

(Om Orientation) New Testament Strategy - Part 1

by George Verwer

The New Testament strategy for world evangelization is based on infallible proofs, love, boldness, and suffering, and it requires a world vision and discipleship.

Duration: 27:52

Scripture: Acts 1:8, Acts 2:41-43, Acts 2:47, Acts 5:40, 2 Corinthians 6:10

Topics: "Orientation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a global vision and spreading the word of God through book distribution ministry. They believe that no matter where one is located, they can have an impact on the world by sharing the gospel locally and using the funds generated to support regions where Christianity is not widely accepted. The speaker also highlights the role of love as a motivating factor for action and emphasizes the need for united and disciplined efforts in reproducing for Christ. The sermon references Acts 1:8, which outlines God's plan and strategy for spreading the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

Transcript

Orientation session number 10. The subject is New Testament strategy for world evangelization. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father we come to Thee in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and we praise and thank Thee that Thou has given us a guide. Thou has given us Thy Word and in Thy Word Thou has given us a strategy. Thou has given us a plan for world conquest, for world evangelization that the name of Jesus might be heralded to every country and to every kindred and to every people.

Our Father as we look into Thy Word at this very moment we pray that the Spirit of God might move upon our hearts, that we might be ready to obey Thee no matter what Thou dost say, no matter how Thou dost speak, no matter how radical, no matter how many changes have to take place in our life and in our practices. Oh God make us ready to obey for Lord we are deeply conscious that we are living in crisis days. We are deeply conscious that now is the hour.

Oh God speak clearly from Thy Word and cause us by Thy Spirit to be obedient for we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many of you who are listening to my voice have already heard our tapes on the subject of a warfare, on the subject of the solution to our great warfare, that is the use of our weapons, the weapon of prayer, the weapon of the Word, the weapon of faith, the weapons found in Ephesians chapter 6. Some of you I trust have heard the tape on love. This is the great motivation, this is the thing that drives us on, the love of Christ constrains us, says the Word of God.

These things will automatically bring about action and it must be united action, it must be disciplined action, and it must be reproductive action. At the same time as we move forth to reproduce, to reproduce for Christ disciplined and united, we must move also according to God's plan, according to God's strategy. God's work in God's way will never lack God's supply.

They were the words of Hudson Taylor who was used so mightily in the land of China and oh there needs to be a fresh obedience to them in our day. Hudson Taylor also said it is not the lack of funds that is hindering God's work, but it's too much unconsecrated money. And we see in God's Word that there's a strategy, there's a strategy for getting our supplies, there's a strategy for carrying out the work of evangelism.

It's not just a matter of getting excited and becoming zealous and running off to the field. Some have done this in years gone by in missionary work, have rushed out to the field without proper training, have rushed out to the field without the anointing, and the end result has always been tragic. It has never been our purpose in the ranks of this movement to become a shortcut to missionary service.

Rather it has been our burden to see young men and women more thoroughly trained for the task, more clearly guided in terms of strategy and spiritual dynamic, that the task might be done more effectively for the glory of God. Now because our time is limited, we're going to have to cover some areas very rapidly that really deserve many hours of our attention. But I want us to turn immediately to the book of Acts and try to get a glimpse of God's strategy.

Now the book of Acts is not a book of theology. If you try to get all of your theology out of the book of Acts, you'll probably end up very confused. But the book of Acts is a book of example.

We can see God moving through men. We can see the New Testament plan, the New Testament strategy unfolding. And I trust that in this next hour, by the grace of God, we can see this.

I believe we need to begin in the first chapter, Acts chapter 1 and verse 3. We read, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Now right away we see here that our strategy is based on infallible proofs. We are not going forth to declare a series of legends.

We are not going forth to declare the traditions of our grandfathers. We are going forth to declare infallible proofs. We have infallible proofs that the Bible is the word of God.

We have infallible proofs that Jesus Christ has risen from the grave. Oh, might we see, might we see that this makes Christianity so unique from all the man-made religions of the world. We are not going forth simply to declare something that we have felt, but we are going forth to declare something which we know.

And these early men of God that we read about in the book of Acts knew in whom they believed and were persuaded. This is why in our distribution and in our preaching we include an apologetic. We include

intellectual reasons why we know that these things are true.

