

Lahetyskonferenssi 2001 (Pt3) (Dutch)

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of radical commitment to Jesus and the call to cross-cultural mission work, highlighting the power of prayer and surrender, and the blessings of spiritual wholeness.

Duration: 51:32

Scripture: Matthew 9:38, Matthew 6:33, Acts 4:31, Romans 11:33, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Dutch"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of attending a weekend focused on world missions. He highlights the rarity of such opportunities for Finnish young people and the need for clear messages about the people of the world. The speaker also addresses the responsibility of Christians to share the gospel, especially in liberal churches where missionary work may be disregarded. He encourages radical commitment to Jesus and presenting one's body as a living sacrifice, referencing Isaiah 6 and Romans 12:1-2. The sermon also addresses the issue of spiritual inconsistency among some young people, who appear to be different individuals depending on the setting.

Transcript

Amen, thank you. What a privilege to be back in your wonderful country once again. I've been about 20 times to Finland.

But I have to apologize, this is the first time that I've come so far north. And I just love all this lovely white snow. In England we get, our snow is not so white.

As it comes down through the pollution, it changes color. When I was going out running early this morning, I found it so refreshing to be here in your country. Let's remember it was the Lord Jesus who said, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person.

This is not my idea. We are not here to consider the philosophy of people. We are here to consider the claims of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The same Lord Jesus Christ that hung on the cross for our sins has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. And I thank God for this conference. I thank God for your churches.

For over 500 missionaries that you have already sent who are evangelizing the world. And others who have gone from your churches with organizations like OM and others. Many people are praying for the meeting today.

I have about 100,000 people who pray for me. Some of them pray for me every day. I've often wondered, how can God ever use such a character as me? But it's because we have a God of mercy and a God of love.

Because I'm privileged to have so many people praying for me. So let us allow our hearts to be filled with a spirit of expectation even now as we stand together. I want to thank the publishers who have been so kind to publish my book in the Finnish language.

And I want to make you a special offer. If you get this book and you read this book in Finnish you send me an email about it or a letter or a phone call or even a smoke signal I will send you free of charge the English edition as a gift. And then you can give that away or do whatever you want with it.

And with that I'll send one of my other books in English. We're hoping everybody will get five copies. So that when you go back to where you live you can share this message with other people.

How many of you already have, with your Finnish Bible, you have an English Bible? That is absolutely amazing. And obviously you're studying that English Bible and to prepare to go to the mission field where they so often speak English as in India. I would like all of you to consider going to India.

When I went to India as a young missionary I had never planned to work there. My interest was the communist world, the Muslim world and closed countries. I was living in the semi-closed country of Spain when I first came to Europe and I had learned the Spanish language.

I was then studying the Russian language and so in the summer of 1961, almost 40 years ago I tried to smuggle Bible and Christian literature into the Soviet Union. Due to my own stupidity I was arrested by the Soviet secret police. I was accused of being an American spy.

It was in the newspapers throughout the whole nation in Pravda. Then after two days of interrogation and finding our little printing press and our literature they decided we were religious fanatics and gave us a submachine gun escort back to Austria. I was really searching my heart and disappointed with all that happened and yet God was giving grace and I spent the day in prayer and before that our work was called Send the Light.

It was a very small work in Mexico and Spain and we were planning Muslim countries. Through that mistake in the Soviet Union God changed my life and during that day of prayer He gave me the name Operation Mobilization. He gave a different vision to work with the churches of Europe to serve the church to help mobilize the young people in the church.

By the next summer God gave us 200 young people. We started from nothing with no money and no big banking only a few churches came with us. The next summer God gave us 2,000 including some people from your country Finland and since then many, many hundreds have gone on these campaigns across the world.

We've given the Word of God to 1,000,000 or we say in U.S. lingo 1,000,000,000 people face to face excluding television and that kind of thing. About 100,000, praise God. Give Him the glory.

About 100,000 young people have worked with us. Probably if I'm honest at least 1,000 from Finland. We have a great God and we are here for a very special time together.

I hope you will pick up some of the other books in Finnish and in English that are being displayed. I'm afraid these very large globes are almost impossible to find but you can get a small globe and when it rains you can also use it as a hat and for a long time I had only this small globe before I found this big one. I find that when I'm praying for the people of the world when I'm praying for the nations of the world that it's good to focus on the country and it helps you to keep from your mind wandering all over the place.

This is a problem I have. So take a few moments today to look at some of these other great books. Somebody once said readers make leaders.

