

The Birth of Om

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon highlights the necessity of spiritual renewal and the active role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the church today.

Duration: 1:17:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal experiences and testimonies of God's provision and guidance in their ministry. They mention how God provided financial support through unexpected means, such as hitting a fox and receiving a bounty. They also talk about a significant financial gift that wiped off their debts and allowed their ministry to flourish. The speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's direction and seeking unity, love, and prayer in their work. They also mention the challenges and growth they have experienced as their ministry has expanded.

Transcript

Well, if you haven't been, you will be this summer. I'm haunted by the lack of time. I yearn to be able to keep my eyes open longer and to get more hours out of the day, be able to get up earlier.

There's just so much to be done. Now, don't forget those girls exercising. How many girls are coming out for the exercises tomorrow morning? Look at that.

Look at that. Revivals sweeping through the auditorium. I'm not going to lead them.

I don't know the women's exercises, but we had two girls volunteer to lead them at 630 in the girls' parking lot, which is over here. The men's parking lot is over by the highway where the noise is. And we believe that's a good thing.

Well, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's get our bearings for the message.

Lord, just help us to know what's on your heart, what's on your mind. We look to you. We praise you and worship you in Jesus' name.

Speak, O God. Amen. Let's turn to Acts chapter 29.

What are you laughing at? You know that Acts ends in chapter 28. Now, some of you, of course, knew that ahead, because you've heard my tape, What Happened to Acts 29. You know, it is interesting in quite a few churches to see the dear saints paging through their Bibles in all seriousness, looking for Acts 29.

Especially embarrassing when the pastor behind me is paging away. But I believe that we are Acts 29. And really, I don't have any message tonight about any kind of outline or anything.

I just want to share from my heart something of the early history of this work. Somebody said to me some years ago, and I'll never forget it, it was an O.M. reader. Every once in a while, they say something really good.

And he said he believed the spirit of O.M. had to be born again every year in each individual. Any movement of the Holy Spirit, I would tell you, if I didn't believe that this was a movement of the Holy Spirit of God, if I thought it was a man-made organization, I would get out tonight. And the leaders, I think the leaders of O.M. know that I would.

I want to move, or the Holy Spirit is moving. I don't want to invest my short life in something that doesn't count. I don't want to even waste one year.

And I know that the Holy Spirit can lead the movement, and Ichabod can be written across the front of it. You know what Ichabod means? You should know. It means the Spirit of the Lord has departed.

It can happen. This is why every year we need the Spirit, the Spirit of what God did in the beginning, even though it will continue to grow and mature and change, and we don't expect you to be exactly the same way we were in the beginning. But we believe the vision, the impetus, the compassion, the spirit of abandonment and love must be born again year after year.

And I think you deserve to know something of those early days. I don't share this much. In fact, I have not shared this probably in a similar way since last year in Detroit.

And I can tell you one of the reasons I'm sharing it tonight is because of Brother Don Hammond, who encouraged me after that message last year and said it was really meaningful. I don't know what's meaningful and what is not meaningful. And the last thing I want to do is blow my trumpet, really.

I'm so scared of doing that. I was greatly encouraged by Paul Tournier. I tell you he's a man to read.

I'm ashamed that we don't have some of his books. I want to apologize for our selection of books. It's not Bernie's fault.

We've just got so many things to do. We've got so many books, so much money invested in these books. We can't keep up with all the good books.

It takes a very skilled, trained man, Bernie's just come into this job, to keep up with all the really tough books. You'll see a lot more when you come over to Belgium. But Paul Tournier is a man you'll want to read.

And he believes that it is relevant and sensible and good to speak about ourselves. Not everyone who speaks to you about himself is on an ego trip. In fact, we can overreact against speaking about ourself because, in fact, our ego is too much intact.

Paul Tournier was a great encouragement to me on this, of just feeling free about myself. I'm a human being. I respect myself.

I accept myself. I have a story to tell because God has worked in me. And I don't want to blow the trumpet, but I want to pronounce the truth.

And I want you to know what God did, and why we are the way we are today. It's so difficult to communicate in these few days why we believe certain ways. Why we are a bit, what some people think, is fanatic concerning the use of God's money.

Why George never has bought himself a new suit and has got his Charlie Chaplin pants and whatever else, according to Leonard Ravenhill. He's not always the most accurate preacher. But I believe with all my heart it will help you to understand something of what God did in the early days.

And I hope this will ring of Acts 29 or Acts 1340 or wherever else we are in the continued work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is working in many different ways. I want to be the first one to say that OM is only one, only one of many, many ways that the Holy Spirit is working.

And it is one of our greatest burdens to esteem these tremendous other groups. Actually, I had invited Glenn Wagner of the Pocket Testament League to be here and speak to us. He was unable to come.

He was one of the great original four horsemen of the University of Minnesota many years ago. It goes back a long way. He never got hurt playing football, but he broke his finger, I think, passing out Gospels in Asia.

He was a great influence on my life, one of many, many influences. And the Pocket Testament League to me is a great work of the Spirit of God. Harry Lew, Alfred Koontz, and many that are going on today.

It was the Pocket Testament League Gospel that I received back in those early days. Praise God for every work, every movement of the Holy Spirit, right down to the last local church, the last prayer cell. Most of you know the original story because that's given more often.

A dear lady, praying for high school 15 years, prayed for me for three years, sent me a Gospel of God, actually in the name of her son, who was a very godly brother, whose life made an impact on me. I read this Gospel for two or three years. A few other people were praying for me.

I don't want to go into the details of my selfish little life. Some of you have heard that, which sometimes I use when I'm speaking to unconverted people. She prayed for me for three years.

I went to the Billy Graham meeting, my heart prepared by the Gospel. I was converted to Christ. I went back to that high school.

We had a distribution campaign with Pocket Testament League Gospels. About a thousand students in this ungodly high school outside New York City to promise to read a Gospel of John. That very, very, very first year we saw maybe a dozen or two come to the Lord.

Just after I graduated and went back to the high school, we had a meeting and 125 young people came forward in the high school auditorium into the cafeteria to accept Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And then a year later, when Billy Graham came back in 57, I don't know how many more came to Christ in that high school. Her prayers were answered.

Some of you know that she is going to be with us on the campaign this summer. Mrs. Craft and her husband, both of them wonderful people of God. And we're looking forward to their visit to Orem.

After all these years, she's very much wanted to remain in the background. She's a very, very ordinary woman. God moved in that high school.

I can remember the very first night of prayer. You're all teenagers, 16, 17. It didn't go very long.

And then in 57, when Billy Graham came to New York, we organized nights of prayer. I remember one of the first ones was in an Episcopalian church. It was a very interesting night.

