

Spiritual Emergencies (Cardiff University)

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of addressing spiritual emergencies through understanding, prayer, and community support.

Duration: 53:04

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:35-38, Acts 12:5

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal testimony of how he was transformed by Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that he was an ordinary person with no special qualities until God found him through the prayers of a woman. The speaker then discusses the importance of forgiveness and healing in relationships, using the analogy of treating a wound. He also highlights the need for practical theology and living out one's faith in a way that reflects the power and greatness of God.

Transcript

Now, I would like to just read something as my, uh... What do you call it when you have something before the message? The prelog? Is that the prelog? The prolog, yeah. This is the prolog. It's called, First Aid for Spiritual Emergency.

Now, in the midst of your mission, or the term in general, you're liable to have some spiritual emergency from other people. An injury will occur. People will get hurt.

And I found this in a little pamphlet and wrote it down. I have my quotation book. Any really red-hot quotation, I'll try to copy it in this little book, which is beginning to fall apart.

Let me read this little quotation, because many, many people have been greatly helped by this. In the event of injury inflicted by a brother or sister in Christ, follow this procedure. Number one, keep calm.

Still your soul before God at the moment of impact. Be still and know that I am God. Rushing about, trying to correct the injury, usually causes greater damage.

Number two, apply direct pressure of understanding to the wound. What caused the incident? Could you have prevented it? Negligent? How does the offending party feel? What if things were reversed? Then what? Three, wash the wound thoroughly with kindness to remove all harshness and vindictiveness. Number four, coat liberally with the ointment of love.

This will protect from the infections of resentment and bitterness. Five, bandage the injury with forgiveness. This will keep it out of sight until the wound is healed.

Six, don't pick the scab off by bringing up the subject and opening your wound. Serious danger from the infection in number four still exists and this could be fatal spiritually. Seven, beware of self-pity, which is painful and touchy.

This is often referred to as withdrawal pains, evidenced by the injured one withdrawing from others, especially the one inflicting the injury. Remedy, accept apologies. Number eight, prescription.

Take a generous dose of antibiotics from the word of God several times daily, using prayer each time. This has a soothing effect and is definitely a very good pain killer. Number nine, stay in close contact with a great physician at all times.

Depend upon his strength, joy, and peace to help you in your convalescence. And ten, evidence of full recovery is noticed when the patient is in full fellowship and harmony, especially with the offending party. You know, in Operation Mobilization, we have some very unpleasant experiences at times.

People of different backgrounds and different theologies. It happens also at Bible schools. One Bible school in this country, a strong-minded puritanical Calvinist met with an Arminian in the loo and they exchanged words and actually ended up exchanging blows.

I don't know who swung first, the Calvinist or the Arminian, but I think in either case God didn't get much glory in that particular situation. And as we move together, an interdenominational group as you are in the Christian Union, which is one of the most beautiful things about it all, at times things get said, people get hurt, one of your theological corns gets tread upon or one of your favorite doctrines gets thumped or something even worse than that, like your own ego. And that little first aid for spiritual emergency may be of some help.

I'd like to just mention one other book. I've mentioned books this morning, so we'll not go into further detail about that. I'd like to mention just Operation Whirl.

How many of you already have this book? That is really encouraging. Now, I don't know why the rest of you don't have a copy, but I want to encourage you, thinking of the verse, the first shall be last, because you don't have a copy, you are going to get a better deal than the brothers and sisters next to you. You are going to get a hardback copy of this book, if you want, for lower than the price of the paperback, at least the present price.

Somehow we printed too many of these hardbacks and there wasn't a great market for them. We're hoping some people will put them in their church library. Now, we don't agree with everything that's stated in this book.

It's one man's production and it's quite a tremendous work considering that. The new edition has a few of the strong, some of them right-wing political statements, just toned down a little bit. We got a Cambridge graduate to do that.

We're encouraged by that. Patrick Johnson is a real man of God. He was, again, the speaker at our conference, spent a year on OM recently, is now the research secretary of WEC.

He's the one who put this book together. I just want to commend it as an outstanding book. It has prayer requests on almost every nation in the world.

Someone said to me they felt it's the most valuable book they had next to their Bible for prayer, which is the topic you have asked me to speak on. I commend this book and we're giving it for £1.50. In order to encourage you, we're giving you a free cassette with the book. Many groups sell those things for £2, so that's a pretty good deal.

We're selling them for £1 or three for £2. If you already bought one of these this morning, go back and just take your cassette. They won't be there that long, unless I can leave them with someone.

I hope you'll be encouraged to get Operation World and a cassette, preferably the one on maintaining balance because it's the one I have the most of. That also will be a good follow-up on some of the things I'd like to say. Let's pray together.

