

# Providence Mission Conference 99 Session 1

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer's sermon calls believers to be watchmen for the nations, emphasizing the importance of grace, readiness, and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives and missions.*

**Duration:** 57:08

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 33:6, Matthew 6:33, John 4:24, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 5:17, 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares the story of a man named Jimmy Baker who had a scandalous downfall due to his involvement with prostitutes. The speaker emphasizes the importance of learning from the Word of God rather than making mistakes in order to avoid such situations. He also highlights the impact of movies on society and praises Christian films for their role in bringing people to Jesus. The speaker encourages the audience to not only evangelize the world but also to be aware of the books available for their spiritual growth.

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## Transcript

Let's pray together. Father, we praise you for the privilege we've had already of worship this morning, and we know that you've called us to worship in spirit and in truth. We thank you, God, for what you've done in this college over the years.

And Lord, I thank you for the many visits I've been able to make here. I thank you for the workers you've thrust out from here to the unreached people of the world and to other strategic ministries in Canada and around the globe. Father, we want to be your watch people.

We want to be ready to go where you want us to go and do what you want us to do. And Lord, we especially pray this morning for nations that are suffering so much, like southern Sudan, where so many have been slaughtered and killed and so many children are orphans, so many refugees, hundreds and hundreds of thousands, and Eritrea and Ethiopia, where that war grinds on, and Sri Lanka, where 50,000, 60,000 have been slaughtered and died in the past 10 years. We think of Afghanistan still with no church really existing there, among 15 or more million people, just a handful of missionaries who are hardly able to even open their mouth about you, Lord Jesus, use their presence in Afghanistan.

We think of the crisis in Chechnya. We think of the chaos in Kosovo. And Lord, the potential war between Pakistan and India.

There's so many things that seem out of control in the world today, the earthquake in Turkey, and we would pray for those that are working among those victims and the other earthquake in Taiwan. We thank you, Lord, as we rush toward this new millennium, that we can be among those who are ready because we're abiding in you, because you've put a joy in our heart. You've given us a gift of salvation.

We want to be your watch people, your watchmen, your watchwoman to stand in the gap, to make up the hedge, to warn people that only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ can they have eternal life. Lord, you've stirred our hearts already this morning, but stir us again and then enable us to take those steps of faith, to be your watchman, to be your watchwoman, to go where you want us to go and to do what you want us to do, whatever the cost. But we pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Well, it's great to be back here again, it's a little hard for me to realize how many years have passed since I was last here.

It's actually only a few, but I don't know if I can. Thank you. We've got a special book display and not quite that long enough.

I've seen this in a Charlie Chaplin movie. But I would like to mention these books because I start speaking and get excited and I forget to tell people about the books. We know a lot of students are broke.

How many students are broke and in debt? All of you get a free book, the Broke in Debt group, which I think sometimes I'm part of. I won't tell you how much money I owe, but if you've got any to borrow, I'll be happy to talk to you. Because when you get money in the kingdom, it gets 100 fold.

So it's 100 percent interest. It's easy to pay back. I've had a little difficulty there with my board of directors, but it's a good concept.

But every one of you can take one of the books free. We would limit that to one of the smaller books like Norm Lewis's Priority One. That's got another book back to back.

This should be really required reading for people interested in missions. There's a book on revival. This came into my life in my very early Christian walk and was one of the most significant books God ever brought my way about grace, about these guys in East Africa who were touched in a revival of grace.

And the other book I have that's only come out in the last decade on grace is called The Grace Awakening. Unfortunately, it's a little difficult to get this one free, but we will be giving one to the library if it's not already there. I believe this is one of the finest Christian books of this decade, The Grace Awakening by Charles Swindoll.

The beginning of the book's a little boring. You don't read that skipping and start in the middle. Really, I started in the middle and then I read in both directions to see which was the best.

And it was a blessing, a little confusing in places. And then I have a brand new book just published about OM. What actually happens? Thousands of Canadians, by the way, have been on OM, even quite a few are leaders in your other mission movements and in your churches today.

And our first burden in OM is just to get you for one or two years. After that, we're just happy wherever the Spirit of God leads you. But if you wonder what goes on out in the mission field, here's a brand new book, The Touch of the Master.

That's one of the ones you can have free as well. All the books are on a donation basis. There's one that everybody should read.

It's really written for men, but men are having trouble getting copies because the women are buying up everywhere, all the copies. It's called *When Good Men Are Tempted*. And it's on the subject of dealing with sexual temptation.

A little bit blunt, quite offensive to some, but I didn't write it. So please don't complain to me. Chapter one, *Why Naked Women Look So Good*.

So it's dedicated to the Bible College movement of Canada. The Canadian that influenced me the most in my life is a man named Oswald J. Smith. He's been with the Lord many years now, the founder of People's Church in Toronto, where I've also spoken many times, was with him before he died.

He came to Moody Bible Institute when I was just a student and just really shook me. And there were a couple of thousand in that meeting and he gave an invitation and I was one of those who went forward. The challenge of missions, he's no longer with us, but his book is.