I remember another one was in a Reformed church, my old church, which was basically liberal, and I was trying to bring in a bit of revolution at that time. In fact, hired a bus for that campaign out of a church parking lot. About that time, my father, who was a deacon and didn't know Christ, was on his way toward the Lord.

And even though he was an usher in the Billy Graham meetings in 57, he went forward when there was a call to come to Jesus Christ. And then he came to know the Lord. But I remember in that church, we organized a night of prayer, and I invited all the pastors and all different kinds of people.

And I really thought a night of prayer, this has got to go right through the morning, eight o'clock in the morning. And I told, you know, I was a rather naive, to say the least. You know, I thought some of these people would come and pray right on.

Well, about midnight, there wasn't anybody left, but one or two others. And I was rather too stubborn. I felt we should pray on about one or something.

I guess everybody left. Well, I didn't make it. I prayed and prayed and fell asleep on the kitchen table.

Woke up at about seven o'clock in the morning. That was one of the first nights of prayer that I ever experienced. So don't feel too bad if you fall asleep in a night of prayer.

You can always have a partner and agree to wake each other up if he's willing to stay on that long. I mention these things because there's a danger that you think you're too young to really be involved all out in this kind of spiritual revolution. But we were only 17 and 18 at that time.

I think I was 17 and a half when those meetings were born. The original name of this work, which very few people have ever even hardly heard of, it was very, very dull. It was called Christian Youth Committee.

Dear me! I only found that out when I saw the picture of the original Dodge truck that went to Mexico and had CYC on it, Christian Youth Committee. The story of the first campaign in Mexico is a very interesting one, and I tend to drag it out. I have to try to condense it.

I went to college right here in Tennessee, Presbyterian school that I thought was evangelical. It had been evangelical. It had gone completely neo-orthodox and liberal.

They mocked any kind of biblical Christianity. And there in the province of God, oh, I tell you, the province of God, I met Dale Roton. He was a year older than I was.

I was warned about him. I hadn't been on campus a week, and I was warned about Dale Roton. I was a freshman.

I was green. I had only been converted about a year and a half, two years. I had already recommitted my life to Christ.

In that summer, I still had one of my businesses, this firefighting apparatus business, and I drove an old truck all the way to Las Vegas selling firefighting equipment. And it was in Grand Canyon. My mother told me, no matter what, don't you dare go to California.

So I only went to the border and came back. But I remember in Grand Canyon, does God ever speak to you through natural beauty? I tell you how we should thank God for the natural beauty of this country. I have been all over the world, and the natural beauty of this nation is completely beyond me.

And Grand Canyon, and that park, Zion National Park north of there, I tell you, you just can't believe it. And I went out on the edge of one of these rocks. I love rocks and mountains, and I just recommitted my heart again to Jesus Christ.

I had actually chosen Maryville College because they still had dancing. I was a fanatic dancer. And some people, I remember some Christian tiptoed up to me, and the Christians in the high school were a little scared of me.

They didn't know which way I was going when I got saved. There were only a few of them. They all seemed to be scared of their shadows.

And they said, George, you know, we don't believe in dancing. I don't believe in dancing. I had never heard anything about not dancing.

Billy Graham hadn't touched that in that message. If he had preached that I had to forsake dancing to come to Jesus Christ, of course I would have said, forget it. You know, it's amazing how God is so gracious with us on our weak points.

And I found this verse in Psalms about dancing. Boy, I took that Bible. Look, buddy.

But it was that summer just before going to college, around that time that I recommitted my life there in Grand Canyon, when I went to my own sister's wedding, and they wanted me to put on a little dance exhibition, rock and roll, and was just coming in. We were more or less still jitterbugging. That shows you how dated I am.

And that was just going out, and the twist, and rock and roll, and all this kind of stuff, which is really, really, really fantastic. It's good I got out of it. But at that wedding, when they asked me to do this little dance exhibition, I thought, Lord, is there anything better I can be doing than this? Is this really the way to demonstrate your life? And I went out into the woods outside that--it was a bar, really--and I prayed to the Lord, God, is this thing, this dancing, got such a grip on my life.

Is this really right? It's often, you know, man can't do something. It takes God to break in. And as I walked back from the woods, my atheist grandfather, who I'd never witnessed to, walked out of the bar.

He was very upset. Somebody upset him. He was an excitable man, I tell you, my grandfather.

And for the first time, I had a chance to share something of Jesus Christ with him. And it came together in my mind, this is the better thing to do. Every minute, sharing Christ.

Every minute, the work of the kingdom. I don't think I ever danced again. It was a real big experience of my life.

Anyway, I arrived at that college with all the dancing. Every day, they had dancing after lunch. And I never did dance once.

But then I met Dale Roton. And Brother Dale, I was warned about him. And they said, boy, watch out for this fellow.

He's baptizing guys in the shower. And they've got these extremist prayer meetings going on. They're praying for everybody at the dances, and they're praying for all of us sinners.

And the people used to go by my door at college, and they'd sing, Jesus saves, Jesus saves, green stamps. They'd laugh and go down in their room. We had many pre-ministerial students.

Most of them were agnostics. Pre-ministerial students, big gigantic pictures of nudes at the end of their bed. I thought that was the new liberty.

Some of our seminaries, this was true 20 years ago, 17 years ago. Who knows now what it is? One of the first places they take you when you get to the seminary is down to the special rooms underneath the seminary where the fellows and girls shack up together after the parties. Seminaries.

Anyway, there at college, I met Dale. I remember when we first talked, we were walking back from a little Presbyterian church. And I knew here was a man who was just completely sold out, hungry for God.

And almost everything he said, everything he did made an impact on me. Then he introduced me to one or two others. He introduced me to a Hungarian, he was thinner than I was.

I tell you, this guy, put your hand around his chest. He almost died as a Hungarian refugee, but all the love of Christ. This was another major influence in my life.

The love of Jesus he showed. It was a beautiful thing. Beautiful thing.

And I met just a few others. And I remember one night we got on a bus. Now I had been distributing literature house to house, but I hadn't caught the vision yet of just giving it everywhere.

No, on the bus. A little bit, you know, I was a little bit reserved, my own funny way. And I remember getting on the bus with a few of these other believers.

And bang, two of them moved down the bus, giving out tracts, and I just sat there, wow. And I, you know, I was still a bit of a phony, and I, you know, I just immediately said, oh boy, give me a tract. And I moved down the bus, you know, as if I'd been doing it for 20 years.

First time I ever gave out tracts on the bus. I never stopped after that. We went into Knoxville.

Knoxville is one of the most significant cities in my whole Christian life. I used to hitchhike to Knoxville every, almost every weekend. Worked among the people in the bus station, and among the trunks, and then with Youth for Christ a little bit.

And then that one time we were on the bus, we were going to visit two elderly people living outside Knoxville called Mom and Pop Goodman. And they lived in a little old lighthouse. Funny little place.

