

Overview of Om World Wide

by George Verwer

OM Worldwide is a global Christian mission organization that aims to spread the Gospel to every nation and people group, with a focus on literature distribution, evangelism, and Special Projects.

Duration: 59:23

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker initially considers sharing his personal reasons for being a Christian but decides to give an overview of Operation Mobilization (OM) worldwide instead. He highlights that many people in OM have a localized view and emphasizes the importance of the command of Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel. The speaker recounts the early days of OM, where they opened bookshops and engaged in various projects globally. He emphasizes the ongoing need for special projects and the cries for help from people all over the world. The speaker also mentions the role of SDL in supporting these projects and encourages prayer for a broader understanding of God's work and the limitations of resources.

Transcript

One, two, three, oh lord You're the light of my soul You're the light of my soul One, two, three, oh lord You're the light of my soul All my thoughts are in the air Let me not be ashamed Of my enemy's triumph over me Give me a shade. Only me a shade. Let it come that way.

Let it come that way. Only me a shade. Only me a shade.

Lost in thee. I'm lost in thee. Let me not be ashamed.

Let not my enemies triumph over me. Show me thy way. Show me thy way.

Thy way is the law. Thy way is the law. Show me thy way.

Show me thy way. Lost in thee. I'm lost in thee.

Let me not be ashamed. Let not my enemies triumph over me. Remember the blessings of my youth.

Lost in thee. I'm lost in thee. Let me not be ashamed.

Let not my enemies triumph over me. Remember the blessings of my youth. Lost in thee.

I'm lost in thee. Let me not be ashamed. Let not my enemies triumph over me.

One more song? Let's try that again. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.

Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives. God sent His Son.

They called Him Jesus. He came to love, heal, and forgive. He lived and died to buy my life.

His empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.

Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives. All sweet to hold a newborn baby.

And feel the pride and joy He gives. But greater still, the God-assurance This child can face uncertain days because He lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives.

And then one day, across the river, I'll find life's path, His way to victory. I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living just because He lives.

Let's pray. Father, we praise You for the truth of this song. Because You live, we can face today.

We can face tomorrow. We can face the hard things. We can face the setbacks as well as the victories.

The illness as well as the health. We thank You, Lord Jesus, that our life is not hinged on circumstance, but on the truth of Your Word and on Yourself. Guide us in this time together, in Jesus' name.

Amen. I've been really wrestling with what I should share because I have literally hundreds of lectures and messages that I would love to give. The Lord's met with us in our retreat day, in our night of prayer.

But I was thinking that as much as possible I should perhaps try to give something that I can be almost sure someone else is not going to give you. I was thinking of speaking to you on why I am a Christian, and the intellectual reasons as a doubting Thomas, why I've followed the Christian faith. But maybe another day for that one.

I'm sure you can give it yourself. And I decided to give you an overview of OM worldwide, linked with the command of Jesus that we go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. I feel that a lot of people in OM have a very localized view.

And they get sort of pinpoint views. A speaker comes in and he pinpoints a particular part of the world. It may be some, you know, unreached people's group.

And that oftentimes people, even in OM, have a very disjointed view of what OM is. Where is it working? What is it doing in Mexico? What are we doing in Australia? What is the policy and strategy for Singapore, Malaysia? What about the communist world? What is OM doing there? And I thought that for this morning's study, we would take a look at this map of the world. I don't know if anybody has a longer pointer than my pen.

But we'll take a look at this map of the world, and I want to share with you on the scope of this work that God has put us in. At least most of you are committed to this work for a year. Many of you are going to want to pray for this work for the rest of your life.

Not as the only work you'll be praying for, because you'll be praying for many other works. But I think if you have this overview, it will help you greatly to pray, to see all that God has done, which will also help you at times understand why we can't just immediately jump on every new project. Sam had a phone call yesterday.

There's another bus for sale. So I came over and just had a chat with him. Somebody's selling a great bus for 6,000 pounds.

You know, just go out and buy it. Why not? No, I don't think we're going to buy that bus. We got about 25 other uses for 6,000 pounds right now.

Much less buy another coach of that type anyway. So when we have an overall grip or understanding of the work, I think it helps in many ways. And I'm going to try to follow the countries in order that O.M. got involved in those countries.

I'll probably get mixed up eventually. The first country, of course, that we got involved in was Mexico. Now, before I went to Mexico, I was involved in my hometown, New York City.

The home city, though I lived outside the city. When I was converted, I used to go in and give out tracts. And I went through the whole underground one day.

