

# Promise Keepers

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer discusses the significance and challenges of the Promise Keepers movement, emphasizing the need for accountability and global outreach among men of faith.*

**Duration:** 1:11:27

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:22

**Topics:** "Convention"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his experience attending a six-hour event focused on prayer, the word of God, repentance, and some praise and worship. Initially hesitant, he decides to carry a large global balloon around the perimeter of the mall where the event is taking place. The speaker mentions the Promise Keepers movement, which he describes as a global phenomenon that gained significant media coverage. He also briefly mentions the Grace Awakening book and its availability. Throughout the sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to speak and encourages prayer for those who may be new or naive in their faith.

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## Transcript

It's a privilege to be here in this place. We thank you for this tremendous place. The great provision it has been for the work, which over the years has enabled us to channel even more finance out to the front lines and into people and into projects across the globe.

Lord, I just know with all my heart you want to speak to us tonight. You already have spoken. I thank you for these reports and challenges in the time of worship.

And Lord, help each one of us to receive what you want, to give us that we may be more mature, that we may be more like you, oh Christ. This is our longing. We know this has to be simultaneous with our passion to reach the lost.

And only you can keep it in balance and in focus. So we ask for your help. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. It's a privilege to be able to share with you. I really believe that little mini-conferences like this are so strategic.

It's a privilege to be able to share. My heart is very, very full. Can you imagine, I've just come from a gathering of almost one million men.

I've come directly from Washington and arrived this morning. I could spend my whole session just talking about promise keepers. I was discouraged to see a very negative article in British press against promise keepers from before the rally.

And then somebody handed me this amazing positive article from the Daily Telegraph after the rally that they say has really silenced many of the critics. As I watched Coach Bill McCartney on television, main primetime evening interview program, the night before the big Saturday event, the heavy questions that came on him. God just gave him tremendous grace to answer those questions in a powerful way.

As I was walking toward the area where the solemn assembly was being held, I heard a lot of women screaming. And I knew that one of the extreme feminist organizations was running a simultaneous protest. I never did meet them, though I looked for them on the Capitol steps where they were supposed to be.

But as I heard this group of women shouting, I thought that must be this group attacking the promise keepers. But in fact, it was another women's group affirming these men. I walked over real close to see if I could pick up some of that affirmation.

We certainly live in amazing days. So much evil, so many terrible things, so much crime. Over one million people in the United States in prison.

I talked to a former O.M.er who's a member of the Board of Trustees in a Wisconsin Christian school. A young couple, their romance just broke. The young boy couldn't handle it, and he murdered his own girlfriend.

He's now in prison long term. I talked to another famous outstanding Christian leader in Atlanta whose son at 24 years of age, also out of control, murdered a young woman that has 50 years sentence in the Florida prison. My heart breaks for the prisons.

During my time in the States, Jack Bennett was sentenced. The founder, leader of the new era, found guilty. Sentenced for 12 years with no negotiation, though they are appealing that.

I talked to his wife, I guess it was yesterday morning. Didn't even know where her husband was as he was just shifted quickly to another prison. I'd actually wanted to visit him, but they were not giving out permits beyond family.

Spent the whole night in British Airways. Jack, one of my favorite airlines. Saw a documentary on one of my favorite people in the world, Mr. Bean.

Absolutely an amazing story of this man. As you probably know now, there's Mr. Bean, the movie, which has been quite attacked here in England by some, but in fact has not yet been released in the United States. The movie was more created for the United States market.

But it is amazing, isn't it, the place of humor. Somebody wrote me a critical letter about global action in Hyderabad. There was too much humor.

At least they can't blame it on me, I wasn't there. But you get a lot of humor through the Internet. And I thought at this stage of these reports, it would be good to have just a little humor from the Internet.

Some of you probably see some of this stuff, it's terrible. Some of it is quite good. And I thought I'd just read a few that came in.

Just recently I spent most of the night reading my post. This comes from, people just usually pass these things on. These are questions that we need to deal with.

Instead of talking to your plants if you yell at them, would they still grow, only to be troubled and insecure? Two, isn't it a bit unnerving that doctors call what they do a practice? What should you do when you see an endangered animal that is eating an endangered plant? Here's one probably for the next General Counsel. Is it possible to be totally partial? Why do they lock petrol station bathrooms? Are they afraid someone will clean them? This one I heard when I was in New Jersey. It's a little bit chauvinistic, but since I've come from a men's meeting, you can handle it.

If a man speaks in the forest and there's no woman to hear him, is he still wrong? Why do sheep, this is very relevant here at the Quinta. Why do sheep, why don't sheep shrink when it rains? I think that's enough. Well, I'm glad you all know how to laugh, because you might be a little uncomfortable by the end of this little series of exhortations.

There are many things on my heart, and I know that's, that must be a cliché. It was great at our prayer meeting a few weeks ago to have Martin Bateman do a takeoff on George Verwer. I requested it personally as the meeting was getting a little dull.

But I would like to just say a further word about Promise Keepers. Some of you don't know about this movement, but David Tarabury, after being the Chief Financial Officer with OM, went with Promise Keepers. Promise Keepers is only about eight years old.

Another brother out of Atlanta, Hector, went with them. So many of us have prayed for Promise Keepers from the beginning. It's a men's movement with seven major promises that are well worth studying.

Most of them we had in our own fellowship in the early days and still do. The seventh major promise is the Great Commission, which I call the Neglected Promise. And God gave me some, when people heard I was going to Promise Keepers, and this was just added last minute to my visit to the States, where I went mainly to speak to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a few other things.

I stayed on because of an invitation to be part of the international conference of the global Promise Keepers movement, which is just being born in the last couple of years. And so they are now going global. Britain was just accepted at their meeting recently of their board.

There's only about seven other countries that are accepted into the fellowship or association. They all realize they have to do it differently in their own country. There's not the plan that you're going to try to copy what's happened in the States.

I think they're even more than aware of the problems and the complications of launching a men's movement. I was talking to someone from Sweden about how to try to launch something like this in Sweden. Needless to say, the Holy Spirit has been working through this movement.

Last year alone they had over one million people, or the year before, 96, over one million, way beyond that, in stadiums, all men. This year the stadium attendance dropped. You have to pay quite a good amount of money to go to those meetings.