And there's a great brand new book on unique things that are happening in leadership. Leadership is changing. And a lot more of God's work today is being done by team leadership, by consensus decision making, leading from a position of weakness.

And there's exciting things happening, especially in your generation, in the area of leadership. And there's a book about it, *The Future Leader*. So it's exciting to be here, to be here with these books.

A close friend of mine actually just suddenly, well, I shouldn't say suddenly because he thought he was going to die, but he did die just a few days ago. I was in Briarcrest. I had to preach on the weekend in Vancouver.

The funeral was on the other side of Michigan. But God, yesterday was one of my few days when I was not preaching on this six week tour. And so I was able to fly to the funeral yesterday.

The memorial service, a man named Bob Van Kampen, one of the most successful businesspersons in the history of the United States. That's true. And he's only 60, but he's with the Lord.

But he left a tremendous heritage. And I wish you could have been there to hear the people speak that he had impacted. I only really got linked with him in the last decade, but other people that have been involved with him for years, especially another business person, paid tribute to him.

And I'm glad that it worked out to somehow get back here around midnight last night. It's exciting to be with you. I wouldn't come here if I couldn't come in the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit.

Because you don't want George Verwer dry crusts, Dutch crusts. There used to be a thing called Dutch Rusks. And by God's grace, I've known the fullness of his Holy Spirit almost every day since my conversion.

God is real, young people. I know you already believe that. I probably won't say that much new, but I want to affirm you in your faith.

I want to affirm you in coming to a Bible college. Probably some of your peers wonder why you were going to such a place, because it's not highly esteemed in our society. I left a top university and college to go to Bible college in Chicago, where I would never, destined never to get any academic degree, which is true to this day.

What a great mistake people thought. I've never regretted that. I have no problem with people who have high degrees.

Many of our recruits are out of Cambridge and Oxford, all kinds of degrees. That's not the way the Lord led me. I can tell you, 40 years later, God can use anybody.

Whatever your academic qualifications, whatever your natural talents, whatever struggles you have. I have struggled all my life in my Christian life. I'm not a natural Christian.

I'm a natural backslider. I'm a naturally angry person, lustful person, person. In fact, I found a lot of Christians when I first got converted, a real pain in the neck, just trying to understand them.

And I had such a pessimistic streak, sort of a Darth Vader of the evangelical world. And I found so many struggles. And of course, naturally, I created a lot of criticism.

And I found criticism very hard, because though I was very loud and outspoken inside, I was a bit of a softy, a bit of a coward. And I can just say God's grace is real to weak people. Now, those of you who are spiritual supermen and superwomen, and you just find every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before, and you're totally delivered from all lust and all anger and irritability and bad attitudes, and you're just high flying.

I mean, I don't want to project any of my problems on you. And I, you know, I want to admire people like that. In fact, I'd love to get your autograph here in my New Testament.

I have a little section in the back that says, all hypocrites sign here. It's true, because the Bible says the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and the two are contrary to one another. God is a great God.

Have you ever read John Piper's book about missions, the supremacy of God in the work of missions? Somebody gave me another John Piper book last night, actually at the funeral. I was doing a little business, a little business on the side at the funeral. With a publisher, he actually gave me 10,000 copies of Peretti's book, Piercing the Darkness.

They sort of overprinted by about a million copies. He's only got 300,000 left. Anyway, I told him I'd take 10 for starters.

So he brought me, I never did read it. He brought me a copy of that there in the front of the memorial service, and I got it with me. And I believe we as God's people, through prayer and spiritual warfare, we can pierce the darkness.

There's a lot of darkness in the world. We're going to be hearing about that. I'm so thrilled that you chose this theme from the book of Ezekiel.

One of my favorite verses way back when I was a teenager, the watchman. I used to preach that out of context and make everybody feel absolutely miserable. And so it's a brilliant, a brilliant verse.

And we'll be looking at that. I don't have a Bible yet. I've only got a New Testament, so that makes a problem.

But I do have a Bible back in London and I'm going to borrow one, perhaps from Jennifer, and then I'll read that text. But it's a great theme, keeping it in context and also going into the New Testament, which is what we're going to do and see that we still do have that ministry. And it's found especially in Acts 1.8. And that's where I'd like us to start right now.

I hope you don't mind my global attire. It's my global jacket and I got global socks, but I don't have them on. I bring my globe because probably two years from now, you won't remember much of the message.

If you do write me, I'll send you 10 free books. Well, you remember the skinny guy from New Jersey. That's where I was born.

My father's from the Netherlands and I've lived in Europe 40 years. Who goes around not only with global globe and a global jacket. This morning, I have my global underwear on as well.

And back in the old days, I never forget a big Cornerstone Christian rock festival. I thought those people were liberated, especially Glenn Kleiser and Rez Band. But when I took my trousers down to show my global underwear, even Rez Band found that a little over the top and they reported it on the Internet.

It got back to my wife and that was not really too good. So you just have to take my word. I have my global underwear on this morning and I'm feeling empowered.

No. X18, you will find that in the New Testament for those of you who have just got here. And if you have a Bible, please turn to it, because here we see the watch person concept of the New Testament.