Must have distributed 20,000 tracts. I've been trying to think where I ever got this vision to give these tracts out, because this was very early days. And someday I'll have to research that.

But the first work really of any degree of overseas work, since three of us who went to Mexico were all born in the States, Dale Rotown, Walter Borchardt, and myself, was Mexico. And it's good, and do try to write down at least one prayer request for each country. If we realize that Dick Griffin has purposely held back the work there in some ways so that we could grow in other parts of the world.

Mexico has been the leaping off point for other parts of the world. And yet the work has still gone on. There was a time when we had six bookshops in Mexico.

The early work in Mexico provided the prototype for SDL as it's known today. And actually the work of SDL follows closer the original, original vision than actually the rest of the land. Because the original, original vision, before we really understood what we said should be our main thrust, was definitely literature.

If you had heard me speak 25 years ago, you would have heard again and again, literature challenge. All the facts about what the communists were doing, what the cults were doing. I don't know if you ever heard any of these old tapes.

And it was very much a literature movement. And in the minds of some of the people in the United States who were involved in the early days, oh, it is still a literature movement. And they can more easily understand SDL than they can the OM side.

Back then the whole work, and it officially became incorporated in 1958 under the name Send the Light Incorporated. I got that name from the hymn, Send the Light. We should sing that hymn once in a while.

I don't know when did we last sing that here. But that was the theme song of Operation Mobilization. The first time we went down, the three of us, of course we were there very briefly.

We just got this vision for doing more correspondence courses, radio broadcasts, bookshops. And within the next two years, even though we were mainly students, we opened about six bookshops. And I was very much involved in opening those shops and management of them right down to cleaning the toilets in the back of them and painting the furniture.

And that's a whole bit of history we haven't got time to go into. We still have one key shop in Mexico City. And Samuel Castro is in that shop.

It's also the literature hub. It's also the legal entity to carry out a lot of other work all over Mexico. But our main work in Mexico became summer campaigns, Christmas campaigns, training weekends with local churches, going out and helping churches start other churches into the streets.

Dick Griffin has always been one of the best leaders for just sticking in the streets. All through these years, Dick has stuck out in the streets, sometimes almost every day. And still the coordinator of the whole work in Mexico.

Balimar Aguilar was the co-leader, a Mexican who got a bigger and bigger and bigger family, decided to finally move out of the city and get on a farm so he could survive. And that's what he's doing today. It was only a few years ago when Balimar went to the farm, we finally gave up the Monterey Bookshop.

We had one in that key city for over 20 years. The bookshop we opened in Mexico City, the first one where I lived when I was first married, is owned by Bethany Fellowship. Very expensive rent shop.

That's why we gave it up some years after I left Mexico and took on a lower rent shop. But that shop's still open. And Bethany has grown into a very large-scale distribution operation in Mexico, actually similar to STL here.

Well, that was the first place that O.M. ever worked. The States continues to be, in O.M.'s sphere of thinking, a sending base. There are so many evangelistic agencies working in America, literally thousands of them, plus tens and tens and tens of thousands of local churches.

We feel that when people leave O.M. in the United States, they should get back with their local church or get back with some other agency, but that we should not start a nationwide program. Quite different than the strategy even here in Britain. Because though Britain is a sending base, it is also one of our major evangelistic fields.

London Arab teams, FFA, small summer campaigns, Easter campaigns, quite a few other things, plus, of course, so many more people working here, taking meetings and campaigns every weekend. Pray for New Jersey. They've doubled their staff since David Hicks took over as the co-leader.

They're growing. They saw about a 20% increase in people. God purposely caused us and led us to put the USA on a very low profile because we wanted the work, we felt the work must be European.

There's not time to go into all the details about all this, or I'll never get to these other countries. But we feel now that the work is very much established in Europe. Most of the leadership positions throughout the work are held by Europeans or Asians or Indians.

That we can open the gate a little more for the states without facing the problem we would have faced 20 years ago of just mainly recruiting Americans and having the thing dominated by the states. You may not understand all the reasons for that, socio-political reasons, but I can't go into it right now. Only after a couple of years do we see the strategicness of Canada.

Canada almost started itself. A group of people there, they heard what was happening. One of them, a couple of them came in the 1962 summer campaign.

The first real summer campaign in Europe was 1962. The exploits into the Soviet Union were 1961. And some Canadians said, we want O.M. Canada.

So I had to go there. I'd never been to Canada. And see what these people were up to.

And I didn't have much of a choice. So O.M. Canada was born. I thought I was against it.

Not sure I had the opportunity to think that much about it. And it was very much centered on Ontario Bible School. But rapidly spread.