Stadium attendance dropped, their finance dropped, and they went through a major upheaval. I met a number of the people who have been through that upheaval. In fact, David Turberry is no longer with

them, and 200 other people were laid off.

Their staff had to grow so quickly to cope with just phenomenal growth. When the money didn't come in, they had no other way until the last few months when they changed their financial policy, no other way to get the money except by the fees for going to the stadium for these great events. With a very wide inter-dominational, interracial group of ministers.

One of the things that we've noticed as we've followed this is the outstanding men they do get at these great stadium events. Some people believe that it fell a little short this year because so many people around the nation were focusing on this Washington event, October 4th. Praying for between 500,000 and one million men.

Believe me, that is a lot of people. That is a lot of people. I have never seen so many people in one place in my life except maybe on television.

I've been in stadium meetings and a lot of, I can even think of great melas in India where I've been sort of certainly surrounded by a few hundred thousand. They must have had close to a million. Some would say more, some would say less.

The Park Commission did not want to get involved in counting because on the Farrakhan Million March of the Muslims, there was a lot of controversy. So there is no official record. All these people came basically the night before or that morning and many of them left by that evening.

There was hardly a single disrupted event during the entire 24-hour period. I remember before I went across watching the news on television, I've never seen so much Christian testimony come on the news in my history. And it went right across the world.

Internet, everything went on C-SPAN. That's a major cable network. The entire six hours was on C-SPAN.

You could see it better there than if you were in the mall where they had seven or eight, I may not have that number exact, of the largest, most high-tech screens that you can get a hold of. I think there's less than 20 of these available in the world. The budget for this event was \$10 million excluding any travel or personal expense people had to get there.

I noticed on the TV they were just recording a plane crash and they were trying to find out whether it was promise keepers. Later it was revealed they were people coming. A small plane crashed and exploded.

No one died. In God's providence, it crashed near a fire and rescue base where they were practicing. And just, you know, even for someone as skeptical as me, this kind of thing, you know, always gets me believing that God somehow is involved again.

But I went there specifically on the invitation of Promise Keepers International. I've been meeting with them and invited them to Jokoway, our event in South Africa. That tape telling about Jokoway is available if you haven't heard that.

It was a privilege. On the Friday evening we had a mini prayer concert and I had the opportunity with my little globe to just share and to basically pray. And there was a bonding.

Someone said to me later, a leader, because they were from all over the world, that if that was the only thing they had gone to, it would have been worth it. Of course, that was just the beginning. This six-hour

event was mainly prayer, the Word, repentance, some praise and worship but not, you know, not overdone.

And it was really, really quite overwhelming. I decided not to just go and just sit there for six hours, which is a little bit too much like sitting in an airplane. But after a lot of wrestling and resisting, I decided to carry my balloon, big global balloon, around the periphery of the mall, which is a huge thing.

From the Capitol Building, over a mile, I think it is, to Lincoln Memorial and the White House. And everybody was in that area, if you know Washington, the big Washington Memorial, the big pencil-like thing and all these big screens. So I marched around the whole outside.

It took me several hours. You could also listen on FM, although I heard much of it live. And when they stopped to pray, I usually stopped to pray.

And I can only say, God met us in that place. Again, I'm one of the first persons to say just big events on their own are not enough. But many of us, even in this room or who are hearing this tape, we got started because of a big event.

These meetings are not that similar to a Billy Graham evangelistic campaign. In fact, the man who preached the gospel gave an invitation and, I mean, thousands of people stood. I think some were already Christians who stood, though the message was geared to the non-Christian.

Another speaker later on had 42 speakers, some of them very brief, of course. But no wonder I never get invited. But this one brother whose name I heard later on gave a powerful, very balanced, powerful message, included a reference to Acts 1-8 and included a slight message, a mention of world missions.

Up to now, Promise Keepers has not been known for being proactive about world missions. Now that they are taking their own movement globally, of course, they are having to look at world missions. And this is one of the reasons I changed my own scheduling and felt I should just be there.

I wanted to and I prayed specifically to meet some of the leaders. I've been waiting a long time praying for some of these people. Well, Bill McCartney, Coach McCartney, he's known to some.

That next morning he was on Meet the Press. I mean, he was the most in-demand person in Washington. And as we had our final meeting of our international group, which was only 100 people, it seemed that he wasn't even there.

And then suddenly I found out there was a dinner that evening. I had forgotten that. Next thing I knew, I walked out and there Coach McCartney was.

Now, Christian Renling, one of my former helpers in OM Associates, has his own organization, is sort of starting to become like my agent. That's not really true, but he likes to push me into situations. And you may think that I'm an extrovert and I just run into difficult situations, but I tell you, if it wasn't for Christian Renling, I don't think I would have ever met Coach McCartney or two of the other founding members.

And the birth of this vision took place in a car out there in Colorado around 1990. So it's a very young movement. And probably in the months to come, you will read criticism, you will hear criticism, especially from certain kinds of women.

But, in fact, God has raised up this amazing movement. And many of the most proactive people about it are women. Because they know so many men in America have become wimps.

And I don't think the average person even knows the situation of the average American male. It is not like 20 years ago. It has completely changed.

There are exceptions. Maybe in your little church, you've got lots of dynamic men and they're the elders of the church. The church has quite a few exceptions.

But we're talking very generally about the masses of people in a land of 260 million. And most of these internationals at this consultation expressed that they felt the situation with men in their country was very, very similar. So, in some ways, this seems to me like one of God's rescue programs.

Is it a last-minute rescue program before Christ's return and the second coming of Christ was wonderfully proclaimed by one of the speakers? Not in an extreme way, but a beautiful way. And the fact that this now has not only taken place and they saw the crowd that they expected, actually more perhaps than they expected. They had one million New Testaments donated to give everyone.

They couldn't get those distributed. Their distribution wasn't fast enough, proactive enough to get them all out. A lot of them were left over at the end.

People carried boxes of New Testaments away. I might just insert here that for me, the three most exciting things, and I'll come back to what happened in that meeting with Bill McCartney. But three of the most exciting things before that happened was the opportunity to talk to two Afghans a little bit about Jesus.