The Pentecostal. Somebody's going to have to bring me that water there. The Pentecostal concept of the New Testament.

X18. Just put it here on future leader. Thanks.

What's your name? Good. Pleased to meet you. Five free books for you and write me.

I'll send you a Bill Drake CD. I wish Bill Drake was here and I'd urge you to get him as one of your mission speakers in the future. He's much younger and he is one of the greatest worship band singers in North America today.

The problem is he lives in London, England, but he's just completed, I believe, a tour of Canada instead of moving west after Toronto. He ended up in Quebec. But I believe God's going to bring Bill Drake back again.

And he's just had six months. He's a man that I believe has the mantle of Keith Green on him. If you believe that happens, writes in a similar way, sings in a similar way, has written 250 songs, including some of the greatest mission discipleship songs of all times.

And after a few weeks, when the dust settles and you still remember anything here and meshed in all of your studies, send me an email and I'll send you a Bill Drake powerful music CD as a gift. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

God has called us to be his witnesses. Sometimes I meet people on the mission field who are uptight because they haven't won anyone to Christ yet. Maybe there's some of you in your Christian life, you've never won anyone personally to Jesus Christ.

Maybe it bothers you. I had a young man come to me 30 some years ago. I hesitate to mention anything like this unless it was really a long time ago in another country.

But he had committed some kind of incest with his sister, maybe his half sister, some sexual incest. He felt so terrible about that even later, though he was forgiven in Christ. He thought maybe he had commit the unpardonable sin.

He thought maybe God could never use me and never let anybody to Christ. And he thought maybe that's because he did this terrible sin in his own family. And I had the joy of showing him from the word of God the absolute efficiency and sufficiency of the blood of Christ to cover all sin.

We're living in a sexual jungle. And we've seen tremendous sexual failure again, even in the church in these past months. I could be full time just counseling people, leaders, top leaders who have had major sexual failure and some of them knocked out of the ministry.

One of the most famous healer preachers, supposedly spirit filled person on planet earth, all during a 10 year period, a married man was sleeping with prostitutes when this God eventually exposed it hit the front page in his national newspaper, a small country. His marriage was over. His ministry was over.

The scandal was unbelievable. I have a message I think I first gave at Prairie Bible Institute called Seven Things They Didn't Teach Me at Bible College. That was some time ago.

Bible colleges have changed. They're more grace awakened. They're a little more honest.

And so many colleges do have subjects in which they deal with the subject of moral purity and sexuality. Billy Graham, speaking way back at Urbana in the 50s, speaking on the challenge of sexual purity, said, if you lose this battle, you lose the biggest battle of your youth. I believe that man I just referred to, I'm in contact with him and I love him.

I believe he has repented. I believe he is restored. He's a broken man.

He's a hurt man. He's wondering if God could ever use him again. And I believe God can.

He'll always walk with a limp. He'll grieve over what he has done, but our God is a God who forgives. Our God is a God who restores.

One of the most famous writers and names in all of North America is a man who had one of the largest churches in his particular area. And during a time of confusion and stupidity and weakness in his life and marriage, he committed adultery. And then he covered it up until he became the leader of a large youth movement.

And then it hit the press. He had to resign in that same week, load all of his furniture in the truck. I remember talking to him.

He became a close friend of mine and moved to another part of the country. And somehow over three years, it took three years for him to really be fully restored. And he's being mightily used again.

The story of Jimmy Baker. Maybe you're still a skeptic. I've got a bigger step skeptic streak than probably most of you.

But it seems to me that prison turned Jimmy Baker upside down. Now, you don't have to go to prison. You can go to Providence.

And be turned upside down. What do I mean by that? I mean, if you can learn these lessons when you're young from the word of God, rather than by your own mistakes, the better off you are and the better chance that you can become a great marathon runner in God's great program. I'm not here mainly to recruit for world missions.

In fact, I'm hesitant to take any more missions conferences. I've probably taken more than most people on planet Earth because my first burden is not world missions. My first burden is reality in Jesus Christ.

My first burden is to see you going on for God, not one or two years, but five, 10, 20, 30 years, in my case, 43 years every single day. Praise God. I'm now a grandfather.

It's great. It's great. I tell you, because so much of my young life when I was your age and I'd pour my heart out, I started preaching at 17.

People would criticize and say, it's just youthful zeal. It's not real. He's too young.

For 10 years, I had people say that about me all over the world. Many doors closed. Many people put knives in my back.

He's too young. How can anybody 21 be leading a full missionary organization? How can this kid in the 20s be announcing he's going to buy an ocean going ship for world evangelism? People would mock. They'd write articles.

Oh, he's going to get a submarine as well for evangelism in depth. Hey, when do you get a phone call? When are you going to get a jumbo jet? Now they're not saying this youthful zeal thing anymore. It's so encouraging.

In fact, if I have a big meeting, somehow, if you're standing a long ways away and there's not a television screen, people still think I'm young. Never forget this girl who thought I was some young, dynamic guy and she was sitting in the back and as she came forward, she just stopped and looked into my face and she said, wow, you are old. Thank you very much.