I've read about 1,000 books in my Christian life. I finished another one last night.

I don't always finish them and some powerful books have almost finished me because some of these books I find very discouraging about so many of the great heroes of the church of yesteryear and I read about some of these men and some of these women some of them even were martyrs, they gave their very lives for the gospel and I feel so small, so spiritually small and I learned something as a baby Christian and tonight I'll share more about my testimony how God saved me in a fight arena, a sports arena in New York City so many years ago but I learned as a baby Christian that God loved me that God wanted to bless me I learned that God could use me despite my struggles and my doubts and my weaknesses and I stand before you this morning still aware of my weaknesses still aware of my lack of

faith still aware of my lifelong struggle with impatience I prayed for deliverance from impatience I've had so many people lay their hands on my head that my head's gone flat and the hair's fallen out and God has blessed me but I still find this a great struggle in my life and it leads to other sins like the sins of the tongue and for me it's a lot easier to be sanctified when I'm in the pulpit than when I'm in my wife's kitchen somehow in God's great providence and sense of humor He gave me a wife that is still completely different 41 years of marriage we are still not able to actually walk together we have tried many different things we have tried many different methods like if I were to walk with my feet very high that I would slow down and when I was young I always stopped at the

corner of the street to give a handkerchief to someone some of you are considering the possibility of marriage there are many great books on that subject one of them I recommend especially is called the Bible and especially 1 Corinthians 13 that we need to keep our marriages together actually this book is not primarily firstly about world missions it is about Jesus and it's about the grace of God and I share things here that God has taught me over these 46 years of learning how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ I would like you now to turn with me in your Bible to Romans chapter 12 we have those great 11 chapters in the book of Romans of theology of tremendous biblical truths we especially have that great doxology starting at Romans 11 verse 33 and I hope you will read that on some

occasion and then we get to Romans 12 we'll just read those first two verses in Finnish This is the greatest burden on my heart this morning that we may understand the total radical commitment to Jesus that we may understand the Lordship of Jesus Christ that we may have that assurance that we have presented our body as a living sacrifice to God this is what I did at only 17 years of age and through doing that I experienced the blessing and the power of God I stood in front of my own high school students 600 students when I was only 18 and when I gave an invitation to repent and believe on Jesus 125 stood up in that meeting including my own father to believe in Jesus and I found out later that a dear old woman had

been praying for that high school for 15 years my friends, my brothers and

sisters God wants to bless you God wants to use you but first of all you must present your body as a complete offering to God as commanded in Romans chapter 12 verse 1 and 2 and many other scriptures many young people, even young people reared in the church they seem to have one foot in the world and one foot in the church they have produced their own postmodern brand of spiritual schizophrenia and so on Sunday they are one person but by Wednesday or Saturday night with other people they are a completely different kind of person sometimes in their home and in the church they seem to be such good Christians but then there is another side to their life that only certain friends ever get to see it's sort of a Darth Vader dark side of their life and as I've spoken on this subject around the

world I've had the joy of seeing tens of thousands of young people come into spiritual wholeness through the power of the Holy Spirit of God I remember when I was in my early twenties being asked to speak at this great youth convention in America and me say that my wife and I left the states 40 years ago and we never went back and we would like to believe that we are Europeans my father came from the Netherlands to America and I went from America back to Europe we've had the joy of living in Rome, of living in Brussels, of living in Paris we've visited hundreds of cities throughout Europe these past 40 years on Monday morning I'll be in St.

Petersburg and we believe that God is wanting to continue to use Europe as a great sending place for missionaries to all the world we have a great God and He wants to bless us, He wants to use us and what I saw in my high school when I was only 18 you can also see may not be the same numbers of people, that's not the main thing I had to win individuals to Jesus before I could win big numbers let's remember John 14, verse 6 Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life in modern Finland today even some very church people are saying we don't have to think and believe these things anymore they're trying to tell us that hell does not exist how would a God of love ever let anybody go to hell that argument is a hundred years old but somehow we find people trying to write new books about old

subjects and I know when I went to university and some of my teachers were very, very liberal and they didn't believe the Bible was God's word some of them tried to destroy my faith basically my first year at university, studying psychology, studying sociology fortunately I got more and more into the word of God and I read other books that answered my intellectual questions during that first and second year of university I went then to study at the University of Mexico I came to this conclusion the Bible is God's word I can trust God's word and though there are many things I did not understand I decided to give more attention to the things that I did understand about the kind of life that God wanted me to live and so many times I would have at Romans 12, 1 and 2 experience I believe when