There are many Afghans in Washington, D.C. I've started my research to see who's working among them. I've heard of one international mission, missionary. I talked to Arlie Lohan, our Afghan man in Toronto.

I had to grab a taxi. On a particular occasion, the driver was an Afghan. I was getting rather hungry.

I went to buy one of these inexpensive hot dogs, and the man selling the hot dogs was an Afghan. And, of course, with all that was happening, it was easy to tell something of what was going on. I've had this prayer for this year that somehow, with all the increased responsibility I have and very much involvement with churches and Christians, that the Lord would give me the privilege of being regularly in contact with non-Christians.

And God did that right there on that day, even though I was surrounded by almost a million men, many of whom were believers. The next non-Christian I was to meet was making an anti-documentary. He saw me with my balloon.

A lot of people saw me with my balloon, by the way. I can't understand it. I was the only guy carrying a balloon.

You laugh, but there were endless, endless people carrying crosses. All kinds of guys were carrying crosses, small wheels, you know, all kinds, little crosses, big crosses. You know, I wasn't the only eccentric there.

There were many. But nobody was carrying a balloon. So that made quite an impact, especially in front of the Capitol building.

And no one else had a global jacket. That's it. That's it.

One million men, no one else with a global jacket. I don't know what is happening with our global jacket sales force. Obviously, I didn't see everybody, so no doubt there may have been someone there.

I think it's important to just throw in at this point that we need to be reminded again that the average person going to church, man or woman, is not thinking globally. The average promise keeper is not thinking globally. The global challenge only came out during those six hours in a very, very small way.

But I believe, as Coach McCartney shared, that especially in the year 2000, they have phenomenal plans, mainly for the states for the next two years, slow growth internationally. But the year 2000, they want to go global in a major way. Well, to jump back to where I was, Christian Rindling introduced me to these two other men who were founders of this movement or with the founding of it, had very powerful fellowship with them.

And we ended up praying in this kind of accountability group prayer where I shared a struggle. One of them was leading promise keepers, and it was quite a big thing, especially for his wife, and we prayed for him. And then I shared an area of struggle that I have when I get home from a trip and the lack of sensitivity with my wife.

And they responded to that and prayed for me. I got further in 20 minutes with those two men than sometimes I get with some people in a very long time. They have an ethos that OM once had and still does have to some degree.

They really believe that men need to get together and share. God convicted me that one of the many mistakes I've made in OM, one of the biggest, is when I allowed our men's meetings to end. We used to have the most powerful men's meetings in the 60s, mainly dealing with sex but not exclusively.

And we discovered after those meetings men would share, small groups, immorality, it would come out. We also had similar meetings which were much more difficult with our sisters. And there would always be some, our sisters especially, who would criticize the openness.

It would frighten them. And then with various changes we tried to amalgamate. We thought, well, things are changing now.

We don't, you know, the whole unisex concept. You have a barber shop now and you have men and women getting their hair cut in the same place. This is not a new thing by the way.

It came in the 70s. So we amalgamated those rather heavy kind of sessions and it ran into greater criticism and to some degree it died. It still takes place in OM, different venues and different places.

And I'm not criticizing OM. And I want to study more what these men are saying. But I came away from there realizing there's tremendous value for men to be able to get together on their own.

And preferably, this is going to shock a few, outside of the walls of the church. These great meetings where so many men have been converted and have come back to Christ, they've been in gymnasiums, they've been in arenas. As one person shared with me, if they tried to do in a church, of course they don't know some of the churches that we know, but if they tried to do in the church what they do in these arenas, getting a little excited, praising God, lifting their hands a bit, you know, they would get the elbow

from their wife.

Again, I'm sure that's present company excluded. But whatever you may think of Promise Keepers, and I will just say it is a movement loaded with weakness. But my dear brothers and sisters, OM is a movement loaded with weaknesses.

And you may even have a few yourself. And I would just say that God is doing something through this movement. And I hope when it comes to your country or when you read about it, and in your prayers you can be proactive.

Their books are in Spanish. We'll be distributing those. The new book is in Swedish.

We're going to be quite proactive about that. There are quite a few former OMers getting involved in this movement. And it is very, very exciting.

The media coverage of this event has been some of the greatest media coverage of any Christian event in this decade. Some of it is negative. And Billy Graham has run into the same problem.

I don't know if you've heard news from San Francisco. But Billy Graham in San Francisco, they ganged up on him, the media. And he is a hard man to get him to fumble.

But they got him on the homosexual issue and he would not move. Homosexual practice is a sin. And I tell you, they came unglued against him.

They are now digging stuff that he has said from the 50s. That is going into major prints, going into the Internet. And there is a fresh new vindictive attack against Billy Graham.

Of course, just going to San Francisco as an evangelical with the message Billy Graham has is almost taking your life in your hands. By the way, this other unconverted person I met was producing an anti-documentary. They think this movement is sort of right-wing with a political agenda.

Many of these people may be somewhat right. But many of them were not necessarily right-wing. And I'm convinced they don't have a political agenda.

Bill McCartney answered that question brilliantly. That doesn't mean there isn't some overlap. Because if you say you don't believe in abortion, just saying that, you have a political agenda.

You're right-wing. So, I mean, how do you put that together? Even that issue and the homosexual issue, which is so hot in America, it seems to me they're handling very carefully. Now, sometimes the media just grabs any old person.

And some of those people are not able to handle the media. And then really stupid things get said. And that gets multiplied.

And that is a good reason that many more of us on OM should go to our effective communicators conference and learn how to talk to people. I ended up sitting next to Bill McCartney for supper that night. I know that may seem like a small thing.

I believe my desire to get next to him isn't what some people may think. I desire to be an encouragement to this man. I desire to know them, to serve.

And I have this prayer that they will become proactive about world missions and the unreached people. All the countries they're going into are all the traditional Anglo-Saxon countries. In fact, all English-speaking except Germany they've entered into.

They're not thinking. And we don't believe they have to think about Turkey, Afghanistan, many of these other places. But can you imagine? And they've got over 25 stadium meetings planned for the United States.

They no longer are going to charge. They're going to open it wider. They want more unconverted people to come.

And it will be free of charge. Major foundations, including some friends of ours, are getting involved financially. They did take an offering at the end of this big event and at the same time give everybody a free meal as they walked away.

