Wesley Duhl.

I'm sure most of you already have that. You may want to get it tonight. Then I saw one of my favorite children's books.

That's written by the wife of Patrick Johnston, who gave us the book Operation World. They lived on the ship for a year, many, many years ago. She is with the Lord.

But this September, the new edition of Operation World, the most incredible mission book in the history of the Church, will be published. I believe, however, his book, The Church is Bigger Than You Think, in some

ways, is just as important. Some months ago, I was in Australia to a similar missions event to this.

Then it was a much bigger conference, with many, many different churches participating. I discovered most of the mission leaders in Australia were studying this book. This conference, this weekend, reminds me of that conference, because they also wanted me to come two days early to speak to the leaders.

And they weren't as generous as you, and they assigned me to preach specifically from three chapters in Patrick Johnston's book. So, as you're picking up your five copies of Comfort Zone, take a look at these many other books as well. Of course, there's no book that is anywhere near the Bible, the Word of God.

And I'd like you to turn now to the book of Hebrews, chapter 12. I'm always amazed when I follow and read about various sports people. And you certainly have some great sports people from Finland.

And it wasn't long ago that everybody was watching the Olympics. And I'm reminded of those words in Corinthians where it talks about running the race. And also, in Hebrews, chapter 12, again, it refers to this race.

I've done quite a lot of running myself. I think the furthest I ever go is about 13 or 14 kilometers. And I must confess that running, often I did not find it very comfortable.

You start to sweat. Your legs start to ache a little bit. And especially if you run maybe seven or eight kilometers, and then you realize, I've got to run back again.

Another one of my favorite things is mountain climbing. I'm not a major mountain climber, so don't get any crazy ideas. I think my greatest feat was to go down Grand Canyon and come back in one day, which you're not supposed to do.

They have a sign, do not do that. And that was an extremely uncomfortable day. And it was incredibly hot.

Quite a few people die in Grand Canyon just from the heat. But the fact is, as we look at various things that we have to do in this life, many times they are not comfortable. Often there are risks involved.

And we see some of the risks in these new sports. Have you followed that new sport where they dive down deep into the ocean without any oxygen? I mean, just reading an article about it, I actually find it hard to believe. The new sports! The word of God in their hands and in their hearts.

What can we expect of these people? Surely if you just read the books. Before you met any of these people, you would be expecting something really unusual. You would be expecting people who are willing to take risks.

You would be expecting people who would go anywhere, whatever the cost, to win one more person to Jesus Christ. For the word is clear that that's more important than winning some corruptible prize, some little Olympic gold medal to hang around your neck. I actually studied the book of Acts before I met many of God's people.

In the high school where I was converted, there were not many believers. I did not know many Christians. And so as a young Christian reading the book of Acts, I expected this is the way it's supposed to be.

The reality, the love, the passion for evangelism, the willingness to deny self and take up the cross. Then when you get into Corinthians and you read about this character Paul, descriptions of his life, descriptions

of his suffering, you think, what have I got myself into? This is a revolution. These people are radical.

They're going to turn the world upside down. Satan, Satan and all of his demons is going to be running a hundred miles an hour to get away from this church crowd. But I'm afraid my actual experience with God's people was slightly different.

I read that they were God's chosen people. My experiences were they were really God's frozen people. I'm glad many of you know English and can catch some of these things twice.

God knows certain kinds of people need to hear everything twice before they ever do anything. But let us look at this great scripture that can inspire us to be God's great people. Hebrews chapter 12.

We'll just read only in Finnish and we'll read say down through verse 11. You still have not had to shed your blood in battle against sin. You have forgotten this word that encourages you as a father to a son.

Do not despise my son, the son of the Lord. Do not despise him, for he will judge you. What the Lord loves, he will judge.

He will take away all that the Son takes away. Your suffering has grown. God will judge you as His own sons.

Is there a son that the Father would not judge? If you have been left to suffer, and all the rest have received their share, you are foolish and unlawful children. When our earthly Father suffocates us, we do not dare to resist. A much greater reason for us is to submit to the will of our heavenly Father, for he gives us life.