I never met two people in my whole life so totally given over to world missions. I just can't. Both of them have to be with Jesus.

That one night in their house was just another major influence. It was in that house that I heard the testimony of Boston Trotman on tape. It hit me like a ton of bricks.

It was in that house that I heard about the great work of H.C.J.B. It was in that house that I saw these two people with pictures of missionaries throughout the entire living room. Every inch was covered almost with pictures of missionaries. And they were praying, and they were praying.

They had to come back from Latin America because of health. And they were just totally given over. They had a few of us students out trying to warm our hearts for missions.

So many influences God uses in our lives. It's amazing, isn't it? You've had many of you the same experience. We started to pray together, a few of us at Maryville.

I started to work in the local jail. I started to work down among the down-and-out children. And I started to read more and more Christian books.

Christian books in the first year of college just began to come into my life. There had only been a few before that time because I was very much out of the evangelical stream. I remember when I got my first Bible and was told that I was allowed to mark it.

I didn't know you could mark a Bible. And I remember almost when my first pen marked my Bible, and I started to mark this Bible. It was in those first year and a half in college that I received the foundation from the Lord.

Forever went to Bible school of the orientation tapes that are listened to to this day. I went through and underlined all specific subjects. Every verse on love, and then listed them.

Every verse on unity, and listed them. Every verse on prayer, listed it. Every verse on this subject, that subject.

I had a big, long piece of paper I put on my desk, listed all these verses. And I thought, this is God's direction. And then in God's mercy, I was able to take a correspondence course on soul winning from a movement that unfortunately went completely screwy, and the director committed adultery and married his secretary.

God used that little course on soul winning to challenge me to win a specific number of souls a week. It's true that I probably lacked knowledge. It's true that I probably did some of this in the flesh.

I think a great danger in our thinking is when we become black and white thinkers. You're all in the flesh, you're all in the spirit. I tell you, my life is a long history of being in the flesh and the spirit many times at the same time.

You say, wait a minute, I never heard that before. Well, you can study it. But sometimes it's true that I forced people to accept Christ.

I had learned how to sell. When I went into the Knoxville bus station after studying my lessons on the correspondence course on soul winning, I believed, you say that's not scripture, but I believed that God was going to give me souls. And I tell you, I must have offended a few people.

I tried to listen to everybody, but sometimes perhaps I was a little rough. But almost every week someone came to Christ. Almost every week or two weeks someone in the jail came to Christ.

I'm sure some of them were not real. I kept the list of those people. This is 19 years ago.

I'm still praying over that list. I have it written. I have it in a little book.

One of my, the most important principles of my whole life, and I yearn for it to be true of this whole movement, is that every person who comes into your life for any length of time is significant. Not every person is significant, but you can't do something for everybody when you start meeting a lot of people. I remember Jim Shemansky, the first young man to accept Christ in that jail 19 years ago.

I wouldn't be able to give you his name if I didn't remember it. Unfortunately he didn't make it. They shipped him to Nashville, Tennessee.

He went on for the Lord for about two years. He even opened the door for me to preach in the state penitentiary in Nashville. And then through a lot of upsetting experiences in the prison, he backslid.

And in my early Christian years, the most devastating, life-shaking things were connected with the people I thought I had led to Christ when they backslid. Just shook me. And I saw that five percent of the work was leading a man to Christ.

I saw this before I was 20 years of age. And 95 percent of the work was follow-up, building a loving relationship with that person, feeding him on the Word of God, showing him you cared, laying down your life for him, being walked down, being spit on, and just keep giving and giving and giving and giving. There are many other lessons that I learned back there at Maryville College, Tennessee.

Significant that we're back in Tennessee tonight. There's not time to tell them. And I saw that God worked through prayer.

And I saw and believed that this was the main thing, must be the main thing in my life. I believe I was 17 or 18 when somewhere, I think it was my own room back in Jersey, that I said to God, only one thing I want in life, I want to learn to pray. I want to learn to pray.

This seemed to be the key thing. I saw this in a number of ways, especially in the life of Mrs. Clapp, the lady who prayed me into the kingdom. Well, I remember Brother Dale was an unusual person.

And in some ways we were going separate ways. He actually fell in love with a girl around that time after he convinced me completely of the bachelor life. Because my life was a bit interwound up with women before then.

And I really decided to lay off this for a couple of years. A few weeks later, old Dale fell in love with this girl. And they spent most of their time memorizing scripture.

And I wanted to get out and go to the jails and go to Knoxville. So we didn't go out too much. But he continued to be a major influence.

And when God put it on my heart to go to Mexico, that's a long story. I haven't got time to tell. I went to Dale and I said, Dale, look, would you come to Mexico? Well, he had already signed up in summer school at Wheaton.

He was already getting out of Maryville. He was a good student, very bright. But he wanted to get out and go to Wheaton College.

But he agreed to go, and we only then could go in August because he would be in Wheaton during all of July. So in July, I worked with the Billy Graham campaign, just from the local area, as I mentioned to you. And then God had given me a Christian roommate.

Of all things in that school, I had a born-again roommate. And he became one of my closest friends and went to Mexico with Dale and I in August of 1957, about two years and a few months after my conversion. I haven't got time to tell you all that happened, how we got that first ON vehicle.

We had nothing. We had no money. I sold my fire extinguisher business, most of it, and sunk the money into Christian books.

I slowly was beginning to discover Christian books. So while Dale went off to Wheaton to study, Walter, my roommate and I, decided in our own home area, in the daytime, the Billy Graham meetings were at night, were to go house-to-house with Christian books, in our own town. Not only did we sell books, we made a profit of about four dollars an hour, selling Christian books to non-Christians and Jews.

And don't let anyone tell you you can't sell Christian books. We used to load our car and go door-to-door, and what exciting times we had. God gave us some prayer partners.

And in those days, some of the men who became our prayer partners are still on the board of directors today. They've stood with us 17 and 18 years. When they first agreed to come on the board, which is a year after what I'm just talking about now, that was a miracle.

We bought this old truck for \$150, a 1949 Dodge. This was 1957. I tell you, it was old.

And we trusted God. He supplied finance in strange ways. I even got a job teaching Spanish.

I didn't even know Spanish. And I got about five dollars an hour for teaching Spanish. But God was a funny fellow.

He had about 25, 30 cats living in this house where I had to go teach. And boy, I tell you, interesting situation. But I remember praying.

We were constantly praying. We were having more extended prayer meetings. We were also showing films locally and trying to win souls to Christ out of our home area in our high school.

And I remember once driving the car. My father had an old Pontiac. I was driving it down the road, and a fox darted out under from the bushes.

And I just stepped on the gas a little bit and hit it. \$30 bounty. I think it was \$30 I got on that fox.

I don't know if they still pay these things. This was some of the first money God was supplying for this work. Now, I'm not, I am not exaggerating.

