

# Partnership With the Church

by George Verwer

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*Effective ministry and partnership with the church require correct thinking, a biblical emphasis on love, esteem, grace, and humility, and a correct view of the local church.*

**Duration:** 50:05

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:38, Acts 11:19, Acts 12:5, Acts 12:12, Acts 13:1, Acts 13:3, Acts 13:6-12

**Topics:** "Corporate Prayer", "Church Unity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and corporate prayer in churches. They share a story of a church in Switzerland that experienced a transformation in their prayer ministry through a leaflet. The speaker also discusses the need for correct thinking and not judging others' ways as inferior. They highlight the importance of love, esteem, grace, and humility in building relationships with churches. Lastly, the speaker addresses the issue of evangelism and the importance of missionaries getting involved in the evangelistic ministry of their own church.

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## Transcript

Let's pray. Our God we thank you for the privilege we've had of worshiping you together this morning. We thank you for your church as people all over the world gather to worship you and honor you and serve you and to relate with one another and to grow in grace and a knowledge of you.

We thank you for individuals and teams that are sent out from churches according to your word to plant the church and to mobilize the resources for the accomplishment of your purposes here in the world. Lord help us have a greater grasp this morning of these some of these great truths and to incorporate it dynamically into our own lives. Minister to us here together and through this tape.

We look to you for greater victories as we move toward 1993. In Jesus name, amen. Turn in your bibles to Acts chapter 13.

I'm sure many of you as you come to the end of the year you like to take a little bit of an inventory and to think of some of the things that God has done in your own heart, your own ministry. I find that as I take a little time to do that the Lord has done a lot more than than I thought. We're all different, but I look at each year as sort of a marathon race.

I know when I begin the year and I think of all the meetings, which is one of the things that I'm very much involved in, it just looks like a Mount Everest and I wonder how can I possibly go another year? Just in case any of you think that I'm some kind of loose laser beam that just keeps going on, I might just say that it does seem at times just so much harder just to keep going on. I don't know if any of you can relate to that. And that's why I'm amazed when I see people who do not know how to put into practice what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9, I buffet my body.

The word that I would sometimes substitute for that is I push my body because oftentimes my body doesn't want to go where I'm supposed to be going. And if I hadn't developed that ability to give that spiritual push, I just wouldn't make it. Acts chapter 13 is a great chapter about the church and I want to talk about partnership with the church, especially partnership with local churches.

One of the most important distinctives in OM has been our very strong relationship with the local church. We didn't have that perhaps in those early months back when OM was being born because I was converted in a liberal church and therefore after my conversion it took some time, especially when I went off to university, to get that sorted out. Also as soon as I got to college or university, because I'd been speaking a lot to youth groups and churches, I found myself very much involved in preaching in churches and so didn't always experience a full local church kind of situation.

It was in Chicago later on and more through Dale Roton who got linked up with the Open Brethren movement in Wheaton, a very live movement at that time that had just had some martyrs down in South America. And then our link up together with William McDonald who wrote that book, Christ Loved the Church, that the local church got on an even higher level in our thinking. Also even from the very first trip in Mexico, the first thing we did when we got there, and this was even before Wheaton, was to go to a local fellowship and see how we could help them.

What an encouragement, I can picture that, though it's 34 years ago approximately, I can almost picture that little mission because I remember for the first time being asked by the pastor to go off and visit the sick and to pray for the sick, something I don't think I had ever done. Later on Dale Roton baptized me in that little fellowship in Wheaton. I partly agreed to that because it was the kind of church where you didn't have to become a member.

How could I become a member? I didn't live there and I was leaving. But Dale Roton and Roger Molstead both became members of a fellowship and that was a very, very important step in O.M.'s history. Let's look at this passage.

Now they that were in the church that was at Antioch, obviously a local fellowship, exactly how they met, how they were divided up, it doesn't say. It talks about five men and then it says, As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul from the work unto which I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

So being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, departed on the Seleucid and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews and they had also John as their helper. And when they had gone through the Isle of Pappas, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar Jesus.

And then it goes on to speak about that complicated situation and how they handled that. Here's a very clear passage. I'm afraid it's a passage I maybe preach on too often.

No, not around here because it is one of the best missionary passages and it's a very simple missionary passage in the New Testament. It shows the importance of the Holy Spirit. It shows the importance of prayer.

