

# Standing in the Gap Sp Harvest 1988

by George Verwer

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*George Verwer emphasizes the critical role of prayer in world missions and the need for a revival in intercessory practices within the church.*

**Duration:** 1:09:37

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 18:36-38, 2 Chronicles 7:1-3, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:9-10, Acts 12:4, Romans 12:11

**Topics:** "Harvest"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of being consistent in our Christian faith. He uses the example of Peter being imprisoned in the book of Acts to illustrate the challenges we may face in our journey. The speaker also highlights the need for spiritual balance, love, and other biblical principles in addition to prayer and revival. He emphasizes the importance of having a global perspective on missions and not just focusing on our own country.

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## Transcript

Multitudes are pushing their way through the streets to get here. I think we should we should start and commit this time to God and I think it would be quite ridiculous to have a seminar on the subject of prayer and not do a little bit of praying even though our time is very limited. Let's pray together.

Our Father we thank and praise you for the privilege of being involved at this great event. We pray for the various seminars that are taking place. Some of us have struggles with these seminar programs because we prefer to be sending people off to other people's seminars rather than taking one ourself.

But we learn submission through these things. We believe that this is an important subject and we believe that we need to face up to the reality of the intercessory ministry, the importance of it and what it is to be involved in frontline world missions through prayer. We just give you all the glory because we have been seeing answers to prayer since that day of Pentecost and before then.

As we know you are a prayer-answering God and you can do exceeding abundant above all we ask or expect. Just guide us now in this time together in Jesus' name. Amen.

I would like to share just a couple of prayer burdens and just have a short time of prayer as we continue to wait for people to arrive. I think we need special prayer at this time for the families connected with the great oil rig crisis in the North Sea. This is a lot very much on my heart.

Let's touch that situation through prayer right in a few minutes time. I would like to also commend to you or urge you to intercede for the continuing crisis in Afghanistan. I'm sure you have followed to some degree in your newspapers.

Yesterday another 150 or maybe in the day before were slaughtered and killed in the fighting there as the Soviets slowly withdraw and leave everything in the hands of their government forces. Apart from divine intervention many authorities in Afghanistan believe that there will be a gigantic bloodbath involving hundreds of thousands in the coming months. Maybe you feel this is too big a thing to pray for.

Sometimes in our church prayer meetings we pray for rather small things. I'm not against praying for small things but if our God is concerned about small things like someone who has a headache then I think God will be interested in what's going on in Afghanistan. So we want to pray for that situation.

I'd like to also urge you to pray as we go to prayer for the situation in Iran and Iraq. We know the awesome tragedy of the shooting down of that passenger plane. We know also that the number of people who were killed there is just less than get killed in a few hours on the front lines.

Probably a half a million have gone out into eternity through the Iran-Iraq crisis. This is not something abstract. This is happening here in our global village.

This is affecting us more than we will admit. We want to pray for the few believers in Iran. There are more believers in Iran than Iraq.

I know a few nations in the world that have less believers than the nation of Iraq. One of the first countries God ever put on my heart as a young Christian, the land of Iraq. I know in Operation Mobilization, the fellowship I'm involved with, we have done a considerable amount of work in many nations including many Muslim nations.

We have been very limited in what we've been able to do in Iraq. So we would like to pray for Iraq and Iran, leaders of those countries. We'd like to add our prayers to the prayers of others that that war may end, peace may come, the gospel may be proclaimed in a greater way.

We know God is overruling much of some of the folly and the sinfulness of man as demonstrated in this war. In recent months the Iranians have been sending children into the front lines to detonate the mines, little 12-year-olds. They can't afford to give the 17-year-olds because they're doing a lot of the fighting.

They are now mobilizing the greatest women's army perhaps of this decade, though they haven't sent them yet into the front lines. They're training for the protection of the cities. So this is an awesome situation.

I always feel, I've been to Keswick many times, that when you get to a place like this you enter into a little bit of unreality. It all looks so peaceful and so calm. The world isn't like this.

And I can tell you behind the scenes, Keswick isn't like this. It's a very needy town with lost people, just like London, where I live, where Brussels, where maybe you come from. So as we pray for Afghanistan in that situation, as we pray for Iran in Iraq, as we pray for some of these other crises, like the oil rig crises, and perhaps other things God puts on your heart, let's pray for the town of Keswick.

Next week, again, the Keswick Convention begins, which has gone on here for over 100 years. And these people, many of the town people, are quite hardened to this convention. Some of them don't even like it, being here.

I hope they're a minority. So let's pray for Keswick. Nice, quiet little country, wet place at this time.

I've been here when it hasn't been wet. And to do this kind of praying, and we want to pray also for the meetings going on now, the meeting tonight, I'd like you just to form little prayer groups. We can have two types of groups.

Those that would like to stand, you can come out into the aisles. These churches are built for standing prayer groups. Just form a little prayer group, a little cluster of three or four people, and those who rather pray remaining where you are.

Fine, all you have to do is turn it around a little bit. These pews are not built for small group prayer, but you are. You just turn it around.

Now, I don't know, is this new to anybody, praying in small groups in a big place? Is this new to anybody? When I first started this kind of thing 25 years ago, it was very new. Now it's quite accepted. So let's pray.

This is a seminar on prayer in world missions, and the best way to engage in such a seminar is to pray. That's one of the reasons I accepted it. So form small groups and just pray.