Keep in mind that in the first summer there was no American charter flight. The only Americans were the small group that had been involved in Mexico. People like Dale, Roger Malsted, Paul Troper, a few others, who had come by ship to Spain after the summer of 1961.

We had the first September conference there in Madrid. Just a couple dozen of us. And that's where I shared the burden that God had given me coming out of the Soviet Union.

I think most of you have heard some of that history. The burden for Canada, again, similar to the states, only we're wanting to increase our thrust in Canada. Because Canadians are Commonwealth.

They have an open door just like British people. In some cases like Bangladesh, even greater. Canadians can go into Bangladesh without a visa.

British, for some reason, now have to have a visa for Bangladesh. So pray for Canada. Small operation based in Port Coburn right near Niagara Falls.

Burt taking a lot of meetings. A small office staff. A very good office they have now.

Marcia was working in that office. She can tell you about it if you want details. Oh, and very, very quickly crossed the Atlantic and in a sense never went back.

I left the States in 1960. And I've never been back except for a very quick preaching tours. We just felt that more and more as time went by, this is where our roots should be.

Our main roots. The first country was Spain. We could be here a long time telling you about the history of Spain.

We don't want to do that now. I want to tell you where is O.M. Spain right now. We don't have a full-fledged program in Spain as it once was.

Spain became rapidly very big. We ran into many difficulties. One of them was nationalism, that they could not comprehend an international work.

And they certainly weren't about to put any money into anything international. Spain, when we arrived there, was a closed country. And each denomination was also very much its own denomination.

The charismatic movement had not yet been born. The few Pentecostals in Spain, they were very, very few. Now when freedom came, and O.M. was very much involved in the early freedom that came to Spain.

O.M. was functioning with the freedom three years before the rest of the people knew the country even had it. By the time they knew there was freedom, we had already been in every town in the nation with huge campaigns, every town, every province, millions and millions and millions of pieces of literature. And as more and more freedom came, 65, 66, 67, more groups came, more groups came.

The Church began to flex her muscles. And we saw that O.M. should flow back more into the Church. Guess as we moved toward the end of the 60s, and that we should pull out and go in in the summers.

The influence of O.M. has never left Spain. The literature of O.M. has never left Spain. The leaders that we have trained are in various ministries in Spain.

This was part of a strategy that I strongly felt that we don't need O.M. as a structure to have O.M. as a vision, as an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. That our burden is not to promote a name. Our burden is more and more structure.

If there's a different way that the Holy Spirit can get on, so a work will be more national, more tied to the soil, then let it go. I think only one summer had we not had a summer campaign, if my memory holds me right. More and more in the last years, there have been some who felt that this is again the hour for Spain, and that they would be more ready for an international, interdenominational group.

There is no working together in Spain to any degree of charismatic and non-charismatic Christians. They do not understand O.M. on this point. And not only that, they are scared of us.

They're afraid we are Pentecostals, the one group, and the others would fear that we're anti-Pentecostal. You get shot from both sides. So it's nice to say, let's go back into Spain.

Most people who say that don't really know what that involves. I'm sure we could, but we need the right men, we need the right senior Spanish leaders, and we don't have those people at present. But with the ships, with the summer campaign, with a small team lining up for the summer campaign, and they're working all year.

In fact, O.M. is there. Jonathan is still acting field leader for Spain, and we'd ask you to really pray. What is, of course, the Lord's mind? Top of their list is to recruit Jack Rendell, but that may sound like the answer.

But my own view is that any move in Spain in putting the senior leadership into a foreigner rather than a Spaniard, to me, is going backward for a European country that has been dominating too much in its Christian work often by foreigners. I, of course, am stronger than some of my co-workers on building a

work on national leadership. What was once an unquestioned principle in O.M. later became a debatable subject because of lessons learned along the way.

So keep praying for Spain. Actually, before I went to Spain, I went to France. And Special Projects was born.

Because wherever I went, I always launched projects. It's part of what God has done through the way I live and think. And I met this man, and we prayed about France, we were not planning to do anything in France.

And I got a vision for a bookmobile. Within a year, through our financing, we got into the hands of another group. We sponsored it.

They operated it. A bookmobile. That man was Mr. Dormois.

Just had contact with him. And this is 23 years later. And he thinks O.M. in France was the birthplace of O.M. in Europe.

That means Mr. Sleep, by the way. Mr. Dormois. So we launched the bookmobile.

We launched some literature projects. And ever since those earliest days, we've always been involved in projects all over the world. I could keep you here all morning just telling you about projects we're involved in all over the world.