It shows the emphasis on preaching. It shows the emphasis on the gift of helps, referring to John as their helper. It talks about sending.

And the book I'm featuring this morning is called *Serving as Senders*. For any of you that don't know about it, one of the most significant missionary books I've come across in this decade. And it emphasizes the church.

When Donald McGovern, about 12 years ago, speaking at an OM conference, expounded this, he didn't believe that it was the whole church that really was interested or that involved in all this. He believed it was a nucleus within the church. Here it talks about five men and he went on to us about the five men.

But of course, I'm sure the rest of the church got involved in varying levels. I believe it's a great mistake when we think about the New Testament, is to put these people on a higher level than people today. The people in those churches, I don't think were that much different than the people I'm having to face many hundreds of times per year.

And by taking things out of context from the New Testament, and I did it, here's a goal. We sometimes give a false picture of Christianity and of Christians. It leads to legalism, super-spirituality, and often a lot of confusion and a lot of judgmentalism.

And now in OM, we have a whole history to look back at, and it's interesting that some of the hardest-line loudmouths in the early days of OM, some of them are not even following Jesus Christ at all. Can you imagine if they are saved, I hope they are, there'll be a little bit of discussion at the judgment seat. But of course, God is so merciful.

He knows when we're young, and we're young Christians, we say all kinds of things that are not exactly true, and we do get into judgmentalism, and we do get hyper, and we do easily develop a wrong view of the local church. This brilliant new book, soon to be published by Youth with a Mission, I consider one of the greatest books on missions ever published. It's, I wrote in my little blurb that may be used on the back of the book, it's 20 or 30 years late, but I think it was Oswald Saunders, I may be wrong about that, he's now in heaven.

At least some major Christian leader said he felt it was 200 years late. Research, for example, that's gone into that book, shows that a very high percentage of short-term people blow it when they get back to their own church. Can you imagine that? No wonder we don't see a lot of them again.

The story of OM Latin America over the last decade should be written, because a high percentage of all Latin Americans returning to their churches were unable to make the adaptation. I'm not saying it's completely their fault, I'm convinced. There's fault on both sides, but with what we've learned over the past 30 some years, surely we need more wisdom and more teaching about the local church.

Whether it's a church we're relating to, for example, in Turkey where we may be going as a missionary, or our home church, or some other church where we're just popping in for the weekend. One of the most exciting things about what's happening in our fellowship is that every week we have another church in partnership with us. Because of what God is doing, we have just increasing numbers of churches that are

in partnership with us, but we also lose some churches in the process.

Some churches, like the church that sent out Dale and Roger, completely fold up. Quite a few OMers that I speak to, their home churches are in serious trouble. When we hear that, what do we think? What is our reaction? Are we willing to get involved to try to help that church, and we're going to talk about how we can do that? Or do we set ourselves back? They are separate from us.

We're here on the field. We're doing the job God wants us to do. They're back there allowing the enemy to get in.

Such an attitude, of course, is hardly biblical and certainly not very profitable. I've written down a number of major things that I believe we've got to deal with if we're going to have biblical partnership with our local churches. Number one, correct thinking.

Doctrine is important. Studying the Bible is important. What scares me is how people can study the Bible and come out with more crooked thinking than they started with.

Cults study the Bible. But the people in some of the totally liberal seminaries that would consider what OM is doing just awful. We're going out trying to win Hindus to Jesus Christ.

I mean, that is being opposed more by people with the name Christian than it is almost being opposed by Hindus, many of whom are quite open-minded about talking about Jesus Christ and like Gandhi would like to assimilate quite a bit of Christianity into their own religion. Correct thinking. I remember taking a course at Bible College on hermeneutics, how to interpret the scriptures, not to be confused with homiletics, how to preach hermeneutics.

And it's something that is very, very important, correctly interpreting scripture. I think we all know one thing that's always dangerous is just taking one verse here and one verse there and building our thinking on that rather than taking the whole counsel of God. Some of you, the next time you read through the New Testament, may want to just take several major themes like, say, the church and just trace that through everything connected with the church and the local church.

Remember chapter 12 in Acts? We find the church gathered together praying when Peter was in prison. It's also interesting to see how the church in Antioch was started in the first place, chapter 11. It wasn't a well-planned, well-thought-through operation and I think it would be a sad day if in OM or in the church we lose the willingness for a spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit that isn't necessarily planned ahead in somebody's five-year program.