Our Father suffocated us only for a short time, and as it seemed good to them, but the suffocation of God will be our real best. We will be able to partake of His holiness. Even if the suffocation does not feel happy, but rather sad, in the end it will give to those who have been prepared its fruit, peace and salvation.

My great prayer is that we will simply take God at His word, that we will decide that this is the way we want to live. Many of you have already made that decision. I am speaking to people who are already in God's marathon race.

This is not an evangelistic meeting for people who have never been in the church. This is a missions conference. We are here to consider moving forward in the great task that Jesus gave us in the word of God.

And I thank God that you have such a conference. Many churches now no longer have a missions conference. Missions is considered something out of date, and we, of course, need to be on our faces to try to change that situation.

That warms my heart. For I live in England. But when you mix it with English culture, it becomes a very unusual combination.

And they like their services. Sunday morning services is long, Sunday service is short. And I have gone to churches where they have given me only 20 minutes.

It takes me 20 minutes just for the book reviews and the introductory thanks. And a little extra time in the winter. Forget this English minister looking at me and saying, of course you can have some more time.

You take 21 minutes. Germany is another country where they like things to really be short and punctual. I guess I've been to Germany about 100 times.

And I have offended Germans in almost every part of the nation. It's in Germany where they accuse me of being a wild Pentecostal. What a privilege to have such a criticism.

I can almost get in fellowship with the Apostle Paul, who seems to be a little bit wild himself. But I especially went to a meeting in Germany, when it was an O.M. meeting, a meeting of our own organization, and I made it so that I got a little bit of freedom, of course, when I was the leader, to speak a little longer. So I spoke about 1.5 hours.

All the young people were listening. But one older man was sitting in the back row. I think he wanted to go home and watch the news.

So he started waving his watch at me. I never forget that moment. I remember speaking about the need to give and the need to go.

The challenge of world mission. And I saw the watch. I said, praise God! This man is donating his watch for world mission.

I never did ever see that man again. But as I think of this great theme that God has put upon our hearts, seven words have come to my mind. And I want you to write these seven words down.

We give you freedom. You can write them in English. But we hope that you will think about these words in the days and even in the weeks to come.

If one year from now, not next week, one year from now, you send me an email with these seven words. I will send you seven books as a gift. So you may want to try not to lose this little piece of paper.

Ninety-eight percent of all the people that ever hear this offer never respond. Many of them have never kept track of anything as long as one year. I'm not sure if I would be very good at this myself.

A few weeks ago I even lost my passport. That's always a very special experience. Or something like losing your wife in a big city.

The first word I share with you. That's why we brought this big globe. That's why the whole world.

Doesn't look very good on me. It would look a lot better on some of you that are a little more global in your appearance. Some people feel that I'm a little extreme.

Actually one of them is my wife. So I'm not asking you to be as extreme as me. I actually have global underwear.

And to keep peace with my wife, I'm no longer showing this. I'm not even brought it to Finland, so that the temptation would not be there. Seriously speaking, God wants to increase us.

This afternoon we spoke about the Maldives and Seccotra, where the church does not exist. We talked about Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia and Libya, where there are almost nobody. And before the weekend is over, we will have spoken about many other countries.

We are not saying that we should only think and go to these places. That would be ridiculous. We are simply asking that we could put a little bit of a greater emphasis on these nations that are so completely different.

And we made it clear that our concern is not just the spiritual needs. It's the physical needs. And so we've been speaking about AIDS.

And we want to speak about poverty. And we want to speak about street children. And we want to speak about refugees.

We want to speak about the problem in connection with people losing their sight, people who have lost their hearing. I was reading an article the other day that millions of people are suffering various diseases in certain parts of the world because they don't have ionized salt in their diet. Is this too much for us human beings? Is this too much for the United Nations? Is this too much for our governments? To at least provide some ionized salt to the people of the world who are dying and suffering from lack of that one little item.

So we want a big vision. But we want God's vision. And God's vision includes the whole person.