we present our bodies as a living sacrifice when we surrender to God in such a powerful way He does, as it was in Acts 4.31 He does fill us afresh with His Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5 many, many powerful verses one of them is about making better use of your time to me that's one of the most exciting challenges of life and every day all these years I've tried to make good use of every ten minute segment that God has given me to live on this planet and so usually from first thing in the morning about 6.30 or 7 to late at night I have this exciting life with God it is so amazing some young people, especially in America and England they say life is boring we have a word for that in Finnish life is boring, everything is boring, the church is boring, the music is boring and if you are finding

that life is boring then I don't believe you are really experiencing the power and the love and the reality of Jesus in a way that He wants you to have I have never had a boring day since my conversion to Christ 46 years ago not one single boring day because Jesus is alive and well now I want to be honest I've had some boring minutes I've had even up to an hour and I've had to listen to a lot of boring music and I've met way too many boring people and I don't want to meet anymore I don't want you to misunderstand I don't mean we are living at a level in which we are always sort of physically well and physically excited Jesus said if any person comes after me let them deny themselves, take up the cross and follow me He has not promised us an easy time I've had much discouragement but the

battle against discouragement can actually be quite exciting all my life I've suffered sexual temptation especially pornography I can assure you that is not boring it's a battle and sometimes I have lost the battle and I've had to weep and cry and repent and crawl my way back to the cross for God's grace and God's forgiveness so can I ask you this question this morning we only have this short time together the next time some of us meet it will be at Jesus' feet it's taken me 40 years to get to this part of Europe I'm not sure if I'll ever get back maybe next time you can meet me in London that's a little easier to get to but I want to ask you this question are you radically committed to Jesus? have you presented your body as a living sacrifice? have you prayed that prayer from Isaiah

chapter 6 where Isaiah says after experiencing God after being purged of his sins and the sins of his sons after confessing the sins of his nation Isaiah says, Lord here am I send me I want to ask you have you ever prayed that prayer? now I know there's a Finnish version of that prayer that's been changed it's prayed by the men Lord here am I send my sister and I want you to change that and I want every man here every young man here to pray Lord here am I, send me in missions today we have three women for every one man we need to address that balance I would ask you pray that prayer during this weekend together here am I, send me in closing I want to give you five reasons why I believe each one of you should go at least for one or two years into cross-cultural mission work sometimes when

we have great meetings everything is sort of very spiritual and very gentle and in my closing moments this morning I want to be very specific around the world tens of thousands of us are praying for 200,000 new missionaries this is part of the theme of this book especially the last couple of chapters in this book I've specifically said we're praying for 300 churches in Finland to take another step or their first step in regard to sending out workers in the end of this book I've also mentioned the number of people we're praying for that Finland would also send 300 churches that would either send their first mission or send other missions and we also point out what other countries and parts of the world should be doing and if every part of the world where there are churches responds to this

we can easily have 200,000 new workers and with that number we will be able to complete at least the pioneer the pioneer mission phase of the church and the great commission so actually we're praying for longer term missionaries so if you only go for a summer that's not part of that 200,000 if you only go for one year that is not part of the 200,000 but our experience is this if people will go for one or two years then a certain percentage of those only seem to catch a vision for long term career missionary work or tent mission so let me give you my five reasons the first reason is we have such a God of grace who can use all kinds of people he can use characters like me who at 16 years of age was tormented by difficulty with pornography who at 17 years of age was on his 32nd girlfriend

who was locked into materialism and owned three small businesses and dreamed that other people would work as he laid on the beach and enjoyed the sunshine with his girlfriend a young man who was also

incredibly impatient and filled with anger and fought with his fists from the age of six and I didn't know Jesus my grandfather from the Netherlands was an atheist my other grandfather was Irish, English and Scottish blood mixed basically that's poison, it's toxic he was a complete drunk then by God's mercy in that Billy Graham meeting share more about it tonight God saved me and God sent God saved me and God sent me even though I had these problems sometimes I wanted to quit and sometimes when I was young and in the service work I had difficulties and I had sex with magazines very confusing

situations with these girls I remember leading one girl to Jesus and then kissing her for the next two hours I don't really think that's in the follow-up manual and I thought how can God ever use such a mixed up character as me we have a great God he knows everything about us and he loves us still we don't have to pretend with God we can take off our little charismatic or Pentecostal or Evangelical or Lutheran take off our little religious mask and be real and then we can come to Jesus in repentance and receive the cleansing of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ for these forty some years I've seen God using ordinary people some who hardly dreamed they would ever be a missionary they went for a summer they got their toe in the water and then they came for a year and the water was