Lord, we look to you now in this limited time as we think about this vast subject of prayer, that it will be profitable and that we will have something from your word. We thank you for the way you answer prayer. We thank you for the mystery of prayer.

And we believe that this mission and the battle of this mission will be won upon our knees. We look to you now to guide us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Matthew 9, one of my favourite passages on the subject of prayer. It would help me in my speaking to know how many of you have not heard me speak before. I'm relatively new to you.

That would help about 70%. Because I feel it would be good if I could just give my own testimony linking it with this whole subject of prayer. Because as far as I can see it, I was literally prayed into the kingdom by a praying woman of God.

Matthew 9, starting at verse 35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them because they were faint and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

Then said he unto his disciples, the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Just think, this is the word of the Lord Jesus. 2,000 years ago.

The harvest truly is plenteous. The labourers are few. And then that command, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth workers or labourers into his harvest.

So clear, isn't it? First, a picture of the Lord Jesus, a man of action. Out, going from town to town and village to village. A few months ago, I was going through Israel, visiting our teams.

Our work in Nazareth among Arabs is led by a young dynamic carpenter from Nazareth named George Khalil. I was in Nazareth, ministering at that little assembly there and then traveling along the plain of Megiddo and thinking of some of the things that took place there years ago. Jesus Christ was a man of action.

You know, there's a subtle philosophy around England that sort of basically says if as a young Christian you do anything, it's probably youthful zeal. And I have seen more and more young people get into this

passivity cult. Not that it's an organized cult, but it's there.

What happens? They launch out in some evangelistic thing. There's problems, they make mistakes, which is quite normal. And then someone comes along with a little super spiritual message saying, this is why you've had so much difficulty, you're in the flesh.

And if we're sensitive young people, we see our mistakes, we feel bad about some of the things we've done wrong, we easily fall for this line that we have sort of been in the flesh. And so we start backing off from activity and we start withdrawing and getting into some kind of spiritual circle in which we mainly emphasize our own spiritual life. I believe this is a subtle pitfall from the enemy because I don't think we can emphasize our spiritual life without witness.

Spirituality does not take place and does not grow in a vacuum. And I do not believe that because we make mistakes as young people, and I made plenty in my teens and twenties, and still do, that doesn't mean we're in the flesh. Being in the spirit doesn't mean you don't make mistakes.

It's not all black and white. Isn't that one of the greatest problems in our spiritual thinking? We're all in the spirit, we're all in the flesh. And we don't know how to handle therefore our basic humanity factor or our limitations.

One of the greatest problems in my Christian life was a failure to accept my limitations and to live in the light of them. Having a definite program for spiritual growth and yet not copping out from facing the reality of my own weaknesses, limitations, and humanity. And it almost got me in a lot of trouble.

So Jesus gives the example and is the perfect picture of balance as a man who knew the Father, spent whole nights in prayer, gave us the Sermon on the Mount and so much more, and yet is found going from village to village and place to place healing and preaching and teaching. And most of his disciples, if not all of them, were doing the same thing almost immediately after his death. Certainly not long after Pentecost.

What an exciting challenge the Book of Acts is. I read the Book of Acts every year, sometimes two or three times a year. Because without an understanding of the Book of Acts, we do not know anything really about the Church.

And it's a very important book, not as a theological textbook, but as an example of how God was working. And I appreciated one of the things stated by one of the speakers at Keswick this summer, who emphasized that there is no one pattern in the Book of Acts for Church life. And this is one of the reasons I'm so strongly convinced that the Christian Union is biblical.

It's true the exact structure of the Christian Union is not found in the Book of Acts. Neither is the Sunday School, neither is the China Inland Mission, neither is so many of the greatest things that God has ever used, including the structure that was found in the Welsh Revival. But the basic principles, the mentality, the attitude, the reality is found.

Donald McGovern, that great church leader and former missionary, had just come from Korea where he was at a meeting of two million people, Christians, meeting in a gigantic airport on the runways. What a man, close to 80 years of age. He ministered at an OM conference last month and it was exciting.

And he showed us from the Book of Acts that it was not the church in Antioch that sent out the first missionaries. If you study it carefully, you'll find that it was five men who fasted and prayed from that church who sent out the missionaries. Now, I don't, on that point, care which theory you have.

We've always thought it was the church that sent them out. But here's a man who knows a lot more about the word than we do, comes along and drops this little bomb on us, which we didn't mind because basically we see that the Holy Spirit works in different ways, in different groups, and different fellowships. Just as we saw this morning, be ye filled with the Spirit, Ephesians, Colossians, the Holy Spirit isn't even mentioned.

And there's a danger that one Christian union in Britain will try to copy another Christian union. And sometimes we hear, oh, this is happening at the Christian union in so-and-so. This happened and that happened.