Just quite, quite awesome. I'd like to just pray with you because we are watching the clock and just especially pray for a relatively young movement that has grown as fast as any movement in the history of the church with phenomenal vulnerability. And to pray for Bill McCartney.

I just maybe had about a half an hour talking with him as we ate. Then he spoke. He gave a very balanced, excellent message.

Others spoke at that dinner and then we've all scattered. What is the next step? I'm not sure. But I don't think all that's going on in the work of God is ever to be decompartmentalized.

What's going on with Campus Crusade and the Jesus film? By the way, they have just received one of the biggest gifts ever for the Jesus film. Partly because of the phenomenal, atomic explosion of Ted Turner's one million to the United Nations. Billion, thank you.

One billion, one thousand million we say here in England to the United Nations. This has stirred up people that non-Christians seem to be now giving more lavishly than Christians. And this has led a foundation to do something they don't normally do, to chop into the assets.

They always think of giving away interest. That's the normal way of approaching things. But they decided to give away this foundation and have given a huge gift to the Jesus film.

But whether it's AD2000 or the Jesus film or Chicoe or Lausanne or WEF, some of the men I met at the international meeting, I met him at Chicoe, I met him at WEF and I met him in Korea. We are basically one, even though there's great diversity and we know, of course, in many cases, serious disunity. We don't want to pretend otherwise.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for what you did in Washington this past Saturday. And what you've done these past seven or eight years through Promise Keepers.

These men, so often backed by their wives and women, who have become proactive in prayer, in ministry, in moral purity, in walking in the light, in being better fathers, in being committed to spiritual leadership in the home and in the church. We thank you for Bill McCartney's challenge that everything now must go back to the local church, that every Promise Keeper must submit to his pastor. Many could hardly believe their ears as this challenge came out over this huge gathering there in the Washington Mall.

And Lord, we believe, though the battle is going to be fierce, though there are many dark clouds hanging over us as well, we believe that this is part of building your kingdom across the world. We thank you for so many women's movements over the years and even other smaller men's movements, like the Christian businessmen. Lord, something has really taken off here and we give you the praise and we give you the glory in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Well, sitting on the train coming here, I just wrote a couple of words down that I want to just put a few exhortations around and then you can fly away.

Praise God for the freedom we have in Jesus Christ. May we not abuse that. Praise God for the Grace Awakening.

It includes the challenge about discipline. We now have our own OM edition of that book, Grace Awakening, 10,000 copies. Instead of \$20, \$1.37. Just let me know how many you want.

That's really more for outside the UK because here in the UK we've always had the paperback, which they never had in the United States until recently. But there's just a few words that I wanted to base a few thoughts on and I would really ask you to pray. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak.

You know, many of these men were not Christians or they were baby Christians. And we may say, well, they respond in such a naive way. They don't really know what they're getting into.

No one's given them, you know, Luke 14 orientation, count the cost, scared them right out of their shoes. So they wouldn't dare lay down on the grass and pray. By the way, when I did that interview with that non-converted person, he got so caught up with what I was saying, he let the video camera run until almost it was out of video.

And in God's providence, Elwood Ellis, one of the leading black, most articulate black persons in America, great friend of mine, in the midst of this draft spots me with a balloon and comes up. I say, Elwood, this guy wants to interview you. And I told that guy, here's a far better man to talk to than me.

And being black, he wasn't about to refuse him, this little white guy from California. He interviewed Elwood Ellis for 15 minutes. Later on in God's providence, I met him at the very end when everybody was dispersed.

He was sitting on a bench with his video camera, and he said they were the two best interviews I've got today. My burden is not his documentary, though I pray it may not come out so negative, but that that young man may come to know the Lord Jesus. He was offended and hurt because some people sort of ganged up on him when they found out that he wasn't a Christian.

And it was a beautiful experience for me. And I hope that with all of our evangelistic methods that we continue to learn in OM, that we will learn how to talk to people who are initially offended by our jargon, by our presentations, by our terminology, that we can just be real with those people. We can use more secular terminology to try to share with them the message of the love of Christ.

One of the greatest persons in the world doing that is a man named Doug Coe. Doug Coe is the man behind The Prayer Breakfast. He's the man behind many men and women in ministry, especially at government and business level throughout the world and in God's providence.

It worked out to get about a half an hour with Doug, which was like a renewal. Doug Coe spoke at one of the first OM conferences in history, Madrid, Spain, 1961 or 62, and he spoke about keeping focused on the Lord Jesus. And it looks like there may be ways that our ship and other parts of OM in the future may be able to network into their phenomenal small group network around the world.

Very different than promise keepers. A very highly contextualized approach to non-Christians, to government people, quite controversial also as many contextual kinds of approaches are. Very, very relational.

I find, this is just a quick tangent, but I find that when certain people find out how relational OM is, for them just to hear that several hundred have been in this work linked together for over a quarter of a century blows their mind. It blows their mind. And with some people that means more than all of our great goals and aims and all the things we put on paper that we long for them to give their money to, because they're relational people.

And you have, of course, all kinds of people, and it's a challenge to meet so many of them. And God has given Doug Coe and his fellowship a beautiful building, a beautiful home right behind the capitol building. Some congressmen actually live there.

To my amazement, two friends from Cape Town, South Africa run that ministry. And that business person who I met in his office a few years ago and great friends of OM and the ship ministry, they are running that ministry on a famous C street behind the big dome in Washington. Well, by now your curiosity is at saturation level.

What are these verber words? Some of you are probably tired of getting verber words, and you think the first one is going to be grace. But actually the first word is intimidation. I want to just talk to you a little bit about intimidation.

It's impossible in any one message not to get in trouble, so I hope you'll be merciful. But I do feel that we as Christians are often more easily intimidated than non-Christians. Though in the United States one of the reasons the average male is in the state he's in, and we're being very general, is because men have been intimidated.

They've been intimidated by their failures. They've been intimidated by the women's rights, equal rights movement. Some of that movement I'm sure is good.

Some may not be so good. Many of them are intimidated, especially Christians, by sexual failure. And they don't know how to get out of that.

And it's quite amazing when we see so many non-Christians just sort of barreling through and being incredibly successful. Right now America is on a roll financially. The stock market is up.

