

# North Africa Report - Part 2

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer shares insights and experiences from a challenging yet fruitful trip to North Africa and the Middle East, emphasizing the importance of prayer and support for local believers.*

**Duration:** 48:48

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:19, Philippians 4:4

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Prayer Support"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares about his recent trip to the Middle East and the challenges and blessings he experienced. He mentions the mercy of the Lord in protecting them during their travels, including a near head-on collision. The speaker also reflects on the importance of spiritual warfare and the need for constant prayer. He highlights the significance of the trip and how it has impacted his life. Additionally, he mentions attending the funeral of a dear friend and the support they provided to the work through prayer.

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## Transcript

This actually is going to be part two of that report from this Middle East trip that some of you have already heard, if you haven't. Copies are quite abundant and you can easily get one. We've certainly seen the mercy of the Lord on this trip and traveling many thousands of miles in that old coach over treacherous roads, especially the last six days we weren't in the coach but in our OM vans in Pakistan where the driving is just beyond description.

And yet in God's mercy, last night, one mile from our home, we almost had a head-on collision with a very fast speeding car that went out of control, headed right for us, fortunately crossed in front of us and smashed into the fence of a golf course. If that isn't a reminder that the spiritual warfare is not just out in Pakistan, but right here. And to be constantly praying, in fact as I came on the plane, I thought wouldn't it be ironic if between here and the house we had the real test of what it's all about.

Let's just pray and commit this tape and this time together to the Lord. Our Father, we thank you that you are merciful. And those of us who went on this team across to North Africa and the Middle East and Pakistan sense very much that we went together with the body here.

And that without those who worked here on the coach and in the typing of the letters and in every other aspect of the ministry that this trip would not have been possible. And Lord, we don't want to focus in on

man this morning, but we want to focus in on yourself. We're not interested in glamorizing travel because there is no great blessing or special reward for those who travel.

But we do give you the praise that you are working in these different countries and that you have thrust out a host of workers who are laboring, often totally unknown, to reach so many with the word, your holy word. Lord, I pray for that Muslim on the plane that I was so extensively able to share with. Muslim missionary from Pakistan to the United States.

Lord, as he goes back to America, now a U.S. citizen, somehow that you could show him the absolute folly of that which he is spreading. Lord, guide us now together in this time of worship and this time of report. Even though we will not be outwardly, verbally worshiping, may we worship in our hearts as we hear what you are doing, as we hear the challenge.

Guide us now in Jesus name. Amen. I think most of you know one of my favorite texts is when one rejoices, we all need to rejoice.

We have come back from this trip very, very much rejoicing. I've made many trips, but I think next to the first time that I went to India, which revolutionized my life, this has proven to be one of the most challenging and stimulating journeys that I've ever taken. Of course, that which you've just finished always seems to be more important than that which was 15 years ago.

The Lord knows. Unfortunately, the moment I finish must go through that door as I'm trying to get to Worthing by 11 o'clock, which will not be easy today, to attend the funeral of a very dear friend, Dennis Clark, who went recently to be with the Lord. We've prayed for him.

We haven't seen him much over the years, but he always quietly and in a very practical way has supported this work in his praying. It was the summer before last, we had perhaps the best time of fellowship we've had in years as we got together in Worthing and walked up and down the beach, sharing many areas where perhaps we never saw eye to eye, but other areas where God had made us of one heart, praying for his wife, his family. Some of his children I know are away from the Lord Jesus, and it'd be wonderful to remember them in prayer.

Well, part two of our little report, if you've heard it, left us in Cyprus just before I left Cyprus, getting the old coach on the ferry. I shared with you the challenge of North Africa. That still very much burns on my heart, and I hope that prayer is increasing for that part of the world.

We sailed, however, on this ferry to the most difficult country that we were in in this entire trip, the land of Syria. Syria is controlled by a minority of people who are a break off from the Shiite Muslim movement. Here you have a large country, well it's not large in comparison to places of India, but compared to say some of these Gulf countries, controlled by a minority group, which is an extreme Ba'athist government, and so the land is in unbelievable tension.

The Sunni Muslims who make up the majority of people there are opposed to the present regime. They just blew two of the major buildings, killing I don't know how many, just before we got there, and it seems that one of the main right arms of the president of the country has hired a whole army of thugs to control Damascus. They wander through the streets dressed just like villagers.

The only mark is that they carry submachine guns and they're under strict orders to shoot anything that in any way looks irregular. So when we drove into Damascus in our bus, it's good that we didn't know too

much about this. We knew the place was tense, and we're glad we came in in the daylight.