Not only in O.M. countries. Because there's such a need, such a need for what I would call Special Project. Maybe a bookmobile.

Maybe a certain book to be published. Maybe a certain film to be dubbed or to be reproduced. Just endless requests come to us from all over the world.

People are crying for help. It's like a Macedonian call. And SDL, of course, has been a vital resource for many of these Special Projects.

Remember, as you pour so much of the fruit of your labor into India, that sometimes frees other money to go to other places. So in a sense, though, SDL, a lot of your cash goes to India, though you're involved in a lot of other projects, including direct projects of giving literature grants. The fact is that you are freeing the general O.M. fund to move in many other directions, including the Special Projects fund.

But the first big action took place in France, really in the summer of 1962. And we saw France, because France was an open country, as the ideal training ground, the ideal place for a big summer campaign. I'm not going to give you the history of that, but France, as it is today, became one of the strongest O.M. fields.

In not every country have we been able to develop the work to the full degree we want to. Sometimes it's the Lord's will that we take the work this far, and then other groups take it the rest of the way, or other churches take it the rest of the way. In France, this did happen.

We took it so far, other groups did all kinds of things. But the Lord led Mike Evans, a very unusual, dynamic leader, to take O.M. also much further, and planted 15 or 20 churches through O.M. teams. In the last couple of years, we've hit some considerable opposition in France.

We are now definitely a middle-aged group in France. We're 23 years old there. We discovered we're not attracting the French recruits.

It's a solid work. A publishing house was born, a very solid French publishing house. A distribution program was born.

Literature has not only gone out in France, but French Africa, that's another prayer request, that largely our books are too expensive for French Africa. We would like to put thousands of pounds subsidy into French books for French Africa. I've done a little, and when I get the invoice from Paris, which we pay for out of special projects, my head spins, because these French books are so expensive.

I think I owe them some money right now. They're definitely overstocked on a few books. We know what that's about in STL.

So let's pray for the French publishing house, which is called Feral. We're doing several books a year, but in the process of the church planting, and the publishing, and the in-depth, building up, tremendous study program in France, we started dropping greatly on French returns. And for the year program, the last couple of years, it's been very, very low.

So there is a key prayer target. We don't need somebody to come into every pyramid and give us the same prayer requests again and again. There is a prayer target right through the year until we see those French young people with us at the July-August conference.

Now, praise God, meanwhile, other movements were born. Why when? When in 1963, summer in France, Lauren Cunningham, as YWAM was just being born, he came on OM. YWAM was already born.

He had a vision, but he wanted to see how we were doing. And he came, and actually he was in charge of the book room. The man who is the present international leader of YWAM, a movement that's grown much bigger than OM.

And they are now moving very strongly in France. Praise the Lord. God has different task forces that move in at different periods of history to glean a harvest.

And when we think of 50 million souls in France or more, you know, there is plenty of scope, just in Paris alone. The next field that very much got involved was Italy. I came to England in February 1962.

One of the decisions I had to make within the next month was the summer campaign to include Italy. We had almost no contact. In fact, we hardly had ever thought about Italy.

And I decided in Easter of 1962, I'll never forget it, to go to Italy. By the way, a lot of prayer was going on for finance at that time. We were completely broke.

It hasn't changed totally. We were desperate. I had these printing bills.

And of course, we didn't have a finance committee. I was the chief bookkeeper. I was in charge of vehicles.

I was in charge of the literature department. I was in charge of the toilets. There were only three of us, actually, the total staff.

And when I arrived back from Italy, a gift of several thousand pounds was waiting from a lady, an unknown lady who had only heard by secondary source about OM that it even existed. And God touched her heart to send in thousands. I think it was 5,000 pounds, something like that.

Now, that's when a pound was a pound, not a penny. You can be sure I just went right through the ceiling and called the fire department and got me down. But meanwhile, the Lord opened the door in Italy.

I went there to my amazement that somewhat interesting brethren assemblies received me as if, you know, I'd just fallen out of a PB cockpit. And I spoke at this PB, Primus Brethren Conference in Rome, and they decided to back OM. And for the next two summers, I went to Italy as the team leader and as the country leader for Italy and learned some Italian.

And Italy became a very major, major field of action for the next 15 years. Italy today has gone in a similar way to Spain. After a period of time, we discovered that the charismatics and the non-charismatics don't mix.

We discovered they don't really go for international things. We wanted our work to be Italian. Our Italian leader, Giovanni de Fenis at the time, really had a burden to more or less move in his own direction.

