

# Lukewarm No More - Part 1

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer shares a transformative vision for mobilizing missionaries and empowering the church for global evangelism.*

**Duration:** 9:41

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Acts 13:2, Acts 13:47-48

**Topics:** "Lukewarm"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a vision that he received from God while on a flight from Cordova to Buenos Aires. He describes it as a historic and scary experience, as he hadn't had such a vision in a long time. The vision is related to the need for breakthrough concepts in missionary work, especially since the number of career missionaries in the United States is dropping. The speaker expresses some fear and uncertainty about the vision, but it has been shared with others who believe it is from God and is now being spread worldwide through various means.

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## Transcript

Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts chapter 13. I'm going to share with you a vision tonight. I don't say this lightly, but tonight for me is a historic moment because I'm going to share a vision that God gave to me on an airplane flying from Cordoba, Argentina to Buenos Aires some weeks ago.

It was a very scary experience because I haven't had this kind of vision which comes from God and comes into your mind for a long time. I remember back when God gave me the vision for the ships in the mid-60s, the vision that I shared immediately with a small group of people to get a ship for world evangelism. And a few years later I wrote out a memo when I was living on one of the ships, the first ship, why we should get a second ship.

My mind jumps back long before that when I had my fiasco and the Soviet Union was arrested by the KGB and accused of being a spy. And my name was flashed across the newspapers in 1961 as an American spy arrested in the Soviet Union. After two more days of interrogation they decided I was a religious fanatic and gave me a submachine gun escort back to Austria.

Our work before that was known as Send the Light. That was going on mainly in Mexico and Spain and our thrust was the Muslim world and the communist world. But it wasn't to be exactly like that.

And I went for a day of prayer after that experience in the Soviet Union and during that day of prayer I was actually on the top of a tree, I used to like to climb trees, praising and singing and God gave me two words just out of the blue, Operation Mobilization, which has been the name of the entire movement ever since. That's trained 95,000 people in evangelism who are working in every nation in the world with every mission society in the world. Over 100 mission societies and groups traced their birth back to O.M. And on top of that we've been able to give the word of God to about seven or eight hundred million and see many tens of thousands come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the vision of Operation Mobilization in the tree that day was a change of my original thinking because it meant I should get involved in Western Europe. Before that I wasn't interested in Western Europe, Britain, Germany. They had enough churches.

I wanted Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq. I don't want to go where they have lots of churches. But God was to change my life and birth a movement that would be known for its partnership with churches, especially in Europe.

And soon we had a couple of hundred people coming out from those churches in the first O.M. summer in 62 and then 2000 by 1963. I remember when God birthed the vision for that 62 summer. It grew out of that experience in that day of prayer, but it was in a weekend of prayer and waiting on God in Spain with some Spaniards that I shared the vision for that next summer.

And it was right after that summer that God gave the vision to multiply everything by 10. I'm sure part of that was very human, but I felt everything we did in the summer of 62 with all the blessing we saw from God and O.M. was just really being born at that time, we should multiply it by 10. We had 12 big trucks taking literature in teams.

I said, Lord, give us 120. It was out of that that we got later on the vision for the ship, which actually came to me in a converted pub in Bolton, Lancashire, or a converted bar. We turned it into a Christian bookshop.

So I guess when people have sometimes referred to me as a visionary, that is, I guess, somewhat true. The vision for India came very, very quickly. In those days I could do things on my own.

Now we're a modified democracy operating by consensus and sometimes doing something at O.M. is a bit slow. But we've just had leaders' meetings in Singapore with 135 leaders from around the world and we've launched something new, which isn't my vision. In fact, I have felt strongly for the last 25 years that my work was to back up other people's visions.

The great vision of Hyderabad and all that India is today was not my vision. I had the joy of just being a servant and backing up the vision of Joseph D'Souza and Divakaram and other Indians. The vision for South Africa and what's going on there, spreading into Angola, spreading into Mozambique, not my vision.

I'm just helping, just backing it up. Some of the big visions for Operation Mercy, moving among the Kurds, engaging in helping in their physical needs, that wasn't my vision. Somebody else's vision I've been just trying to help.

That's true of what Gordon Magney is doing, some of you know him, in serve among the Afghans. And so in some ways over the past years, I've become less aggressive, I've become more laid back, and my burden was just to empower and to serve and to help others. And I was quite happy in this role.

There's plenty to do in something as big and complicated as O.M. Then somehow I got drawn into a movement called A.D. 2000 and beyond. Not well known yet, except in some third world countries, but it's a network, it's not an organization. Many organizations relate to it.

The Southern Baptists are in that, very big players. Campus Crusade, very big, WAC. Many, many different movements are networked in.

Doesn't mean they agree with everything. Doesn't mean we work together in everything. But there has been a feeling by some of the big groups, like Campus Crusade and the Southern Baptists, and some very beautiful, humbling statements made by some of their leaders, that we cannot do it on our own.

We need each other. This movement is led by a young Latin American named Louise Bush, who is able to win people and get them together in Colorado Springs and then get them together in Korea. We had our big A.D. 2000 gathering in Korea last May.

Louise Bush and other people, as I consulted with over 30 people before I joined this movement in leadership capacity, wooed me into becoming the chairman of the section of the movement for the mobilization of new missionaries. Now when I got into this particular track, led by a young man from Youth Within Mission named Perry Rickard, they had the goal of mobilizing one million new missionaries. I said, you're crazy.

I said, we've got to get it down to a more somewhat sensible figure. There are less than 200,000 missionaries in the whole world today. There are different ways to count missionaries, but, you know, even being quite broad-minded.

And so my contribution to A.D. 2000 mission mobilization track so far was to get the number down to 200,000. We agreed to try to help mobilize 200,000 new missionaries. Now it's very important to listen at this point and understand we don't think we're going to do this.

This is a ballpark figure. A lot of it is already happening, has nothing to do with us. But we feel it is good to have goals for the whole body of Christ.

As far as we're concerned, some of the great missionaries, shakers and movers and senders and goers, will not necessarily be part of A.D. 2000 and may never get our letters and may never hear of this vision I'm sharing with you tonight from Acts 13. But they're still part of God's family. We're all one.

Whether they will agree to be one with us or not, they're still one according to the Bible if they're God's children. On this flight just a few weeks ago from Cordova to Buenos Aires, I had the heaviest vision poured into my mind that I've had since those days when I thought about India and launched that and launched the ships. And I'm shaking.

I'm still wondering what is going on. Is there some ego in here that I've gotten deceived? And so I share this with you in a bit of fear and trembling, though it looks like now this vision is in the air. Louise Bush believes it's from God.

Perry Rickard of the Mobilization Tract believes it's from God. The people in OM that I submit to believe it's from God. It's now on the Internet going around the world.

It's now going out to two and a half thousand leaders in the form of a cassette across the whole world. And I'm extremely nervous. But the vision is simple, and the vision is from the Word of God, and the vision for many people is not new.

But some of the concepts in this vision are breakthrough concepts. And I believe we need breakthrough concepts if we are going to see new missionaries, especially since the latest report shows that in the greatest missionary sending nation in the world, the United States, the number of career missionaries is now dropping.

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