Oh, if this only happened in our Christian union, how much more blessing we would have. Now, over here in Wales, you're all a little more conservative, which is helpful. Tozer says that in the present religious scene, it's good to develop a little bit of reverent skepticism.

Not to believe everything that comes across the borders from England. Just to have a little reverent skepticism. And I am convinced that is basic for survival in the 20th century.

So we see the Lord Jesus, a man of action. We see him a man of compassion. Verse 36, he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion.

One of the great changes took place in my life when I first went to a foreign country. I'm a very ordinary person, I can assure you. I don't have a high IQ.

I am nobody special until Jesus Christ came into me. Just one in a million typical, loud mouthed, extrovert, aggressive, hostile, lustful Americans. But God found me.

And in his providence, he found me because one woman had a burden to pray for me. And she prayed for me for three years. She had been praying for the school that I was attending for 15 years.

Not only that people would be converted, but that they would be saved and sent. Now, I'm not from a Christian background. I didn't know what the gospel was.

If someone said, are you saved, I would have thought in terms of a flood or something, in terms of water as I was studying life saving. Believe me, that wasn't easy for a skinny little character like me to rescue these gigantic fat people out of the swimming pool. But that's another message.

My grandfather was from the Netherlands. He was an atheist. My other grandfather was a more, a little more calm character.

He was from Glasgow. He was a drunkard. And my parents also didn't know Christ.

My father went from the Netherlands. He was born over here to the States to find the good life. And he was a materialist.

And at 16, in many ways, I was a confirmed materialist. I had three businesses. I had learned how to lie.

I had learned how to cheat. I spent most of my weekends in the nightclubs of New York City. And I'm not proud of any of it.

And somehow, in God's mercy, this woman began to pray for me. And then she sent me a Gospel of John through the post. And I began to read this little book in my spare time, sometimes only a verse.

I'd come home from a nightclub at three in the morning. I was a total neurotic on dancing. If I couldn't find women to dance with, I'd dance with chairs, brooms, curtains, anything I could move with.

My mother thought I had been vaccinated with a phonograph needle when I was a baby. To this day, music seems to do things to me, and it's difficult to discern the difference between what's Christian and what's non-Christian in the present music scene. But in any case, she prayed for me.

She sent me this Gospel of John, and I began to read this, and it worked in my heart. Then Billy Graham came to New York City. I didn't know what an evangelist was.

But somehow, I saw that he played sports. I read a magazine article about him. I saw that he had a wife, played sports, so I thought he must be at least half normal.

I went in to hear Billy Graham. I sat way in the back. To my surprise, I just had a letter, by the way, last week.

The girl who was with me, one of my closest friends who accepted Christ that night and then backslid, 41 years of age, just shriveled up, just like that, and died of cancer a few weeks ago. The heavy piece of news as I was praying and hoping she would come back to the Lord. But both of us, this girl and myself, sat there and we heard the gospel.

You know, I'm a great believer in the sovereignty of God, probably the strongest biblical anchor in my whole theology. I believe so much in the sovereignty of God that even if the preacher is not perfect, and even if you feel his theology isn't perfect, and even if you don't like the invitation he gives, or something else about him, God is so great, and Wales needs this message, that he can still save souls. Would you spread that message around Wales for me since I don't get here much? Because I'll tell you, there's some people over here and in England that feel unless everything is just so, and the theology is just so, and the historical foundation is just so, and everything is just so, God can't work.

And then they claim they believe in the sovereignty of God. They turn him into a midget on one hand, cut off his legs, cut off his arms, and then go around and say they believe in God's sovereignty. I will tell you, some of the greatest conversions in the world have taken place through very weak preaching.

I believe in preaching the gospel to include repentance. I even believe in preaching the gospel to include discipleship because Jesus said to the multitude, unless you deny self, take up the cross, and follow me, you can't be my disciple. And the disciple is not a super saint.

He's just a follower of Jesus Christ. It's a very basic term for all believers in the book of Acts and in the gospels especially. And I am just so convinced that though on one hand we have our ideals, and we're very much against easy believism, we believe that we should not push people to make decisions for Christ because we're not after decisions, we're after disciples.

And we have a lot of other strong principles. We want to be the first ones to acknowledge that God uses others who we don't even agree with and whose methodology may seem more superficial and whose theology may not seem to be all that we would like. God is greater.

And we need the practical reality of God's sovereignty, the practical reality of the gospel of grace. And if you want a good picture of that, then read *The Life*, Volume 2, especially of George Whitefield. I'm in the midst of it.

A man who was very strong on working together with people even when you did not totally agree, and yet stands as one of the greatest reformed Christian evangelists of all times. And oh, was he persecuted by some of his fellow theologians beyond all words. And you know, often your strongest opposition comes from your own house.