I believe in planning as well as a spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit. The worship service this morning was well-planned and it was beautiful. Thank you very, very much.

Verse 19, Now they who were scattered abroad, they didn't plan this one, upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus in Antioch preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. That led to the Antioch church, verse 26, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Who planned the invasion of all the Koreans into Saudi Arabia? Was that planned by one of the churches in Korea? I don't think so.

It's very much linked with the economy, it's linked with culture, it's linked with providence, a very important factor in all of this. We need correct thinking about the church. However, if we're going to have that

partnership, the church must be trained in its thinking about missions.

And praise God for the to come and take missions conferences and other meetings and help teach the people about world missions. It really grieves me that quite a few people in the work seem to have a low view of taking meetings, when in fact it's those meetings in churches that give us that opportunity for partnership, not just during the meeting, before the meeting, after the meeting, the phone call later, the letter later, the books we can send, the bonding that takes place. And I just believe if we're going to see that right relationship between OM and local fellowships, there's going to be a lot more work.

We're not going to be able to do all the favorite things we would like to do every weekend. If you think I'm infatuated with taking meetings every Sunday, then you obviously don't understand much about me as a human being and as a weak, struggling person. I was just telling my wife how I was just rejoicing, humanly speaking, because we have no meeting this Sunday night.

We only have a meeting Sunday morning. And the next weekend, because people want Christmas programs before Christmas, I may have no meetings at all. And I'm just looking forward to the opportunity.

I just crossed the 400 meeting mark for 1992 and it was a battle all the way. It grieves me that sometimes people in the world are working harder and are more committed to secular causes than Christians. Forgive me if I have a hang-up in this area.

Last night when we were thinking about going to bed, about 10 to 10.30, two of our Amway friends, British Amway friends, dropped in to visit us. And contrary to what people may think, Amway in Britain during recession is doing very, very well, because more and more people are desperate and they're willing to go out and even try to sell something, that which normally appeals to British people about as much as eating wood. But we had a rich time of fellowship with them.

And whenever I meet some of these people, and Amway is very aware, very aware of their critics and their mistakes, like any other company. It's amazing, other companies that are not in direct marketing and are not involved with so many people can make all kinds of horrendous mistakes, corruption, lies, cheating, and nobody says much. They just, it's a secular company, what do you expect? But because Amway is what it is, they get shot down a lot.

And like everything in life, including Operation Mobilization, and OM has a direct marketing twitch to it, there will be problems. But I tell you, a lot of those people who became millionaires through Amway, or may be living through Amway, work very long, hard hours. There is no easy road, whether it's IBM or Amway, or whether you're working with the United States Army or Marines, and have just gone into Somalia, supposedly to distribute food.

Surveys show that laziness can creep into a movement like Operation Mobilization very easily, because with the emphasis on grace, people are afraid to enforce accountability. Not many people know how to do that. And also, unlike a secular company, there's not the power to fire people.

Most people today are far more uptight about losing their job than the average OMer is uptight about being asked to leave. There may be a few OMers, you know, shooting a social policy right through the head like they do at times. Six months in a row, they've already been given their second warning.

They now may be worried that they're going to be asked to leave. Coming back drunk to an OM team can cost you your ministry. But of course, when OMers leave, they take their financial support with them.

And some of them, even after being asked to leave OM, have set up shop quite easily somewhere else. Very interesting Christian work. Someday I'm going to write a book about it.

Pray that we don't become cynical as we get older. Correct thinking about the church, but correct thinking about missions, about groups that are called parachurch. And I know people listening to this message are people that are within a local church.

And you have your questions and your doubts about parachurch agencies. I think the greatest mistake is just to make a generalization. All parachurch agencies are the same.

It's ridiculous. Biblical groups like Wycliffe get put in the same category as some guy down the road, who out of his own initiative, because he had a dream in the night, is opening up some kind of Christian business and trying to call it a ministry. The whole situation has become extremely complex today, because we live in a culture that is a free enterprise culture in most cases, where all kinds of people who are love Jesus are going into business.

That's one of the reasons Amway got so complex. Because in the early days, they tried to mix Christianity with Amway, because some of the founders were Christians. And of course, it became more and more difficult, because of course, many in it were not Christians.