Ted Turner, when he gave away that \$1 billion, all that was was a stock increase from last year. The foundation I'm linked with, that we are linked with, that a couple of years ago looked like they were in trouble, their stock has gone off the charts. There's a lot of money to give away right now in the United States and some other countries.

Of course, if you're following the Pacific Rim, you know that Malaysia and Singapore, that part of the world has been hit. Devaluation, tremendous drop in the stock market. That may have changed even since the

last time I looked at it.

But it is interesting to make comparisons between Christians and non-Christians. I am forced to do that because I live in a non-Christian world. And I know that we have an abundant life in Jesus Christ that they don't know anything about.

So you don't have to worry about me over-exalting the non-Christian. He's lost, he's on the road to hell, and he needs Jesus. I met with another amazing character, Clark Kennedy, who now has a new job working as my helper with the 82,000 Movement and other networks internationally that we're now involved with.

He was with me in Washington, so was Rick Hicks. That was exciting that he wasn't feeling so well. But we met with another man just yesterday morning, and this man's one focus is to win golfers for Christ.

He has asked me, I feel sure he's going to back down, he has asked me to speak in Australia at a huge golf event. And I may have to play golf first. Now, one thing you never want to watch is my golf.

But maybe I could take some lessons. He was just sharing how this outstanding Christian, some of you golfers can help me, Bernard Lange, who went way down to almost 100, and very much an outspoken Christian. Of course, when they go down in their profession, people talk.

And many were making this a matter of prayer. And Bernard Lange, in the last few weeks, has had some major wins. And, of course, on a practical level, it's his new putter.

He has this weird putter, I think it comes up to his nose. I don't know, it maybe operates like some kind of a compass. But he's certainly putting very well.

I believe one of the reasons some non-Christians go further than Christians in their basic work is because they are tougher. They have to be tough. I read a quote from a non-Christian recently.

It said, 99% of success is failure. In America, if you want to quote somebody and get a lot of response, quote Abraham Lincoln. There's a little thing about Abraham Lincoln, and it lists his life, largely all failure.

Failure, rejected, turned down, and then at the end, elected President of the United States. Now, I don't know if any of you, 96, 97 has been a year, a few failures. Failure should not discourage you.

Failure is where it's at. That's one of God's great places of learning. Promise Keepers has gone through their greatest time of frustration, of failure, and disunity.

And yet, through that, has taken their greatest step forward in their ministry. And they are thinking far more quality than they are thinking quantity, though it may not seem that way, believe me. And I would just urge you to beware of various forms of intimidation.

Think of those men in the book of Acts. I was going to read that passage where 24 men, it's in Acts chapter 23, verse 12, have a plot to kill the Apostle Paul. You cannot use the word intimidation without using the word fear.

One of the reasons I believe so strongly in small group sharing is I believe we must, most of us, have a place to share our fears. Now, there are people that have very unusual and beautiful marriages and they have a large part of their sharing is within their own marriage. Wonderful.

No one wants to get in either or syndrome. But I just talked to another man on the phone the other day. He is petrified to tell his wife that he is still hooked on pornography 10 years later.

The last time he shared that she just about went ballistic and the marriage was almost finished. He is being counseled by people not to tell his wife. And so he phones me long distance to have someone that he can share these failures in the area of pornography.

A Christian in a secular company recently was caught feeding on pornography out of the Internet and he was fired and his marriage now may break. I talked to one who is praying with him that his marriage may come through. I will tell you, if we see a men's movement of God's Spirit in OM, we will probably discover that 50% of all the men in OM are wrestling with pornography or lust in one form or the other.

I wonder if we as a movement are to the place where we no longer want to know that, we no longer want to hear that because that is so unpleasant. To have an OMer come up to me recently and confess that he is into pornography on the Internet is not very pleasant. Some of the other things that we have had to face in the past years are not very pleasant.

I don't believe any movement, Promise Keepers, OM or anybody else, is ever going to have 100% victory in dealing with these things. That is unrealistic foolishness. But I believe we can increase the number of people that come into victory and maturity for long-term marathon running if we would pay more attention to some of these areas, read and distribute more books and tapes, get involved in meetings where these things are spoken of and have some kind of accountability group which OM strongly teaches in its very strong present mode of emphasis on pastoral care and people care.

Intimidation comes through failure. Intimidation comes sometimes because of critics. Critics, Christians are generally sensitive and find criticism very difficult.

If no one is criticizing you about your ministry, then no one is observing it. I can assure you that if I observed your ministry even in two days, I could give you a list, especially if you are a public speaker. Because all public speakers can improve and that includes this one.

And some of the unusual invitations I get to speak would have never happened if I had not continued to learn from others how to communicate, how to face different situations and all of that kind of thing that we... Well, I personally don't feel we hear enough of it. And I just praise God for the Confident Communicators course, but only a tiny percentage of OMers are going to go through that course, just like most of our other courses in OM. The large bulk of OM are not getting all of this core kind of in-depth training and teaching, except on a local team level, which, of course, is normal because these things, of course, cost a fortune.

And I'm convinced that much of what we believe and what we're wanting to do on OM can take place on a team level. Also, the local church is very key in all that, for we certainly can't do everything. But let's move on.

My second word is the word unity. I have another message I'm working on called Seven Areas of Unreality. And one of the areas of unreality I put as all the talk about unity.

It's probably one of the toughest areas you can talk about. Promise keepers, of course, are viciously attacked because they do not take any anti-Catholic position. Our position in OM would be very conservative in regard to Catholics, but we're in church planting in the field evangelism.

They are running stadium events for almost the general public. Slight difference in what we're attempting to do. And we are a long-term international family whose entire linking has largely been to local churches who have sent us, who are largely evangelical churches or evangelical charismatic churches, most of whom are fairly conservative on this issue.

So there is a great difference. And I believe we need to be able to see people, whether it's Billy Graham or some other great spiritual hero, do something without necessarily feeling that's the way we should go. I know that when many of these men go back to their churches and back to share this vision, especially the reconciliation factor, that's one of the hottest things about promise keepers, the message of racial reconciliation.

Do you know who some of the main players were during these six hours? Native Americans. They were the hosts of the entire event, and it was not tokenism. And we had to sit there, we Anglo-Saxons, even on the Friday night meeting, and get this strong word from our Native Americans and the history of the atrocities against Indians.