There are people here like Livingston who know. Been listening to the story for 10 or 15 years. Wait till I tell about him, boy, you're going to really get knocked out.

But God was showing us that he worked through prayer. We were only kids. We were teenagers.

We're just, I guess, starting to go into that ripe age of 20. I thought by 25, you're out of date. Man, I looked at people, 25 is too old.

Too old. We need young people. Interesting.

Now we turn people down because they're, well, is he old enough? You know, we look out some of the years are young. May God deliver us. Well, we went to Mexico.

The vehicle exploded on the Pennsylvania turnpike outside Harrisburg. I didn't know much about vehicles. My whole relationship with vehicles over the years has been a nightmare.

But even as we pulled out of my driveway in New Jersey, we had some literature. We had all the literature from Moody Press. We're going to pick it up in Chicago.

We were told we'd never get across the border. We were told every negative thing you could think of. We wrote to missionaries, several wrote back, hopeless, impossible, don't come.

But this missionary, John Beekman, said, come. I had met his sister going door to door in Midland Park, New Jersey. He said, come, come and stay with the Whitcliffe Bible translators here in headquarters.

Boy, that was a wonderful letter. Praise God for a few open-minded people. Short-term work was almost unheard of in 1957.

But God had put it on our heart. We didn't even know what short-term was. We weren't even thinking about what it was.

I was just asked to fill a huge document for somebody doing a PhD on short-term work. I could not answer one question. What were the social implications that led you into short-term service? What were these implications that led? I couldn't answer the questions.

I wrote the guy and said, look, man, this is beyond me. What led me into short-term service? But God worked, and we prayed there in Harrisburg, and we spent the night in a skid row mission. Do you still call them that? I'll never forget that night.

This place, we didn't want to spend any money. We didn't have any, hardly. We were praying for an engine.

We'd been giving out tracts all day in the station, the railway station. It's a good spot for evangelism. We went into this skid row mission.

I don't think I've ever told this story. And the guy wanted me to take off my clothes, all my clothes right there in sort of public. And he put a sheet over me.

I don't know if you've ever been in these places. You know, they're afraid you have lice. And so all my clothes went off, and I got in the sheet.

He said, the dormitory's down there. And I walked down these stairs, creaking stairs around the corner. There were about 100 beds, triple-decker, you know, dark, little light in the corner.

Boy, I was a bit apprehensive. Cost us a quarter, I think. Anyway, I finally got in a bed, and I was just about going to sleep, and somebody started shaking my bed.

You're in my bed, kid! What are you doing in my bed? A car exploded out on the highway, and this guy's shaking my bed. I'm dressed like an angel. I tell you, I wanted to quit.

And you'll have your experiences in OM, too, when you want to quit. I tell you, when you lay down at one o'clock in the morning after a night of prayer and discover you're in the girls' dorm instead of the boys, it can be a pretty heavy experience. But this is why I preach so often on the rest of faith.

Anyway, God worked. He supplied a rebuilt engine. God touched some people's hearts who only found out about it by, almost by accident.

Perhaps this is a little sad part of the story, but the man who put that engine in, Henry Rudak, was a relatively, well, wealthy man. He drove a Cadillac in a big construction business. What happened in those days so hit Henry Rudak? He was never the same again.

He sold his whole business, and this is about two years after he gave us the money for that engine. He launched out to Bolivia as a missionary at fifty-some years of age. And he was flying missionaries, doing a tremendous work for God with his plane.

He got all the licenses for flying at that age. He developed this skill. Flying missionaries all over Bolivia and evangelizing.

It was only this year, a few months ago, that Henry, with four Bolivian nationals, got lost somehow in a cloud, or I don't know, made him in vertigo. I don't know what happened, but he was taken to be with the Lord. And it's people like this, really, that we owe a lot to.

In fact, he was the man that paid for those original Gospels, I can say it now because he's with the Lord, that paid for those original Gospels to be given out in high school. I want to tell you, don't despise prayer partners. And those of you who don't actively seek out prayer partners in the coming days, you're missing one of the major principles of this movement.

I acknowledge that I was weak back then. I knew I couldn't do it myself, and God gave me men like Henry and others who are living today, and others who are with the Lord, and they stood behind me in prayer as I went forward in fear and trembling. While we got to Chicago, we picked up the Gospels.

We headed down to the border. We prayed so much about crossing that border. In those days, Mexico was semi-closed.

They were stabbing people for giving out tracts in Mexico in 1957. Men would sweep down on Protestant orphanages with torches burning to the ground. We don't discuss that much anymore.

They were hard days for the Mexican church. Persecution. The persecution of the Christians in Mexico made the church grow and grow and grow.

Anyway, the man who was to inspect our vehicle was completely drunk, sort of looked into this old vehicle, this black truck, looked like a hearse, and he said, go ahead. The next morning, we were in Monterey, and we were giving out tracts in the middle of the street, and I tell you, I can't explain to you what happened to us in that first summer. That's why I'm so convinced in taking teams of young people out summer after summer.

I must admit, my flesh gets very tired of it. I've been to 16 or 15 June conferences, and I get everybody mixed up. I'm a far more sensitive person than perhaps anyone will ever know.

I live at any conference like this, I live in perpetual frustration. I hate to forget people's names. I like to meet with everybody.

I'm embarrassed to walk even down the corridor. You think I'm the big strong Christian leader prancing around here? I'm almost scared to walk in that dining hall every day. I hate to tell you that.

It'll be harder tomorrow. Because there's so many people, and I feel sometimes self-conscious, and I want to meet and talk to everybody, and I used to in the early days of the work, there were six people, ten people, a dozen people. You could relate to them all.

You could know them all. Now the whole thing seems to be explosively out of hand. But the thing that has helped me in that is just a simple knowledge.

It's not my work. I'm just a tiny, tiny, tiny, extremely tiny little part of a great work, and so I ought to relax and just pedal on and paddle on and proceed forward in my faith. But in that first summer in Mexico, we saw God work.

I remember going into my first Mexican prison in Monterrey. I tell you the way those men were living. I just couldn't believe it.

I didn't know anybody lived that way anywhere in the world. Made the Nashville State Penitentiary look like a palace. And God opened the door.

We played gospel recordings. I was just learning to speak Spanish. We played gospel recordings, hundreds lined up behind the truck, listening.

And I saw that young nobodies who couldn't preach, who didn't know a thing, could be used of God. We had dozens profess Christ in that first campaign. We only had a month.

We had some problems as well. We got sick. A standard part of missionary initiation is sickness.

We were all sick up in the Whitcliffe Bible Translator's headquarters. I remember John Beekman coming up to visit to us. John Beekman is one of the first heart tracers ever put in a human being.

They said he's supposed to be dead 15 years ago. He's a man I mentioned this morning that just had this stroke. His biography is written up.