And so we said, Look, Giovanni, you start something else and other OM-trained Italians will move in other directions and let you breathe for a while and see what happens. So we pulled out. And Giovanni started a movement called Mobilization for Italy, something like that.

And other things were born. And we went back in the summers. We've been back every summer.

We went back with the ships. Again, we wrestled with should we reopen Italy. Again, we don't really have the Italian long-term leader willing to throw himself in to what we want to do.

But it's a key country. It really is a key mission field. I don't know why there aren't more people interested in going to Italy.

It is as unreached as many parts of Africa, many, many parts of South America. Northern Italy would be far more unreached than most of South America. It's a hard place.

Dr. Schaefer started to work down there. Very little happened. Very little happened.

Southern Italy, there's more response, especially the Pentecostal Church, which in many cases, I'm afraid to say, is very extreme. Other cases, it's balanced. So Italy is another field we still want to be involved in.

We're still pushing a number of publication projects there, which is also true in Spain. We hope you'll keep praying. Actually, before we got in Spain, in France, excuse me, and Italy, we were moving in to the Soviet bloc.

The original vision of OM was not Western Europe. It was the Muslim world. And, of course, you know the story.

I got arrested with Roger Malmstead in 1961. And that was one more factor. We went for a day of prayer that led us to think Western Europe first.

Let's get the Europeans with a vision for the Communist world. They're more acceptable there anyway. Let's get the Europeans thinking about the Muslim world.

Why just think of a small number of people perhaps coming over from the States? And through that concept, Operation Mobilization was born, as it's known today. By the very next summer, I think it was 1963, not 1962, we again started immediately sending teams into the Soviet countries. We started publishing books in the Soviet countries.

In fact, before that, we had Secret of Happiness published in Russian. I can remember us working on a manuscript right here in London as far back as 1962, as I found some fellow here in England who spoke fluent Russian. And Special Projects was born for the Soviet Union.

And I can't give you the statistics, but I can tell you, O.M. has put millions and millions and millions and millions of pieces of literature behind the Iron Curtain over the last 20-some years. The trials, the struggles, the problems in that, that story probably will never be known. Around 1965 or 1966, those dates are not accurate, Dale Rotom was having to come out of Turkey, and I felt he should take over the work in the Soviet countries.

He then developed a whole new security program, which after that, for a while, even I didn't know what was going on. And O.M. Eastern World went underground and has only been allowed out from underground two months ago. Two months ago, at the September conference, we decided to at least announce, publicly you can do this now, that O.M. exists in the communist countries.

It's still sort of a bit of a tricky thing because we won't tell people very much. And if they want to know, they have to write to John Hymas, who's the sort of secretary for the Muslim world country. He's located in Wales.

And you can write him if you want more information, and you can get it if any of you are interested in the Soviet countries. In the summer of 61, I also went into Yugoslavia. In fact, Yugoslavia was one of the countries highest on my list.

It was in my top ten. Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, these were in the top of the charts back in the late 50s, and Yugoslavia was one of them. I went into Yugoslavia.

We started some special projects. David Borman, who came with us in the early days in Spain, married a Spanish girl, settled in Yugoslavia. He later became independent because it seemed an independent worker had more freedom.

In fact, our policy for many years is that when a person went into one of these countries, he renounced O.M. at the border and went in independent. You can't go in these countries as a member, full-fledged member of an organization. You get arrested, you get questioned, what are you going to tell them? It's no game, I can assure you.

It's one of the toughest kinds of work anybody can ever get involved in. One of the reasons we are bringing it into the open, at least some of it, and to at least announce our existence, is we are in desperate need of prayer for that work. Last year was a very hard year.

Jerry Davey, by the way, is on the oversight committee. He will fly or drive to Vienna in a few weeks for another oversight meeting in that very, very unique and difficult work. So Yugoslavia was a great burden.

When they wanted to bring Richard Wurmbraut out of Romania, we were one of the first they contacted. I remember making the decision. The conference was down here in St. Mary Cray.

Somebody said they want to use an arm truck to haul Wurmbraut out underneath. I said, no, I don't think that we can get into that. The Norwegians brought him out the legal way.

It cost them a fortune. Ours would have been much cheaper. But we decided not to get into that kind of people delivery service.

There's not time to share with you what's happening in those countries. But I can tell you right now, this week, Dale Roton and his wife and Mike Strachura are all evangelizing and holding campaigns in Poland. And that's something we can pray about.

