

Sharing With the Karachi Team

by George Verwer

George Verwer shares insights on financial challenges, ministry experiences, and the importance of unity in the Christian community during his trip to Pakistan and the Gulf region.

Duration: 58:00

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1

Topics: "Missions Update", "Unity in the Body of Christ", "Trusting God for Provision"

Description

George Verwer shares his experiences and challenges during his trip to Pakistan, emphasizing the importance of financial trust in God while also working diligently to support the ministry. He recounts how God provided for their airfares through book sales and generous gifts, highlighting the unity and support among believers in Kuwait and the need for prayer for the local church. Verwer stresses the significance of maintaining unity within the body of Christ, addressing the challenges of pride, criticism, and disunity that can arise in ministry. He encourages the team to work towards greater love and unity, reminding them that their actions and attitudes can greatly impact their witness. The sermon concludes with a call to prayer for the ongoing work in Kuwait and the broader mission efforts.

Transcript

Really, I don't think I'll share much from the word tonight. Maybe I will later. And I know you've been praying most of the day, so it isn't fair for my wife and I just to arrive so late and then, you know, keep you here to some strange hour.

We're really thankful to God for the opportunity to be back here in Pakistan once again. One of the things that was concerning me about this trip was where is the money going to come from because these airfares, for me, are horrendous. And with the financial situation of ICT, it's not easy for me to divert money.

As a family, we're seeing plenty of money come in, but it's not easy to divert it from ICT that's so in the red to these airfares. And as you know, right through O.M., there is this ongoing financial battle which is linked with the fact that airfares are up, hostages up, telephone is up. And I was really praying that our stop in the Gulf would somehow be used to release some of the money.

And I think, you know, there's always the two-fold trust. We like to sell books. We like to do whatever we can to see some money come in.

But then more than that, we like to pray and to see the Lord supply. I think this is a beautiful thing because the one isn't contrary to the other. A lot of people, most of their life, they have to spend working, earning money.

It's not a matter of them just getting up in the morning and praying and then the money comes in. They have to work. And I think it's good that in O.M. also, we have to work for some of our money.

But then it's also good that we can trust God to supply. Now I knew I could sell quite a few books and tapes in the Gulf, though our visit was going to be very brief. But how do you carry them? Last time we went was in our old bus.

So I had this special coat that I can load with cassettes and books. We decided not to bring too much clothing. I don't know if Dirk was there when we left, but we had more hand baggage than check-in baggage.

And you did too for other purposes. But we had not much difficulty. The one little case alone, they opened it at Customs and I had nothing to hide.

Kuwait Customs had 48 music cassettes. Of course, these music cassettes sell for about four and a half pounds, five pounds sterling each now. I happen to know that secular cassettes in the Gulf, nothing.

You can get them for half a dinar. They're all pirated. Christian music cassettes are like gold.

And so in the first two meetings, we sold every book, every cassette at full price and covered at least one of the airfares. Then the Lord started bringing in money in gifts. One man gave us \$500 in crisp \$100 bills.

And then other gifts came. But then we were out of cassettes, out of books. So in the night, the Lord gave me this idea of starting the Gulf Christian Book Club.

So we just launched the Gulf Christian Book Club. You pay 20 pounds sterling a year and you get one book a month. And a couple of dozen people paid in advance to join the Gulf Christian Book Club.

And so another \$1,000 came in. Then Oman, they couldn't get me the visa to Oman. So I stayed three extra days.

Many more meetings opened up, mainly among the Indians, but also among the Arabs. And another \$1,000 worth of gifts came in, many of them small gifts from the Indians. But these dinars, each dinar is worth over \$3.

They add up very, very quickly. And some of those gifts were very small and I think represented sacrifice on the part of the people who gave. And so really we've seen both of our airfares covered.

In one sense, we've already seen them covered, but we wanted to see it in this more specific way. And that was a great encouragement. Of course, the spiritual ministry with these people is far more encouraging.

They don't get many visitors to Kuwait. It's completely different in Bahrain. Bahrain, easy to get a visa.

Everybody, a lot of people go there. Because I had phoned Bahrain when it looked like I couldn't get a visa for Kuwait. And they said, oh, you know, we got a guest speaker this week.

We had a guest speaker last week. This Arab assembly where I ministered that has been going through a significant time of difficulty has very few visiting speakers. So that was a real encouragement.

And we had usually every day one meeting for Arab speakers. These are not Kuwaitis, but they're Palestinians, Egyptians, people of other backgrounds. And then we'd have a meeting with the Indians.

Most of the Indians we're in contact with there are from Kerala. A number of them are ex-OMers. So it was an encouraging time.

We've got some very close friends there who we really feel linked with. They are going to help in this Christian book club if people don't get their books or something else goes wrong. We also launched a tape club and a Malayalam book club, all of which is going to take a little bit of effort.