People I was with last night emphasize how they don't use the Amway platform to push Christianity. They don't feel they should do that, but they feel their Christianity as they live for Christ will come out to the people that they're working with. And they are seeing quite a few people.

They are quite excited about the people they're seeing come to Jesus. That's exciting. I want to speak one of these days again on the subject of living for Jesus in the marketplace.

There's so many great books on it, I don't think really I need to speak on it. But I'm amazed how many people have never even heard of that great book we've been pushing, *Your Work Matters to God*. But the Lord is using that book and other similar books to show that working in the marketplace is not second-class citizenship in the kingdom of God.

And I think it's one of the most exciting things about the present OM emphasis. Correct thinking about the complex situation we face as a church, Christian businesses. There's a place for them.

STL, our own spiritual baby and part of our own fellowship, big meeting about it today, has moved from being a Christian mission and ministry to being a Christian business. It's still a ministry, but there's been a shift. And it takes discernment and wisdom to be able to know the different ways that God is working.

Not that one is necessarily better than the other. That's always sad when people think their way is better. Now the Lord knows we in our hearts will feel that about certain things we do.

That's normal. But we must give it some time before we make some verbal pronouncement about the other person or the other group. And I just think the bigger picture is so important in all of this.

But moving on from this need for correct thinking, the second major principle is we've got to have that biblical emphasis on love, esteem, grace, and humility. Four words. It's good to see some of you taking notes, a sign that you feel you might still be able to learn something along life's road.

Love, esteem, grace, and humility. You tie those four words together and you've got a foundation for building relationships with churches. But not just in words, but in deed and in truth.

How many of us really do esteem our pastors? I find so many people are complaining about their pastors. He doesn't write to me. Most pastors are so busy in our modern culture, there are exceptions, that they don't write many letters.

To write your pastor off because he doesn't write you a letter I would have thought is being a little bit small-minded. If you've experienced more of the grace awakening and know more of the reality of Jesus Christ, then you should set the example. Sometimes I receive very encouraging letters that say at the bottom, please do not feel you have to answer this.

I just want you to know we appreciate this or that. Sometimes a phone call in our modern society goes a longer way than even a letter because there's something about hearing a person's voice on the telephone that can be encouraging. If we're going to build our relationship with the churches, in many cases the pastor is not the key person because he's so busy, he's a delegator and he's given missions over.

Not that he's not interested, that varies from person to person, but he's given it over to deacons or elders or a missions committee. And anybody who wants to develop a relationship with the church knows he needs to start with someone. I recommend you start with someone who actually likes you.

It's easier to start with someone that likes you and then he will help you work on other people who have their doubts about you or who, as the world says, don't like you. By the way, it's a term that I have rejected when I became a believer, the term I don't like someone because Jesus Christ did something in me that made that very, very difficult. It may be in myself as someone that doesn't, humanly speaking, appeal to me, like the man who sat next to me on the tube the other day late at night after the train was also late.

He had a very strong smell, I think he may have also been drunk. We were all crowded in there. I didn't think it was a time for an evangelistic meeting and my attitude toward that man was less than the best and I was quite happy when he got up at the next station and left the train.

Forgive me, Lord. If love is just talk that doesn't lead us to liking people or to making an effort to like people and seeing it as a challenge that the Holy Spirit can help us with, I believe is a great mistake. I know I'll probably be in trouble in this message if I dare mention again the book *Grace Awakening*, but I believe if the Lord gives a prophetic word and it's being used mightily in the lives of literally hundreds of thousands of people, that it would be well worth giving the book a chance, even if you just read the hot chapters which are more around the middle.

God is giving OM a more grace-awakened attitude toward the local church and I thank God for it. I think it's always been there, especially with some people, but it's increased and praise God, we see local churches also having a grace-awakened attitude toward us as well and we appreciate that because some of us are very aware of our sins and our failures, our inadequacies and all that goes with that. And when the church forgives us and accepts us and gives us a second chance, it's so wonderful.

It's like that great preacher who went to this tremendous church where they have a lot of emphasis on anointing and he gave his powerful message, he thought it was a powerful message, and he was feeling so good because they invited him back again. But after the second time he found out that the reason they invited him back is they felt his first message had no anointing at all and wanted to give him a second

chance. Please turn the cassette over now, do not fast wind it in either direction.

They felt his first message had no anointing at all and wanted to give him a second chance. So be careful of evaluating the situation when you get invited back the second time. The third major principle is one we're talking about all the time, the principle of prayer, corporate prayer.