And the greater divisions in England often come from within people of more or less the same theology. Often they're not even in contact with people from other theology, so they can't have any great big bust up with them. It comes right from within their own house.

This is why ultimately the way of the cross is a way of love. The way of the cross is a way in which we acknowledge the greatness of God even when we ourselves feel so weak. And when we see the Lord Jesus looking at the multitudes and then move with compassion, we long for this kind of experience in our own life.

When I went back to my high school after my conversion in that meeting with Billy Graham, my heart just broke. All these secondary school students, a third of them drunk on the weekend, I had a mission field. The mission field is always right where you are.

I started right there in my secondary school. And we started nights of prayer. We didn't know how to pray.

You know, it's a wonderful thing you can start to pray without knowing how to pray. You just say, Appa, Father. And you open your heart.

And we had prayer meetings in the school. And there were prayer meetings in the gymnasium. And God moved in sovereign power through sometimes very weak preaching, some of it my own.

All I did was read four things God wants you to know from a little tract I found. And when I asked people if they wanted to repent of sin and drunkenness and immorality to meet in the school cafeteria in one of those meetings, 125 students, many of them broken, weeping, went to the cafeteria to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. That was the birth of what today is known as Operation Mobilization.

Fifteen years of prevailing prayer by one woman. And God broke in to one of New York City's suburban areas, roughest high schools or secondary schools. By the time Billy Graham came back to New York, two years later, we were hiring buses out of liberal church parking lots, running people into the meetings.

My own father, who made some kind of commitment to Christ in that meeting I just referred to, went to the Billy Graham meeting and got even a more sure faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Before God was done with that secondary school, over 200 had surrendered their lives to Christ. About a year later, three of us went to Mexico, again with this one great conviction, God answers prayer.

From our teenage years, because I went to Mexico when I was only 19, we had this overwhelming conviction, God answers prayer. That was the cornerstone of our whole movement. And I come to you 25 years later to say the same thing, God answers prayer.

God answers prayer. And as you pray for the Lord to work in your coming mission, you are going to see God work. It may not be exactly in the way that you expect, because God is a God of surprises.

And His will is always bigger than you think. Never did we dream when we started to pray for one ship in that converted pub, in that funny little prayer meeting, where some of us were laughing the laugh of faith. Could God give us an ocean going liner for world evangelism? Did we ever dream that so many years later would we only have one ship, but we have a second ship two to three times the size of the first one? Not as a gimmick because we've never had much publicity about this.

No one even knew we had this project. But as a practical way to carry people because missions are spending a fortune flying their people to the field. And to be able to move 300 people in a training program and in a missionary invasion to work with the churches, to distribute millions and millions of books, 30 million pieces of literature from the small ship alone in 10 years is just a down to earth way of getting the job done in an enormous world of four thousand people.

How strange it is that on one hand we say God is great, sovereign, all powerful, mighty, prayer answering, omnipotent. And on the other hand, we practically speaking don't live any different than the atheists down the road. And I feel very strongly about that.

Practical theology. I had to lecture for six days at the continent's most conservative theological seminary in Switzerland. This was an event of last year.

George Verwer, who has no degrees, I got too impatient and quit university to go to Bible College, and that Bible College didn't give any degrees except the third degree when you broke a rule. And here I am lecturing in the theological seminary where these students spend four years learning Hebrew and Greek and everything else. To my utter amazement, the head of the seminary, after listening to me for six days, offered me the job of teaching in the seminary.

I don't think my OM leaders were overly excited about me leaving OM to teach in the seminary. But I say this because I think even our seminaries see the great need for dynamic practical theology. I have found that our seminaries, and I've preached in many of them, are almost bankrupt when it comes to prayer, praise, worship, practical theology.

There's almost no training for ministers on what to do when they get married. And many a great preacher is an absolute flunky when it comes to handling his wife or his children. And the generation of reprobate children of ministers and missionaries is probably the greatest scandal in the 20th century church.

No wonder John White has written this tremendous book, Parents in Pain, which many of us as parents need to read. I believe with all my heart that unless the church again renews the emphasis on prayer, we are doomed to be orthodox in the head and heterodox in the heart. Any church that neglects the prayer meeting is asking for trouble.

They may be able to keep up the scaffolding, but the reality will soon disappear. Tozer said, the great danger is that if the Holy Spirit left the average church, no changes would be made whatsoever. Things would go on as usual.

It frightens me because I know that can happen in O.M. It can happen in our ships, if we don't walk closely with God and spend much time waiting on God. Andrew Murray, one of God's great men in years gone by, whose books I strongly recommend, wrote a book called *Waiting Upon God*, how we need this in our jittery generation. And before you go into this mission, you need times of waiting upon God, not just corporately, but individually.