Hidden. Is it hidden? Parallel? Parallel by choice. Anyway, he has this thing in his heart.

When he came up the stairs to visit us sick fellows, boy, this thing started to thump. And he was leaning over looking at us. You don't know whether it was a time bomb or what.

And he explained this little thing in his heart. Praise God for that man. Read the book if you get the chance.

Well, that was the first summer. We came back and disbanded. Dale Rothau went to Wheaton College.

And I don't think I ever thought of going to Mexico again necessarily or banning together with any of us. There had been nothing organized. This Christian Youth Committee had only been in something in New Jersey to show films and work in the high school.

I went back to Maryville College for another six months. With my roommate, a lot of things continue to happen. There's not time to tell it.

The Lord led me in January that year to transfer to Moody Bible Institute. I hardly knew what the place was. I didn't even know what a Bible Institute was.

But it was in Chicago. My heart was in evangelism. I wanted to evangelize.

I wanted to go to Chicago. And I found a school in Chicago. It was Moody Bible Institute.

Little did I know all that God had planned in his providence. The providence of God is one of the greatest truths in all of the Bible. The young man to pick up my suitcase when I arrived at Moody Bible Institute, the president of the student council, was a young man named Jonathan McCroskey.

He was there in the hallway. There's no room for me in the school. They put me in the YMCA.

I became a chaplain of the YMCA, which was an insignificant, ridiculous task because they had hardly anybody ever come to the chapel. And it was in that ministry because I went in January because I was in the YMCA. I got a burden for the men in the YMCA.

I didn't have to do that. The school wasn't even happy about it, but my heart was pounding for the souls of these men. I cannot tell you how the Holy Spirit had gripped my heart concerning souls in that day.

I cannot explain. I do not have the same intensity in the same way. I'm glad it's not necessary.

And that quote I read the other night explains that. But I wanted to reach these men and so I went the extra mile and I decided to rent some Moody science films to reach these men in the YMCA. And I went up to the seventh floor, wherever it was in Moody Bible Institute, and I heard there was a Moody science film section.

I want to get one of these films. Now I can tell you, let me just insert this, perhaps the greatest struggle in my life was girls. From the age of four, I am not exaggerating, because I wasn't yet in school and I can remember standing outside of the window of the grammar school that I was going to go into next year, the primary school.

I was going to go in first grade or kindergarten next year. I remember standing outside the window waiting for a particular girl to come to the window to sharpen pencil. It's because of experiences like that that at 15 I thought maybe I was sick.

Even at 20 I thought I was still sick. I found out there's a few other men had the same problem. Of course, it wasn't linked with sex or anything like that.

It's just sort of this infatuation with this other species that God had created. God had dealt heavenly with me. I must lay off the girls.

I got in such confusion after I was a Christian. We're always proud of the sins we did, we committed before we were Christians. What about all the things you did since you were a Christian? Well, I made some pretty big messes.

It's also when I led one girl to Jesus Christ and I ended up in such a necking party with her in front of Washington Monument that I just wouldn't want to tell you the details. She fell in love with Jesus and George at the same time and it was one big ugly mess. Brothers, don't mix your soul winning with your passion.

It doesn't work. You will not advance the kingdom of God. I tried it.

It doesn't work. God really scorched me and really hit me in that experience. Anyway, girls have been out of my life for a couple of years, two years at least.

I went up to rent this science film. Of course, there were about seven girls at Moody at that time that were bothering me. Man, I can't even explain it.

But I was running around. I was going around the opposite directions. I was, you know, Joe Batchelor.

And man, there was a chick sitting behind this desk renting films. Man, she's my wife. Trina, I think my wife should stand.

She's so shy. She's always sitting in the back. You've got to stand up and make sure who you are.

Thank you. The moment I looked at her, I knew she won't marry me and she won't go to the mission field. She was too pretty.

And I had this conviction that none of the pretty girls wanted to go to the mission field. And I tell you, at Moody Bible Institute, there weren't 15 pretty girls in the whole institution. They all looked like they were going to the mission field.

So I said to, I said to my, to Trina, I was very bold. I said, I think the second time I went up to get some film strip projector or the film, I said, I bet you're not going to the mission field. She was a bit taken back by that.

I've had her spellbound ever since. But she wasn't in love with me, I can assure you. Only God could ever do that.

Anyway, that's another story, another chapter in the book. But believe me, if you just get on with the will of God, if you get on with reaching men for Christ and get your eyes off the women and all that thing, he will bring that girl into your life and vice versa for the girls. And if I had tried to figure out who I could ever marry and all the rest, it would have never worked.

A number of times I could have got so easily involved with the wrong girl. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. I did everything actually in the coming months after that to scare her away.

Even though down to my heart, I was absolutely knocked out. And because I knew that even though I was emotionally wrapped up, that if God didn't break into it, it was of no value. We went to Mexico again and the work began on a permanent basis in the summer of 1958.

God, because of the laws of the United States, because a few people were beginning to give money, as we planned to go back to Mexico, we incorporated Ascend the Light Incorporated in the spring of 1958. And these men, in fear and trembling, decided to serve on the board of directors. That summer we had several major prayers that a bookshop could be open, correspondence school could be open, that faithful nationals could be disciplined.

The whole burning passion of the work from those earliest days was discipling individual nationals. That the work in any country would be done mainly by the nationals, not by us as foreigners. We would back them up, encourage them, supply them with literature.

And we must have prayed again and again and again. God would give us at least one faithful man. It's all we wanted, at least one.

That summer in 1958, God gave us Baldy Maraguilar. He's with us to this day, running his bookshop and his radio broadcast and his preaching ministry and other things there in Monterey. I'll never forget another crisis experience in my life when I went out to a garbage dump in Monterey to preach.

People were living in the garbage dump. They were eating garbage soup. I never saw so many flies in my life.

There were literally millions of flies. We picked up babies. Three-fourths of their body was covered with flies in their mouths, in their ears.

I asked God, I cried out to God, how can it be that I have had so much? Living in middle-class Snobberbia with everything I ever wanted, every gimmick, every gadget, car when I was 17, more clothes than I could wear, and God just began to hit me. I think that that was a major experience in this area of wanting to live on the barest essentials, of not wanting to any more exploit the poor and the poverty stricken of the world through consuming more than I needed. Another experience was when I heard a missionary previous to this at a little church here in Tennessee, a man who described the situation in Africa, and how he picked up a little baby and pulled out a worm about eight feet long out of the baby's stomach, and how he saw so many dying and suffering in ways beyond the imagination simply because there was no medicine, simply because God's people didn't care.

And I wept many times. I don't want to be one of those selfish, middle-class, I don't know what adjective to add. I came back again from Mexico.

We saw God answer prayer. He gave us Balimor. He gave us a shop.