We are humbled in OM by the privilege we've had of helping thousands of churches with their prayer ministry. One church in Switzerland, the church recently was completely turned around in its prayer ministry through one leaflet, a reprint of that article from Moody Monthly, whatever happened to the prayer meeting now going all over the world in many many languages. We often in churches have the opportunity to speak about prayer.

I'm constantly being asked to lead nights of prayer, they're not usually that long, but sometimes you get three nights in a row, that's always exciting. If only they knew the struggle I had to go especially on the third night. Prayer is the key to seeing workers sent into the harvest field, Matthew chapter 9. Prayer was the key in that difficult situation there in chapter 12 when Peter was in prison.

Prayer was made without ceasing. It's just amazing when young people who've been on OM return to their home church and don't get involved in the prayer meeting of the church. I mean some of the most dumb things have been stated by ex-OMers that have put of course the backup, that frightened away the pastor or other members of the church.

By the way, I don't pick my information up out of the air. Pastors tell us these things. Christian leaders tell us these things.

We have a lot of information about ex-OMers who go home and some of the struggles they have. Now if I were talking to the church, I'd say, did you really make that young person feel welcome when they got back? Invite them to the prayer meeting. Give them a chance to share about what they've been doing the last two years on the field at the prayer meeting.

It takes effort from both sides and we've got to realize that and as I tried to bring out in the last point, esteem the other better than ourselves. How sad it is when you get people trying to mobilize prayer who have no prayer life. You think that's a bit of a problem in Operation Mobilization? It surely is.

We have a certain OM ethos and there's certain things that we do and certain things that we say. We may be out leading a prayer meeting. We may be asked to speak about prayer.

We may be asked to organize some kind of prayer meeting. But if we don't have a prayer life, if we don't have that knowledge of God in ourselves, it's bad. Dreena and I were taking one of our typical walks a few days ago to a favorite place.

So many beautiful places you can walk around here and most of them are free. And one of my favorite trees in this huge garden had been completely taken down. This huge beautiful tree.

Been there maybe a hundred years. It's gone. We began talking about this.

Why? Later we saw some of the gardeners. What happened to this tree? What do you do with this tree? And he said it was rotten on the inside. And he went on to say it was also dangerous.

A limb fell off it and hit a woman's shoulder. We can't have trees like that here in this park. What a spiritual illustration.

I knew the moment we heard that it would come up on one of my messages. But some of the Lord's people and maybe some of us look really nice from the outside. And especially as we get older, some people, I don't think in my case, as they get older they look more spiritual.

But the Word of God is clear. Man looks at the outward appearance. God looks at the heart.

How is your prayer life? When you go back to your home church, are you going to go back as a man or a woman of prayer? We're not talking about perfection. We're not talking about the absence of struggle in prayer. But we're talking about some basic realities that's there because of the Holy Spirit, because of obedience, because of the practice of prayer.

And what amazes me is when you find people who don't really have a prayer life and yet you offer them even a free book on the great subject of prayer, they're not interested. One of the great mistakes I made in my life is not to read more books about sex. Now what a confession.

I'm known for speaking openly about sex. Therefore most people presume I must have read a lot. But I was the kind of person when I read one or two books about sex and marriage, you know, this is not the kind of book that appeals to me.

And I made a few mistakes over life's road which we won't go into detail about. But it's interesting how in a particular subject, after reading one book or having some experiences and seeing some degree of success, we feel we've arrived. Rather than being hungry to learn more, being hungry to listen to others and to see what they know on that subject.

It's amazing how few married families ever sit down and talk about sex together. It's still taboo. Our so-called liberated society.

It's not. It's not true. You don't get two.

I'm talking about married couples sitting down and starting to talk on this subject. Maybe really close friends, sometimes in humorous situations. But it's just difficult to talk about.

The Bible seems to be very, very open about it. And you would think in some of these sections of the Bible it would say not for mixed audiences here, especially the song of Solomon, which is pretty, pretty heavy. But we won't get into that this morning.

The fourth major principle, if we want that partnership with churches, is evangelism. One of the greatest problems for the returning O.M.er is his refusal to get involved in the evangelistic ministry of his own church. Because it's not the way we do it in O.M. Or they don't use literature enough.

Or this. Or that. Or, oh, that doesn't work.