Wales is certainly one of the more beautiful parts of the British Isles. You have no excuse for not getting out into the countryside for a half-day of waiting upon God, with an open Bible, with an open heart. It's been the practice of my life since I was seventeen to spend a day, or a half-day as often as possible, just waiting upon God, going into the mountains, finding a cave, and just spending that time alone with God.

When I first moved to Spain, Spain was closed. Everything we were attempting in Spain was impossible. The opposition was great.

The opposition was out into the woods of Madrid and waited upon God in a day of prayer and fasting. And it was there often that God gave me the next move, the next plan for what He was leading me into. Oh, it wasn't all victory.

Most victory is mixed with some failure, like the time I went out for this great day and night of prayer. I was going to fast. I've always found fasting hard.

I don't have much excess, and one day fasting, I can barely stand. And for a while, I was very extreme. I was going to fast and I thought, I'm going out for this day of prayer and fasting, and I took one piece of bread with me.

I thought, I'll need this after the fast to get back. And I was going to pray on into the night, and it was Spain, the weather changes. I didn't realize that, but it changes very quickly from the day.

The sun is out tonight. And I must have fallen asleep somewhere around nine o'clock. I've always been very good at sleeping.

I'm in some ways naturally lazy and always love the sack. Alan Redpath is the greatest spiritual problem in Britain, or one of them is blanket victory. You know, just get the blanket off in the morning and get up and get in the word.

Anyway, I fell asleep, and it got cold around midnight or one. So I woke up. When I woke up, I grabbed for my bread.

It was gone. I was all alone. Who stole my bread? Obviously, some animal had come in the night during my intensive prayer that had turned to intensive sleep, and had stolen my resources.

And then the worst ordeal came when I attempted to make my way back home and ran into a pack of about 15 dogs. Now, as a great courageous Christian claiming all the verses of Timothy, I can assure you I am scared to death of dogs. But somehow, I made it home.

Yes, failure is often there when we attempt to have a day in prayer, or a half day in prayer. Why is it that we understand that a doctor will take a doctor will take a doctor? Maybe six, seven, eight years before he's a master surgeon. But we think that we're going to learn the art of prayer in a couple of weeks, or one term, or a few messages, and a few attempts.

Don't be discouraged in your praying. Whether you've fallen asleep, or your mind has wandered, or you found your prayer was not answered, don't be discouraged in your praying, because God will have to test you. As He allowed Job to be tested, so He will test you.

One of my favorite verses from one of my favorite books is *The Mystery of Providence*, one of those old Puritan books that needs to be re-read in this day in which we all want instant everything, instant holiness, instant victory at Cardiff University, instant revival, or at least near instant revival, and all the rest. I don't find that in my Bible. I find the battle, the struggle, persevering prayer.

I remember Dr. Francis Schaeffer, who has always been one of our closest associates in Europe. Dear man, I remember him answering questions at the World Congress on Evangelism, and answering questions about prayer, and pointing out that going to God in prayer is not like going to one of these little machines in the railway station where you put in your right coin, you pull the lever, and out comes your little chocolate bar. God works with us as human beings, and therefore into every transaction with God comes many different human factors.

And that will include suffering. Edith Schaeffer, I believe, has written a classic book on the subject of affliction. I was re-reading part of it again this week, about her experience with a dentist.

Have you ever had any really good, glorious dentist experiences? You know, we can be so brave when we're singing our hymns on Sunday. Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, and on Monday we're scared stiff even to march into the dentist office. He's only going to check your teeth.

He's not going to take your mouth off your mouth away. But sometimes things go wrong, and with Edith Schaeffer, it all went wrong, and she went through a two-year nightmare with her impacted wisdom teeth. That book is a dose of reality in this very superficial day in which we live.

And I would commend it, together perhaps with smaller books like *No Easy Answers*. The Lord Jesus Christ saw the multitudes. He was moved with compassion, and then he told us to go, That came later.

He told us to pray. Every real mission has to be born in the prayer meeting. Every real mission has to be born both in the prayer closet of those in the mission and the prayer closet of those who maybe are not there, but they're involved in one way or the other.

If we don't take more time in prayer, it's just a practical problem. We just cannot possibly pray for all these things. I've often said to me when they know that OM is very strong on extended prayer meetings.

We have a night of prayer on Tuesday. We have a full day of prayer on Thursday. And that doesn't make us more spiritual.

It may be because we're weaker. If you can do in one hour what it takes us to do in a day, praise the Lord. Move forward into battle.

We will follow in your smoke. But most human beings, it takes them an hour just to get their hearts softened up. They're so frostbitten from the present day evangelical scene.