And we know they in turn did some atrocious things against these immigrants. It is still a great stain on the United States, and of course this controversy about what we're supposed to do about it. But one thing for sure, we need to be loving one another.

Some of the great speakers at this event were Afro-Americans. Though now one of the famous women Afro-Americans has renounced being called an Afro-American because she wants to just be an American. So it is difficult to know what you're supposed to say.

But God is bringing racial reconciliation through promise keepers and other groups on quite an astounding level. The prayer summit is part of it. All kinds of things in the States and other countries are dovetailing together.

And I think that's beautiful even though it's hyper-complex. They emphasize something we've always emphasized, that unity is in the midst of diversity. But I would urge you to understand that one of the strongest things we have in our land is our unity.

And sometimes we have to back down. Sometimes we feel we're compromising. Sometimes we're even feeling a twinge of our conscience, and that's a tough one to wrestle with.

But I believe as you study the New Testament, you see the importance of 1 Corinthians 13, then you will give unity a higher level of esteem in your theology and your philosophy. Many groups that have come unglued, when I have researched those groups, I found that they basically presume that unity would just come through loving Jesus. Unity does not come through loving Jesus.

Some of the most ugly people you and I know, let's be honest, they love Jesus. And the militia movement in America, which has doubled in numbers, doubled in numbers, one of the most ferocious modern-day Nazi movements in history, there's now a Christian book about it, many of them claim they love Jesus with all their heart. And that's why they are ready, if necessary, to put a bullet right through Bill Clinton's head.

In fact, leaflets were being given out in Washington asking for the immediate dismissal, impeachment of President Clinton. It obviously was not an official part of the promise keepers. There were unofficial T-shirts, and I bought one before I heard the announcement.

Typical Verwer, move quick, look at that T-shirt. I bought it, then I heard a woman on a little loudspeaker, please don't purchase these T-shirts, you have to order them, they don't allow that on the mall. I already had my T-shirt.

When I went to put it on, it had a gigantic hole in the back. What a rebuke for my disobedience and my impatience. It was quite exciting to show Bill McCartney that as I was wearing it for the meal we had together the next evening.

The third word I want to leave with you, I hope is one of your favorite words, because if it isn't, I believe both you, your team, and eventually OM, will be in difficulty. And that's this amazing word, flexibility. Not a great spiritual word, is it? Flexibility.

How will OM ever survive into the year 2000 without flexibility? Adaptability. As I say in one of my books, big heartedness. I want to just prepare you, by the way, for a new book.

Some of you old timers probably will eventually decide Verwer is backslidden and it's all over. But I have allowed them to put my picture in my global jacket on a book. This is STL's idea.

Three of my books together. What do they call them at STL? Omnibus. An omnibus or an omnibook.

And I decided in the video age when millions have watched thousands at least or hundreds of thousands on the internet and by video, my interesting face, why should I refuse to put it on a book? It is a totally ridiculous, inconsistent thing. And when I saw other people who I greatly admire allow their pictures to be on the front page of a book, I finally surrendered, though it's not an easy surrender. My only passion in my pragmatic ethos is that somehow more of these books will sell.

I can hardly ever get through a week without being someone that has been impacted through one of these feeble books. Last time I was here, I was speaking to 400 leaders of the Christian Union. A woman ran up to me and said, one of my books can turn you completely upside down and brought her back to the Lord Jesus.

I've never rated my books that high. I mainly push other people's books. But it's a proof that God can use all kinds of books and some of you ought to write a book.

I think Howard Norris should write a book. In fact, if he put his memos together, he could have an encyclopedia. But flexibility, I believe, is going to be more necessary than in the past.

It's great to talk about all these things, globalization and the manual gets thicker, the policy manual gets thicker and the memos and the instructions and all the rules. We've got so many rules in OM. Young people, when they come on OM now, especially when they go to certain places, become very aware of many rules and you need rules.

I'm not thinking of necessarily rules like the social policy, which certainly varies greatly from team to team and place to place, but I'm thinking of all the rules that we have in connection with finance, all the rules we have in connection with things, many of which are quite good. And then the fourth word, just quickly, is the word spirituality. This is a major buzzword in OM right now.

How many have noticed the new buzzword in OM, spirituality? You can get ten Christian leaders to speak on spirituality and all ten of them will disagree with what that is. One thing we need is we need a balanced,

grace-awakened view, forgive the term, of spirituality. If God hadn't changed my view of what spirituality was, I would not be here.

I might even be an enemy of this movement because I had that kind of potential and I had such an unrealistic view of what true spirituality was. And many of us have read books that present just a particular side to spirituality. And lately I've been concerned that some men of God have very much elevated the need to pray and fast for 40 days.

I don't think the average Christian should start praying and fasting for 40 days. I think it's folly. And we, in the early days of OM, we saw fasting and folly big time.

If you're going to start fasting, why don't you just start small? Why don't you try a meal? And if you think that fasting is going to revolutionize your marriage, fasting is going to set you free from this or that, you're in for one more of those head-banging experiences because the Christian life is not like that. So many who have testified of great experiences in the past no longer walk with Jesus Christ. We can submit the names to you.

There is no one special deliverance, one special way. I remember a brother who went into a three-day prayer and fasting thing. He was one of the most gifted persons who ever came on OM.

We're talking early 60s. And when God didn't totally set him free after the prayer and fasting, he lost his Christian faith completely. To me, when we have people in missionary work who are talking about being disappointed with God and blaming things on God, then we surely need to get them by the hand because we are in ministry here.

God gave me this thought today that I've never had before in my life, that some people go into marriage thinking that if the Lord led them into the marriage, that's a guarantee that the marriage will be okay and they'll live happily ever after. I realize I've hardly ever spoken about that. I didn't, I guess, think I needed to speak about that.

God can lead you into something and you can still blow it. God led you into OM, you can still blow it. God can take you through a great deliverance experience and two weeks later you can blow it.

If you think I've come away from Washington, you know, Mr. Optimist, you don't know me. As I saw all these men leaving the mall, I thought, what will they face in the next week? Many of those men are already on the verge of divorce. Over 50% of all marriages in America end in divorce.