You can be sure that most of the time when you pray and look at your map of the world, that something is happening in those Soviet countries. Very quickly the vision spread to Germany, to Sweden, much slower to Finland, slower yet to Norway, for recruits. Of course, the big sending field from February 1962 onward became Britain.

And of course, the scope of the work in Britain, the development of the work in Britain, it would take me all morning to explain. We saw Britain firstly as a sending field. We saw Britain as much stronger than we thought.

Those of us who were foreigners. And of course, by the first summer there were 90 British people. By the next summer there were 900 British people who crossed the English Channel.

And it was about that time that I realized this is the place where I want to throw a chunk of my life. The Indian vision was then born. And my dream was six months in India, six months in Britain, six months in India, six months in Britain.

I did that for a number of years, though I was always involved in a lot of other countries as well. Certainly in the plan and purpose of God we can see that Britain was to be the anchor for OM rather than what would normally look like the anchor, the states, because these is Commonwealth. And India was to become the primary and largest OM field where what happened just went beyond all of our wildest dreams.

We launched out of India. 1963 we arrived. By 1964, January, an amazing bit of history there's not time to tell about.

People said Indians are not going to work for this kind of thing. You're not paying any salary. What future is there? There was instantly quite a lot of criticism.

Many people stood at an arm's length. Some people cooperated with us. And it was clear when I went there in a survey trip, Rotan had already been in a survey trip the summer before, that I should return there with my family, which I did, in September, October of 1964.

And things just began to explode. Spiritual Revolution newspaper recruits, requests for teams all over the country, and of course we were faced with a staggering population. I remember then we thought of 400, 450 millions.

It just seemed to eclipse everything else that we were doing. Now it's 750 million. It's a hard country just to even keep up with the population.

The burden in India, as in many countries, is mass evangelism and training of Indian nationals. Mass evangelism through every possible means, especially literature. But while we're doing that, on-the-job training of nationals.

Teaching them the life of faith. Teaching them to believe God. Teaching them how to win others.

Teaching them how to relate to one another. And the Lord has blessed that work there in a tremendous way. Simultaneously, however, the work which had already been born in 1961, as far as I remember, before I got to England, wrote on Roger Ball State, Krista Fisher, now anchor, living in India.

I arrived in Turkey. Primary OM field. We used to live and breathe and think Turkey every day.

Because we had the statistics. Hardly anybody was there. Hardly any literature was there.

There was no Christian bookshop. We immediately opened a bookshop in Ankara. It had to be half-educational in order to survive.

That became the seed of the birth of educational book exhibits. When that shop folded up, I asked a team traveling to India, I was living in Bombay, to pick up the educational books. We don't want to lose the money on them.

We'll sell them in India. Get rid of them. That led to the birth of educational books in India, which later transferred to Nepal.

That's where I got the idea of using an educational image for the ships. Because I was living in Nepal, involved in educational book program, which is one of the ways we stayed in Nepal, because it was a semi-closed country. So the teams went to Turkey, and they've been there ever since.

Turkey has always been two-fold work. Literature distribution, much of it, in a very quiet way. The losing ministry, we've lost millions of pieces of literature in Turkey, a very absent-minded group.

And at the same time, a lot of the effort is very much personal evangelism. Learning the language, very important in Turkey. Dealing with people individually.

Then working with the small groups of believers. It's really a full-fledged, as OM worked in many countries, it's a full-fledged missionary work that is very similar to what other mission societies would do. Some people have always felt or thought, well, OM is short-term.

OM from its birth was short-term and long-term. In fact, the longer term almost became before the short-term, because when we launched out in the early days, we never thought of anything but just our life in missions. And then slowly the concept developed of short-term.

That terminology was not even used in the early 60s and late 50s. So the longer term work has gone on, and I'm sorry to say that the number of recruits this year in Turkey is down to about 17 or 18 people. Now the catalyst effect, which has spread to many other fellowships and organizations, has increased greatly the number of people coming in from other groups.

So the fact that our numbers are down a little bit, that is not such concern, though it is concern. A team around 1962 went across North Africa. And I haven't got time to share, but it never seemed to develop that OM should have a major thrust in North Africa.

We've had various efforts over the years. And Bertil Inquistar, our world leader, has just completed a survey in North Africa a few days ago. We had him sharing at our retreat last night.

We've had some efforts there. We've had people in prison there quite a bit. Very tough situation.

We didn't want to jeopardize the work of the North African Mission or the Gospel Missionary Union with OM's sort of situation. Plus, we started to get very involved in Iran. Iran became a major field.

We had teams every year there up until the Iranian Revolution. It was out from Iran that we started to get more and more involved in Pakistan. They went for visas in Pakistan.