But it seems the only way you can get books into Kuwait right now is one at a time, except if people are willing to carry them in, is to send in one book at a time, and usually not more than, say, one a week to be safe. One a month might be better. There was, and we could make this a real matter of prayer, there was a Christian bookshop called the Family Bookshop in Kuwait.

A year ago it was completely burned down. Everything was lost. And if that isn't a work of the enemy, because it was the main place in Kuwait where there were books, there is one seven-day Adventist man who has a few Bibles in his shop, English Bibles, a few Arabic.

You can get scriptures. It seems that people are often willing to make great risks to get scriptures into these countries. We're not talking about a lot, but not many have the vision for Christian books.

And yet to me, a book is a sermon in print. When we have our meetings in our churches, we don't just read Bible verses from 2 Chronicles or whatever. We preach the Word of God, and we believe in the preaching of the Word, not just the reading of the Word.

And yet so often the same is true in the communist countries, the same is true in China. A number of groups have a vision for Bibles, but very few have a vision for Christian books, much less cassette tapes. So let's pray right now for Kuwait, this little assembly of Arab believers, a number of Indian groups, very little contact with Kuwaiti people.

They are very aloof. We also have Brother David Reynolds there now, who's still with OM, just got a job in the University of Kuwait. We can pray for him.

There's another ex-OMer, John Zimmick, who, in a very unusual way, got a job in the University of Kuwait. There are openings for people to go there, teach English, and in other ways. But getting to Kuwait is one thing, and having a witness with Kuwaitis is something else.

Now, David Reynolds, who used to live in Egypt, he's having a good time with Egyptians and Palestinians, but Kuwaitis, very, very difficult. This is a country of 1,400,000 in the heart of the Arab world, extremely wealthy, extremely wealthy. That really needs our prayers.

And I believe, among other things, God wants to use the Indians who are there, who have financial resources, to help the work of God in India, and perhaps even in Pakistan. There are Pakistani believers in those countries as well, though I haven't had yet as much contact with them. Quite a few of them, some of them received some information occasionally about OM India.

And it was really a blessing to meet a brother who had been Frank Dietz's interpreter about 17 years ago. I was just thrilled to be brought a little bit up-to-date on the news. The ship Lagos has been to Kuwait twice, and many of them have very encouraging memories of the Lagos visit.

It's unlikely that it could get back again, though we don't know. Maybe we could just go to prayer right now for Kuwait. Thank the Lord for these financial provisions.

Thank the Lord for the contact and the heart-linking we have with both the Indian and the Arab-speaking believers. Pray for their churches. The Indian Brethren Assembly went through a serious division about two years ago, so I was speaking to both groups.

I've got friends on both sides of the division. The enemy, of course, wherever God's people are worshipping, the enemy's number one strategy is division. Bring division.

When you come in sometimes from the outside as a stranger, one party comes to you and shares their burden. The next day, the next party comes to you and shares their burden, and you find yourself just torn apart when you discover you may have two close friends who are now not even speaking to each other. And so that's a prayer burden also.

Our friends in Oman, Joseph and Radha Kuruvilla, if we could pray for them because they were very disappointed. They looked forward for us being there three days. By the way, we fortunately, very fortunately, got an extension to a transit visa.

Just the thought of getting into Kuwait this time of the year is just almost impossible. And thanks to Dirk's perseverance, we got this three-day transit visa. We got it extended.

That's another story. There's not time to tell of how they so easily extended this visa so we could stay there and minister. All right, let's go to prayer.

I'd like to share now just a little bit about the ships because there's a lot of prayer going on aboard the two ships for Pakistan and for this part of the world. And so I think it's good we in turn pray for the two ships. I have been visiting the ships almost every week for the last two months.

Sometimes both ships, sometimes just one. Quite often sailing with the ship. I had the joy of sailing from Scotland to England and then from Ipswich to Dover, Dover to shore, shore to pool, and pool to Plymouth, all these famous places.

And I feel especially the Lagos. I think with Doulas it's too early to know, but especially with Lagos, God has really been working in quite an amazing way. And we can say that in each port many, many thousands of people, even in sophisticated England, have come to the ship.

And there have been people who have come to know Christ personally. Quite a few have rededicated their lives. I tried to speak one meeting either before the ship came or just when she arrived, usually an after church meeting where generally we had between 500 and 1,000 people.

And then I tried to preach once again at the end. And I know in my own meetings, which is only a tiny part of what the ship was doing, we saw many, many, perhaps 100 or 200, make commitments of their life to the Lord, which often was linked with world evangelism. And I'd like you to specifically pray for these people who have stood up, down in Wales on the Doulas, the same thing.

And Welsh people don't easily stand up in a meeting. But in one meeting alone, there must have been 60 who stood up to ask Christ to be absolute Lord of their life and preaching very much about the lordship of Christ, Lord over their time, their money, their talent, their relationships, everything. And it's been encouraging to see people responding to that.