Half of all the books that we sell from our ships are educational books. We've just been in Vietnam. How do you think we got into Vietnam? It's because we are a legitimate educational work concerned about the whole person.

A few months ago the ship was in China. An unusual open door to sail up the river right into Shanghai. Sometimes we've been criticized for having educational books.

Surely we must be concerned about education and moral foundation. And many times doors open to share about Christ because we have been offering something in the area of education that people want, people need. China is asking for thousands and thousands of English teachers.

Many believers are taking up that challenge. Often with educated people. We really hope that you will get some of these vision building books.

One of the reasons we want you to get this book is because one of the main purposes of the book is to build vision. And in this book though it is a short book. I've dealt with at least 25 mythological issues that are being discussed even in our theological colleges today.

I may not be a theologian but I have sat at the feet of hundreds of theologians for 46 years and I've tried to put together some of what I've received into this small book. The second word that I want to share this is going to be a little harder is the word change. At this point I want to first think about Finland.

I want to think about the fact that the church actually is not growing very rapidly in Finland. That is true almost through the whole of Europe. I've just been over in Sweden.

The church growth situation in Sweden is desperate. Of course people are going to glory so just to keep up with the promotion rate to glory you always have to see some growth. So for me the church in Sweden, the church in Finland, the church in Great Britain, where I live, it's growing.

It's alive. It's not growing fast enough to increase Christians alive in any way. And I know some of your churches are growing.

In general the Pentecostal and charismatic part of the body of Christ even in Europe generally is more growth and more life than in some of the other countries. When we say that we must be very careful. It's great to think of what God has done in the past.

But we must look to the future. And sometimes people who are always dwelling on the past become a hindrance to what the Holy Spirit is wanting to do for the future. About 20 years ago I saw an operation mobilization that we needed to make change.

And it included some things that were very special to me. And God just gave me this as one of my favorite words. I said, Lord, I want a change.

I want O.M. to change. We don't want to move from the basic doctrines of our faith. We don't want to move from our basic worship of God and the message of Christ.

Because the young people don't understand. People find it very boring. And we want to change how we communicate about money.

Because our overemphasis, that's right, our overemphasis on prayer and faith cause confusion in especially local churches. So we have experienced a lot of change. I believe it's also one of the reasons we have more and better relationships with local churches than we previously had.

Let us do some evaluation of our youth ministries, of our worldwide outreach ministries. Let's be willing to look at things and to see if the Spirit of God wants us to make some changes. I am very concerned about youth, youth, so many of them never entered a church in their whole life.

And unfortunately in some places if they entered a church, it would be more harm generally than good. Because it's either formalistic or liberal or totally apostate that they don't even believe the Bible is God's Word. The way ahead is not going to be easy.

It leads to the south. It is worth it. I want to speak as an older person.

A grandfather of 62 years of age who gets a senior citizen discount on British Rail and in the restaurants. We as older people should be thinking that we as older people should be that we as should be as we go to our churches. Not whether we're comfortable.

Well, the music is just the way I like it. Oh, and the people are dressing just the way we did 20 years ago. That should not be our main concern.

Much less things like, oh, do people really appreciate me here? Do those young people giving me proper respect? And did you see that young person there? He had an earring in his ear. This should not be our main burden. Our main burden should be to see people coming to Christ and going to heaven with us.

For characters like me, thank you Jesus, and for characters like me, sometimes it means doing things, seeing things that I don't like. We have this very important image even more important in marriage. It's the word compromise.

the devil. There's even a book by that title, No Compromise. It can have different meanings at different times to different things.

This can still come back to me. I have to always be careful in this area. So my philosophy of pornography is no compromise.

The same is true on all of the Ten Commandments. Even though one or two of them are hard to explain in terms of the message of the New Testament. Speaking.

There are areas where we cannot compromise. I must be absolutely 100% faithful to my wife. And by God's grace for 41 years I have done that.

Of course if people do fail or sin and I've seen with my eyes that's the battle zone. There are areas where compromise is necessary.

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