We were in college at the same time studying Spanish. The correspondence school opened. We just saw so many answers to prayer.

The first gospel radio broadcast went on the air. It had never happened before in Mexico. We had asked God to do it.

He did it. We were told it couldn't be done, but God did it. Well, we were getting old by then.

We really wanted to get moving. Boy, I was I was really at the bit. Boy, I tell you, the moody course was three years.

I thought, Lord, impossible. I'll never exist here for three years. I'll go out of my head.

So I managed to do correspondence courses in the summer and on my spare time, and on my dates with Drina, we studied correspondence courses, and I got out of there in two years. And I went back to Mexico. A lot of things happened in between.

I was running out of time. There were Christmas crusades. Pretty soon there were two dozen of us going down instead of three or four.

And about that time, Wheaton College got plugged into this. I went out to see Brother Dale. He had become very intellectual, and he was memorizing scriptures.

His eyeballs were coming out on the floor. He was wearing glasses, memorizing scripture, and he was fanatic for Wycliffe Bible translators. And I went out and had a meeting with him, and he made further influence on me.

In fact, very shortly, he ended up baptizing me, not in the showers, but in a little gospel chapel in Wheaton. He was being influenced by a little movement known as the Brethren. This was to be another major influence in O.M. And I began to share again the vision and the challenge of Mexico, and then it was the next Christmas, Brother Dale, I believe, decided to go down to Mexico again.

He had bumped into some rather interesting characters. One of them was a guy named Greg Livingston. Greg was a bit skeptical about the whole thing, but he decided to at least favor us with his presence at one of our conferences, the first full conference down on the Mexican border.

And then he went down to Guatemala. And I'll never forget Brother Greg giving his own testimony. And they had the vision for books.

And I don't know whether that story is true or not. I think it is about the little red wheelbarrow or little red wagon. Brother Greg there in sophisticated Wheaton was pulling his little red wagon around, selling Christian books.

But they became extremists. Some of the rumors against the work grew out of Wheaton, not out of Moody. We were more balanced.

But they started to forsake everything they could get their hands on. They wanted to forsake even other people's things. But there are some interesting stories.

And I don't know all that's truth. I know that they took half of their breakfasts. They only ate the perishables and all the cornflakes and the cereal that they carried out of the cafeteria.

You can imagine this happening at Wheaton College. And pretty soon there were a couple of dozen students carrying all their cereal out for Mexico. And they were stashing boxes and boxes of cereal.

Then started clothing started to come and they were selling that and forsaking a lot of things. And pretty soon they were down to one suit each. And then the president of the freshman class resigned.

He was supposed to spend a thousand dollars for a fountain, a new fountain. It's so important for Christian colleges to have fountains. Who ever heard of a Christian college without a fountain? So they added a fountain and he said, this is it for me.

His letter to the class resigning is written up in true discipleship, signed RM. And this was the explosion. This was, this was too much.

Then he was going around with only one suit. Everything was going down to Mexico. People began gossiping and criticizing stories.

True, we made mistakes. Has there ever been a movement of the Spirit of God where there haven't been mistakes made? Excessive zeal. God was keeping his hand on it because we had prayer partners, because we were reading Christian books.

In order to try to keep the students calm, they started switching suits. One brother one day in one suit. People were beginning to be relieved.

Oh, they're coming into more balance. And a lot of other things could be told. Why were we doing this? Because we were completely convinced that this book was the Word of God.

And we were literally trying to follow this book. Isn't it amazing that anyone who literally tries to follow the Bible gets ridiculed and mocked? You study it for yourself. Dale wrote down by then, had one-third of the New Testament in his memory.

He was doing evangelism. He was assistant to his professor. He also got his master's degree at Wheaton.

He wasn't just sitting around. He's not an intellectual, intellectually backward. But God was dripping his heart about the world.

And we saw people fight for gospel tracts in Mexico. We saw that 70% of the people in Mexico had no Bible. We saw that millions at that time had not even a gospel or a tract.

How would we dare? How could we dare waste money back in college when we're having three or four good meals a day and everything we could want? How could we waste more money when that money could print tracts and Bibles and gospels, support national workers, open bookshops, put radio broadcasts on the air? And so this was the impetus that brought us in to this lifestyle. God had to balance it out. And if you didn't hear my message on balance, maybe you shouldn't listen to this one.

When I finished at Moody, I got married and I headed for Spain. Before that, I spent six months in Mexico discipling nationals and all that. We saw some beautiful answers to prayer.

By then, six bookshops, by the time we left Mexico, six bookshops were open. It was on the way back from Mexico. We met Greg at the border.

And from the very, very early days, it's not been one man. I, of course, know my own story. Every brother has his side of the story.

But from the very early days, it wasn't one man, but it was God welding together a team. One man had a bigger mouth, but God was welding together a team. And I just so feel so convinced about teamwork.

I feel the key thing in missions is relationships, relationships with one another. If we get down together, as it says in Corinthians, if we're of one heart and of one mind, I tell you, nothing can stop us as we use the weapon of prayer and the Word of God. And so from those earliest days, we started spending a lot of time together.

We practiced walking in the light. A major book came into the movement at that time called Calvary Road. And another book earlier than that, Passion for Souls by Oswald J. Smith.

These books were to temper and mold the whole movement. Other influencers like Dr. Alan Redpath at Wheaton, I mean at Moody, Moody Church, and others who came to Moody Bible Institute to preach, like George Duncan, molded the movement, helped to balance us, humble us, and things began to explode. It was in 1960, I sailed on the old Queen Elizabeth to Spain.

I was completely ignorant of Spain. I was told nothing could be done. I was told what we were going to do was foolish.

But God had put Spain upon our heart as the next step. My ultimate goal was the Soviet countries, though my greatest burden was to challenge other people to the Muslim world. The Muslim vision had already been born in depth before we left Moody, mainly through studying books on missions.

Then I got out of the library and through talking to missionaries from the Muslim world. I remember men like Lionel Gurney coming through. He's still burning on, a bachelor for God, 60 years of age.

He's just in my home in London, going on another world tour to pioneer more countries. God worked. Back from those prayer meetings for Islam and those nights of prayer at Moody, there are people in every continent in the world today.

A very high percentage of the people that were caught in the early flame of this movement through Moody are out on the mission field. Exciting. I remember one young man, Phil Parshall.

He came and he said, George, I think the Lord's leading me to West Pakistan. Through the flame that was burning at Moody at that time, through the prayer group, he caught a vision for Islam. I said, look Phil, I think you ought to pray about going to East Pakistan, which was totally, totally unreached at that time.

He's now the director of perhaps the largest single mission in Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan today. To try to shorten the story, we hit Spain in the fall of 62. I arrived in France, bought the oldest car I could get, drove down to Spain from Paris.