It's more difficult for me to give that invitation and to preach in that way where you're aiming for people to specifically respond. It's more difficult to preach one message like that than five Bible studies. You just somehow feel the intensity, especially at that moment when you're asking people to stand.

You know the moment you do that, some people don't like that. Only some do not like that invitation. So I'd appreciate prayer.

We send letters to all these people, literature. We have so much follow-up work in our little office there in Bromley. Vera's still working on some of that right now and another fellow in the office named David Tomlinson.

And I'd really appreciate prayer for that. Of course, people came to the exhibition. Dumas was slow.

Wales is in an economic depression, an area of Wales. Some book sales weren't as great there, but there was still a lot of encouragement. They had quite a few evangelistic meetings, and a number of people in each port made professions of faith in Christ.

I don't want to take up too much time because I really do want us to pray, and I think everybody here knows about the ship. Mike Wigley, who was one of the leaders on the ship for, what, two years? He can pray very intelligently for the ship. But I was encouraged, and I believe the ships are in Britain in God's timing.

God uses providence. I'm only in Pakistan by God's providence. And I told someone the other day, if you think that this is the second best for the ships to be in England right now, I have to say that my living in England may be second best.

But personally, I don't care. Second best, third best. What does that mean? I'm in God's will through God's providence.

And I didn't get to Oman. I ended up three extra days in Kuwait. Was that God's second best? Did I fail to pray through my Oman visa? And I just feel God is doing something special in Britain right now.

There's a tremendous surge of evangelism with Mission England, Bill O'Graham, Luis Palau. And yet we don't want this to lack the emphasis on the lordship of Christ, discipline, world evangelism. And in some ports, we've been working with Mission England.

And I've got a lot of new relationships, a lot of new churches linked with us, a lot of young people. I would say hundreds praying about coming on the summer. And we're now increasing our prayer goal and asking the Lord for 500 British young people to come this summer and for a good number to stay on for the year program.

So let's pray that as a result of those ships, a year from now, there may be some committed people right here in Pakistan and in this surrounding area. I don't see a separation of divisions. You know, this is a ship vision.

This is a subcontinent vision. This is the Arab world vision. It flows together.

We all need each other. And I would like us to pray to that end right now as many new prayer partners, hundreds of new prayer partners. In one meeting alone, when I was very specific about people being prayer partners, actually it was the Willemots Church in Bournemouth, 60 people signed up in that meeting to become prayer partners.

And it's not easy to get people to commit themselves, even to receive a prayer letter. Financially, the ships have been picking up. Doulos has a long way to go, though we've had a miraculous gift covering 50% of the cost on the new generator.

That generator, I'd rather not mention the price of it. It is much more than we paid for Lagos. The generator for Doulos will cost much more than we paid for Lagos.

A gift, a miraculous gift in Germany for 50%, and the man, because he knows how much money we'll save on fuel every single day when we have that, he is willing, if we don't see other gifts, he is wanting and willing to finance the rest of the cost on the generator. And as we save money on fuel, we can pay him back. Whether the Lord wants us to do that, I don't know.

So there's exciting things happening on the two ships. There's 100 people at the January conference. That finishes tomorrow.

Let's pray for that. Some of them will go to the ships. That's very helpful because it will give them the kind of training that will prepare them for their next move.

Pray for the lineup, people. Pray for Doulos right now in Merseyside. Lagos is in dry dock.

Hopefully, I haven't had the final word on that. She will then go up to Merseyside. That means the Liverpool area.

And then both ships will join again in Belfast. We need the mind of the Lord. It doesn't seem that Lagos is quite ready to launch out to the Caribbean.

There are a number of things that have to be done. And the financial situation isn't that healthy yet. So we may delay the Caribbean because when she goes, we want it to be on a solid financial footing.

Doulos, of course, will be around Europe for probably quite some time. We'll not get this new generator until Finland. It's going to take some very great answers to prayer to see those two ships going.

But I believe that the Lord can do this. And the ship people feel very strongly they want to see the breakthrough without jeopardizing or hindering any other aspect of the OM work. And they very highly esteem the work out here.

There's no question in OM that the subcontinent work has the highest esteem of perhaps any work in OM for many reasons. No need to go into the detail. We think of the fact that we soon have almost 1 billion, 1,000 million people living in the subcontinent area.

One-fourth to one-fifth, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the entire Earth's population lives in this giant subcontinent which at one time was one country except Nepal and Sri Lanka which are included in this area. So let's go to prayer for the two ships. They're a little bit short-staffed.

They're not seeing a lot of big gifts coming in which they need to see. There are other things that I could share but I think we're lacking in time. So let's go to prayer for the Lagos and the Doulos and all that's involved with that.