But grandchildren are great. Grandchildren are great. Tony Campala, one of my favorite speakers, he said, grandchildren, that's God's gift to you for not killing your kids.

Yeah. Pray for your parents, really. They're not as bad as you think.

I mean, what would you do if you know someone like you just popped out of the womb and said God is a God of grace. God is a God of love. We don't want people going to the mission field before because they feel guilty about staying in Canada.

You can easily suffer more in Canada than the mission field. You can far more easily freeze to death in Canada out on the highway than you could freeze to death in the Congo. Have you read about anybody in the Congo lately? You know, Congo pygmy freezes to death on the highway because he failed to stay on

his camel.

I haven't read anything like that of you. In fact, I am convinced that preparation for marriage is probably more difficult than preparation for the mission field. Now, I don't think Providence is, you know, a school full of eunuchs.

I can imagine some of you run into the library to look that one up. Boy, I tell you, there was some heavy stuff going on in the women's dorm last night. This is the only school in the world I've ever been to.

They put me in the women's dorm. You know, it was great to phone my wife. Honey, what are all those noises? Girls in the background.

Oh, don't worry, honey. I'm in the women's dorm. They're all well behaved.

Just to quench rumors, it's a guest room, sort of a little bit separate, you know. Tell me about it. There's a little sign there that says everybody's going to be quiet at 11 o'clock at night.

Anyway, don't ask me what dorm it was. May God bless every one of those girls. They can all get two free books, especially if they could be a little quieter tonight.

Let's just take a look at that verse. You'll receive power. That's one of my favorite words.

And I want to give that word to you this morning because that's God's word for you. That's God's word for missions. That's God's word for the person who wants to be a watch person, for the Lord Jesus to share their faith.

I was telling you a little while ago how some people feel guilty because they never led a soul to Christ. But in fact, our first task is not to lead people to Christ and win them to Christ, you know, push them in the kingdom. When I first got saved, I was so aggressive in personal evangelism.

People accepted Christ whether they wanted to or not. It was called manipulation. I'd go to the bus station and I'd sit down next to some poor soul who was waiting for a bus.

And I tell you, by the time I was through, this guy was miserable. He didn't even want to get on his bus. And some of them accepted the Lord.

I went down to the local jail and preached. Some of those came to Christ. I think some of them were real, but some were not.

I think of those words back in John's gospel. As many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God. And I want to ask you, in the beginning of our little time together, have you experienced the power of God in salvation in your life? In any college situation, there can always be some who, for whatever reason, have not yet made that initial step of faith.

I remember speaking together with Billy Graham and Tony Campalo at Urbana some years ago, and I'm speaking back there again the end of next year. I hope some of you will come and spread the word around about Urbana. But I believe Billy Graham, or maybe it was Campalo, it doesn't matter, one of them spoke basically about salvation.

I thought, at Urbana? All these people are here because they want to be missionaries or they're interested in world missions? And quite a few were saved by the power of God at Urbana. And it's possible that someone here this morning, the reasons it doesn't matter, you not really have assurance of your salvation. You're not really experiencing the power of God.

As many as receive him, to them he gives power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe on his name. It's all of grace. And if you have not yet experienced the power of God, then the first three chapters of this book are not boring.

The first three or four chapters are about salvation by grace. And I praise God. That he has saved, I'm sure most of you, maybe all of you, only the Lord knows, and that now he has put his hand on you for kingdom ministry.

Kingdom ministry, that's what we're into. We're not just called to evangelize the world like we used to say in the 60s. And there's nothing wrong with saying that.

But we discovered as we've studied the word of God, as we were impacted by the Lausanne Congress, by John Stott, by Tony Campalo, by many other men and women of God, some of them Canadians, that we're not just called to evangelize the world. We are called to build the kingdom everywhere. That means we've got to be concerned about those with HIV.

That means we've got to be concerned about refugees. That's why we have to immediately do something when there's an earthquake in Turkey, as our people had to do and are now working among those victims. That means we're concerned about social action and justice in the nation and the way prostitutes are sold into slavery in India.

A dynamic second generation OM friend means his father was an OMer, married to a woman whose mother was an OMer and mother and father. They're going to India, not as we did, to give out millions of tracts and to win people to Christ. They're going to India as a legal team.

To help these prostitutes that are being sold into slavery, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them. We now in the 90s, and I praise God for this generation, realize that some of the things that were told way back to be sinful are actually part of our culture and not necessarily sinful. Swindoll brings that out in his book.

Some of these things that are tied into our culture, like having a glass of wine in France, the church is probably never going to get unity on, you know, whether we should go to certain kinds of movies. Surely Christians today should be impacting the world, the media. There are born again people in Hollywood.

There are born again people in some of these blockbuster movies. In fact, I discovered recently one of these guys that has generally played a really bad guy. I mean, he's a really ugly guy in the movies.

He's got born again and now he's a good guy. But maybe eventually he'll play a good guy in the movie. Movies are an enormous impact on our society.

We must understand what's going on there. There's a movie magazine put out by Ted Bear, a man that's impacting Hollywood and other film producing places and films are produced in Canada, I can assure you as well, and Great Britain and India, one of the biggest film producing nations in the world. Praise God for Christian films.