Some friends were going to put us up for the night, and they just shared that one bus driver recently had just made one wrong turn and got shot right out of the driver's seat. You might want to remember Alan Witt, as in about a week's time he drives back through Damascus. I told him to make sure he doesn't make any wrong turns, and also to go through daytime.

It's a miracle we ever got into Syria. That was the only country where it really seemed it was finished as far as taking this vehicle. Could have been a small vehicle, but they saw the word Bedford on this document, and they thought this was a Ford, and Fords are blacklisted in Syria because of the Ford Motor Company dealing with Israeli, and they just said in no way would we take this coach through Syria.

Already Syria to get off that ferry is enough red tape to boggle the imagination, and we just committed this to the Lord. We walked from the port, quite a long walk into town and back three or four times, praying, crying out to the Lord. It seemed that maybe Plan B was going to go into effect right there, but it cost a lot of money to put it back on the ferry, and somehow even though they never did understand that this was a Bedford, and in the documents they were passing back before the words Israel were written, the top man somehow made a special concession and let us drive this Bedford through Syria.

We went to Aleppo first, which is one of the few places where the believers are willing to take the risk of having any foreigners. There are hardly any overseas personnel ministering in Syria at all. It's so tense, and anybody in contact with overseas people, immediately the police are on them.

But in Aleppo, these very bold believers who had some kind of relationship with the police there, and have told them openly about the foreigners who come, not only wanted us to come, they insisted we stay several days. That's when this trip started to get extended, and insisted that we park the coach right next to the church, plug in our electricity, thanks to the mains unit installed in the coach, because it always helps to get free electricity, and I think one of the highlights of the trip was the fact that we were able to take into Syria over 600 powerful Arabic books. I think it would have been worth taking the coach alone on this trip just for that one delivery.

They weren't smuggled, they were just so caught up with all this Bedford business, they never bothered to look under the seats of the dining room, which can handle about a thousand books, and the believers wanted all of these books. Some of them we picked up in Egypt, books that just cannot get into Syria, outstanding books, and many good books in Arabic, unbelievably low distribution, and I would ask you to specifically pray for one of the main purposes of this report. I hope some of you will write a few things down.

I know it's a cold morning, you've just made it through the heavy snowstorm, and you probably lost your pen along the road, but if you can write some of these things down, that is the idea of giving this report, but pray for those Arabic books. Pray for May Musa, the ex-Omar, and his father's the key man of the Bible Society in Syria, as they really had a vision. We ministered there for three nights, they're just a small group, and I've shared about Syria last year, because we were there last year, so I won't go into great detail now, but the church is alive, small but alive, in Syria.

One of the itinerant ministers was there the same night I arrived, really seemed to be an anointed man. He goes around and visits a number of small assemblies and churches, and yet has a full-time secular job, which is often necessary in these countries. We then, after Damascus came after Aleppo by the way, we

drove down into Jordan, though we wouldn't want this put into print, there is the Christian bookshop there that has a new location, and I was really impressed with that ministry.

I think our brother Habib is more fulfilled than he's ever been. In Jordan we just have a couple of nationals, we have a number of ex-Omar's there, but there's no international team at present. Situation is still very sensitive, but brother Habib, some of you know him by another name, is really fulfilled and encouraged in that shop.

They have a wide range of powerful books in Arabic and English, an excellent location, sales have doubled since they changed location, and that's a key prayer target. Another key prayer target for Jordan is the new modern version of the Arabic New Testament put out by the Bible Society. It had a mistake in Philippians when it first came out and brought down the entire wrath upon the church, there was even unbelievable things were planned for the Bible Society.

This is always the great tension in these areas. Now they've changed that Philippians passage, and we feel, some of us, it's not an official OM feeling, but some of us feel this is a valuable New Testament because Muslims can understand it more than the old Arabic New Testament, but it's an unbelievable controversy. And I, in one meeting, didn't know anything that much about it, was not even thinking about it.

I was giving one of my normal messages about extremism and talked about these people in America who get carried away, and the main thing becomes defending one translation of the Bible. One of the arch enemies of this translation was in the meeting. Boy did he come at me the next day.

So I do sometimes leave my ripples, they're not always for the sake of the basic message. That's a big thing there. Will Longmaker, a Weck brother, very close friend of ours, is the head of the Bible Society temporarily in Jordan, and our brother Jamal Hoshway is now out of OM and in the Bible Society.