Waiting upon God. Worshiping God. Confession.

Then, as we discern the will of God, moving into the front line attack of the ministry of intercessory prayer as we're taught in the Word of God. And people say, well, what do you do all night in a night of prayer?

First of all, a night of prayer for us usually ends at one or two or three in the morning. It doesn't mean we go through every time to six in the morning.

Our Indian brothers sometimes do that. They're a little stronger than we are. But you see, we're burdened for the whole world.

And we believe in specific prayer. We have prayed for specific things about China that have just been fulfilled. I have just, a few months ago, come from China.

We've had teams in China for the last three or four months. I can't even tell you what some of those teams have been able to do. And now, very top government officials are asking us to bring the ship Lagos to communist China.

I don't want that in print anywhere. But you can pray about it. And God and His sovereignty has linked us with the churches in Singapore and Malaysia.

If we could ever get a linking with the churches in Wales like we have in Singapore, I tell you, we'd have a thousand Welshmen on the move for God in the next three years. That would be the greatest missionary miracle in the history of Wales. But the church in Singapore and Malaysia is alive.

They want to be involved in world missions. They are encouraging their people to move out. They are supporting them all as they move out.

And we have many of them in OM, over a hundred, and many of them speak Mandarin Chinese. And they're on their way to mainland China in the next couple of years. There is a complete open door in China today for overseas Chinese people.

Malaysians, of course, can't go because of their government restriction, depending of course on their conscience. But I believe with all my heart God is going to do something in China and that is because of prayer, years of prayer. And we believe other nations also can do and that is because of nations also can do and be invaded firstly by prayer.

And that is the way we are going to see the victories. When we first went to Mexico and I was back a little while ago about to share that experience when I went to a foreign country, I went out to a rubbish tip. We call it in America a garbage dump.

And people were living in this place. People, little children were eating garbage soup. Soup made from just what people threw away.

I had never seen such poverty. I have always been from a sort of middle class bourgeois background but because of various reasons been incredibly sensitive to poverty. Even when I went back to my hometown, Patterson, New Jersey, which is now a very poverty stricken place, it's just overwhelming.

And when I walked through that rubbish tip, that awful place and saw people living, little babies with 50 flies walking all over their bodies and in their mouths, I just couldn't believe it. I thought, where have I been? I thought, where have I been? What strange place have I been confined to for 19 years of my life that I haven't realized other people are suffering so much? And as I walked away from that place, I recommitted my life to the Lord Jesus. And I knew that at least for many years I would never return to my own country, my own little lice community where to this day I'm still accepted as a nice little good

American patriot.

And I've been together with my wife away from home. We love our parents. 21 years.

I want to commend you to get into a foreign country as soon as possible. Beloved, we are not in the 19th century any longer, even if half of Wales is when it comes to the church. We need to realize the world is a global village and every man, woman of God in Wales, if they are going to be members of this great community in which what happens in Wales affects Cambodia, that's right, then we need to get our minds blown out a little bit in terms of some of the spiritual cobwebs and get out into places like southern Europe or further afield into Turkey or Iran or Iraq or Cambodia or Eritrea or Somalia where millions are going without food, where the church at times doesn't even have a Bible and where there's suffering even among believers far greater than anything we know here, though one of the great ailments of Britain today is Operation Murrmur and everybody seems to be murmuring about something.

Maybe it takes a semi-dumb immigrant like myself to tell you I think this is one of the greatest places in the world anyone could choose to live. If you think Britain is disorganized, including British Rail, it's because you're incredibly naive. You're still living in your little student jungle sipping some kind of intellectual straw from a glass of something that doesn't exist.

Do you know there are countries in Africa right now where there is total anarchy? You can't post a letter, you can't make a phone call, you can't walk down the street and know you'll get to the house alive. There have been hundreds of thousands of people butchered in African nations over the past ten years because it is so difficult to organize a country, to organize people, to run trains, to run telephone systems. We are benefiting from the Christian heritage of this country even though we have thrown away the heritage to some degree while trying to keep the benefits.

And today Britain is probably still one of the best organized and safest countries in the world you could ever live in. In America alone for everyone ever killed in Britain, and there are not many murders in Britain, there are ten to one in North America, and they think they're still the greatest country in the world. You're at least ten times safer over here.

And I could give you at least 25 other areas where Britain is almost a little heaven compared to nations where I have actually lived, where every day it is a struggle just to get through the day, just to get the food, just to get on with life. And I believe one of the things God wants us to do as British Christians is to thank God for what we have, the freedom to preach, the freedom to worship, relative safety. Sure I know all the negative things.