Praise God for creative young people 30 years ago who created films that are being used to bring people to Jesus Christ. We think of the Jesus film that's now been watched by more people than any other film in the history of the world and has brought hundreds and hundreds of thousands to a knowledge of Jesus. I first saw that film, I think, 30 years ago in Edmonton.

It's still being used for the kingdom. So we're not called just to evangelize the world. We're not here just looking for people to join these great mission societies and be one of God's witnesses and watch persons out in the other part of the world.

We are concerned about our own society. We're concerned about social justice in Ottawa and what's being done in Ottawa. We're concerned about what's happening in our prison systems.

Americans perhaps should be a lot more concerned about that than Canadians. We're concerned about this Native American and native Canadian challenge in which we have absolutely failed. If we're honest, by the way, it really bugs me that we as God's people are not willing to just acknowledge as we go into a new millennium, there's going to be a big some big celebrations.

We love to celebrate. I'm for celebration, but I'm also for reality. We have failed.

I personally have failed. I have no problem acknowledging my failure. I failed as a husband.

I failed as a father. I failed as a leader of OM. I failed as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But when I fail, I immediately repent and claim God's grace and press on. I then have to put that failure in his hands. If the failure has caused some difficulty that I have to deal with five years later, that happens along life's road.

Then I have to reacknowledge, look, on that occasion, I did fail and I'm very sorry if that hurt you. Thank you for finally telling me after five years. But I have to also say that by God's grace, I'm forgiven.

I wonder if you how many of you know complete other true freedom of conscience because you're forgiven in Jesus Christ. As far as I know, because of the miracle of conversion, I've never gone to sleep with anything between me and God or me and anybody else to say, wait a minute, after all these other things you've said about weakness and struggle and grace and failures, now you're coming out as a secret perfectionist. No, because on so many days I did fail and I did sin and I did stupid things, but I kept as I learned from the word of God, I kept short accounts with God.

And so I quickly repented and claimed his blood. Sometimes it was only laying there with my head on the pillow, having been unkind to my wife, that I looked over at her and asked her to forgive me. And we prayed together.

I'm sure there's some nights when I fell asleep so tired that perhaps I didn't really get something dealt with. But God is very merciful. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin.

And God, during these days of missions event, he's not wanting just to put some kind of evangelical purgatory trip on you and make you feel miserable because you determine you're not going to be a missionary and you're going to marry a cowboy and live in Alberta the rest of your life. God knows everything about you. God knows everything about you.

I think this is a quotation from A.W. Tozer and loves you still. God is not wanting to put some guilt trip straight jacket on you. God is wanting to set you free.

And some of you, because you've been reared in legalistic backgrounds, the road to freedom is not going to be an easy one. And if you don't deal with it, some of you are going to have nervous breakdowns. Some of you are going to run out of spiritual gasoline within the next couple of years.

Where God is, there is freedom. And yet that freedom is not so that we can just turn around and hurt people, including ourselves, and some of you might even be gifted at hurting yourself. You've got your own little personal purgatory trip that you put yourself through.

But our great God, our great God is wanting us to find a balance of biblical teaching in his word. We are called to holiness. I believe every day I should aim as high as I can for kingdom work and ministry and love in this area of lust.

I don't tolerate even a few seconds of lust in my mind. I try to quickly deal with it. A lot more difficult for me than perhaps some of you, because at 16 I was hooked on pornography.

My grandfather was an alcoholic, by the way. My grandmother divorced him, so much for my spiritual background. He was Irish, English, Scottish blood mixed together, basically toxic.

I only saw my dear grandfather, and I did love him three times in my life. The final time he was dying of DT, alcoholism. In a nearby hospital.

My other grandfather was a little bit different. He was from the Netherlands. I don't know any of you from Dutch background.

That can be a real challenge. And he was an atheist. My own father was a materialist.

Perhaps at this point I could just share my testimony. I wasn't from a Christian home. I was from what would be called a nominal Christian home, because we weren't Muslims and we weren't Hindus, and we lived in the United States, so we must be, you know, Christians.

And I went to church, which was like a glorified social club. I became the head of the young people's group, assistant to the pastor, taught the young people how to rock and roll. I was big into Haley and his comics, Elvis Presley and all the rest.

I had no idea of salvation in Jesus Christ. It was religion. Now I had a lot of other things all going on at the same time.

And somehow a dear woman heard about me and she put my name on her Holy Ghost hit list. Everybody should have such a list. And I was in trouble with the police and I was a big loud mouth in the high school.

And so she started to pray for me. And this woman not only prayed for me, then I'd become a Christian. And I'm not exaggerating this at all.

She prayed that I would become a missionary. In England we say missionary. I don't know.

How do you say that in Canada? Oh, American. Things just creep up from the border. English missionary.

I can't even pronounce it, so don't worry about it too much. But she not only prayed that I would become a Christian, she prayed that I would become a missionary. She didn't even discuss this with me.

You know, the nice to get at least a phone call. Hello. Just want you to know your life is going to be completely changed.