up to their chest and thousands of those made the commitment to become long term missionaries and they've been swimming in God's holy ghost ocean ever since when someone comes to me radically committed to Jesus and they say I'm going to become a doctor I say praise God that's wonderful someone else comes to me committed to Jesus like my friend here I'm going to be a pastor God's not called me to that if I preach more than three times and they don't all repent and get revived I'm out of there the same people week after week after week the same people all they need our prayers because that's a difficult God somebody else says they're going to be a farmer they need our prayers I say praise the Lord it's all part of the kingdom that this weekend is a special weekend this is not farmer's

weekend this is not banker's weekend this is not pastor's weekend we're looking for missionaries we're looking for people that will leave Finland who will go to Uzbekistan or Azerbaijan or Pakistan or France or Spain or Italy or Greece or Libya where there's less than ten believers or Tibet where there are no believers I want to ask you would you really pray about this the second reason you should go is because there are so many open doors you've got that wonderful mega miraculous Finnish passport we live in a world where people generally don't like Americans and they don't particularly like the British anymore either but everybody seems to like people from Finland maybe Sweden is a little bit of an exception and so this gives a great open door we need to thank God for this we need to

take advantage of this when we think of the fall of the Iron Curtain something we did not dream of even 15 years ago let us continue to give thanks let's open the door to all those Muslims of Central Asia we should see another 100 Finns at least going into Central Asia in the next few years we don't know how long that door will be open Turkmenistan is already closing these are serious opportunities that we must not miss also we have air travel it is so inexpensive generally to travel even great distances on these discount tickets and we have so many other communication tools we have the internet I have my own website georgeburwell.com you can go in there tonight and spend two days in there by e-mail we are in touch with missionaries all over the world God has set before us such a great

open door now is the hour for a major forward push in obedience to Jesus and we need to take advantage of this we need to take advantage of this the third reason that you should consider going is because we now have the resources we have more than enough churches of course we always want more we have more than enough Christians one out of every six people in the world professes to be a believer in Jesus

now many of them are not true Christians but even if half of those are true born again believers what an army we have and more than ever in history Christians have money we have resources the story of our one mission in India starting from nothing when I was 19 and went to Mexico the story of reaching one billion people 500 million in India alone the story of getting these two ships and

keeping them going for 30 some years everybody in our movement looking to God to supply the finance in answer to prayer God has never failed us we have failed some other people have failed but God has never failed us He will supply your resources as you move in His way the fourth reason you should consider going this is incredibly important I call it the mystery of God's providence how many Finnish young people ever get to a weekend like this where the whole focus is on world mission where we are going to get these strong clear messages concerning the people of the world many of you have already had this in your own local church for many of you I'm not telling you anything new so if you don't go who will somebody who has never heard it somebody who is not even a Christian yet someone in a

liberal church where they don't believe anybody is even lost and that missionary work is stupid we have a great response much is given, much will be expected God has blessed your nation God has blessed your church God has saved you God has blessed you and the logical reasonable thing now is to give it back to Him and go wherever He wants you to go and the logical reasonable thing now is to give it back to Him and go wherever He wants you to go I want you to think about these things throughout the day and maybe tonight will be a time of decision of course you can make a decision any time the fifth reason you should stop going this was really helpful for me I hope you will read this book What's So Amazing About Grace which is also in the Finnish language because this is my fifth reason the

grace of God He leads us to do things He will give us the grace to do not in the absence of struggles and doubts and difficulties and failures but in the midst of those things God will give us the grace and also as you take that step of faith to begin to move toward the mission fields of the world you have the assurance of God's love if that's not really His plan He will graciously stop you He loves us going to the mission field is not because you have some kind of guilt feeling because God is giving you the love feeling the love for Jesus, the love for people because God is giving you that reality of grace and you're beginning to see how the glory of God and the grace of God and your response is tied together in His great kingdom Please, think about it Please, read this book and allow

the Holy Spirit to direct you in the way that you should Let us pray Our God and Father, we thank you for all that you're doing around the world We thank you for all the missionaries who are already out there and we pray on the basis of Matthew chapter 9 that you will send out workers right from this great gathering this weekend Help us to search our hearts Help us to make sure that we really have presented our body as a living sacrifice to you To go where you want us to go and to do what you want us to do

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