It exploded in the mountains and we got another engine. I arrived in Madrid as my wife flew in, six months pregnant, our son to be born three months later in Madrid. We knew almost no one, but we knew God.

Within three days, we started sending out the gospel through the post secretly. On the second week, God gave us our first full-time Spaniard. Four weeks later, he quit.

Gonna knock me out when that happened. Three months later, we opened the first Christian bookshop in the whole of Spain. It was a Catholic Bible store.

We opened it in the center of Madrid. The Christians couldn't believe it. And students, young Spaniards, began to get excited.

In the summer of 1961, I went off to the Soviet Union because this was my burden. I'd been studying Russian in Madrid while teaching English and starting to work there. I got arrested in Russia because of my own stupidity.

And I came back from Russia convinced that we weren't ready for those countries and that we needed something in Western Europe. I was in a day of prayer and fasting, maybe only one meal, and was up at the top of a tree in southern Germany just praising the Lord. I don't have a theology of timing trees, but I just like to do it.

And I was praising the Lord. And as I looked across Europe, I thought of my wife's father who had been killed in the war. I thought about Germany and locked her armies against Britain and America.

And that's where the name Operation Mobilization came. And it was there in the tree. God gave me these two words, Operation Mobilization.

I said, what? What is the Lord trying to say? Up to that time, we were just planning to send a few brothers to the Middle East. About ten students, including Dale, were on a ship on the way to Spain and were going to leave in a few, in a month or two. We were thinking mainly the Middle East and Turkey and the communist countries.

And God said, no, Western Europe first. He also showed us that Americans were not to do the job. Europeans would do the job.

They would move across their own continent like two mighty armies, the British and the Germans and the Swiss together, reaching, mobilizing, training. And then it would spill over into the Muslim world and the communist world. That has been exactly fulfilled.

There's not time again to tell, but we went back to Spain. I went back to Madrid and I took a group of Spaniards. I think there were seven of them.

I took them to the mountains of Madrid for a weekend of prayer, waiting on God. And I presented them with this bizarre plan, that they, as Spaniards, would lead an army of Europeans to invade France and several other countries. These Spaniards had never been out of their own country.

Their own country was closed. And in my broken Spanish, two hours per sentence, I was trying to explain that God was going to use them to shake the whole of Europe for Jesus Christ. You know what? They believed it.

There's nothing like young people to believe that they can do something. And this is one of our greatest problems as we get older. The gangrene of unbelief creeps into our hearts, and we know better, and we're more sophisticated, and we know more theology, and more eschatology, and more of all the rest of the gangrenes that can drag you down into unbelief.

And so these Spaniards said, we can do it. Two weeks later, the little group arrived from North America, Dale and several others. Paul Troper was in that band.

We had our first fall conference there in Madrid. I tell you, God, the heavens opened in that conference. We were out in the middle of the fields, just praising God.

Next minute, we were on the floor. I remember once playing the Messiah, and we were all just on our faces, worshiping God as we listened to the Messiah. Meanwhile, Brother Dick Griffin, who just put his head in the door, went down to Mexico to hold a fort there with Baldy Maher.

Greg began to take over the work at Wheaton, which was beginning to explode, and to begin to think about mobilizing an army for the summer of 1963. In 62, there were very few Americans. There was no charter flight, but God gave us 200 Europeans.

People said, even missionary leaders, you'll get 20. It'll be a miracle if you get 20. We had no transportation.

We had no money. Nobody knew who we were in Europe. But God did, and they came from the churches.

I arrived in Britain in February of 1962, and by June of 62, we had 80 Britishers who were ready to move out for Christ. Fifty percent of the people who took part in the campaign in 1962 are serving Jesus Christ somewhere in the world today. There were 200 of us, and yet 25 million pieces of literature went out across the continent of Europe.

It was an incredible thing. Truckload after truckload. There was not one single mechanic.

I knew more about mechanics than almost anybody in O.M. at that time, and we had 15 old, broken-down vehicles. I remember driving the whole summer. A five-ton truck.

I was petrified. I remember the water started coming out of the block, up in the mountains of Italy, and the thing was overheating, and I sent the men off to separate villages. We had three million tracks to get out.

This was mainly a mass track campaign. That's where we got that reputation. It's stuck with us ever since.

One crusade. We did that in 62. I remember this water leaking out, and just crying to God, what can I do with this thing? And I couldn't speak Italian, and I went in the garage.

The guy didn't even want to talk to me. Get that thing out of here. You've never seen a truck like this.

We got it in a junkyard in London, and so I used to chew gum rather intensely. I took this girl, stuck it in that crack, and it held for several weeks. You can see my time is already gone, but the whole summer was just one answer to prayer after the other, and I just insert this.

None of it would have ever happened without that little girl sitting in the back. I was a bit rough as a husband. You wouldn't believe it.

You wouldn't believe it. She was seven months pregnant. I said, get in the truck, man.

We're moving out. She did it. She never even complained.

She complains more now, but she never even complained, and I said, look, honey, I got something to share with you, and she never wanted to be a leader. She's always been quiet and shy and all that. I said, I think you got to take over the team.

Take over the team? There were about 15 girls on this team. The fellows were out on squads, but there were two other fellows. I didn't feel they could be the leader, so I said, you'll have to take over the team.

I got to go back to Paris. I went back to Paris to get more recruits to have the August conference, and I left the team with my wife. I gave her about 50 villages to cover and five cities, and she moved up with this team along the coast of Italy.

I came back later and met her in northern Italy. Story after story, I could tell you it's true. We were young, only your age.

We were scared. We made mistakes. We couldn't even drive these trucks.

We just steered them. Here we come along. We had so many accidents and vehicles exploding and wheels falling off, and yet that first year in 62, hardly a single person was hurt.

We rode the voodoo again in Madrid in the fall of 62, and all we could think of, remember talking to Federico, our Spanish leader, was multiply by 10, multiply by 10, multiply by 10. That was God's burden. We're going to multiply everything we've done this summer by 10.

We're going to go to 2,000 people. We're going to go 110 some odd trucks. We're going to go to so much literature.

We knew God was the God of the impossible. Of course, souls had been saved. Some of the very leaders in the very campaign had been saved just a year before, like Christa Fisher Eicher, who's now married to Ray Eicher in India, came from East Germany, got saved in Madrid.

And so in 1963, we prayed for this massive effort, the 2,000 young people, to put out 200 tons of Christian literature, and yet slow down, do more personal work, book selling, cover the villages, more discipling. By then, Greg was moving in North America, and recruiting, and ready for the first charter flight, an old propeller plane. I don't know whether that was the year that it took off, and then had to go back to land again because something went wrong, and they had to drop all the gas out in the Atlantic Ocean, and everybody's looking out the window as the gas is floating by the plane.