You're probably going to end up living for Christ in Tibet. People from New Jersey. I don't know if you ever met anybody from New Jersey.

Most of them are rude. And, you know, Bruce Springsteen. I'm sure you never heard about him in Sunday school, but he's out there.

He's also a little loud. And imagine if he got saved. I love it when rock and rollers get saved.

Now, what about Cliff Richards? There's few people in the whole of Europe that have a more powerful testimony than Cliff Richards. He's testified to the power of Jesus Christ to millions and millions. I remember forget going to one of his concerts.

When I first got to Europe, a good old legalist and really an ugly American, that was one of the hardest things for me to face in Europe. And I was an ugly American because I at that time was very proud of my country. I was, you know, anti-communist freedom fighter.

Back in the McCarthy era, that really has blown your history section of your head. But I heard about this Cliff Richards and he was still singing secular songs and he had little pretty little beboppers bopping around behind him as he sang a song and they weren't really properly clothed. At least they didn't have head coverings.

And I thought this is impossible. This is impossible. But as I watched this man from a distance and I talked to friends and I watched a documentary, then I finally got to one of his concerts and had that chance to have supper with him.

You know, when you have an evening meal with a rock and roll guy, what time do you think that is? That makes a women's dorm here seem like a Sunday school picnic. They start their food, they start their food, the meal at one in the morning. And I watched this, this famous rock and roll singer, this was a secular concert, though he sang one or two Christian songs, come afterward and meet the crowds.

I've often watched how some Christian leaders meet the crowds. Some of them will not even meet them. They walk out after they preach, they don't like to meet people and I'm not judging them, maybe they got a hassle and Cliff Richard's obviously professional, but he met people and they went down to a room with a whole lot of people and he was after this huge concert, high energy, five times more energy than it would take me to speak in a little meeting like this.

Ten times more. He was absolutely gracious with every person. The second time I went back to see him with two of my children, it was before the concert, the guy was, to me, it seemed that he would be a stressed out 20,000 people out there.

He stopped in front of my two teenagers and he just focused on them for just a short time. They will never forget Cliff Richards, secular rock and roll artist of Europe, stayed higher on the charts of Europe than any person in history. But he's born again.

He gives big time to world missions and he walks with Jesus. Now, maybe he's made some mistakes, big deal. All of you who haven't made any mistakes yet, you know, I've got another section in my Bible for you to sign.

Maybe you won't remember much a few years from now, but I hope you'll remember this. God is a lot more big hearted than many of God's people. Swindle often refers to them as grace killers.

You find them in almost every church, quick to criticize, quick to jump on the young people, quick to show the music they're singing is from the devil. May God help us understand how big hearted he is. Yes, he does hate sin, but we must be careful of taking things that are really part of our cultural.

They're not clearly spoken about in the Bible and just immediately giving that the big S sin classification. To make a long story short, that lady prayed for me. She sent me a Gospel of John through the post, through the mail.

I then started to read this. By this time, I owned three businesses. I was on my 32nd girlfriend.

I was becoming the president of the student body this huge outside New York City High School. I was wild. And God's word from John's Gospel hit me like an atomic bomb.

And I signed up and joined this organization called the Pocket Testament League, and I thought this is the greatest thing in the world. They're giving Gospels of John out all over the world. And I started to raise money to buy Gospels of John and scriptures before I was even a Christian.

You can imagine what happened after I was born again. That happened in a meeting in New York City. Another wild guy blew in the can into town, sort of the Clint Eastwood of the evangelical world called Billy Graham.

He took out the old spaghetti Westerns, both guns and blew my brains out. Spiritually speaking, I got saved in a Billy Graham meeting in New York City. And it's been a powerful reality every day, every day ever since I immediately almost immediately on my conversion.

Since God may want me to be a missionary, I didn't know much about it. I've been in this organization raising Gospels, so that certainly impacted me. I never to this day have had a real proper missionary call.

I don't know if you dispense those here at Providence, but I'd give several hundred dollars, maybe up to a thousand for a proper missionary call. I think God just looked at me and gave me a missionary kick. Dutch people are stubborn.

Call sometimes won't do it. And here I am so many years later with this simple testimony. God is real.

It's all of grace. I have failed so many times. Oh, no, not the big failures that would, you know, get written up in the Gospel Gazette and my leaders would have to gather around in a meeting and say, that's it.

George Brewer, he's blown it. He can't be. How can he be the leader of the youth movement? Is he's, you know, got some kind of scandal going.

I don't understand that. Why some people sin and they get forgiven and they're out in the street running a race and somebody else sins a different kind of sin and they're in prison. I just visited my friend Jack Bennett in prison, the man behind the great new era scandal.

I tell you, he was not guilty of all the things they accused him of, but he was guilty of some. And so he is sentenced, this this man who has a heart so full of love, but who did make some real mistakes, may have had even some mental illness. And the people got in this big sort of pyramid scheme and they lost the money, though we lost a lot.

We got eighty five percent of it back. He had not squirreled it away in a bank account in Switzerland, but he had sinned. He had he had failed.