We'll turn the cassette recorder off for a few minutes, and we'll just pray. Lord, bless us as we pray in these small groups for these horrendous crises around the world, for the meetings going on here, for other things that we believe by your Holy Spirit you can put upon our hearts. We are not here playing games.

We're not here to fill our head with sort of biblical tidbits that we never really put into practice in our own lives, but we are here in the name of your Son, Jesus. We are here because world missions is total war. We are here because your Holy Spirit lives within us, and we sense that we are being sent, that we are being compelled into frontline intercession, into heavy artillery spiritual warfare.

Help us, for we always feel so weak and so inadequate when we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Let's go to it with all of our hearts.

Amen. Others have arrived. I'd like to just again give a word of welcome.

My name is George Verwer. This is a seminary on prayer in connection with world missions, and we felt that the best way to start the seminar was in prayer for some of the crises situations around the world. I hope that you will take this seminar seriously, and that you will write down perhaps at least a few things as a result of what you hear.

And one of our goals in Mission 2000 is, as outlined in Timothy, 2 Timothy chapter 2, that which we commit you, commit to you, you can commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. I believe one of the greatest needs in the entire Church today, whether we think of world missions, church growth, renewal, I believe one of the greatest needs without question is a movement, grassroots movement, toward reality and unction in intercession. Next to the doctrine of love, there is no other doctrine where the Church pays greater lip service than the doctrine in connection with prayer.

I have had 33 years of experiencing inconsistency and hypocrisy beyond all imagination in seeing so many people talk about prayer and so few who are willing to pray. I've seen it in the Christian unions. I've seen it in the churches.

I've seen it in my own feeble fellowship of Operation Mobilization. It is one of the number one cons and tricks of Satan himself. People who are not praying surely are people who are straying, and if they're straying from God, they're in trouble.

They may feel good, they may eat good, but they're in trouble with God. So many young people that write to me share that their prayer life is either in a shambles or it doesn't exist. I've had even my own leaders in my own movement confess that their prayer life is in shambles.

So burdened was I about this some years ago, I wrote a letter to all the leaders of OM and asked for immediate resignations of anybody who did not have a prayer life. As you can imagine, a few people decided to repent rather quick and try to get their prayer life in order. Satan, the Bible says, don't worry about what I say, that's not so important, but the Bible says Satan as a roaring lion seeketh whom he may devour.

And prayerlessness is one of the subtle methods that Satan uses. Before I go any further, let me mention a few books on prayer that you can pick up at the special book display over in the main tent. I recommend very much the writings of A.W. Tozer.

He's a man who was known by his friends and by his enemies as a man of prayer. If you don't have any enemies, that's also an indication you don't have much of a prayer life. This is one of Tozer's most powerful books, Man, the Dwelling Place of God.

Isn't that exciting? Just the cover will send you for a spiritual loop. Man, the Dwelling Place of God. The Holy Spirit lives in us.

And as it teaches in Romans 8, in ourselves we hardly know what to say as we pray. But the Holy Spirit, dronings, utterances can pray through us. And that's a book that moves in that line of thinking.

A relatively new book on the subject of prayer, written by one of the first missionaries I ever met when I arrived in India as a young missionary about 25 years ago. His name was Wesley Duell. I've watched this man from a distance for 25 years.

And that's why when he asked me to write a little word or a foreword for his book on the will of God, I was willing to do that. But I feel his book on prayer, his book on the will of God is so new I don't think it's in Britain, but his book on prayer has been out for a couple of years and I want to commend it to you. How many already have this book? Touch the World Through Prayer.

This is your chance. I can tell you if I mention this in my main meeting tomorrow night, there won't be any copies left. So I'll give you advance word and if there's no copies left then I won't mention it.

But it's a dynamic book on prayer for missions. This man should be giving the seminar, not me. I'm just, you know, I have a lot to learn yet next to this character.

He was the leader of OMS, Oriental Mission Society, for many years. Wesley Duell, Touch the World Through Prayer. Write it down.

Try to get a copy of that great book. Mountain Rain is a book that comes out of the great OMF movement. What a privilege we have here to have James Taylor with us.

We'll be speaking tomorrow night. This is a book about James O. Fraser, that man who made such an impact among the Lisu people. Mountain Rain.

Write it down if you want your faith encouraged. If you want to be challenged about spiritual warfare, that's a book that you will want to get. I'm sure this book has already been mentioned.

Operation World. Surely the most practical book for intercessors that has ever been published. Presenting information on almost every nation in the world.

Facts about the political system, what's happening with the church, what mission societies are there, what's being done, what's not being done. There may actually be a few of these available at the back of the church. Otherwise, they're over at the official literature display.

We need to, with a book like this, not just have a copy, but if we are visionary, missionary-minded, spiritual revolutionaries, we are going to be distributing this book. If there's anything that competes with our prayerlessness, it's our lack of sanctified imagination, our lack of divine holy ghost enthusiasm. It is a scandal in the church.

It's beyond a scandal. We should be arrested and put in prison if God was doing his part. He's too merciful.

He lets us press on. And I pray that you will not just read this book, but that you will become a distributor and get quantities. As many a Christian leader, many a pastor will never buy this book.

They would never take their own money to spend four pounds on a book like this. But if you give them a copy, they probably accept it. Most of them are trained in at least basic manners.