They are doing a great work. Many ex-OMers all over the world are in the Bible Society, and God has given us a unique relationship. They had just come back from Lebanon, a country we were unable to fit into this tour, where they were working with a few from YWAM going into schools distributing the Scriptures.

By the way, we were in this part of the world when they blew up the Syrian embassy. In fact, the brothers on that distribution team, including Jamal, had just come back from a village north of Lebanon, and they wondered what all the streets were very, very quiet. That was the day that terrible car bomb blew that embassy up.

What a volatile, intensive time of the world it is. Of course, as we started to read in the Jordanian newspapers about the annexation of the Golan Heights, we thought we are certainly in an interesting part of the world. One of the Jordanian believers said to me, and he convinced me without much argument, brother, this is where you need to be.

This is where the action is. That brother, by the way, is a very key believer there. He's the first Jordanian to come on OM way back in 1963.

He tells this story wherever he goes. He's a key layman. He's an architect.

He really wanted to meet this George Burwer. This is way back in 1963, a few years ago. Of course, he had this image, you know, some dynamic, large, older, mature, sophisticated, well-dressed Christian

leader.

He had just finished shaking hands with some skinny, poorly-dressed character who had welcomed him from Jordan. He turned to Antoine Deeb, who was with him now, one of the most well-known evangelists in that area. He said, when are we going to meet George Burwer? Deeb said, there he goes.

We just met him. I don't think we ever had a conversation again until some years later when I visited Lebanon or Jordan. Pray for him and other believers in Jordan who really do want to reach out to their non-Christian neighbors.

Traveling through this area, you just realize how difficult that is, how complex and how difficult that is. In fact, in one of the house fellowships that I met in, I had a burden not to give the kind of messages I usually give, but I had this burden to just give this message on the ten basic doctrines of the Christian faith. I felt so strong that this was a message for that night.

I started right off with God and the Trinity, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Again, I was in trouble because this particular house fellowship will not use the word Trinity and they will not talk about three persons. They will only talk about three manifestations.

This is a group we're very linked with. I'm in no way condemning them, but it shows the terrific problem believers have in speaking about God in three persons. They have trouble even speaking in three manifestations.

As I was witnessing extensively to a Muslim on the plane yesterday, that's the thing. When you get to Jesus as the Son of God, by the way, this man was from the Ahmadiyya movement. They're not even allowed to do hajj to Mecca because they're considered extremists.

They have their own prophet, came after Muhammad. They're the ones that teach that Jesus Christ never died on the cross, went to Kashmir, and his tomb is in Kashmir. They are the strongest.

They're like the Jehovah Witnesses of the Muslim world. They're all over the world, even in Israel. That causes even more hate to come from some of their own people.

They believe all the prophets, something I learned about Islam, or at least their variety yesterday. All the prophets were perfect. None of them ever sinned, including that one from Pakistan.

We got into interesting discussion. What a challenge it is, and I just want to insert this here, that every one of us, wherever we are in the world today, there are opportunities to speak to Muslims about Jesus Christ. You don't have to go to the countries I went to.

In fact, if you go to some of the countries I went to, like Saudi Arabia, you probably won't speak to any, to any great degree. One ex-alumer there who's been trying to witness to his students, I dare not mention his name, shortly after giving any kind of witness, called to the carpet by the head of the university and said, any more of that and in 12 days you're out. And these people in Saudi Arabia who have gone there to witness, many of them are very, very frustrated.

Pray, because some of them really want to just pack it in. It's so hard to make contact and to be able to share, if you're trying to hold down a job, which is something, of course, that most of them are doing. That's why they're there.

These countries are very difficult to get into. In fact, one of the reasons, again, our trip was extended, is instead of four or five days in Jordan, we were eight days in Jordan just trying to get visas. One of the key visas, fortunately we already, thanks to Maywey, had our United Arab Emirates visa.

We wanted to get our Kuwait visa. Now here's Kuwait. Here's the road that we took along the pipeline, an excellent road, littered with tires, old cars, and pop cans.

The entire road looks like you're driving through a dump because the Saudis have so much money and it's so hard to get your vehicle helped out in the desert. If you have an accident, they just leave. And sometimes they pile them up like little monuments, one car on top of the other, with tires on top.

It's like little altars to the automobile industry. But we really wanted to go to Kuwait. It was a key Arab assembly.

We knew we could have contact with many believers. A.G. Phillip, who led the work in Kerala for some years, is there. But to get a Kuwait visa is just out of the question.