I read the magazines, I read the newspapers, I listen to the wireless, but as Christians we should thank God that we have relative stability in this country. We don't know how long it will last. Therefore, from this relatively stable situation, let us launch the attack upon the rest of the world and countries where there is chaos and lostness and hunger, to give them the gospel, to give them some of that foundation that we have so that they can build at least some decent, semi-decent form of lifestyle.

I feel very strongly that it's God's will for a great army to go forth from Britain to evangelize the world. I fear the tendency, the present tendency on introspection, telling us we can't evangelize until we're all somehow together in love and unity. The church in Britain, as far as I can see it, and I spend a lot of time researching this, is not going to unite.

If it does unite it will be under a false flag of some phony ecumenicalism in which we have to deny the basic principles of the Bible and the reformed faith and the basic doctrines in order to have some kind of quasi-unity. I don't believe that's God's plan. As individual believers let us love one another.

Let us lay aside our differences in order to be a mighty army for God. The word toleration was hardly known in Britain until Cromwell's army. There's unheard of toleration.

You either believe the particular religion that was in at that time or you were burned at the stake or jailed or flogged or beaten. And every Christian should read the history of the church because in some ways you have two Bibles. You have this Bible and then you have the Bible of history.

What has happened because people have believed this Bible? And history is important. And 50% of this book or more is history. And if you read the history of the British church you will understand even some of the present day happening.

It was when Cromwell tried to raise an army and brought in people of different religious persuasions that the word tolerance was almost born. Tolerating people of different religious persuasions even though most of them were Protestants. All of them.

In order to fight. Now whether you agree with that fighting or not is not the subject this afternoon. But certainly the principle is biblical.

If we're going to be an army for God. If we're going to evangelize the world or even Cardiff University then we're going to have to be willing to unite even though we don't believe everything the same. I wrote something in my Bible that was very meaningful to me.

It's the only hope for a I've written this. Because of world evangelism and the reality of a spiritual warfare we need to agree on a plan of action and a strategy and policy to carry out that action even when there are things we don't like or even agree with. And I would say the same for your coming mission.

In order to have some strategy. In order to operate at least to some degree as an army. As a fighting force for God in Cardiff.

You're going to have to be willing to unite and lay aside some of the things that you don't agree on. Otherwise you can never really engage in a fervent evangelistic thrust for God. How important.

I believe that is. So let us come together in prayer. Let us take Matthew chapter 9 and begin praying for laborers.

Both for the existing work here and for the work around the world. This is the clear command of the Lord Jesus Christ. If this command was true two thousand years ago what can we say today.

We have this command backed by the life of Jesus as we see him spending a whole night in prayer. As we see him teaching his disciples how to pray. As we see him telling the disciples that after he goes then they will give themselves to fasting and prayer.

And then we see this same emphasis on prayer right through the entire book of Acts. Maybe we could just look at a few references. Like Acts chapter 12 when Peter is in prison.

Verse 5 Peter therefore was kept in prison but prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him. Was it Leonard Ravenhill in his incredible book. I saw it there in the bookshop.

I could spend a week in that bookshop. Who said a church that is not praying will be strained. I think he was the one that also said you're either evangelizing or fossilizing.

There's no middle road because the Holy Ghost brings a holy go. Evangelism is as basic as breathing to the Christian. And I hope you will see that in the coming days.

As they attempted to evangelize in the early days of the church recorded in the book of Acts. They ran into problems on every side. And I will tell you Satan has had committee meetings already.

Read screw tape letters to plan a counter attack on your card of evangelistic effort. He knows how to sow discord, disunity, confusion. He knows how to use extremism.

And he will work overtime taking advantage of our weaknesses, of our tendencies to speak before we think. Any of you ever have that trouble? Your tongue just goes slightly faster than your brain can get you in tremendous difficulty. And oh if we just knew a little more of mouth control.

I've often had to pray oh God crucify my tongue. I remember a preacher once coming up to the pulpit. I couldn't believe it.

It would have been very offensive in India. And he took out from a bottle a gigantic cow's tongue. And he was waving it at us.

And then he preached on the sins of the tongue. It reminds me of something Billy Sunday would have done with a whiskey bottle. Only he wouldn't have waved it.

And he would have thrown it at us. Anyway, Peter was there in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing.

By the church. That's what made the difference. It's one of the biggest buts, B-U-T, in the Bible.

Peter was in prison. Everything was going wrong but prayer. Cardiff University, tough situation.

Many agnostics, more indifferent, few drunks, whatever else. But prayer was made by the church. And I don't think this type of evangelistic thrust should be separate from the church.

It would be my prayer that every believer, believer's group in Cardiff, every church would be standing with you. Though you have the unique ministry as one of God's, in a sense, guerrilla forces to infiltrate the university because that's where God has put you. Praise the Lord for his providence.