And so they probably will accept a copy and it might revolutionize their ministry. I think you actually get a free map of the world with that book. I noticed they're going into European maps as well, but I still like a map of the whole world.

And you get that free of charge with the book Operation World. You also can get free of charge somewhere around here. I haven't put everything together yet.

I've just come through the night. I don't know where everything is, but I believe you can find a copy of this bookazine, magazine called Islam. This should challenge our prayer batteries as much as anything.

One out of every six people in the world today is a Muslim. There is up to now, excuse me, only a tiny response among Muslims. Here's a map showing the Muslim world.

I discovered a mistake. They don't have Malaysia as a Muslim area, but it certainly is. Christians are even being persecuted in Malaysia to some small degree.

Islam, you can get it free. Little magazines like this are all tools you can use in spreading this vision for intercession and in your own ministry of intercessory prayer. There are a number of other books connected with the prayer life, and I'm sure as you go over to the literature table, you will discover some of them.

Praise the Lord. Now turn with me to the book of Acts. The book of Acts.

I'm in the wrong book here. Be patient with me. Book of Acts chapter 12.

I'd like to get a time for questions at the end, but I don't promise because sometimes I make a promise like that, and then I don't keep it. I feel convicted, but that's my goal to give this material and give you a chance to ask questions. I don't want to pretend that the whole area of prayer in connection with world missions is, you know, some simple little thing.

There's no problems. You just get the little Verwerth seminar package, and away you are. A little Miss Intercessor, a little Mr. Intercessor to shake the whole world for Christ.

Some of you have trouble just shaking yourself to get out of bed in the morning, much less shake the entire world for Christ. So we want to give an opportunity for questions. Here in the 12th chapter of the book of Acts, we have Peter in prison, and he is well guarded.

Look at the situation in which he finds himself. Verse 4. When he had apprehended him, put him in prison and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him.

We won't take time to read the whole chapter. It is a very exciting chapter, like almost all the chapters in the book of Acts, and every Christian should read the book of Acts every year and memorize part of it, and of course put it into practice. That's the hard part.

It's the book of Action, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, more than the Acts of the Apostles. We find that God answered their prayers. I don't know if they were only praying concerning Peter's situation, but God heard their prayers, and we find Peter miraculously delivered.

And look at verse 12. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. I want you to mark that.

How many of you have learned to mark your Bibles? Do you ever mark your Bible with a pen or a colored something? You've got all these wonderful marking systems. When I discovered that as a baby Christian, it revolutionized my Bible study, that I could mark my Bible. And that helped me also to memorize certain passages of Scripture.

Many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to hearken named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened up the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate.

And they said unto her, I'm not mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, it is his angel.

Peter continued knocking. When he had opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. But he beckoned unto them with a hand to hold their peace, declaring unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.

And he said, go show these things unto James and to the brethren. And he departed and went to another place. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir.

The old authorized version English. No small stir among the soldiers concerning what was become of Peter. When Herod had sought for him, found him not, examined the keepers, commanded them, should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and there abode. Here we find an emergency. Here we find one of God's chosen anointed instruments put in prison.

And we find God's people responding to a specific challenge and engaging in prayer at a prayer meeting. As we think of the task of world missions, if we are going to see the gospel penetrating every part of the world, then there must be a resurrection of the prayer meeting. We've even heard people give the idea that, you know, they have their own personal prayer time and they don't really believe it's necessary to have a prayer meeting.

A man from California wrote in a very somewhat famous book some years ago, that any meeting in your church that you have to push, it's better to drop it. As a pastor, you really can't afford that energy to push things that people are not interested in. Thousands of pastors in America in the past decade have dropped all prayer meetings from their church.

Some have dropped the main prayer meetings, but keep some kind of token prayer meeting at some weird hour of the morning when hardly anyone goes, but at least you can say you have a prayer meeting. I'm sure some of them are sincere in having that prayer meeting at six o'clock Saturday morning, and I am in favor of such meetings. Anything is better than nothing.

But I cannot understand how so many churches today no longer have a real prayer meeting. Unfortunately, some churches that do maintain their sort of old-fashioned prayer meeting, it is a rather dull, dry, introspective session in which people are often praying the same prayer week after week, and very seldom do young people go. I'm sure you are aware of the great gulf gap fixed in this country and many countries between the older people and the younger people.

You, of course, can tell me of wonderful exceptions. Fine, I love exceptions. But the fact of the matter is that a very huge percentage of young people in Britain are going one way, and a huge percentage of the adult population of which I am part of seems to be going the other way.

The wall is getting broken down in some places, praise the Lord, but it is getting rebuilt in other places. What a wonderful thing it is to go to a church where the young and the old are praying together, interceding together, getting to understand one another better, engaging in prayer. The amazing thing is also when there is a prayer meeting, there is often very little prayer for world missions.

Again, there are beautiful exceptions. The prayer meeting usually consists of a Bible study. I'm not against that if they extend the meeting to an hour and a half, but to try to have a one-hour prayer meeting in which you cram in a half-an-hour Bible study, 15 minutes of prayer requests, leaves a rather tokenish form of prayer that I do not find in the book of Acts.

I do not find in the history of the church. I do not find among godly men and women who have shaken the world for Jesus Christ. And since I don't find it, I don't believe it.

I don't accept it. We need to have in our prayer meetings a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour before God to seek his face. Part of that time may be confession.