People wait there, going into that office every day for a month to get a visa, to see their own child. See their own child for three days. Somehow the Lord, I had to sit in that office hours, hours and hours.

I delegate most things. This kind of thing is not so easy to delegate. Fortunately, I was reading Martin Lloyd-Jones' book through again on spiritual depression, its cause and cure.

And when I was heavy in the chapter, when I was just about ready to tackle this man, I was in that chapter about not panicking. And I will tell you, that was a beautiful crucifixion experience. Two, three, four days.

And when we walked out with those visas, the people in the outer office, they thought, what in the world? How did these people get the visa to Kuwait? And when we got to Kuwait, our key contact there, one of them who works in the Pakistan embassy, walked into the top office to one of the top men and got us a seven-day extension, boom, just like that, on a transit visa. Now the Lord, again, heard our prayers to get us into Kuwait where we spent Christmas. It was a five-hour ordeal to get into Saudi Arabia.

They look for liquor. They believe that almost, they believe all Christians are drunkards. One of the greatest problems we have in communicating to Muslims is to break down prejudice.

They have unbelievable ideas of what a Christian is. So they searched our bus for liquor, drugs. Of course, they think that's another one of our big things.

And of course, they were looking for weapons and pornography. Five hours, inch by inch, unscrewing little things around the bus. This was something you wouldn't believe.

And when they marched my wife off into a little room to give her a personal search, I thought that was going to be, not the end of my wife, but emotionally, the end of the journey. Because she had just read this book, some book about what happened to women when they got searched in Algeria. There was more than a search involved.

But actually, the Saudis are quite polite. They're quite polite. They served us a full chicken dinner during this ordeal, and the thrilling thing is they were so looking for alcohol.

And the funniest thing, this will be one of the funniest stories in the history of OM. My wife's not going to like me for telling it. But someone in France, you know, the Brewer family is absolute, at least the older ones, myself and my wife, absolute tea toddlers.

But somehow, somebody in France, some missionary gave us a bottle of wine, cooking wine. And lo and behold, the Saudis found the cooking wine. You have never seen anything so funny as five people trying to get this cork, which was absolutely stuck out of this bottle of cooking wine.

Finally, one man, the Saudi inspector, kept sniffing, sniffing. And he said, oh, it's nothing. And he put it back.

The second time through Saudi Arabia, they found out it was the real stuff, and they took it away. An interesting experience. But the thing is, they were so excited about these other things, they didn't seem to worry about several hundred Christian books.

And the Arabic books were wrapped in a poncho. They actually handled them and put them back. Second time through Saudi Arabia, when the Arabic books got discovered, we had quite a fanfare.

The Bible is illegal in Saudi Arabia. It's becoming legal now in Doha. What a contradiction, because many Muslims are saying that the Bible, including the New Testament, is a book that should be read and respected by Muslims.

But certain countries don't agree with that. They took all these Arabic books, they're only about 50 or 20, put them in a suitcase, wrapped them with a customs wire, and sealed it. We had almost a ceremony.

I was able to give a complimentary copy to the head customs man. A revolution of love and balance in Arabic. Or a revolution of love in Arabic.

But we got through, and most of those English books, of course, we kept selling out of English books. Oh, how I wish I'd thrown in a few suitcases. Those of you who were here in the last minutes, we were loading the bus.

We put in a lot of English books. I wish we had put in more. We ran out almost by Cyprus.

We got quite a few out of there. Praise God, their stocks increased a little bit. Never hurts to have a few extra books.

We got a few more out of Assad, though his stock is not very good. Again, shortly after Kuwait, everything gone. I was selling personal cassettes, music cassettes, anything I could find by the end of the journey.

And we had thousands of dollars of book sales and tape sales on this trip. In Kuwait, there's one especially live Arabic assembly, led mainly by Palestinians. And I believe it was in God's province that we have Christmas with these people.

You know, those of us in this part of the world, especially with certain types of people around, and their particular belief about eschatology, we get a very heavy dose of pro-Jewish material. And of course, we love the Jews. We want to reach that nation for Christ.

We love all people. But it was good to get the other side of the story among these people who once had their home and their lands, everything right there in what they call Palestine, and are now refugees in

many different parts of the world. I'm not here to make any more comments on that, except that we need to pray for the Palestinian refugees and settlers, who of course are all over the Gulf, and because of the way these countries function, they never know how long they can stay.