Remembering some of the people personally that we know, like Brother Stan Thompson who carries an enormous load. He's a lineup man for all British ports overseeing the whole thing. Of course, he's got a little army working with him.

But he's under a lot of pressure. We want to really cry out to the Lord for him. I'd like to just share some thoughts that are really on my heart from Ephesians 4. I don't know when you last studied this chapter.

It may have been even last week. But right through my whole Christian life and if you study the early roots of OM, you will see this incredibly important emphasis. And it's on this whole thing of our unity in Christ.

You never understand OM if you don't understand this emphasis. Not only understand this emphasis but try to understand how big our emphasis was on this from the earliest days. For example, the first real conference of any size was down on the Mexican border in 1960.

My wife and I had just been married. We'd been in Mexico. We came back to the border.

We met the new people going to Mexico. We had a conference for about five days and we went to Spain. Every night during that conference I spoke on Galatians 5.22. Some people think, oh, the old emphasis in OM was dedication and that type of thing, world evangelism, disciplined life.

The new emphasis is balance and love. The fact is that both of those emphases have been from the beginning. There were times when one was so strong it overshadowed the other.

Of course, a lot depends on what person you're talking about because different people in OM were strong in different points. But again, I saw this in Kuwait and I've seen it everywhere I go. The lack of spiritual understanding on how to maintain unity and the importance of unity.

To me, it's just so important and it's emphasized in scripture after scripture. Ephesians 4 is just one of many scriptures we could look at. Let's look at it together.

I am therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you. These are strong words. That you walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called.

Paul is writing this letter for prison and he's beseeching these people to walk worthy. God is concerned about our walk, our Christian life. Verse 2. With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

You know, it might be good that I speak on this tonight because I know nothing about your team here in Karachi in terms of your unity. No one has told me you're either greatly united or disunited. I read your reports.

I actually read two of them today. You know, they don't always tell everything that's happened. I just try to always believe the best and that you have unity in the Lord.

But one thing is for sure. No matter how good your unity is, two factors remain. Number one, Satan can try to destroy it.

Number two, even if there's not a major attack from Satan, your unity can always increase. Paul wrote to the Philippians who were known as a loving church. What did he say to them in his prayer? What did he say? He said that your love may abound even more.

Maybe you are a united loving team to some degree. Paul would probably write, if you were writing to your team, dear OM team in Karachi, let your love abound even more. Let your unity increase even more.

And I think one of the things the Lord showed us in the early days of OM, if you've ever listened to those early orientation tapes, they're still used in some countries. You remember one of the tapes? Unity. Unity.

And one of the things the Lord showed us and continues to show us is that we have to endeavor. We have to endeavor. We have to work at unity.

I think about one out of every five letters. I've been spending almost all day either praying or doing letters. Two favorite hobbies.

Not really hobbies. Ministries or whatever. And I think one out of five letters of any importance, laying aside letters that are just very general, the great goal of that letter is building the unity.

Building the unity. Helping this brother understand that brother. Helping this field understand that field.

There are continuous tensions in a movement like OM because there's so many people. There's so many ideas. There's so many visions.

Different leaders are reading different books. It's interesting to see how a leader will read one book and after that, that book will be coming through his ministry, through his ideas, through his memos. But you see, another leader may be reading just the opposite book.

He may in fact be reading a book that's attacking this book. And so two leaders reading two different books are actually being drawn away from each other. And if we're going to have unity in the body of Christ, and we know the great problem we often face here in Pakistan is disunity within the body.

The last time I was here, the last two times I was here, almost everywhere I went there was division within the body. Not just between, you know, those who are outright liberals denying the Bible and those who, you know, are biblical and evangelical. Often the division was between even those who claimed to believe the Bible.

And it is my deep conviction that evangelical biblical Christians have not made unity a big enough priority in their thinking. You see, fundamentalism and then the evangelical faith was partly reactionary against liberalism, against higher criticism that came out of Germany, criticizing the Bible, and in reacting against higher criticism and liberalism, and that was immediately tied up with ecumenicalism. And so that, that appeared very ugly to many evangelicals, ecumenicalism.

And so in reacting against that, they have not made unity a very big priority. In fact, you couldn't even go in a church and talk about unity. They would think you're an ecumenicalist.

You can't talk about unity. We don't believe in unity. We believe in separation.

We believe in upholding the doctrines of the faith. Now, praise God, quite a few evangelical leaders in the past decades have emphasized biblical unity. And, of course, that's what we're trying to emphasize.

Endeavoring, verse 3, working hard to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Why? Very simple, verse 4. There's one body, one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.

It's almost like an overemphasis, isn't it? One God, one Lord, and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all. And then he goes on to emphasize that in the midst of this unity, there is great diversity because God gives different gifts. The unity we've always understood as biblical is unity that comes in the midst of diversity.