It may be a little bit of worship and then moving in to intercession. There can be another hour at another occasion which could be all worship. I'm not against that.

We have lots of that. That's on the increase. We know the great emphasis in praise in some nations over the past decade.

I think it's beautiful, but I believe that praise that does not lead to agonizing, hard work intercession often leads to an introspective, self-centered brand of Christianity in which people are basically looking for a nice feeling. And in the long run, we produce a kind of Christianity that A.W. Tozer said you would not find in the New Testament. He was one of the strongest voices against spreading a degenerate effete brand of Christianity to pagan lands.

I remember getting in trouble with that Tozer quote at the famous Urbana Convention 20 years ago when I was somehow able to speak. I still feel to this day that A.W. Tozer had something to say that we should have listened to. It's not enough to send out people to other lands.

They must be people of quality. They must be people who know how to pray. They must be people who understand spiritual warfare.

They must be people who will not fall apart with their brother in Christ the first time there's a misunderstanding, first time to discover their brother in Christ is a sinner. But they will know how to pray through that situation in love and brokenness. We have a massive amount of disunity on the mission field at this present time.

We have a lot of prayerlessness on the mission field. We don't need another generation of prayerless spiritual midgets. We need men and women who know how to pray.

We need men and women who know how to fast and pray. I remember when Alan Redpath, who I must confess was one of my spiritual gurus, came to Moody Church in Chicago and tried to call God's supposedly chosen, generally frozen people to prayer and fasting. I will tell you, he didn't last long after that.

You cannot believe the resistance there is in our churches to such things as prayer and fasting. You cannot believe how many elders in our churches refuse to go to prayer meetings and yet are the elders in the church and will put heavy pressure on a pastor or leader who tries to take the church into any kind of extremism or make any changes. Brothers and sisters, if we are not committed to change, we are committed to death.

I repeat that, if we are not committed to change, we are committed to death because the Holy Spirit is moving. He is changing. He is transforming.

He is stirring. He is shaking. He is doing a new thing.

That doesn't mean we change our doctrines, God forbid, for if we did that we would be anathema. But it does mean we can make some other changes that may bring more life into the prayer meeting, that may allow a little more freedom, that may begin to focus on, for example, unreached people's groups, as there has been this new emphasis through men like Ralph Winner and other missionary leaders that we must focus on the unreached people. Ninety percent of the missionary work is in areas where there is already a church, there is already response.

Praise the Lord, we want to continue that. But only ten percent approximately would be among the unreached people, the Kurdish people, the Baluch people, the Uyghur people. How many of you pray regularly, say once a week, once a month? I like to be big-hearted, we don't want anybody to go out of here feeling too guilty.

How many of you pray at least once a month for the Kurdish people? Warm my heart and raise your hand at this time in this honesty survey. Maybe you got in the wrong seminar. No, hallelujah, maybe you're in the right seminar.

I want you to put the Kurdish people on your prayer list. There are twenty million souls. We know why there's so few people at Mission 2000.

There's a number of reasons, but one of the reasons is that world missions is not a priority in the British Church. Anybody who doesn't know that doesn't know anything about Britain. Now admittedly, I can't be an expert, I've only lived here for 27 years and preached up and down in almost every single part of the British Isles for 27 years, so I'm sure someone else can bring me into correction.

There is a token interest in world missions. Nobody's opposed to it, but there is not a major interest in world missions and the unreached people at this present time. So therefore, anything we do like Mission 2000 will basically get token response.

Of course, they'll eventually blame it on the organizers. They didn't publicize enough or they didn't send out enough gospel blimps with an advertising banner hanging on the back of it, but you know, listen, if we are hungry for God, if we believe in world missions, if we believe the Bible and we even heard, if we even heard that there was such a conference as this going on, it would go to the top of our list. One man from the United States just heard about this conference.

He's a man of vision. He's a man who believes in the Bible, believes in world... He just heard about it. Guess what? I just met him walking down the street.

He came from Chicago, but we can't get people to come here from Carlisle, from Preston, from Manchester. Don't think I have an axe to grind. If I communicated that, that's wrong.

I don't have an axe to grind. I have a message to declare. My pre-Mission 2000 message is the same as my post-Mission 2000 message.

The church needs a shaking. The church needs revival. The church needs to get on her knees in repentance, in brokenness.

There's no purpose to have one more seminar and fill our heads with biblical tidbits if we are not going to obey, if we are not going to repent, if we are not going to get up out of our beds in the morning and get upon our knees, if we are not going to reinstate the Book of Acts prayer meeting into the church, if we are not going to turn from sham, parade, and spiritual death, as A.W. Tozer called it, and come into light and unction and reality. There's no purpose. So when we walk out the door of this church, we will be accountable.

We will be accountable for what we have received here. You say, by what authority do you speak these things? By the authority of the Word of God. Hundreds of verses, hundreds of verses.

We are having fights in some of our groups on subjects where people have two or three disjointed scriptures. Here's a subject in which there are hundreds of verses. It is a subject we can unite on.

In fact, most men of God and leaders do unite on this subject, at least in terms of their verbal commitment. It's when it comes to actual praying that the difficulty comes in. You then get what you call the excuses, the many excuses, why we can't be there.

I spent 26 years trying to get people to go to nights of prayer in Great Britain. It's lucky I didn't die a premature death in the process, because you just can hardly get people to pray beyond one hour. Now there is a movement.