Everybody in these countries, most people in these countries, and there are just hundreds of thousands, Pakistanis and Indians, Palestinians, all these lands I'm going to talk about in a minute, they're all very much second-class citizens. It's quite amazing, quite amazing. The Lord opened the door, even though there was no advance notice apart from one phone call the day before, these people really opened the door.

They wanted us to stay Christmas. We had the main Christmas evening meeting, and Indians came in on that. A.G. Philip immediately lined up several other meetings among the Indians, and it was an encouraging time.

Christmas Eve, one of the Arab brothers in the assembly in Kuwait came and said, you know, there are actually some books here, because we had hardly any Arabic books, and at our book table people were wanting Arabic books. The man came to us Christmas Eve, he says, you know, an OM team, I think 10 years ago, had left some Arabic books here. I said, oh.

He said, oh, I've sold some of them, but we have a few left. Christmas morning, Ben, my son and I, spent part of the morning going through six huge boxes of Arabic books, hundreds. Books that now are selling for three times the price back in Lebanon.

How were we going to sell these books, because we knew we'd never get them through Saudi. So we had a really big book bonanza. Sunday night, we gave five books for one dinar, which is about a pound and a half, and to our utter amazement, almost every single book was sold that night, as people took the vision of getting these, selling them to others, giving them to others, and using them, whatever way possible.

Here's books that have been sitting for a decade. And you know, it just confirms a theory I've always had, that it's better to have too many than too few. Those books are worth three times as much.

Of course, the Tehran team used to go to Kuwait all the time, and they probably just had to leave these books. A lot of Deir ut-Tan's books, Billy Graham books, other books, pray for those books. Something else was shared to me in Kuwait that I pass on to you for prayer.

Some group has been sending Christian literature through the post, good literature in Arabic, through the post. This is a controversy. I heard about it in North Africa.

Some agree, some don't agree. But the believers, some of whom in Kuwait are quite bold, they were quite excited about this. And they said the Kuwait authorities wrote an article in the newspaper against these tracts, warning people not to take them and read them, and republished the full text of the tract in the main newspaper in Kuwait, including the address where to write in for Bible class bonus courses.

And you know, the Lord has his way of getting his word out. As we pray, even though when we pray for some of these countries, we feel so hopeless or helpless, God works. In Syria, one of the most anti-foreign and tight countries in the world, somehow in God's providence, Charles Coulson's film, Born Again, was being shown in the government's cinema in Damascus.

And I remember 10 months ago when we left Syria, we were crying out to God for a film ministry in Syria. And you know how our film ministry is going, it's got one leg broken and the other one's temporarily being operated on. So we haven't got any films in Syria.

They like them. And we made a number of Arabic teaching films on this trip with one of the best interpreters we could find in Jordan, that's another story. And we made a lot of other films along the way, which we hope to put into a film we can use in prayer meetings, especially some exciting shots in Pakistan.

But God has his film ministry. And here, I think the government brought that film in to show what a terrible government America is, because they're very anti-American, like most of these countries. And here it is a testimony of salvation in the main government-sponsored cinema in the middle of Damascus.

I don't think these things are accidental. I believe God answers prayer and these things happen. We got another Saudi transit visa and we drove through this.

Again, I don't want to mention any names. And I just share that there are many, many expatriate believers in Saudi Arabia and a majority of them have very little contact with the Saudis. I think the best place to reach Saudis for Christ is London.

And my burden and vision for the Arab world team is greatly increased. Of course, I'm sure there are things also happening there that I could not see on my short trip. But it is a very, very extremist and fanatical place with very tight control on everything.

We moved on to the United Arab Emirates, a very different story. There are still missionaries in the United Arab Emirates in medical work, pastoring expatriate churches, like one excellent brother who is the pastor of the church in Abu Dhabi, right here. We visited Abu Dhabi, had a very encouraging meeting there.

Arabs came to that meeting. Then we went to El Ayn, down here on the border, very close to Amman. Here it is.

Had an encouraging meeting there and both Arabs and expatriates. Again, ex-OEMers in all of these places, pressing on and were greatly encouraged, seemingly, by our visit. And then up to Dubai.

Again, many ex-OEM Indians in Dubai. Again, the same situation, hard for them to reach in among the national people. Pray for Irving Silvian.

He is in El Ayn. He was in Saudi Arabia. His wife found it very difficult there.

And his great burden is the Baluchi people. And he's working on the Gospel of Luke in Baluchi. We had supper with him.

Sends his greetings. There are many Baluchi people in United Arab Emirates. And the minority, of course, are the people from Emirates itself.