Why is it that as Christians we often are so critical? Somebody write me a paper on that. And I know in my own early days and even to this day it's so easy to criticize. And there is a place for constructive criticism.

And certainly there's a place for correction. But when you go back to your home church or whatever church you're in contact with, point out five good things that you see before you open your big mouth and

start talking about the one negative thing. Commend them on whatever evangelism is being done.

Get involved with it. And that will minister to people. That will help bond you with people.

Now we know when you get involved in evangelism in a church, those who are in the church that may not be involved in that evangelism, you will have maybe some struggles with them. Because these tensions are already there in the church. It's not O.M. who brings these tensions into the church.

Generally, let's not flatter ourselves. We come back from the field. They're already there.

But we can try to bring more grace into a situation. Suppose we're working with the people who are gun-ho on evangelism but are being judgmental about those that are not yet in that more kind of overt evangelism. There are different kinds of evangelism.

We can help those people develop a better attitude toward the other people. We're peacemakers. We're peacemakers.

Rather than join them in their negative criticism against somebody else in the church who's doing this or doing that, we can share. Generally, the indirect method is best. The indirect method is best.

Some of our own experiences or we can at least make some efforts to bring peace. In some situations, especially when you first get into it, the best thing to do is just listen. The word is clear in James that we ought to be slow to speak and quick to listen.

Evangelism, there's a lot more I would like to say about it. I believe a lot of the struggles that come in O.M. on the field, and sometimes it's true in a local church, are when people are finding something very hard. Evangelism often is hard, and they're therefore looking for some excuse not to do it.

As I go around the world and talk to O.M.ers, I often find the ones who are complaining or moaning about something, as you talk it out, that's not really the issue. What they're talking about is not really the issue. The issue often is that what they're attempting to do, say in the Muslim world, say in the engine room of the ship, say in some other situations, the work is very hard, and they're finding it hard just to keep going.

And any excuse that could come along that would just help the conscience or help them answer a difficult question the leader may be asking at the time is often too easy to grab. One of the highest forms of integrity is when you're asked why you are doing or not doing something to give the actual reason rather than what you think of at that time would be a good answer. When you understand what I have just talked about and apply it in your life, I believe you've moved into an area of integrity that many, many people have never even thought that much about.

The fifth major principle in this kind of church partnership is unity. Again, we need a whole message on that. That was one of the strongest distinctives of the work from the earliest days, unity, and it was that emphasis on unity that led OM, again from those earliest days, to let love cover the differences in the churches, even sometimes little doctrinal peculiarities.

From the very first campaigns in Mexico, we worked with different churches from different denominations. OM's interdenominational route, OM's attitude toward different kinds of churches goes back to the very, very fiber of the movement. Praise God it isn't something we had to add later on, though it always had to be redefined or more finely tuned.

And anything we can do in our local churches to build unity, to bring greater peace, to demonstrate love, is going to help the cause of world missions in a tremendous way, sooner or later. And then number six, communication. This is where our team here, the International Coordinating Team, we especially have an awesome privilege to just get so much communication, tapes, books, videos, audiotapes, letters, phone calls, magazines.

We are inundated with all kinds of materials that can encourage churches, that can help them develop their missionary vision, that can help them build greater spirituality. I think of all these leaflets we have around on the subject of prayer, many of them from OMF. It's just brilliant, but of course it doesn't just happen through having a message about it.

The next or seventh principle is information. It's tied in with communication, but I listed it separately because it's such a vital part of our own work here and the work of many OM teams. To get those book tables out, to have that literature available, to carry it with us in our briefcases, to plan ahead so that we have enough material, enough information so that we can really do a job that honors God.

Churches are so grateful for OM's ministry in this area. We get amazing feedback. Don't presume, even as you go back to your own church, that they understand even the most basic things about the work that you're doing.

Easily, in talking about OM or presenting the vision, we can go over people's heads. And don't belittle people. I've sometimes done it from the pulpit.

I can get away with it sometimes in humor because no one person is put on the spot. Sort of a general, you know, type of thing. But beware of ever belittling an individual or even a church, especially if you're not a master communicator and who is.

Don't speak down to churches. Bond with them and speak from your own failures, your own struggles, from churches you've been with. I remember speaking in Poland.