At my meeting on Sunday morning when I was speaking, three meetings in a large Korean church, a leading marital counselor teacher has written a number of books. Mike McManus came to my meeting. We also talked on the phone.

Though he would be naturally skeptical about certain promise keepers things because his big thing in marriage is getting couples who have a good marriage, help other couples. He's not into a men's or women's thing. But he was proactive about promise keepers because of a number of reasons and it's his conviction, he may not be right, that the marriage thing has taken a slight turn for the good divorce in America.

He thinks maybe because of promise keepers, but it is ever, ever so slight. Many of those men, not only are already through divorce, many of them through two or three. My breakfast was with someone in the

midst of divorce proceedings.

Every pastor in America is facing this as a crisis in his church, grabbing many of them for every kind of marriage seminar they can possibly get. And I just throw this in. I don't know what you're going to do with it, but anything we can do in OM to have more input into our married couples about the basic nitty-gritty of marriage and family and home is time and money well spent.

Not that our single people don't need input. Everybody needs input. And praise God for the courage that people in promise keepers have had to realize God has called them to amend movement and to stick to their knitting.

There's so much pressure on them to do all kinds of other things. And they're going to stick to what they believe God has led them to do. Spirituality is worked out in different people in very different ways.

It is incredibly hard to measure. A tape I listened to recently tried to point out the difference between legalism and a true spiritual person. Legalism, the influences are outward, whereas a message about grace comes from within.

But for most human beings, it's a mixture, isn't it? When are we going to arrive at the place where nothing outward affects our behavior? No peer pressure. Nothing to do with fear. No concern about what people say.

Only just God and His Spirit working through us. Don't make that mistake. This treasure is in earthen vessels.

My fifth word is a word I don't think I've ever used in one of my messages in recent years. It's just the word dogmatic, and I just want to be brief, but I think this is so important. You and I know that long after people are missionaries or committed Christians, they can be very offensive, dogmatic people with personality hang-ups and therefore unable to communicate.

No wonder they don't want to talk to any unconverted people. They're not able to speak to people in general. Speaking to people is not easy in our society.

How many lesbians are my sisters in here involved with women's liberation people are you talking to on a regular basis or don't you believe they're worthy of conversation? How many male homosexuals are we men? We great heterosexuals, and there may be men here wrestling with this issue. How many of them are we talking to? Our whole society is so pluralistic, and it is my conviction that the church has become a gigantic religious ghetto where 90% of the people are not really talking to anybody much. And then perhaps for our pastime with our unrealistic approach to life, we turn on one another.

Why are Christians in so many of our churches turning on one another? Why have 50% of all the churches in Britain at least gone through major disunity in the past decade or two? I can't go anywhere. I can't go anywhere on this planet ministering and not hear of another church that is going through phenomenal disunity. So quickly we turn on one another.

So quickly we become way too dogmatic. I just had a letter. Dump all the NIV Bibles from your ships into the ocean.

King James only. This fellow sends me a postcard every week. The last one said, Remember Lot's wife.

Really encouraging. Another fellow just wrote me, who I have given, as far as I can see, love without any other motive to over all these years. A former OMer.

I knew he was a bit of a, a different kind of a fellow. His wife eventually couldn't stand him. She left him.

And I kept loving him. I kept going after him. And now he's written off my relationship with him.

He gives maybe \$25 every month, I guess. Maybe he had a rather elevated view of that. I can assure you that is not the reason I was spending time with this fellow.

He has written me, completely written me off, and his mother has written me off, because he knows, he has proven that I promote Christian rock music. In many countries, there are over 100 areas where if you move in that area, you will be caught off. America may lead the pack, but other countries, and this rosy idea we have about the church in Argentina, the church in China, the church in Russia, would you be, I know we can't have a once and for all set free, because we've already preached against that, but if you could have, if you could have a moderately set free experience, all over the world, people are people, and 1 Corinthians 13 is so slow to become the priority.

Why do Christians have to become dogmatic on so many issues? Would you like to have a lecture on disunity and O.M. on the subject of computers over the last 20 years? We could write a book. We have people very dogmatic about computers. I think, to be honest, in recent years, the Grace Awakening movement has invaded them.

I'm sure they're all loving one another, so I'm just going into past history. The fact is, whether you're talking about automobiles, or houses, or salaries, or income tax, or whether an American can drive in Great Britain once he's here for 370 days, there's 100 different areas where we as Christians get quite dogmatic and quite uptight, and we're not afraid to boldly share a piece of our mind. I've met some long-termers, and they've been doing it for years.

There's not much left now. I shouldn't have said that. My final word, forgive me if I've gone too long.

Do you realize what a rare opportunity this is to speak to folks like you? I'd pay 10,000 pounds for this anytime, but don't ask for it now. It's too late. My last word, and this message is kept in balance by other things I've shared on the subject of grace, and forgiveness, and love, but my last word, just to make you all feel so good, is work.

I wanted to have a little practical thing because we're big into training, and to have training, you've got to respond. So I would like you to write the word work down. I know that's difficult.

You're tired. Your hand isn't working anymore, but if you could, on your piece of paper, write the word work. I'll spell it to help you.

W-O-R-K. Now I'm going to say some controversial things again. You all love me so much.

If you are under the illusion that this movement is such a movement of hard-working people, I don't believe you know the movement. I don't believe we have more than 50% in our movement that are hard-working people, and I don't hold it against them because many of them are young. They have never held down a job.

Unlike many people in past decades, they've never been to war. Can you imagine sending the average O.M. around a military training course? And isn't it interesting how in the United States, women are fighting to get military training. Have you read, you know, I'm wanting to see G.I. Jane.

I haven't seen it yet, but have you read any of the controversy about women trying to get in all these different branches of the military and be able to do the same thing? I think there's one in one of the air stations out there right now. Isn't there a woman out there now? Do you know the training these people go through? Why does the book of Proverbs talk so much about laziness? Because people, a good chunk of people, are lazy. When I took a survey among people in India way in the early days of O.M., what is the biggest problem you're facing? I thought, surely it's going to be surely a lack of love.

Never forget it. We took the survey. They said, laziness.

They said, laziness. I believe some of the heart cries for pastoral care in O.M. are legitimate and we've heard and we need to keep hearing. But I believe other heart cries were distorted because the fact is that person was finding just eight hours' work on the ship very, very difficult.