Even if you're not sure you're in God's will, anybody in that state, I will tell you the more I think about the will of God and the problem of finding the will of God, the more I look to God's sovereignty. And I hope there aren't too many of you that are overly neurotic about the will of God. I once told someone it really shattered them.

I said, look, if you marry the wrong girl, one of your goals should be to marry the right girl. Men, you're all plugged in there, marry the right girl. But I want to tell you, don't get too neurotic about that because even if you marry the wrong girl, God is great and he can make it work.

Why do I say that? I've counseled people, they've come to me, I got away from the Lord, I married this chick or this girl, and now I've seen from the Lord this is not the right girl, I should divorce her. No, no, no, brother. You've got your theology wrong.

You've got to get on your faith and trust God to make this thing work. I'd rather have the wrong girl and be right with God than the right girl and be out of fellowship with God and blow the relationship. Someday I'd love to come back and speak to you on the will of God, one of the subjects that I believe is so important in the life of the believer.

So Peter was in prison, everything went wrong, prayer was made, and out he went. He came. It was a miracle.

You get people these days who are very, very neurotic about breaking the laws. They're always on us saying, you're taking Bibles into China, you're taking Bibles into Russia, isn't that breaking the laws of men? You get somebody telling you about this, you know, they're all uptight, they're driving down the highway at 85 miles an hour, warning you against taking Bibles into the Soviet Union. I believe very strongly in keeping the laws of men.

But when that law is absolutely contrary to the law of God, there are not many cases, huh? Not many cases. Then I believe you have to choose. And Peter said we've got to obey God rather than man.

Read Brother Andrew's little book on the ethics of Bible, whatever he called it. Smuggling. It's a term with certain semantical overtones.

But in any case, these particular angels were actually breaking the law of this area and this prison. So God sent these angels to break the law. The same thing happened to Paul.

That was even a more destructive event later on when Paul was in prison at midnight keeping everybody awake in his praise meeting. And he was also rescued by angels. The book of Acts is a book in which we see God working in the lives of people and through prayer.

Remember Acts 4, 31? They were all together praying. The place where they were gathered together was shaken. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and went forth and spoke the word of God with boldness.

And those people had been at Pentecost. And though they had been at Pentecost, in Acts 4, they needed to be refilled with the Holy Spirit. And whatever your differences may be on the subject of the Holy Spirit, I think we can all agree whatever the past, now we all need to know the fullness and the reality of the Holy Spirit.

And that's the privilege of every believer. And I believe it's very important to emphasize the ministry and the reality and the fullness of the Holy Spirit in preparation for your mission. And if you're not sure that God's Spirit is having free course in your life, then you can just surrender your life, use whatever terminology you want, commit your life, surrender your life, and ask him to fill you and use you in this mission.

When some do that, they have an emotional experience. When others do it, there's just a still quiet assurance that God is working in them. We have become infatuated in our day with the spectacular.

And sometimes God works in the spectacular, but often our God can work in the ordinary. My wife has been the most faithful, loving, loyal marriage partner a man could ever ask for. She's not in a spectacular time.

She has no great public ministry and doesn't want one. Her ministry has been home, it's been washing, cleaning children, and some illnesses and some surgeries, and yet I've seen God working in the ordinary back in my home as much as He has worked at times through the extraordinary in some of the meetings I've been involved in. There's the same God.

And we need as much the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the chores around the house and for your boring mundane continued studies during all this period as you do for those spectacular moments when people are saying, what must I do to be saved? And you lead your first soul to Jesus Christ. Our God is not limited to any one course of action or any one way of working. And I pray that in your mission, as you emphasize prayer and reality and the warfare, that you will also emphasize spiritual balance and the many other aspects of spiritual life.

Well, our time's gone. I don't have a closing, so I think we'll just close. Father, we thank and praise you for your word.

We thank you for this challenge from your son, the Lord Jesus, as he told us to pray out laborers into the harvest, and we want to do that. From Wales, from all the parts of the world. We thank you for 400 that came on OM, just one of many of your movements this past summer from Britain alone.

Truly, this is a miracle and answered in many years of prayer. We thank you for others that launched out with different churches and fellowships to carry out your great plan. And we, Lord, believe it can be greater in the years to come.

You know more than we do. The tremendous harvest fields of places like India, where half the nation has never once heard the gospel. And where there's such an open door especially for British people.

Lord, we pray for India, for China, for so many areas where millions have never once heard. We think of Peking with one church for eight million people, whereas we live in a land that has a church for every 800 people. Oh, God, grip us with the reality of what this is all about.

And take us into our prayer closet and to our knees more than ever before to pray forth laborers and to know reality in prayer. Oh, God, we worship you. We praise you and we believe that as a result of being together with you on this weekend, our lives, by your grace, will never be the same.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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