They got a better name than OM had. We just called it Night of Prayer. Just come from one last night.

With this generation, they're also getting shorter and shorter, but we still at least have them. But there is a movement led by a man named David Bryant, who will be the main guest speaker at the OM conference in the Netherlands this year, who the Holy Spirit has used to start a movement called the World Concert of Prayer Movement. They put a new name, more with this generation, and they're starting prayer concerts, and they are spreading.

And thousands have gone to some of these prayer concerts that may start at 7 and 8 in the evening and go on to 11 or to midnight. We're having a little mini prayer concert here, which is patterned after the concept that David Bryant launched and talked about in his amazing book, World Concerts of Prayer. We can't go very long, because apparently there's some kind of curfew here at Keswick.

But it's amazing in these prayer concerts that I've been in around the world, how when the actual time comes to pray, sometimes people feel a little nervous about me. I don't know why. I guess they know what I stand for.

They come and share their excuse why they're not able to be there. I don't have a bad attitude toward those people. I don't have the problem much of bad attitude for people.

If I ever have a bad attitude, it's toward myself, my wretched self. I got enough other problems without having an attitude problem toward God's people. But I want to see a movement of prayer in the British Isles.

I want to see people on their faces together. I heard something incredibly exciting about a great prayer meeting that took place in Birmingham, with some 15,000 gathering together for praise, for celebration. That's exciting.

And may it spread all over the country. The tendency, however, in Britain is to mainly think about Britain. 50,000 recently marched through the streets of London in a praise, prayer, celebration march.

What an amazing event. Wish I had been there. Hallelujah! Things are happening.

God is answering prayer. There's a stirring in the mulberry bushes. But when it comes to world missions, to some degree we are left out in the cold.

Missionaries are considered specialists that you only bring in on occasion when there's a missions conference. So we have Mission 2000 and we're overrun with missionary speakers. When I saw the number of the speakers here, I called up and said, I don't want to go there.

I don't want to take up the time that James Hudson-Taylor could be using. Let him speak for two hours. But somehow some other people got on the phone and they bent my arm and here I am.

I prefer to go into situations where missionaries don't often speak. I've just come from Chicago. Largest Christian rock festival in the world.

Petra, you name the band, they're there. Five days of hard gospel rock. God, you wouldn't believe it.

Anybody over 30 would have a nervous breakdown within a mile. The Holy Spirit was there and I had the joy after Petra closed down, because the police don't let them play after 10 o'clock at night, to speak to 2,000 and 3,000 of these jumping, leaping young people about world missions. A lot of copies of Operation World went out.

Every time I go there, I've been there almost four years in a row, we see people decide that world missions is a priority. Do you believe that? How many of you believe that world missions, reaching those Uyghurs, reaching those Baluch, reaching those Kurdish people, 20 million of them, reaching out to Turkey where all the believers could sit in the first couple of rows of this church, reaching out to even beyond that into the unreached people of the Soviet Union, the unreached people in certain sections of China? How many of you believe this is absolute top priority for God's people today? Raise your hand. Well, that's encouraging.

Of course, one would expect that at Mission 2000. What is our hope if we are going to see a grassroots movement for intercessory prayer for world missions? One of our hopes lies in what you do with this seminar material. If you are willing to allow me to appoint you as a recruiter, as a mobilizer for world missions, so that you will go out from here convinced that you should not just believe what you've heard and act upon it, but that you should recruit others.

You can mobilize a prayer meeting in your own place of residence. Don't do it on the same night as a church prayer meeting. Don't necessarily blow a big trumpet about it.

Just start it in a small, quiet way. A small group who want to intercede for world missions. Not for just one group, but as the Holy Spirit leads world missions.

If you're linked in with a church, make the missionaries from that church one of the main targets. Might be good for you to share with the leader in your church that you want to do this just in an informal way, in your own place. He might even decide to come, or he might say, well, look, why don't we do this in the church instead? If we are going to go forward, we've got to develop Holy Ghost stubbornness.

Got to develop stickability. We've got to realize if people like us, a tiny number of us who choose a seminar on the subject of intercession, if we don't do something about this, who will? Who will? Peter was in prison, but the church without ceasing prayed for him. Tomorrow night when I share, we may look at how this is practiced in Acts 13, where they prayed and commended those first missionaries out into the harvest field.

I also hope to share in the main meeting before our concert of prayer something about the obstacles of prayer, the fiery darts of Satan against your prayer life, hindrances to your prayer life, so I won't get into that at this time. I want to, before opening for questions, just move on and share just a few other practical pointers about maintaining your own prayer life and being involved in group and corporate prayer. Number one, and I hope to re-emphasize this again, you've got to determine from the beginning that you're not going to get discouraged.

You have to realize from the beginning that Satan is going to try to discourage you. You're not going to see all of your prayers answered immediately, no matter how filled you are with the Holy Spirit, and that is a vital part of intercessory ministry. You are still very, very, very human, and I want to just testify so that the record is straight that I have been a great struggler all my life in the area of prayer.

At 17 years of age, I prayed that only one thing I would learn in life. I was not interested in starting any kind of movement. I was just a young Christian hungry for God, and I said in the quiet of my room at 17, I may have been 18, I said, God, I only want one thing in life.

I want to learn how to pray. That's all. You see, I was converted to Jesus Christ through a woman who prayed for me for three years.