Different ideas, different burdens, different visions. But before we go on to that, let's look again a little more carefully at verse 2 because within verse 2, we find some of the keys to real unity. It says we should walk worthy in verse 1. It doesn't stop.

There's a comma after verse 1. And then it goes immediately on, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forgiving or forbearing one another in love. Now, I wonder if that verse describes your own behavior. Actually, my work often involves me more in the local church scene than it does with OM.

I'm with OM, especially the September conference, summer conferences, of course, all the time. But I'm constantly being sent out, and OM is like an arm of the church, into local church situations. And in almost every situation, it's the same thing.

Division. Disunity. Gossip.

Backbiting. Greatly hindering the Lord's Word. And, of course, I came again across this just recently.

And in studying this and thinking about it now pretty steadily for 29 years, I, of course, have some strong convictions. And number one is that pride is the greatest source of disunity among believers. Between non-believers or between people who are totally heretical in doctrine, perhaps doctrine is a bigger problem.

Though pride often gets involved there. Because I believe when there's humility and brokenness, often we can separate from people to some degree in a loving way. And as Christians, and I pray you will learn this during your time in OM, we have to learn how to compassionately disagree.

We don't have to lose our temper. We don't have to overreact. We don't have to say hurtful things to people about them personally.

We can take a strong doctrinal stand. We can say, look, we go so far in this particular area, but we don't go any further. But we appreciate you and we love you and we pray for you.

We separated paths years ago with our friends, Christ is the answer. We had a meeting and we agreed we couldn't work together and we separated, but we prayed for one another. We've corresponded.

Recently I was with their leader again. We're sort of flirting again, seeing if there's a way that we can perhaps work more together, though they're very different, very different in their approach and to some degree in doctrine. We have to learn how to compassionately disagree.

Some of the great failures in my life have been my inability to compassionately disagree. So easily when I disagree, my blood pressure goes up, my circulation increases, and it comes across in a way that is hurtful or not kind and not gentle. And it's an ongoing struggle.

I was reading in Proverbs just a few moments ago actually that a man offended is harder to win than a strong city. And so easily when we're under pressure, we're upset. Alan Redpath says whatever you do when you're upset, don't open your mouth.

Do whatever you want. Wiggle your toes. Wiggle your ears.

Write a letter. Cook a meal. Job.

Whatever you do, just don't open your mouth. But so often when we're upset, we open our mouths. And we offend.

We hurt. Now there's two things we need to remember in this. Number one, you're not going to get through life without somebody hurting you.

So your task is to learn how to forgive people when they hurt you. Learn how to forgive people when they hurt you. I am still learning that.

Because I'm vulnerable. I can be hurt. I'm sensitive.

And some of us who give the appearance of being thick-skinned and we could drive right through the philistines even if they had swords and we only had BB guns, actually we're often very sensitive and we do get hurt. And if you know my little message on survivalship, I get a very great response to that message whenever I give it. One of the points is learn how to be hurt.

I think you got that at the September conference. Learn how to be hurt. How are you doing? Probably someone's hurt you over the past months.

If not, well, praise the Lord. You'll have other opportunities, I'm sure. You know, we don't have to get all of life's problems all at once.

And I just see this in local church after local church, in team after team, brother X gets hurt and he doesn't know how to forgive the person who hurt him. And it's so basic. It's so simple.

We don't have any choice. We must forgive. We must forgive even if the next day we wake up and that same hurt is there.

We've got to forgive. We've got to keep putting on the ointment. If you have a sore and it doesn't heal in the first day, what do you do? You put the ointment on again.

And it may not heal the next day. You treat it again. Some of our hurts are very deep.

And we have to put constant ointment. Love, forgiveness, praise, thanksgiving, Romans 8.28. I can give you 20 different ointments to put on your hurts. You've got to keep putting them on.

And I think this is where so many churches have so much difficulty because they try it for once or for twice and then they give up. Because as Christians we have the ability to go right to the other brother's hurt. It's like, you know, somebody having a wound from yesterday and you going right up to him and pushing your finger into the wound.

That's not the way to heal it. And yet this is what happens in the body of Christ. Because everything is so complex and because Satan is the master.

Satan is a master at bringing division between the very best of friends. Why do we now have so much divorce among Christian leaders? Divorce among Christian leaders. Very common.

Now that divorce is considered more of a possibility. We don't have this so much here in the East. That's why we often have an increase of hypocrisy in this area in the East.

And we have husbands who are six months a year away from their wives. They say it's necessary for the ministry. But sometimes it's necessary because they can't stand that wife.

And it's just convenient to have a ministry where they're on two different continents. It's so subtle how the enemy brings division into the body. And I want to be very honest.

Some of our teams in OM that start out in October rejoicing, blessed in the September conference, recommitted their lives, filled with the Holy Spirit. By January, I will tell you if you had to live on that team it would be a nightmare. It would be a nightmare.