Praise God for Dale Roton's recent book, *Can We Know?* Indeed, we can know. Praise God for books like *Science Speaks*, *Basic Christianity*, *Why Believe*, *Countdown*, *Reason for Our Hope*, and a multitude of other books that we are using because they clearly present the infallible truths and the infallible proofs concerning these saints. Now turn quickly to Acts 1 8, that great verse.

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth. Now here we see a definite plan. Here we see a definite strategy.

A strategy that includes the whole world. A strategy that includes Jerusalem, yes, wherever you are. Also your neighborhood, your local state, your local province.

Also your whole nation and the neighboring nation, but also the whole world. Oh, that God would give us a world vision. The Bible says without a vision the people perish.

And one of the greatest needs in the church today is a vision of a lost and dying world. Might God give us that kind of vision in our prayer meetings? Might there be maps on the walls of our rooms that we can weep over and pray over? Yes, God's vision included the whole world and there's been very few and there are very few today who have this world vision and because of it the church is weak, because of it the church is blind. Oh, that God would open our eyes to the millions of India.

Actually I'm making this tape late at night here in the great city of Bombay. It's almost the only time when it, when it's quiet. Actually it's quite early in the morning and the city is somewhat quiet, although there are literally hundreds of thousands sleeping in the streets outside my windows.

Oh, might God give us a vision of cities like this throughout the world where the teeming masses run headlong into hell. And the Bible clearly declares that God's strategy includes the whole world. Oh, might we be able to sing that great song the whole wide world for Jesus Christ.

Acts 1.8. Might it burn into our hearts, might it burn into our unconscious mind and deliver us from localized division. No matter where you are, no matter how small your work, you still can have a world vision. This is why I've always been so convinced about this book distribution ministry.

Because though I be in the United States, though I be in England, going house to house with books, I can be fulfilling the double vision. I can be getting the word of God out locally and presenting the claims of Christ locally. At the same time, instead of having to invest all my money locally.

When the gospel goes out, money comes back through the donations received from the books and that money can be channeled out to the regions beyond. It is a definite part of our strategy not to want to use God's funds in the lands where 90% of all Christian money is being used, mainly England and America. But rather to be able to channel our funds out to the lands where practically no one is interested in giving.

Lands like Turkey, lands like the Arab countries, lands like India, lands like the communist countries. This is why we don't want to spend great sums of money in evangelizing America and evangelizing England. There are already literally thousands of people and hundreds of groups that have this vision.

Praise God for them. But God has given us this vision of a whole world. And though there be few who have it, we must believe that that few is enough.

Let us turn now quickly on Tacts chapter two and verse 42. Here again, we see the New Testament strategy. We see the believers gathering together and remaining steadfast according to verse 22 in doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers.

There's heavenly strategy. There's God's plan. We see them also in verse 44.

We see them together. We see them having all things coming. We see them in verse 44 selling their possessions.

Now, I don't believe this was a fixed rule in the church. I believe simply we are seeing here that the basis of their strategy, the basis of the New Testament life was love. And because of a particular situation there in Jerusalem, their love caused them to sell their possessions.

Their love caused them to take these definite acts. I believe there are times when similar situations come to pass in our day. We see this when there's an OM team working together.

It becomes practical to share. It becomes practical to have a common pool for funds. Now, if we're all living in different parts of the country, this will no longer be practical as it was true in the New Testament church.

As different groups moved off, there seems to be evidence that they didn't continue this practice in every place. In other words, the rule was love. And oh, might we realize that all the strategy in the world will mean nothing if it isn't based in love, if it doesn't have its roots deep in love.

But when it does have its roots in love, there will be practical effects. It will not be all from the neck up. There will be reality.

There will be sharing. There will be a selling of possessions. There will be a giving of oneself and of one's time and of one's money and of one's everything.

As the poor widow who walked in to the church, to the meeting place and gave the widow's mite, she gave all that she had. This is God's strategy. We cannot get away from it.

Man would build up his securities. Man would sponge and get every type of material thing to fall back upon. But God would say, trust me.