What do I know about Poland? What am I going to say in the British Isles? Seven struggles of the church in the British Isles. The people were just glued because they had all the same struggles. Of course, I knew a little bit about where I was and what I was attempting to say.

It's so important that our words are seasoned with grace. Principle 8 is when we help an individual believer, we help the church. Some of you are not going to be standing up in front of a church, moving the entire congregation in the spiritual revolution.

Your work is mainly with individuals. As you help a believer, you help the church. A cup of cold water given his name will not go unrewarded.

This is one of the reasons I personally find often what I'm doing here in Bromley as motivated as what I've done in India or Pakistan or Nepal. Because I know that as I help people here, as I help the church here, as I do this little bit and that little bit, it has a ripple effect. You've all thrown stones in the lakes.

It has a ripple effect. It has the multiplication effect. And I hope you're motivated about giving yourself to individuals.

We used to call it discipling people. That's a more ongoing type of relationship to another believer. Now the new word is mentoring.

I'm reading this new book by the Navigators, Connections About Mentoring. I think it's all great. Anything we can do to encourage others, pray with them, bless them, help them, love them, ultimately is going to help the local fellowship in one way or the other.

And my last principle is revival. I even use the word with a degree of hesitancy because I've seen so much extremism under the name of revival. And people that sit back and basically won't do anything except pray for revival and after a while they don't do much of that either.

We emphasize in OM personal revival and I hope we never lose that. Calvary Road, We Would See Jesus, Reality by Stanley Volk. Let's pray for greater revival in the church.

Let's work for it in a balanced biblical way trying to emphasize the whole counsel of God rather than one particular favorite truth that we think is going to be a cure-all for all the things we see that we don't like. Because often we're unrealistic about the Christian life and fail to realize that the Christian life is not lived in the absence of doubt and sin and struggles and problems and tears and misunderstandings. Revival and the Christian life is in the midst of those things and historic revivals prove there's more misunderstandings and problems and heartaches after the revival than before it.

So it's not a cop-out. It's not an easy answer. It's something that can take place in a larger way.

And then if we get a book written about it. But in the biblical context it's something that happens in all of us day by day as we walk with Jesus, as we deny self, take up the cross and follow him as we experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit on a day-by-day basis. I've written here in big letters no easy answers.

Everybody's running around with easy answers to complicated problems in the church. No wonder the churches seem to divide so quickly. No wonder people who one minute are bonded a few weeks later are not even talking to each other.

There's something in at least a large number of people that seems to crave total final slick black and white answers to all the problems of life. And some people have gone through 10 different churches in their lifetime looking for the church that has all their answers. I've heard testimonies of people that have had over 20 crisis experiences in their effort to somehow get it all together in their Christian life.

The result often is discouragement and confusion. Yes we want to mobilize the church and I'm going to follow up this tape with a message on mobilizing for world missions from the local church. But I think we've got to get the foundation first.

We've got to have these basic concepts, these basic principles and the right thinking in order to continue to have that relationship that will really honor God. Between the missionary team, and that's what I see an OM team as, a team of people sent out by their churches to get the job done. OM is attempting to do things decently in order, providing some structure, accountability, a lot of important things that a local church back in Illinois is not going to be able to provide to a team in Turkey.

And to me mission societies like OMF, WEC, Wycliffe, OM, many others are raised up and are just as much a part of what God is attempting to do as that local fellowship that is sending out those people in the first place. And until we somehow can get our act together in a greater way, with greater love and esteem

and reality, I don't think we're going to reach the world for Christ by the year 2000 as so many people are talking about. The battles are not going to be won in the big conferences in Manila or Singapore or Edinburgh or anywhere else as important as they may be.

The battle for world evangelism will be won in the local church. And I hope every one of us does what we can to make it happen. Let's pray.

Our God and Father, we thank you for this clear teaching from your word about your church. And Lord, as we relate to such a wide range of churches, this is surely one of the most challenging things we face as we attempt to go forward in our own Christian life. And Lord, we know you can turn even disappointment in local church situations into an appointment with you and your word to try to resolve that situation or to try to move into something that is even better.

Lord, we thank you for so many, so many churches that we're in partnership with and that we're laboring together with. We thank you for their financial support, their prayer support, their love, their encouragement. Give us greater wisdom, this whole area of sending, this whole area of re-entry, that we may honor you even more as we move into a new year.

And we give you all the praise and all the glory through Jesus Christ. Amen.

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