And by February and March we have to close some of those teams down. The number one problem every year is in the area of unity. Of course, we're attempting the impossible.

French and Germans and Dutch and Americans and English and Chinese and Africans and now Latin Americans and Brazilians all on one team. In some cases they can't agree on anything. What to eat, what to wear, what time to go to the meeting, what to sing, how to walk, how to talk, how to clean the apartment, how to, you know, they can't agree on anything.

It's a free-for-all, I will tell you. And some of those young people by August, when it's time to leave O.M., they say thank you Jesus and they dance out of O.M. like someone set them free from a prison. Now we don't have any of those kind of teams in Pakistan.

Mike Winkley's great gift in building unity and sending the right people home at the right time and ministering in other ways. And perhaps Pakistan gets a little more prayer than some of our other O.M. teams. Like some of those isolated Austrian teams that in my mental surveys get very little prayer.

Very little prayer. There are many, many factors. But I know that right across the O.M. body the need is to guard our unity and to walk as it says here in loneliness.

That's the absolute opposite of pride. How do you handle criticism? Has anybody criticized you in the past few months? Anybody taking you aside and saying, you know I really appreciate you? That's a good way to start when you're going to criticize. I really appreciate you and I think God's really using you and it's a real blessing to have you on the team and God's given you a ministry of music.

We're thankful for that. Boy, we really appreciate your cooking and appreciate the way you're handling the team sewing. But I just wanted to share this with you.

Many people would not remember those five positive things. They only remember that one negative thing. And yet, young people, I can't include myself as a young person anymore.

My wife, as you can see, is much younger than me by appearance. Actually, she's older by a month. You've got to, especially if you're going to be in Christian work, especially if you're going to get involved in any kind of a church work, you've got to learn to handle criticism.

And if no one has criticized you in the past six months, then you should be sad right now. Just be sad for about a minute. Be sad for about a minute.

Because if this is going to be a training program, you have got to learn to handle criticism. Now, maybe Mike would have come and lived here for a while, get to know each one of you, and then you could correct them better. Or maybe you're here to correct them now.

That's something he's probably here to correct me. But you've got to learn how to handle criticism. You can't go anywhere in life as a Christian without that.

And yet, so often, we see disunity because Brother A criticized Brother B, Brother B is hurt. Now, when you're criticized and you're hurt, the human reaction is to look for fault in the one who's criticizing you. This is sort of a little human game we play.

Because somehow, if you can see fault in him, then you can say, who is he to criticize me? Why doesn't he get his own life straightened out? Then I'll be willing to receive criticism. In other words, actually, you're not willing to receive criticism from anybody because nobody is going to get their life 100% straightened out. And the lack of ability to receive criticism in loneliness of mind, esteeming the other better than yourself, as it says in Philippians 2, is probably one of the great hindrances to spiritual unity.

Another major thing the devil uses is when someone who is quiet and sensitive is hurt by the more boisterous outspoken type. Now, some of the men who are the most greatly used of God never brought their temper under 100% control. Now, hopefully they brought it under more and more and more and more.

But you see, men that often have tremendous zeal and drive and they can work hard and they can counsel people into the wee hours of the night and they have the energy to do so much, that same energy, when the enemy gets in, gets into anger, hostility, temper. And again and again, I have seen in the work of God, men being mightily used, but because they didn't bring their temper under control, they hurt other people. Those people didn't know how to handle that hurt and so the disunity has come.

You know, I was one of those men. To some degree I still am. And only because, really, people like Jonathan McCroskey, Dale Roton, a number of other people I could mention their names, when I did get in the flesh, they didn't write me off.

They came to me and they did it very gently. They said, Brother George, we know God's working through you. We believe in you.

We're standing with you. But you know, when you overreact that way, we don't feel it's pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. What was I going to say? What was I going to say with that approach? I had read Calvary Road.

I didn't have any chance. If I hadn't read that book and a few other books, maybe I would have been able to do something. I didn't have a chance.

I had to repent. It was hard. I sometimes kicked.

I was hurt. I went to my bed. They don't understand me.

Don't they realize this is the way I am? Don't they understand my grandfather? Don't they... No, I had to repent. And it's only because of the message of brokenness in OM that these strong-minded men who hold this work together worldwide are still together today. And if we weren't together, how are we going to tell you to remain together? And I just pray that you will see how important this is.

Lowliness, brokenness, learning how to be heard, learning how to handle criticism. It's not the end of the road. Great people are all criticized.

You know, sometimes as Christians we are more naive about life than the unconverted. I like to fellowship with unconverted people. That's the wrong term.

You can't really fellowship with unconverted people. But you can make the adjustment in your own terminology. But I like to read secular material.

I like to read about some of these presidents of these countries. Every single day somebody is attacking them. Every single day people are at the throat of any government leader who's doing anything in any nation.