God would say, this is my strategy. It's a strategy of faith. It's not a strategy in which we're running around begging people to supply our needs as is done so frequently today.

But it's a strategy of falling before God and believing Him to supply and at the same time having such a dynamic love one for another that we will be concerned about the other man's needs and we will want to supply the other man's needs even if it means what it meant in the life of Barnabas, the selling of one's lands. Oh, I know this is fanatical. But if you'll read the New Testament and if you'll follow the history of the church, you will see that those men who have been used of God have known the reality of this kind of life.

I think of Hudson Taylor living on bread and apples. I think of men so mightily used of God who have gone forth knowing the reality of 2 Corinthians 6.10, poor yet making many rich, having nothing and yet

possessing all things. And we see in verse 47 the result, praising God, having favor with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily, such he should be saved.

Many want that, don't they? Oh, we have many who want to see souls saved. They want to see people added to the church. Why they read verse 41, then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day they were added unto them about 3,000 souls.

Oh, isn't that tremendous? Oh, there's many want to see that. And there's many want to see what it says there in verse 43, in fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. Yes, they want to see that.

We want to see the blessings, but we do not want to pay the price. This is the mark of 20th century Christianity in all of its various phenomena. We want the blessing, we want the power, we want the souls, we want the revival, but we don't want to pay the price of discipline, of dedication, of total commitment, of selling out, of giving all, of laying ourselves on the altar.

And oh, so much of our talk today about crucified life, so much of our talk today about holiness and sanctification is all from the neck up. It's all in the head. But when it comes down to suffering, when it comes down to denying self, when it comes down to really giving, to doing the practical thing, we're miles from it.

Oh, that God will deliver us from this religion of words. Oh, that God will deliver us from merely playing the game. And I can tell you there's people that have gone through these orientation tapes, and they've heard these messages, and it has merely been as before a hearing of the Word.

It's a curse. Might God by His Spirit stir our hearts and deliver us from the religion of words, from the religion of merely hearing, and bring us to that place of deeds, bring us to that place of action, bring us to that place of revolution. Oh, without this it is merely sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, and all the strategy in the world will amount to nothing.

And we see over in Acts chapter 4, verse 31, and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. And here we see again more of God's strategy. Boldness.

Without boldness we will never accomplish the task. Without boldness we will never evangelize the world, unless we're willing to go to those doors and stand fearlessly before the people, and in love declare to them the riches of Christ, and in love present them with the Word of God, we will never get the task done. These men prayed, and when they prayed, they were anointed with boldness, and they went forth with the Word of God.

Oh, my God, give us tongues to speak boldly for the Lord. Let us quickly move on for time is slipping by. Let us look at Acts chapter 5, in verse 40.

Here we see the apostles had just been beaten. You'd think now after they were beaten, they would tone down a little bit. They'd seek a safer way, but look, verse 40, and to him they agreed, and when they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go, and they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing.

What a tremendous thing. Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, and look at verse 42, mark it in your Bible. This is God's strategy, and daily in the temple, and in every house, they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Every house. There's God's strategy. That must be our strategy, to teach and preach Jesus Christ in every house.

It's very clear. We don't need to write a manual. It's there, house to house, teaching and preaching, even though they were not to do it, even though they were told this was dangerous, even though they were told to be quiet, even though they were beaten.

They immediately went back and began to teach and preach in every house. Why are not we doing this in our day? Do we really think we're going to evangelize the world from our nice offices? Do we really believe we're going to evangelize the world from our pulpits and our air-conditioned churches? God deliver us, God deliver us, and bring us back to New Testament strategy. Do you know we have more people in our day writing about the book of Acts, and expounding on the book of Acts, and publishing more books about the book of Acts, than we have living it.

Where are those men who are going to go out fearlessly from house to house, teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, and not just in their own little nice community, but yea to the ironiest parts of the earth, or to those of you living in the gigantic cities of the western world, down into the slums, down into the foreign districts, down into the unpleasant area, from home to home, witnessing, preaching and teaching Jesus Christ, and not just going around and having an every member campaign, and inviting them to come out to another meeting. That's okay, but that's not New Testament strategy. All the substitutes we have for God's plan, all the glossy false substitutes for New Testament disciplined militant evangelism, and today the average man's not ready to evangelize, unless he has a new vehicle to go out and evangelize in, or unless he has this, or unless he has that, all of it's just so much gimmicks.