He's acknowledged that we can forgive, but we live in a real world. And I'm going to say something to you, I hope you won't forget Christians do things sometimes more stupid than non-Christians. For example, quite a lot of Christians have fallen into immorality with their own children in their own home.

They've abused, they've abused their their their their children. You say this, this is incredible, isn't it? It happens. The man may, the person may have a pedophile tendency.

We were just told in the press in England, we have twenty thousand pedophiles going to our churches, one that supposedly had become a Christian. He got caught doing things he put in prison. He came out, the church sort of forgive him, laid hands on him.

He went back in the church. He just did it again with the same little girl. He's just been arrested again.

He's going back to prison again. We need to understand. God forgives, but our society does not forgive.

So together with grace, we need to be smart. Together with grace, we need to be disciplined. Together with grace, we need to know holiness.

And I want to tell you, if you've got a problem that causes you to be tempted with little children, you've got to get that sorted out. And that is not going to be easy. Your denomination has just stood up confessing unbelievable, unbelievable abuse of children in their boarding school in Africa.

And I don't judge them because I believe it's a real world and there's nothing new that's going on. But an ounce of prevention is worth ten pounds of pure of forgiveness and restoration. And it's when we're this age, it's when you're young and you're flexible.

The tree can still be bent. You need to make sure you're getting the heavy things sorted out in your life. If you've got a pornographic problem and you think that's small, you're a jerk.

It will destroy you. I've just dealt with another case. Children in the family.

Divorce. One reason only. He's a pornoholic.

He can't resist it. First, it's the magazines. Then it's the Internet.

Then it's down to the blue movie joints, which are usually within 50 miles or in London, 25 feet. And then, of course, as a pornoholic just called me on the telephone the other day, and a married man going into ministry, he said, I've just fallen with a prostitute. I'm scared to tell my wife.

I want to know, George, will I go to hell? He feels he's lost his salvation. I had the privilege of telling him, you're not going to lose your salvation. You certainly lost your joy.

You certainly have a big mess. You better repent and get sorted out. We have a God of grace.

My message these two days with you is a message of grace. But grace without discipline can lead to disgrace. And so I was saved by the grace of God in that Billy Graham meeting.

But somehow, as a baby Christian, I got into the word. Somehow, as a young Christian, I got exposed to Oswald Smith and Roy Hession, and I got that sex thing sorted out. The magazines, they went up in smoke.

That was easy. But the mind was another struggle. But God gave me a strategy for dealing with the lust of the mind that has served me every day, all of these years.

Not in the absence of some failure, especially with the eyes. In fact, some of you have heard me at Urbana know that I shared a story in Urbana years ago that got me in trouble only with a few people. And that I was having a prayer walk in the woods one day, I was a Christian leader.

Oh, God had used me. All kinds of things were happening. And in the woods that day, there was a pornographic magazine in the tree.

Somebody had put it in the tree after lusting over it, I guess, and then used it for target practice. They're bullet holes. I've never seen and I've seen a lot of magazines.

I've never seen a magazine in a tree with bullet holes in it. I'd love to be able to tell you this morning really how in the power of the spirit, because of what I learned at Bible college and on my knees, I just looked at the magazine and miraculously destroyed it. Victory.

But the trouble is, that's not the truth. The truth is, for several minutes, that magazine made a complete fool of me. And when you fail like that, you feel so guilty, Satan tries to tell you you're not even saved.

He had tried that before, so that didn't work when I was just a baby Christian and had a similar failure. But somehow I knew God still loved me and that this wasn't some weird thing in the judgment of God was going to come hit me with a lightning bolt before I got out of the woods. And I repented and claimed his cleansing.

And I came out of that woods with a greater strength to stand against that kind of temptation or I wouldn't be here today. I want to ask you. Is your conscience clear as you sit here this morning? There's a chance that your conscience is not clear because of legalism, because you don't understand God, God's mercy, God's word and God's ways.

And so you have to turn from that wrong conscience and allow the grace of God to cover it. Your conscience is not always correct if you're reared in a hyper legalistic environment. Even people in non-legalistic environments get what I call conscience erroneous zones.

Our final basis is the word of God, the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the word of God, not our consciences. But it's a it's it's a difficult thing to find that balance because others, your conscience may be bothering you because you have sinned in a serious way. You haven't got this sorted out or you are continuing in sin that can be just as much a matter of attitude and disposition as it can be over actions.

In fact, the things I have to repent of the most are dispositional sins. You can have a smile of a gospel singer, but have the disposition of a snake at the same time. I've seen it as I'm backstage with many, many music groups.

I'm very much into Christian music and I want to tell you, we need to pray for Christian bands. I just spoke at that big event in Hamilton to eleven thousand teenagers with this great band, Delirious, a tremendous band from England. Eleven thousand teenagers, three hundred and fifty came forward when I gave the invitation and they had two hours of Delirious.

But my experience with bands, you have a wonderful band here, a wonderful worship group here. Praise God for that time together. Worshiping Satan targets these groups.

And most of them end in division and confusion and in some cases, immorality or naive. A top business consultant said, was asked, what's the difference between the Christians working in the business world and the non-Christians working in the business world? The consultant with years of experience or the owner of the company said one thing, the Christians are naive. They don't think it can happen to them or they don't really have the discernment to know what's going on.