And yet they go on and on and on. Look, in Christian work we don't get a fraction of that kind of criticism. We don't have enemies just waiting to pounce on us.

Some of us sometimes do. And yet so often we don't persevere. Think of the great sportsmen.

They all get written up in these gossip papers. And a lot of it's false. A lot of things you read about people in the secular world it's just lies.

And they get criticized. They get attacked. And some of their best friends turn against them.

Of course their marriages break. And yet many of them, let's face it, quite a few of them, they just keep going. They just keep going.

For what? They're not going to heaven. They're not winning eternal results as we are. I think it's part of the trickery of Satan to get us all very idealistic and too sensitive about, I think sometimes too sensitive about things in general.

And I found people in OM, this kind of message on unity, if it's not carefully given, it does more harm than good. Because someone immediately gets on the disunity syndrome. They're always thinking we don't have enough unity on the team.

We don't love one another enough. And they become oversensitive about themselves. And they go around apologizing about the simplest thing.

And this scares me in Christians. Because I've seen Christians overly sensitive about things have nervous breakdowns as a result of that. And this is where God has convicted me.

I'm not the nervous breakdown type. Now, anything can happen. But in 29 years, I haven't had a lot of other problems.

A lot of other sins with my mouth, my eyes, against my wife, against my family. Nervous breakdown, that hasn't come yet. I get confused and feel like overthrowing the whole Christian faith completely.

But nervous breakdown, that hasn't come. That's partly linked with my temperament, my background. At seven years of age, I wasn't the little shy, quiet fellow.

I was the outward, outspoken, extrovert, overconfident, little gang leader in my community. And, you know, I was different, very different from the background of many people on O.M. So certain books, like some of the writings of Tozer, Watchman Knee, Andrew Murray, that I read a lot, they never gave me any big depression. My kind of temperament, I can take it or leave it.

I always thought some of the things Andrew, Watchman Knee said were completely up the creek. I immediately did some research and found out he had all kinds of problems in his life, got excommunicated from his church. And that's part of my temperament.

And it defends me from becoming overly sensitive, putting myself down, down, down, so that eventually I don't function. But I find other people read those same books, listen to some of my heavier messages, Lordship of Christ, Forsake All, Total Surrender, and it just paralyzes them. It just paralyzes them.

They can't function. Anybody who listens to George Verwer needs to be able to say, I don't agree with what he's saying right now, thank you Jesus. And any other preacher, because listen, some people who are very sensitive, and especially in a very strict background, they are continually intimidated.

This is a new word for me, 1983. I never used the word intimidated before 1983. I got a series of tapes about intimidation.

Imagine seven tapes on intimidation. Actually, the man died in a plane crash who made these tapes. But it is true that there's a fine line.

His tapes, by the way, are the most intimidating messages I've heard in a long time. They really, really started to bring me under bondage. Because I'm sure some of my messages are very intimidating.

And it seems to me a very fine line that is hard to find between people being convicted of sin through your ministry and people feeling intimidated. I'm sure often both are there. But as Christians, especially committed people like those of you in this room, and you are committed people, you may be a failure, but you're still committed.

Committed failures like me. Committed people often are easily intimidated. And at the end of the year when I talk to some OEMers, they give me the idea that their life is a total failure.

Really. You get some, if they miss their quiet time one morning, they feel, you know, I'm a failure. The next message they hear on the quiet time, it's very easy to give a message on the quiet time.

And some of these great men who talk about the quiet time, if you live with them and discover their quiet time isn't as good as it was when they preached that particular message about the quiet time, it might encourage those of you who like me, at times, have a very lousy quiet time in which I'm just grinding through Bible reading and the prayer is a little bit short because it gets interrupted by the breakfast. And I thank the Lord that if I have a terrible quiet time, Jesus Christ is not dead. And my life is no longer dependent on my quiet time.

I don't think it ever was. Though I've hardly missed my quiet time in 27 years. When I do miss it, I claim God's grace for that day.

I will not be intimidated by some little hyper message about the quiet time. God is God. And He is going to work in that day.

He knows I love Him even though I don't feel like it. He knows I love His Word even though that Bible reading this morning in Chronicles was a bit confusing. He knows I am committed to world evangelism even though sometimes I fall flat on my face.

Dr. Siemens is still the book of the year even though we're 1984. Healing for damaged emotions because so many of us as Christians we have damaged emotions. And that's what often brings us disunity.

Somebody through their words touch a wrong nerve of our damaged emotions and we're hurt. We then overreact. We hurt them.

They overreact and hurt somebody else. Or, here's the other very subtle method the enemy uses. They sort of accept what's happening but then they go and talk to other people about it.

Do you know how much of this is happening in OM? You know, people get the idea sometimes OM creates spiritual glorified cricket match. The problems we have in OM are continual. They're never ending.

And some of those problems many of them are linked. The never ending gossip. People talk about this.