Some may ask why we didn't get back to England before now, or why did we end up going to Pakistan when ultimately we decided to go to Pakistan later on. But one of the reasons was that our brothers and sisters in Oman, another impossible country to get into in some ways, I wrote to one missionary friend, he wrote me back from my own parents' church, don't come. But the Indians are a little more aggressive than perhaps Americans.

And they not only asked us to come, they insisted, they sent not only air tickets to Muscat, because we couldn't take the bus there to Oman, they sent air tickets for Dubai, where is to Muscat and Karachi. That's \$700 worth of air tickets. And on this trip, we weren't exactly flush with finance.

We were trying to identify with the movement in its situation around the world. So we were encouraged by that gift. They were not going to take no for an answer.

We talked to him on the phone. And that's when we said, you know, if we're going to Oman, we are not going to miss Pakistan. Here's Pakistan right here.

We just spent a couple days there again, very encouraging meetings. In all these places, we've seen, well, certainly in total, a couple thousand dollars in their money. Come in and answer the prayer and gifts, most of which will help also Alan's trip back.

Alan left United Arab Emirates three or four days ago, and is somewhere here. I can only just add that the bus proved to be a greater help than I think we'd ever envisaged when we took that step of faith to go by coach. In fact, I've been able to, at least during the first and early part of the second part of the journey, probably do more letters than I've done in any one single period, and maybe even in a couple of years.

I don't know. I can't keep track. But that was lifted a great burden off my heart, mind.

I know I'm not supposed to carry these burdens. But you have hundreds of letters, some of which are very important. And people that are very meaningful to you, you're carrying them around.

And by the way, never had any trouble with customs and security with my correspondence. There was so much so many files, so many letters, they just didn't know where to begin. They rumble through always looking for pornography.

It was that was very, very encouraging, because I was a little concerned. When I discovered later some of the papers that I had in there, I especially got concerned. But we left the coach flew to Oman, and had two days there spent New Year's Eve and New Year's Day there.

And I'm convinced that God has put some of these ex-Omers in these countries in his providence, not just to work among the local people. But there's very, very growing churches among the expatriates in some of these countries. And they are reaching out.

But also to support the work in India, we have tremendous gifts from the Indian brothers and sisters there. I used to judge these people pretty heavily that went to the Gulf. I thought about the fact my own father left the Netherlands as a lad, probably for similar reasons, which has meant a lot in God's providence in my own life.

But I believe that the Lord wants to use these Indians in the Gulf. And some of them really, really are going on for the Lord. This one we stayed with as an ex-engineer from the ship, very, very committed to the work of Oman and the ship, started his own business linked up with Sheikh.

God is really prospering him. Well, without any question, Pakistan was the highlight, I believe of both months, I think it would have been really a subtle trick of the enemy if I hadn't gone there. We flew into Karachi, we were really running out of time.

I have a non meeting that can easily be cancelled on Sunday. I was hoping to see my son, which I have been able to before he goes back to university. And I've done a whole separate memo on Pakistan already.

It's on on. It's on tape. Gave it to May, by the way, if you can pray in Taifas these days, contact May.

But after going through so many of these countries where there are so many restrictions, and so many things you cannot do, and everybody's tiptoeing around, and to come into a Muslim country, 90% Muslim country, where there is just unbelievable freedom, there's not total freedom, you can't do everything. And we have to be very careful. There's some cities in Pakistan where you can't really go yet.

In wide scale literature distribution, the believers are very sensitive or not so much just the believers, but nominal Christians, it's a complex country. But to just go out in the streets and start selling gospel packets, the day I arrived, and books and give out tracts was just like coming into, you know, some kind of a cool shower from 100 degree desert. And I have just been motivated beyond words about Pakistan.

Actually, for a couple of years, I've been speaking to my wife about moving there at least a couple months a year. It was great to get back and use my Urdu. Everybody was very impressed.

I have six phrases. To be able to travel on that train, a real slow train. They told me when I got there, I have to fly that was \$250 just Karachi to Lahore, it's not a small country.

And they said they've been to the top man in the station. No way can anybody get on the train? Well, I learned from India. That doesn't mean so much out in that part of the world.

And I got a contact and he got a contact and we got seat reservations on the train Sunday morning. We got there Saturday at time of the team. We had a meeting in the Baptist Church, preached the Cathedral at eight o'clock seats 800 people 25 in the meeting, broke bread with them or took communion, got on the train at 1024 hours to Lahore North.