I was then converted in an actual meeting where Billy Graham spoke, and in my research about Billy Graham, I discovered that the secret of his ministry was prayer and not his prayers, but a group of people in various parts of the world, intercessors, men and women, especially women, who knew how to intercede. One of those women was so powerful in intercessory ministry, Billy Graham would fly her to the campaign city and have her interceding behind the scenes. It was Billy Graham's challenge to me as a baby Christian.

Converted in a one-night meeting of Billy Graham, it was his challenge that first got me organizing nights of prayer when I was still a teenager. I organized it in an Anglican church across the street from my high school, where revival had begun through the prayers of this elderly lady who had been praying for 15 years for that school. Through her prayers, I was converted.

A few other people came to Christ. I organized prayer meetings, short ones, long ones, and then this night of prayer in connection with the Billy Graham crusade, which took place two years after my conversion. God had saved me and prepared me to mobilize prayer for the big New York City campaign in 57.

It was after that campaign, three of us got in an old van and went to Mexico, where O.M. really was born. So it was as a teenager that I started this movement of intercessory prayer. Admitted myself to prayer, regularly spent whole days alone, totally alone with God in the mountains, in caves, in trees, fasting, seeking God.

Do you think a movement like O.M. is born in a seminar? Do you think it's born in a weekend? Do you think it's born in some missiological course? It is born when men and women will seek God, when men and women are so hungry they'd rather die than not see the world reach for Jesus Christ. I spoke with this intensity as a young teenager. The Holy Spirit poured himself out and a movement was born.

Satan has proceeded to attack us every month, every year, so that some of us stand, semi-old men, wounded, wounded all over the place. I am one of those men, but still alive, still fighting, still believing that God's work done in God's way will get God's blessing. Still believing that men like Carrie and Hudson Taylor, men like David Brainerd, praying hard, John Wesley, George Whitfield, that these men still should be our example, even in this day of hyper-contextualized, semi-pagan brands of Christianity and evangelicalism.

You realize that? I've always known about the Elijah passage. He was praying and the fire came down, but I realized that Solomon prayed. I just read that this morning.

Solomon prayed and the fire came down. I want to ask you, bring this to a close. Are you on fire for Christ? Is God burning in your heart? I'm not saying you're always gonna feel that.

You think a character like me always feels it? I can backslide quicker than you can blink. If God doesn't meet me every day, if somehow I don't get something from the Word or a book or a brother in the Lord or something else, you know, so easily I can begin to grow cold. I can pass people on the street, pay more attention to a new car or a new dictaphone than a lost soul on the road to hell.

I'm no different than the rest of you. So I have to seek his face every day. I have to buffet my body.

Is that one of your favorite passages? First Corinthians chapter 9. I buffet my body, bring it into subjection, lest after preaching to others I become a reprobate. So when I don't feel like praying, I pray more. When I don't feel like memorizing the Word or reading, I read more.

When I don't feel like witnessing, I often force myself, by God's grace, to witness. Isn't this the missing link in so many places that leads to the prayerlessness, isn't it? The lack of discipline, the lack of being able to buffet that body and say to the body, with all of its needs, all of its cravings, ever get any cravings? Praise the Lord, some of them are innocent. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote this book, which in my view is the greatest English book that has ever been written.

Far better than Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, in my feeble opinion, though I have to confess I haven't finished Pilgrim's Progress. It's a great book, but this one is better. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Spiritual Depression, Its Cause and Cure.

It's one of the missing books in our thinking and in much of our action in the church today. Get a copy of it. Of course, it is in no way in comparison to this book.

This is God's Word. These are just sermons in print. You find something here that you don't find there, you can pitch it out.

I haven't found anything yet myself. And in this book, he talks about discipline. He talks about prayer.

He talks about the fact that our spirituality is our responsibility. We can't blame it on God. We can't say, well, I prayed to be filled with this Holy Spirit, but the Lord didn't do it.

I asked God to deliver me from my lack of discipline, but the Lord didn't do it. Oh Lord, you failed me again. You big failure you.

No, your spiritual state of affairs is your own problem. God lives in you by the Holy Spirit. He is more than willing to work through you.

He is more than willing to change your life. He is more than willing to make you a man or woman of prayer, but you have to take the steps of faith. You have to deal the death blow to the self-life.

You have to deny self, take up the cross, and follow Jesus, as he said three or four times. You have to buffet your body and bring it into subjection. You have to, as Lloyd-Jones points out in this book, put on the whole armor of God.

Put on the whole armor of God. Did you do that this morning? Don't go out into this wild world anymore without that whole armor, that shield of faith. That's the key to intercessory ministry.

So when those fiery darts of discouragement come your way, stand firm. Stand fast. Realize it takes a lifetime, a lifetime to learn to be the kind of man and woman of prayer that you want to be.

You probably, like me, will never reach your goals. I think my goals, I'm reaching them less now than I did when I was 22. Maybe I've had enough brains to adjust them and to let other great biblical truths be blended in with this biblical truth that we're emphasizing in this seminar of intercession for world missions.

Also, as we move forward in this ministry, we need to realize that God is working in different people in different ways and beware of judgmentalism. There's a great difference between making a proclamation as I am at this time and sort of judging individuals and making accusations or getting caught up in the super spirituality or extremism. In fact, some of the people I have seen drop along the side of the road in the area of prayer, it is because they got into extremism.