People talk about that. And it seems to be hard at times for us human beings to be positive in what we say about people. Somebody once said if you can't say anything positive about a person it's better not to talk about him because probably you're going to say something hurtful.

And I'm still learning in this area. I really am. But I believe God wants me to declare war against gossip.

And to try to be more positive about people. To try to be more wise in what I say. To try to be more wise in what I repeat.

To try to believe the best about people. And to realize it takes 10, 20 years for the average person to reach a degree of spiritual maturity where these things are not taking place relatively regularly. At least I would say that's true in the average church.

Sometimes in OM we really are in a little bit of a spiritual cuckoo land. We're young. We've got more energy.

We've got a lot of motivation. You are in the period of your life where it is the easiest to be optimistic, to be dynamic, to be a visionary, to be on the move. Where are you going to be 20 years from now? That's what I want to know.

That's why I've written the book No Turning Back. And forgive me if sometimes I can't give as much time to the new OMs. And one of my great fears in coming to Karachi is I'm going to disappoint the Karachi team because they're actually not going to see me as much as they may have thought of when they heard George Burroughs was going to live in Karachi because, as you know, I leave tomorrow at 2 o'clock.

And on top of that, I still must continue in my responsibility as the international servant and leader in this world. And I have a burden not to neglect my existing relationships. With 27 years of ex-OMs, 37,000 of them, you can be sure I'm only in contact with a small percentage.

But it's very important to me because if those people are not going on 20 years later, that makes me fearful of even speaking to you now because what's the purpose of it? Am I trying to just get you through the OM year? My interest isn't OM. My interest is you. My interest is that you have a spiritual foundation that's going to take you next year and the year after and the year after.

And even though I don't know your names, I've been praying for everybody regularly who's been on these teams, looking at Annie's photo probably over 50 times, praying for her. And still, I didn't get her name when I came here tonight, mainly a result of jet lag and because she's now one year older. But probably the wear and tear of leadership has changed a little bit from the photograph.

We even had a personal conversation. Remember that day? I had a personal conversation with every sister on the Karachi team. It's a very big emotional experience for me written into the diary of my heart.

I think I even sent you copies of those pictures, very famous pictures for the OM gallery that we'll produce in 1999. But where are you going to be 20 years from now? Just looking back on your little OM experience, oh, I used to be dedicated. I used to be on fire.

We now have backslidden parents, ex-OMers, recommending their children to come on OM. Yeah. Praise God, most ex-OMers, as far as I know, are not backslidden.

Isn't that encouraging? It's good to have some encouragement. But one OMer who's backslidden, he's telling his son, daughter, what an amazing experience you've gone on. I went on OM when I was your age.

Makes me feel almost ill. And one of my greatest burdens in the time I have with you here and the sharing that I'm able to have is to continue to lay a foundation of a whole life of service for Jesus Christ. It may not be in the Muslim world.

It may not be a full-time dynamic spiritual guerrilla force. It may be in a very quiet situation in your own hometown with a husband and three children. That, of course, couldn't be quiet.

It may be in a secular job somewhere, a very boring secular job. It may be in a local church situation quite different from the Bukwala attack force of Karachi. But God is God and the basic principles we teach on OM about love and unity and brokenness and discipleship, they are valuable right through life.

When you leave OM Pakistan, leave some of the things you have learned here. Leave them in Pakistan. What a heartbreak to meet an ex-OMer from the subcontinent back in his home city right now.

I talked to his pastor. He's seemingly totally unable to relate to that situation. I don't think he learned the real basics of what OM is teaching.

He's trying to go on telling the pastor how in India they preach out of the backs of the trucks and they do this and they do that and among other things he's not very well dressed and he seems to be now eating quite a bit and getting heavy by the minute and this is not world's greatest testimony in that church. In fact, it is hindering what we're wanting to do in that church. Though he's a sincere brother, he loves the Lord.

Part of it is not his fault. Part of it is linked with the fact that we don't just take on OM sophisticated, well-trained, outstanding graduates of this or that university. We take a wide range of people including very ordinary working class.

I don't like the term ordinary people. And of course, two years on OM isn't going to change their personality, isn't going to take them from a bit of working class mentality which in some situations would be good. In this particular church he is in, that is not too good.

And it's partly the church's fault because they're a bit uppity, a bit middle class and so, you know, it's not really just this brother's fault. But it's our burden to be able to lay a foundation so that whatever situation you go into, you will be able to adjust and you'll know what's appropriate for that situation and you'll be able to adjust to that situation by a very balanced and biblical application of these biblical principles and that somehow God will use you to bring unity wherever you go and love and oneness. Make this, make this a major aim in your life.

I think it's one of the most important things in scripture. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this little time together and yet, this is truly one of the most important truths in all of your word.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20836.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/sharing-with-the-karachi-team/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net