About the same time the work was born in Iran, which is now in the hearts and the minds and the lives of nationals, Afghanistan was entered by Gordon Magney and a few others. And today, there are ex-OMers in Afghanistan, but our main thrust is among the refugees because there's 2 or 3 million refugees who have come out of Afghanistan and are there in Pakistan. So this very much became the target area.

But we discovered the rapid growth took place in India. Much easier situation. The church, much bigger, something to work on.

And we discovered that often the kind of people we have in OM, the kind of ministry we have, works better when there is a church and there are national young people that we can train, that we can work with. So we didn't give up the Turkish people, which is sort of the whole type of missionary work needed from A to Z, demanding a more skilled person, a more trained person. We didn't give that up, but we saw fantastic possibilities in India for doing much more literature, films, training, mobilizing the church, mass campaigns, reaching 10 to 15 million souls every year, and many of them Muslims.

And we discovered that very little was being done among the Muslims of India, now numbering 100 million, so we wanted to have a greater thrust among the Muslims. So you can see what happened, that within a decade, from a very small beginning, in 1957 of 3 people going to Mexico, within one decade, our work had expanded from Mexico all the way across to Bangladesh. And that was the expansion that took place within the first 10 years, a lot of it within the latter half, because the growth of the work in OM from 1957 to 1962 was very, very small.

We weren't sure what God was doing. We were learning basic lessons about prayer, about relationships, about the spiritual warfare. And you know, that's a beautiful illustration, almost worth this whole lecture.

Don't be impatient with yourself. It takes time to make a man or woman of God. It takes time for a work of God to be born and have its roots.

The idea for the ship, of course, came in 1964 in the converted pub in Bolton, Lancashire. But there were six years in which I was mainly, with a few others, alone in this vision, researching, visiting ships, finding out prices, answering the criticisms. Two years later, 66, Graham Scott joined.

And together, we worked on pioneering the ship vision. Since most are familiar with the ship ministry and with its expansion, being born in September of 1970, first voyage early 1971, has expanded OM all the

way across almost the entire world. Lagos covering this whole area, Doulos covering this whole area, Lagos making at least two trips around Africa, strongly convinced us we should not start permanent, long-term works in most of Africa, but should be a catalyst, should supply literature, should get involved in special projects.

Because with our push and reach out here, and then eventually here, just to take on another whole complicated continent with many, many individual nations, we were not ready for, and we don't have any go-ahead present for anything south of the Sahara. Rapidly around 71, 72, we started getting committed into Sudan. Kamal joined the ship, caught the vision, went through the intensive training program, went back to Sudan and became the founder, praise God.

The first time a work was really almost founded by the national of that country, and has gone on ever since. Of course, South Africans began to get involved because there are always South Africans floating around Europe. Then when the ship went there, the first trip, I was on the ship at that time, more interest developed, and through just a slow process of growth, an office was born under a dear lady, Mrs. Wiles, for many years as a volunteer, and it's still changed to Mrs. Voslo, who operates that office as a volunteer.

Australians, we're as far back as 1962. In fact, the first truck driver on the land in 1962 was an Australian, Leslie Payne. His name was popped into my head.

But we never felt we should start an office there. It seemed so far away. We were battling with new offices opening almost every year.

But eventually, a few years ago, after more and more Australians getting involved, then Lagos going there, the chief engineer, John Yar, going back there. He's with the Lord now. We opened an office in Australia.

Originally, we wanted to send Lagos to South America for one year. This was the burden I had. Just as a catalyst, just to let them know what God was doing in the Muslim world, just to plant some catalyst explosives.

But as the Lord brought the Dulas vision, it seemed Dulas should go. The response was so overwhelming in South America, it was difficult to ever pull her out. It became one of the great controversies within OM.

What we should do. But it's clear that the Holy Spirit has led us to a degree of commitment in South America. So now there are unofficial offices in many of these countries, all run by volunteers.

Only in Argentina is there a full-time worker, Brother Perfetti and a couple of others. We felt, after much prayer and debate, we should have at least one definite, full-fledged OM base in South America. We already, of course, had Mexico for Central America.

And there's not time to go into the details. But there is a new report about what the ship... The negatives are lying with our printer here. I don't know if you could give Dave Brown the go-ahead to just do at least 10,000 of those.

He wants to know what they're for, but they're for me. But there's a special report on what God has done in South America written by Frank Dietz that we all need to read. Because it's clear that God has done something very, very real.