With or without these things, I say even this, with or without literature, the job can be done, if there aren't militant, anointed, disciplined men, who will go forth in the name of the Lord. Let us turn on and look at Acts chapter 6, verse 1. And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, and verse 7, and the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied. There's God's strategy, not decisions, disciples, not numbers, but men, disciplined, broken, and alive by the Spirit of God.

That's God's way. And all of the emphasis in our day on numbers, and on decisions, and on how many members we have, is a lie. Where are the disciples? Where are men like Stephen, who will stand in the midst of the most fiery persecution, and say, Lord forgive them? Where are the men who will go forth despite all the onslaughts of the enemy, firm in Christ, trusting in Christ, for deliverance, and for power, and for victory? Oh, that God will bring us to that place where we do not go out seeking multitudes, but where we go out seeking the ones and twos, who will live the life of a true disciple.

Let us go on now quickly to Acts chapter 7, and verse 54. Here we see the martyrdom of Stephen. There's not time to read it now, but I want you to read it, and when you read it, realize this, this is God's strategy, and we can't get away from it.

God's strategy includes suffering at the very center. Philippians 129, for it has been given you in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. And as much as we want to push this out, even unconsciously, even though we continue talking about it on the conscious level, unconsciously it is

being pushed out of the church.

With all of our efforts to do it, it is still, it is still a basic part of God's strategy. Might we read those verses and allow them to sting and to pierce our hearts? Look over at Acts chapter 8, and verse 4. Therefore they were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word. Read it over and over again, and remember that word everywhere.

They went everywhere preaching the word, and this is what God wants today. Not just in a few little English-speaking countries, not just in the countries where it's easy, not just in the country where, countries where the people make decisions quickly, not just in the countries where we're allowed to open schools and hospitals, and where we're accepted, but in the hard places, literally everywhere, that is another key word in God's strategy. Might we put it back in by his grace? Turn over to Acts chapter 9. Verse 20, in straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Here we see also that we must preach in the hard places, and we must preach the hard message. The hardest place that they could have preached in were the synagogue, and the hardest message they could have preached was that Jesus was the Son of God. We could expound on this at great length, what it meant to go into those Jews and to preach that Christ was the Son of God, and yet they went, and look at verse 22, but Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.

Here again we see another vital thing in God's strategy. They went forth and confounded the Jews. In other words, it was partially an intellectual presentation.

It wasn't just all on the emotions. It wasn't a matter of having nice music in a nice meeting, sweeping people off their feet, only to find out most of them backslide later, but they were willing to present the intellectual claims of Christ. They used prophecy to prove that Jesus was the Christ.

Here again we see how important it is to be able to use these well-written, apologetical books that present the proofs of Christ, especially when some of us are yet young in the faith, and do not have a full grasp of all these things. We go out to the homes. We get a witness.

We begin to witness for Christ. We can use these strategic books that present the intellectual answers, and although it's only the Holy Spirit that can ultimately convert, and it's the Spirit of God using the Word of God, still we have infallible proofs, and we see in the book of Acts that they used it. They used it.

They used it in love, but they used it. It was part of their strategy. Turn quickly over now to Acts chapter 11.

Acts chapter 11 and verse 26, and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch, and it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church and taught much people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Here again we see another important glimpse of God's strategy for world evangelism, the local church. God's strategy in world evangelism centers out from the local church, a local group of believers.

They will become God's instrument in any particular area for world evangelism, and all of our efforts must be ultimately aimed at seeing local groups planted, worshiping, glorifying, and evangelizing. This is why as we work in Europe, as we work in Mexico, our burden is to work with local churches and missionaries who are planting churches. In many cases, in our cooperative efforts, we can't go in and do this work.

In our pioneer fields such as Turkey, we are doing this work, and this is the aim of the work, but in most fields where we go in for summer campaigns or temporary work, our burden is to work and to help and to labor with those who are doing this work, who are planting local assemblies and local churches that will be vital witnesses in their area for Jesus Christ, and right across all of operation mobilization. This is our strategy.

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