I've seen people get into extremism in the area of fasting and go off balance. They want to accomplish what it took Hudson Taylor in a lifetime, they want to accomplish it in one year. No, they want to accomplish it in a one-month summer campaign.

And I tell you, if there's any movement at times that has got into extremism, it's operation mobilization. That's why after giving some strong messages on prayer and revival, I decided I need some strong messages on the human factor, on spiritual balance, on love, on many, many other biblical principles. And they asked me what seminar I wanted at this big conference and music festival in Chicago.

I said, why don't you give my seminar the title, it was five sessions, consistent Christianity. Then I can declare something of the whole counsel of God. In a sense, it's not my choice to just talk to you about prayer because it has to fit in with all the rest of the great truth being shared here in these days.

Otherwise you can become extreme, you can become lopsided, you can become pharisaical, judgmental, and even just ill. Many more things I'd like to say, but I really think it would be good to pray and open for a few minutes of questions. Lord, we thank you that we've had this little time together.

Lord, you know how heavy my heart has been for over 30 years on this whole area. You know how many hundreds of times, yay, thousands it has been broken because of the prayerlessness among your people, because of Operation Excuse, which spreads like cancer across the Christian world, because of the inconsistency. We don't like to admit defeat.

We've got all kinds of little cliches trying to cover up for our failures. But we know, Lord, in this area of prayer and intercession and all that goes with it, we have failed. I know, Father, I have failed.

And I seek your face for a greater move of your Holy Spirit in my prayer life, in the prayer life with my dear wife, and with my co-workers. And I ask for spiritual balance in the midst of that. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Let's take some moments for questions. Anything that you would like to ask at this time. Don't feel your question is too small or insignificant, because whenever I communicate, there's always at least a little bit of miscommunication.

Something that just needs a little bit of fine-tuning. I give a general thrust, now we need to fine-tune that. You can help me do that.

Right here, good and loud. Just for the sake of our cassette tape, we have an excellent question that when we're praying through a lot of prayer letters, I tend to be almost extreme in this area, how do we keep it from becoming mechanical? I must confess, I am still battling that. And so often I stop in the middle of praying through, I spend a lot of time praying through prayer letters and correspondence.

Pray, read, pray, read, pray. I wrote an article about that. I don't know if you read it, but I think you just have to continue to lubricate yourself with praise, thanksgiving, confession, expressions like, Lord you know all about me and you love me still.

Lord you know I'm not really totally excited about what I'm reading here at this moment, but I pray and I might give a shout. I may give an internal shout so I don't frighten someone who's with me, but I believe that you're going to have to battle that. Don't let the pendulum swing where you say, well this has been mechanical, I'm not going to do this anymore.

Now I also engage in prayer walking. I engage in different practical changes in the way I pray to help, you know, face this particular problem. Sometimes I pray with music in the background, often praise choruses.

Also to mix it with reading the Word, singing the Psalms. That can help you to battle on. Also maybe having a chapter in a good book on prayer as part of your prayer time, that's perfectly.

I do a lot with pictures. I pray over people's photos, something about praying over a person's photo. I pray over atlases.

I pray through encyclopedias. I pray over anything that helps me associate my praying with something specific. I prayed through the entire book Operation World last year.

I needed a few months this year to complete it. Almost every line, a lot of that did get a little mechanical. There will be the straw factor in what you do.

Don't let the straw factor discourage you. God is operating with you on the basis of mercy. He's not demanding a prayer performance out of you.

Some of you are not good performers. You may be a little bit of a spiritual wimp. God still loves you.

He can set you ablaze. He can use you as you pray, even over lists of people. I think it's important, however, to seek the mind of God.

Have times of prayer when you don't have things around and you're seeking the mind of God concerning what you should be praying about. Someone else, yes. Your second.

The question is how would we break down, how would we sort out actually praying for the Kurdish people? Now, we all have different capacities. And if you're a two-talent person, don't try to be a ten-talent person. If you're a Volkswagen, don't try to be a Mercedes Benz.

And it's something that we've seen really goes out of control. People who are not, you know, they have so much capacity in various areas, emotionally, mentally, physically, spiritually. And they try to be someone else.

And it gets bizarre. That's why I emphasize the whole counsel of God. At the same time, it would be good if you're interested in a particular people's group to do some research on that people's group.

Maybe even do some correspondence with people who may have more information. You've got to be an information seeker. You've got to be looking for information that can enable you to have ongoing prayer life.

God put Turkey on my heart when I was a young student. I went into the library. I researched Turkey.

Then I got more and more involved until I realized this was one of the main countries that I was to give my energy to the rest of my life. Then I went out to see Dale Roton, who was planning to go to South America. And I challenged him about the land of Turkey.

And his whole life was changed through that challenge. He went to Turkey, pioneered OM in Turkey, and many others followed him. And that has been one of OM's key target fields.

That was all born out of research and prayer in a library in Chicago. So you can push, you can read, you can write others, and the Lord will take you. It's often one step at a time.

You're not going out the door praying Hyde. You're going out the door praying John or praying Mary or Susie or Sam. You're still you.

And the prayer road for most people is going to be a long road. And these great men of prayer, they all had their failures. Many of them had struggles in their marriages.

That's a great mystery. Many men of prayer have had struggle in their marriages. Tozer had difficulty in his marriage.