But you know, if you went out to the subcontinent just to get the train experience, it would be worth it a little expensive. Because going through those towns and seeing the homes and seeing the people in mass, of course, because I've been in India traveling in the trains for several years, it just, you know, memories came back like a Niagara. But what what a challenge.

And these people are so friendly. They're so willing to talk about Christ or anything. The man sat next to us on the train assumed that he was a brother, kept referring to my wife as a sister and couldn't, you know, gave us from his food and just just a tremendous wide open door for ministry.

I was impressed very much with the teams in Pakistan. The most female dominated field in all of Operation Mobilization and the most Asian dominated field in all of Operation Mobilization. And I tell you, we've got some lessons to learn from some of these women from Malaysia and Singapore.

There are people there from other countries as well, but they are crying out for Commonwealth people. Now they had some Americans. Some of them have gotten this interesting Urdu course in Lahore.

We're the only ones in the class. They come in different times so that the teacher doesn't exactly know what it's all about. That's giving them visas.

There are ways to get visas. In fact, I remember one of the things that Tim Lewis, son of Norman Lewis, is with us this morning back in Morocco, if you remember him. He shared, and I never forgot it the whole trip, you know, the issue is not the problem of getting in these countries.

The problem is people don't want to come. That's the bigger problem. There are ways to get in.

And that's certainly true, of course, about Pakistan. The Commonwealth people are far better. We had a good time in Lahore.

We had a meeting in which a number of key Pakistani believers came. They have a book, almost a bookshop in the base there. They're advertising it.

We sold about \$100 worth of books that night. And it's just unbelievable the dearth of Christian literature distribution in Pakistan. Hardly any real bookshops in the country.

CLC is a little tiny shop, second floor, way out of the way in Karachi. Very little in the way of what you would call a proper bookshop, like 9 London Road. It doesn't exist.

And here's the land. What's the population there in Karachi? 75 million people. And many, many Christians.

There are, I don't know if you would have that figure, but we estimate a couple thousand Christian leaders. Now many of them are not necessarily converted people. They come largely from the sweeper caste.

That creates a barrier to reach Muslims beyond anything we can understand. But they're there. The Pakistani church is there.

They cannot be totally bypassed in that situation. They have a strategy there in which a large part of all their effort is directly to Muslims of every background and every group in the nation. But at the same time, they want to see revival in the Pakistani church.

So that's a key prayer request. They have very good linking with some of the key Pakistani church leaders who so need our prayers. We're praying out, sending some mailings of some key books.

Mike Wakely is one of the most aggressive, enthusiastic leaders when it comes to literature. He just moves. And I just have a burden that in the future, here in STL, that we include Pakistan.

I haven't had a chance to talk to Jerry yet. But that we include Pakistan in this, in the vision for India, as far as the little profit we see from the sale of books here, channeling out not just to India, but to Pakistan. I think personally, in the next 10 years, we should include Pakistan an equal priority with India.

It's the same continent, very similar people. And yet with our burden for the Muslim world, we have to acknowledge that Pakistan, in one sense, should be more important. We have plowed 17 years into India.

India is a land where, though we need more foreigners, the work is in the hands of nationals. Whereas Pakistan is, at present, the way our strategy is, for a number of reasons, just such a wide open door for international personnel, which we often, at times, have difficulty deciding where we're going to put people. These people who want to get involved in Muslim evangelism.

Because some of the fields, like Turkey, do not want people in Turkey during the first year. You're dealing with far more complicated, in-depth situations, where people need more training before they go. Pakistan is a much more OM-ish situation, if you know the terminology.

Somebody can go out there, maybe even in their first year, if they've had some basic training, and they can find a real ministry. Gospel packets, and Mike Wakeley has the most powerful gospel packet I've ever seen. I counted the number of pieces of literature.

It sells for a rupee. Not one of these, what do they sell for in India, 30 paise? He's got 12 pieces of literature in this gospel packet. Number of pieces geared for Muslims, a lot of scriptures, and one Bible Society piece broke into 12 other pieces.

24 separate pieces of paper in this bombshell gospel packet. He has also just produced, in cooperation with the World Home Bible League, 25,000 copies of Great Truths. What's the name of that? Great Truths of the Bible? Great Bible Truths.

This is just like a New Testament. Sells at a super-subsidized price of two rupees. We got out in the streets with them when we were there, and it goes, not as fast as a one rupee packet.

A rupee, by the way, is five pence. You get ten rupees to a dollar. That was encouraging.