I thank God. And so many great books came into my hands, I thank God that he gave me a Nathan, he gave me a friend at Maryville College, I'm going to bring this to a close soon, I appreciate your patience. This is the university studies I went to before coming to Moody and I was warned about him.

Dale wrote on he's baptizing people in the showers. I immediately look for him. We've been linked together for forty three years.

You think God has brought you to Providence just to fill your head? God has brought you to Providence, yes, to fill your head, but also to fill your heart. With his power and grace, his Holy Spirit, God has brought you to Providence, maybe for this very missions conference in which he is going to turn you around, some of you that have not really thought you should go into missions, maybe during these days he's going to turn you around and you're going to become one of the most dynamic missionaries that has ever gone out of Canada, because our God is a God of surprises and because some of the best missionaries I know never thought of being a missionary when they were your age. Some of them were even opposed to it.

We have a great God. We have a God of grace. We have a God who loves us.

And he is wanting to bless you during these days. And he is wanting you to make decisions that are going to make you a marathon runner, whether it's in Canada or whether it's in Calcutta. And it's exciting when we see people start to come in to what I call a grace awakening.

It completely changes their lives. I've seen it happen to whole churches. I've seen it happen in mission societies.

In fact, it happened in OM, a movement that had a legalistic grace killing streak to it that could even make a turtle flip upside down and shake its feet. And God, through books and through repentance and through this brother Dale Roton, who was such a grace awakened person and was willing to confront me and get me to repent when I did or said something extreme, I believe is a more grace awakened, sensible, big biblical movement than we were in the 60s. Of course, we've got lots of other problems to wrestle with.

You never get to the place where you arrive. Dale Roton and I have been together 43 years. We met at Maryville College.

I'm praying God's going to give you some long term relationships here, first of all, with people of your own sex, your own gender. Then maybe in God's providence, people of the opposite gender, which can be,

first of all, platonic, that is possible. And then it may be romantic and lead to something else.

But I urge you in this romance thing to go slow because Bible colleges have produced some of the most idiot marriages in the history of the planet, and many of them are divorced. Many of them are divorced. Because they go into it when they're in a unique environment and a unique situation, and they're young and the testosterone is pumping heavy, and within a few years they recedit.

Now, just in case you misunderstand that, I was one of those marriages. And this afternoon, I'm going to share about my marriage and how it almost came unglued. Because my wife and I were so in love with each other, we didn't have really too much time to think about what marriage actually is.

At Moody Bible Institute, you are not allowed to marry as a student. Just tell me, character, loudmouth, aggressive, hothead from New Jersey, you cannot marry while you're here. And something happens in me that says.

So I got married one week after I graduated, and I graduated one year early by doing a few correspondence courses, and my wife thought I was the most wonderful person on planet Earth. I just gave her that one verse out of Ephesians. Submit, submit, submit.

She did, sold her inheritance and gave it to O.M., that was important, and then agreed to marry me. We went to Mexico and the marriage was great for several weeks. Then she read the other verses.

We've had a few problems ever since. But in two months, we celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary and have had 40 years almost of, I never know what to do with that, just praise God. I've had 40 years of God's grace.

If there's any place you need grace, it's not firstly in missions, it's in marriage. And if you get a solid marriage or the Lord calls you to be single, and many of the greatest missionaries are single, especially single women, then he will give grace for that. Well, this is it.

You know, I read in a book, make sure you get a good ending to your message. So we'll just end because I'm hoping you're going to be back at one o'clock. And it takes me a while to get warmed up.

And I am jet lagged and I get a little confused. And, you know, it's good to be here in Briarcrest, but I do get mixed up. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you, Jesus, for the reality of your Holy Spirit. We thank you that you are sending ordinary, needy ragamuffins out to the mission field and you're using them to build the kingdom. You know everything about us and you love us still.

And we thank you for the message of grace. Lord, we want to be your watchmen. We want to be your watchwomen.

We want to go where you want us to go and do what you want us to do. And Lord, we know that you, you called us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. And we want to do that.

We know, however, the need for senders is just as great as the need for goers. Help us now, Lord, to make use of all these exhibitions. Help us to make a take advantage of having these missionaries here from all over the globe.

And we believe most of them are grace awakened missionaries that we can talk to and relate to. Bond us together. Don't allow us to have two camps here, the visitors and those who are residents, but bond us together right now.

We are one. We are part of your body. We don't have to live by the initial impression of someone.

We can get beyond that in the power of the Holy Spirit. And Lord, I just know if you can take a character like me and save me and keep me going all these years with all my mistakes and all my sins, all my failures, then this hope this tremendous hope for everybody on this campus. And we're we're putting our money on that great hope.

Lord, we're risk takers. We're we're kingdom gamblers. I'm putting my money on the young people who are sitting in this auditorium, that they're going to be great Holy Spirit guided marathon runners for your kingdom until they are finally with you.

Even as my friend Bob Van Campen went suddenly into your presence just a few days ago. Lord, we're ready. We're ready.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

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