As Lagos went this direction, of course, Singapore became a key place. The only reason Singapore got involved was it was a place to register the ship. I was looking for a flag of convenience how to register the ship.

The hurdles we had to overcome in the first six months of the ship ministry are just unbelievable. And Singapore was a place. We sent a man out there to find out.

We got the ship registered in Singapore. I had been in Singapore in 1968 to an Asian congress on evangelism. I had some degree of burden for that part of the world.

I had been to Indonesia. And so it seemed that through Lagos, Singapore and Malaysia were to become sending fields just like Canada, USA, and Britain. And now, of course, there's a full-fledged operation there that's growing.

We just praise the Lord for it. Through the 1971 conflict between Pakistan and India, we ended up working among refugees. This led us eventually into the birth of the work in Bangladesh, a very significant but small work going on.

And, of course, when the ship visited Karachi three or four years ago, that was the final confirmation, especially now that I could not get back into India. Mike Wakefield became the founder, leader of the work in Pakistan, could not get back into India. More and more, as we got a foundation, Bangladesh, it seemed we could add Pakistan, became one of the most recent of the receiving fields for OM.

Through Lagos, of course, many other nations got involved, Korea. The Koreans had come on OM long before Lagos, but that gave us more input there. We still don't really know how to handle that situation.

Koreans want to go to the mission field. They have a terrific problem getting the English language. They have a lot of difficulty getting the finance.

And generally, they want to leave their wives behind, which we eventually made a decision that we could not take people for a year without their wives. That's still ongoing debate among the 100 other debatable subjects. Philippines, of course, there was explosive interest there, but it's a country that has far, far more missionary work than most of the other countries OM's in.

So we treated Philippines also somewhat as a sending field, a new, third-world sending field. And that's going on in a small way. Same is true of some of these other areas.

We need your prayers, as this thing has so exploded across the world. The open doors are just, you know, without limit. The work in Israel was born around the same time that the ship visioned.

In fact, the same week, in the same room where God gave the burden about the ship, Ray Lynch gave you the burden about Israel. And we opened OM Israel around 1964, and it's been going ever since. One year we closed it, and the people of Israel begged us to reopen the work and said they felt it was the most significant evangelistic work going on in Israel.

The work in Southern Ireland was really born through campaigns from Northern Ireland, where for a while there was a separate OM entity. There was also a separate OM entity in Scotland for a while. We had to learn that sometimes in order to take three steps forward, you've got to take one step back.

We hit a lot of difficulty in the early days in Southern Ireland, so we pulled back. And then later, through STL, opened a shop there, or carried on an existing shop. And then, with the vision of Peter Mayne, Nigel Lee, others, we started OM Southern Ireland as it's known today.

Church planting throughout the year, very small. And the campaigns in the summer. Now, I don't think I've touched every single country that OM is involved in, that's for sure.

But our time has run out. I really hope that you will take the map of the world next time you look at it, and really begin to pray in a bigger way for the whole scope of ministry that God has given us right across the world, because both ICT and STL are indirectly involved, and often directly involved, in every single one of those countries. There are spiritual hotlines from every one of those countries right into this building.

And we need to just realize that sometimes a little effort here, a little extra push here, goes a long way through those spiritual hotlines. And a little prayer here, and a little faith here, goes a long way to touch nations and people's groups right across the entire world. I'd love to say a little bit more about China, where we're not officially involved, but have had some ministry.

I'd love to say a little more about a lot of places where we've had short-term evangelistic campaigns. Vietnam, Campuchia, Laos. I'd like to say a little more about Nepal.

There's not too many places in the world where we haven't had some opportunities to light some fires. And, you know, it's amazing, even when we have to pull out in structure, fires keep burning, because that's the way the Holy Spirit so often works. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for this little panorama of what You have done across the world in these two and a half decades. We know it's impossible for us to grasp all that You've done. The tens of thousands that have come to know You.

The 300 million that have received something of Your Word across the entire world. And when we add to it the tremendous work of so many other groups and societies, we know that You are a living God who answers prayer. And we praise You and thank You.

And we can say with all of our hearts great things You have done. Though we have been feeble, though we have failed, great things You have done. Increase our vision, we pray, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Any questions or feedback you have as a result of this session, I'd be more than happy to receive. Any urgent announcements? So, it's going to log off today.

We're going to be outside the warehouse at 10 o'clock. And we've got some cold weather. Good.

Douglas is due in Swansea at 5 o'clock. I'm hoping to be there. And they are going to be shocked by the weather coming up from Spain.

I think it's a greater shock to some of our vehicles. Okay, please go quickly to your bases of operation.

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