This includes key selections from the Old Testament. So, in fact, in some ways you're selling a man a book that's really a little better almost than the New Testament. It's a combination of the old and the new, and geared toward the mentality somewhat of those people.

25,000 copies. Mass distribution, the way we do it in India, is not so easy in Pakistan. We have to be very cautious, you know, about standing on the corner, moving tracks in one day like Bombay.

There it's got to go a lot slower. The believers and the nominal Christians and others, they seem to be happy about the selling. Carefully, door to door, the girls go more door to door, the men go in the streets.

But blitzing is not yet on in Pakistan. We then went to Pindi, where we have just a women's team, a very enthusiastic, smiling women's team. Praise the Lord for them.

We got a little interview with Malyung, which we'll be showing you on film sometime later on. They had many, many, many contacts. They had quite a few Muslim women in for the little Christmas thing they had right there in their apartment, which is a beehive of activity.

People showed up very late for that meeting. The most intensive five days the whole trip, by the way, did Pakistan. You can imagine when it is traveling.

After that, we shifted to a van and we wanted desperately, we were running out of days, no reservation on the airplane. We desperately wanted to get to Peshawar. We made it.

And again, this was another highlight to be there among the Afghan refugees. In fact, just the day before yesterday, mid-afternoon, we were sitting in the tent of some of these Afghans in a refugee camp along the mountains of Afghanistan. They were actually inviting us to join the army.

I'd go back into Afghanistan to fight. I explained that I wasn't really much of a fighter of that type and probably would be a hindrance. He countered that.

We did all this through Gordon who speaks the language. He countered that by saying, well, I wouldn't have to shoot. I could just come along and help.

So I was quite flattered. But I don't think that's my present ministry. I think this was especially, especially made a real impact on my son, Ben, who's been with us all this time, doing a lot of the driving and has stayed on in Pakistan, will be going on into India for a couple of months, volunteer service.

We had a meeting that night with the team. We had to leave at about 10 o'clock and get back to Rawalpindi about one or two in the morning. And then the Lord, even though we had no reservation, got us on that plane yesterday morning.

What a privilege. This is what I thought on the plane. I spent a lot of my time in prayer.

What a privilege to be a part of what these young men and women are doing out there, not just the ones on OM, all of them. XOMers, whatever group, in our meeting in Lahore, many different groups came to the meeting. Out in these countries, doesn't matter so much what group you're in.

Not like back in some of our countries where everybody's pushing his own thing. Everybody's pushing his own magazine. When you get out of these countries, you got to forget your silly little label and get on with the work.

There's no value in many of these countries for them to even know you're with some group, Operation Mobilization, or whatever. And I thought as I came back, because sometimes I get a little down on Operation Mobilization, which I feel so often is limping. And then I have other struggles.

And the warfare is very intense intellectually when you're in some of these countries. But I thought what a privilege to be a part of what these people are doing. And what a privilege to be able to send them literature.

Mike Wakeley is one of the best literature stocks of English literature, which is a great need in Pakistan, any team I've ever visited. It's available. And it's available because of the ministry of some degree STL and also the international coordinating team.

And of course, it's part of the whole thing worldwide. Let's just close in prayer. Lord, we thank you for the privilege of being part of your work.

And we want to give you all the glory for what you're doing. And we just thank you for the wide open door, especially there in Pakistan, and pray that we may know what new steps we can take to see that whole nation reach with your word. Lord, we need to see a release of finance.

We need to see a release of literature. We need to see a release of workers. We need to see your church moved.

Lord, I thank you for those that went on this team. I thank you, especially for my own wife, who has been through some pretty heavy days to keep on this schedule. I thank you for Ben for Alan.

Thank you for those who are on the earlier part of the trip. For me, Paul Stilley and Roger, Hans Stroman, Neil Brinkley, and others. We believe Lord that this journey was in your providence, and that your mercy was our main foundation every day.

As you delivered us from endless possible accidents and problems, not that you always do that, because often we can learn much through not being instantly delivered. And we did have to face some setbacks and some difficulties. And Lord, we pray that each one of us who has a responsibility of spreading this vision, and of sounding the alarm, and of giving the Macedonian call, may somehow be willing to daily deny self, take up the cross, and to do it for your glory.

We ask this, Lord, don't allow us just to be hearers of these things. But may each one of us this very day search our hearts, and know what we should be doing, and where we should be going, to advance your cause of reaching every person, every individual in this world, with the gospel of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray in his precious name.

Amen.

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