They were not making it. And when you're not making it in your work, you've got problems. And not everyone is honest enough to say, I cannot handle this work.

I did have a person when I visited the ship share that with me. I won't say what part of the world she's from. That's irrelevant.

But she just, people in her class, in her society, that she knew never, ever did this kind of physical work. And this person, I tell you, was suffering. We should have sympathy.

We should have love. We must be patient. We are a training movement.

We're not McDonald's. We're not Wall Street. This isn't IBM.

And so, those of you leaders who sometimes maybe are a little too rough on your people, I hope you don't go extreme. But I believe if we are wanting to prepare people, and most people do not stay with OM, of the 90,000 who have been with us, there are only 2,700 right now, most people do not stay with OM. Most people do not even go into missionary work.

They go back to tough jobs. And we in OM must maintain a high work ethic for God's glory. And we must examine our own hearts.

Some of you know one of my greatest passions is to see finance come in, is to see people raising support. I wrestle with this every day. And I'm convinced there are many factors.

Faith and prayer is always the one we talk about. But my surveys show that some people they've never seen that support because they have not worked at it hard enough. Now sometimes that's because they have too many other jobs.

So don't misunderstand me. We need to somehow work that out. But raising support in missions is going to get harder than ever.

We have 30 to 40,000 people out there who have already indicated that they want to go. That is on my conscience. Because quite a few thousands of them were in my meetings.

Many thousands. Not the 40,000 that Howard thought once in a memo. But the 40,000 around the world.

We're all, you know, it's great to have one fan on your team. Now I've got Chaco as well in May. But no, my whole team loves me.

You know, they're all into the Crucified Life and Spirit film. But I will tell you to go out and continue to challenge young people to leave their jobs, to go to Bible school, and to prepare to go to world missions, and not become more proactive on this whole issue of how to raise support and hard work. Because many of us believe now that the new wave of missionaries, increasing numbers, must be tentmakers.

And I talked to a top business person who after two hours of heavy questions made the biggest commitment he's ever made to OM. And he believes strongly the way ahead, and maybe a little extreme, the way ahead of tentmakers. Because it's going to be harder than ever to raise that finance.

Some of us go out and take meetings. It's easy to raise money if you're out taking meetings. They may feel they should give you something.

But what about the people behind the scenes who don't have all those contacts? They will have to work much harder. They will have to be much more creative. Thousands have done it.

Thousands have done it. Praise God that it is possible for these things to come into balance. And through it, I really believe, I really believe we'll be more mature.

I really believe we'll be able to run the race right to the end of this pandemic. Way beyond our secular, non-Christian cousins. I really feel God in the church wants to have great people in politics.

And I meet them. God wants us to have great people in the arts. And I meet them.

Not that we're going to take over the world, some kind of cuckoo dominion theology. But because we are the soul and the light. Because this is a calling from God.

We have great doctors. We have great people in every area of society. Great football coaches.

Great athletes. We need great missionaries. We don't want an army of second-rate, half-hearted, introspective missionaries who are everlastingly thinking about themselves and their problems and where they're living and what they're eating.

All those things have a place. Hallelujah. But we want people who are focused and hard-working and are able to go through a day or two whether they feel spirit-filled or not.

Whether they've got a great quiet time or not. What nonsense that we can't live a day if we don't have a great quiet time. I have many miserable quiet times.

I was so encouraged by Coach McCartney. He's very strong on quiet time. O.M. is not going to abandon that.

But whether you have a great time with Jesus and you feel all Jesus-y and all Holy Spirit warm and wonderful, you've got a job to do. And you've got And when you go to take another job back in your own country, you're not going to be able to call them up and say, we've got a prayer meeting this morning. You're not going to be able to call them up and give them some of these kind of excuses that we get so

regularly at times.

You'll either have to go and bite the bullet. I love that expression. Forgive me.

It's one of the ways I've kept going. Or you will be fired. Now there are companies where it's a joke.

Many times in social services. But the fact is, today, everybody in business will tell you the competition is tougher. Do you know how many Koreans have just lost everything they have in what's happened in Korea in the last two years? Including men and women who are dreaming of putting money into the church and putting money into missions.

They're bankrupt. And one of our most committed Swiss prayer partners who's been at many OM events lately and we're all hoping and praying for this big thing he's going to do. Money go to India.

Money go here. I just talked to him on the phone. He's bankrupt.

For everyone's success in business in these days, there are many. That has an interesting implication because as people like Peter Maiden and I and others here go around, we have so many people that want to get into ministry. Oh, I'd really like to get out of this thing I'm in and get into ministry.

I sit down with him and say, look brother, you're in ministry. Now God may lead you into some other ministry, maybe OM, but you're in ministry now. Well, thank you for your patience.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for these dynamic, balancing, life-changing words that are loaded with biblical challenge and biblical meaning. If we had a seminar instead of one message, we could go from Genesis to Revelation and we could talk about intimidation and flexibility and unity and spirituality.

We could speak about the problem of dogmatics and we could speak about work. But Lord, our time is long gone and we just ask, oh Lord, help us as we attempt to be more committed to the highway of holiness. To be more committed to 1 Corinthians 13.

To somehow know more of that book of Acts ethos. We know even what I've shared here today could be debated within OM until you come with finer tuning, with need for changing certain terms, with the need to bring in other truths. Lord, we're already known as a movement that is very much committed to balance and committed to being big hearted and listening to the other person and networking with people that may even have habits or things they do that really even frighten us.

We've seen that in our AD2000 movement where there are certain things happening that we're actually opposed to and yet they're happening within this network that we are associated with. Lord, this seems to be the way, the complicated way of the 90s and of the new millennium. Lord, we ask for wisdom and if there's even a few nuggets of wisdom that we can get from these sort of exhortations and heart cries from my 42 years on the racetrack, then Lord, help each one of us to pick at least one up for our families, for our children, for our teens, for our life together here in Britain as we're on different teams and have different kinds of ministries with complex overlap as we all live in this country.

We're all basically relational people committed to churches and we believe it's going to take ongoing renewal, ongoing renewal to keep this work on track for your kingdom here in this challenging land with the things that are going on. Help us in Jesus' name. Amen.

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