Wesley, unbelievable problem. And you know, that's why I'm very slow to throw out a little simple formula. This is it.

It's going to be a battle. It takes the whole counsel of God. It takes spiritual balance, many other things.

This lady was next. Thank you for that question. Better to pray on your own or pray in a small group? I only touched on it in the beginning, so let me reinforce it that I believe there must be emphasis on both.

I especially try to emphasize the group prayer from Acts because I find that most Christians acknowledge that they must have a personal prayer life. I've hardly found anybody that doesn't acknowledge that. Where there is a growing set of vibrations that's around, that group prayer is not necessary.

Whereas we must understand both are clearly in the Scriptures. Jesus went off alone also and prayed through the night. You find that in the Gospel of Luke.

So I would say you need both. In my own life, I battle. There are periods in my life where I had a lot more group prayer.

I'm in a period of my life now because OM prayer meetings are getting a bit shorter and probably also other factors that I lean more toward extensive hours in personal private intercession, which people may not know about. But I'm trying to find a balance. Yeah.

No, I would just say again, it's both. In other words, in the morning you might want to have some prayer for Afghanistan in your quiet time, but then during the daytime, if you get in any kind of group, share with them what God has given you in that quiet time or what you discovered in a book and pray again. We also have

a great debate.

Do we just pray once with all of our heart and then simply believe and after that sort of stand on the promise? Or do we persevere? The Scriptures teach there's a need for both. There is a time when you stand, you believe, something's going to happen. But in prayer later on, imagine many of my prayers, some of which many of which have not yet been answered, I've been praying a similar prayer for 30 years.

Now you want to talk about something that can get a little difficult and I've not seen the breakthroughs. So I think there's a time when you stand on God's promise and you say, this is it. And there's a time when you persevere again.

You just ask again. That's not a problem with God. And we have a number of passages that talk about importunate persevering prayer.

We're gonna have to close now or maybe just watch this a little fast. What time is it? Five more minutes. This one does gain five minutes each two hours.

Helpful for my kind of person. Yes. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

The title is a little misleading. It's basically an encyclopedia on discipleship and spirituality. One of the books that's most similar to it in some ways coming out of someone more of this generation is David Watson's book, Discipleship.

How this man with all that he was doing, all the other books he wrote, managed to put that thing together before he died is quite amazing. It's brilliant. It's brilliant.

So there's, you know, last generation, this generation, two great books on discipleship, discipline, spiritual life. Technically the title is called Spiritual Depression, Its Causes and Cure. Yes, one of the things that's been the most meaningful, I think, in our situation is that my wife and I have hardly missed an OM night of prayer for 28 years or more.

I've never, I don't think, put a lot of pressure on her to be there and sometimes someone that doesn't always feel physically as well as I do, it was much more difficult for her to come. But I know even often, so often when I'm away, she makes her way up. She's been doing it for, we've been married 28 years and gets involved in the OM night of prayer and in other prayer gatherings.

Up to some years ago, we were always often together in the, some of the morning prayer time. Some changes took place that made it difficult for her to get to all of those. So, as a couple, we've been involved with the whole body in praying.

Looking back, I feel that my wife and I have not been systematic enough in perhaps tackling all, you know, nations together. And I have a weakness that I tend to go off on my own thing. You know, my wife is over here.

Of course, she reared three children. I'm out in the woods having her, you know, a red-hot prayer time and she's wrestling with the problems at home. And I wish that I could turn the clock back and do some things over again.

At the same time, those times of prayer and intercession, especially often for your own family, are just, you know, absolutely essential even for survival. I'm the kind of person and sometimes I'm in an attack

position. I'm ready to just take on the enemy, so to speak, spiritually speaking.

But other times I'm in a survival position. I'm under pressure, I'm wrestling with my old enemy of doubt, or I'm wrestling with one of my other old enemies, and I'm feeling a lot of pressure. So I pull into a survival position where I'd emphasize more praise.

I would make use of Christian music more at that moment. I'd emphasize the need for meditation, just getting out. I need, you know, to get out in the woods, get out of the mountains, just be away from the clutter and the clamor and somehow seek God.

I have a whole 50-point program, most of it in one form or the other, written in the back of my Bible for personal spiritual survival. I am NOT a naturally spiritual person. I'm a natural backslider.

Books say my temperament caused the greatest scandals in the church. I'm the kind that there's, you know, it should have happened according to statistics. I should have been one of these characters that, you know, ran off and committed immorality like we're reading about, you know, so often these days.

Yet somehow, because I think of what I was taught as a young Christian, all the people praying for me, God's sheer mercy and grace, you know, he has kept me out of those scandalous and mind-bending situations that seem to be so common in these days. I think prayer, by the way, is definitely tied into that. Not just my personal prayer life, but so many others.

Once there's a movement of prayer, can you imagine just the fringe benefits of the movement of prayer? You know, revival could almost come as a fringe benefit of a mighty prayer movement for world missions, because God is sovereign. So I think that's important and something to keep in mind. Time is up now.

It's a great encouragement to have a dear man of God who I know knows much about prayer, and that's something, no matter how much we know, we feel we know little. But I'd like to ask Colin Peckham to just close this meeting in prayer, if you would, at this time. He's got a good loud voice as well.

If you ever think I can speak loud, go take in a Colin Peckham seminar. We had him on our ship ministering. Could you close the meeting in prayer for us?

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