And I tell you, we just prayed as this plane came chugging across the Atlantic. People thought we had gone mad. We knew about the New Tribes mission that had seen two airplanes of missionaries crash.

We thought, what if that happens to us? Tremendous fears came upon us. Worry, fear, tension. In fact, I remember that first truck I drove down to the coast.

I went into a state of psychosomatic, uh, fixation, whatever you call it. I had started to ache, especially as the truck, the timing went off. It started to explode as we crossed London Bridge of all places, and we were late for the ferry.

The last vehicle in the line of cars had an accident, and suddenly I felt tremendously tense and headache. And I had a crisis experience in the cab of the truck. My wife, I think, can remember.

I just realized deep, deep in my soul, this is God's truck. This is God's work. My worry might tension, my fear will not add one bit.

And I remember in moments, or within the hour, that headache went away. And I came into a relaxed position, even though we missed the ferry. Yes, God held us together.

We were weak. We were afraid at times. We overstepped ourselves.

In 63, He gave us those 2,000 men. We invaded 90,000 towns, 90,000 towns and villages with the Word of God. We moved into Spain.

I get a little hazy on that. It was either 63 or 64, but we moved into Spain with a massive effort, even though it was a semi-closed country, and people were in and out of jail in many, many cases. And on and on the story could go.

Of course, most people thought it would all fizzle after that. A lot of mistakes were made that summer. By the end of the summer, we had broken down vehicles in almost every part of Europe.

We had no headquarters. We had borrowed the European Mission headquarters for just July and August. We couldn't have it in the fall.

We rendezvoused in the fields. We were living in the fields like gypsies, praying, God give us a place. We found an old place in Switzerland.

How are we going to get the broken down vehicle to Switzerland? I don't forget that. We found that the Swiss didn't want these old vehicles, especially if they didn't run. It's an insult.

We found we had to get these vehicles somewhere. The winter was coming. The big push out to India, and we found a guard post, a checkpoint on a hill.

We towed the vehicles to the top of the hill. Then the tow truck would back up, and they'd release the emergency brake. These big old beat-up trucks would roll down into Switzerland, and they'd stop at the checkpoint, pull the emergency brake, all put the passport, immigration, look over the truck, okay, release the emergency brake, no motor, and into Switzerland.

Meanwhile, I went to the north of England to find a conference center. All we could find was an old house that people told us was haunted. After we moved out years later, no one ever did move in that place again.

But we were so crowded that they were sleeping on the same floor where we had the conference, where we had the dining hall. Everything was on the same floor. They kept clearing it up, clear the beds up, bring out the tables, clear the tables up, bring out the chairs, and that's where the vision more for India was born.

And when dear brother Greg came, he wasn't sure where he should serve, and I said, I don't know how I gave him the challenge, but I said, Greg, you're going to India. We weren't quite as organized, to say the least. And God knew this little nobody, this little pastor from Aspen, Colorado, he wasn't a pastor back then.

In fact, if you had gone to him then as an O.M.R. and said, a brother Greg, like Frank Dietz did one time, I think I'm going to be a pastor. Livingston would have given you 25 reasons why you can never go be a pastor in the United States. Well, he is now a pastor in Aspen, Colorado, but it shows the way God works, because he will soon be launching out again in God's timing.

And I just can't forget how God used brother Greg in India. We were told it would never work in India. No one would join us.

There's no future, no life insurance, no salaries. Indians will not have it, except the unemployed and crooks and thieves. We averaged two thieves for every team in the early years.

We had so many things stolen, I tell you, I thought we were on a relief program. And it was doomed. It seemed totally doomed in India.

So many problems, so many cultural barriers, but we kept praying and we kept working. And soon God gave us a few nationals and we poured our life into them. Today there's 170 full-time nationals in India.

I don't think there's any major thinking missionary in India that wouldn't say that this little work of the Lamb has been one of the greatest historical mission works in the whole history of India in the past 20 years. And then it was the Middle East and Turkey and many other places. I just can't, I just don't feel free to tell you more because of the time.

God, the same God that worked through this feeble group of nobodies is with you this summer. We need the same recklessness tempered by love and by balance. We need the same vision, the same desire to press on when everything's impossible.

The same victory over our emotional problems, the same willingness to suffer, to pray and finance. We ran out of money so many times. Not only were we operating on a shoelace, we couldn't even find the shoelace.

In 1963 we were in debt \$70,000. It was finished. It was finished.

We decided to stop eating for two days. Hardly any food was consumed, especially by the more mature people. We cried out to God and I remember a night of praise.

It was, it was midnight. We were praising the Lord. The money had not come in, but we, we just felt the money was coming.

Somehow we decided not to move out. We have a fixed policy, you know, we don't move out in September or with all, unless all bills are paid, up to date. We stop everything.

We've, seven years at least over these years, we've stopped everything for days and just waited on God. Praying and praying and praying, didn't tell anybody about it. God brought him in.

And at midnight when we were singing praise, the letter that had come seven hours before from Holland, winding its way around the confusion, got to the Dutch brother leading the Dutch prayer meeting upstairs and he came running down the stairs as I went running up to the meeting to tell him that the Lord had given us a spirit of praise and they should praise the Lord. He ran down the stairs, I ran up the stairs and he said, brother, 9,000 Dutch guilders, the biggest gift we had perhaps, perhaps had almost in the history of the work. And after that, it just, it just came in.

If you think this is all coincidence, thousands of, of experiences like this over the years, then you're going to have more faith than I have. God answers prayer. God will supply finance.

We still had a lot of debts and yet in a miraculous way, we had one gift, the largest gift in the history of our work. It has never been matched except perhaps this morning. In 19 years, we had a gift somewhere around 60 or 70,000 dollars.

You couldn't, I mean, you couldn't imagine what that did to this movement. When we were bankrupt and people were screaming at us for not paying our bills. We were praying and we were fasting for a long period of time.

The first teams that headed out for India, it was torment. Mumps hit the headquarters. People were chewing at each other.

The Americans thought the British were in sin and hindering the work. This one thought that one was in sin. They even decided to have a foot washing meeting because they thought there wasn't enough humility and one brother wouldn't let anybody wash his feet and oh, they can, people, we had at least a dozen people quit.

That was one of the great purges of OM, 1963. In the fall, just a month after that, came this huge gift of 60, 70,000 dollars and almost every single bill was wiped off. And from that day to this day, it has just moved like a mighty rushing wind.

There's been problems, heartaches, disappointments, beyond words and still some mistakes. But God, always with us, always forgiving, always accepting, always loving. Your God, my God, Acts 29.

We want it again this summer. We want more this summer. We're more ready this summer than we were back then.

Now we've got a ship. We've got 200 vehicles ready to roll. We've got 30 mechanics around the world who've been working hard for a year.

Things have exploded so much in the literature department in Bromley, Kent, where we distribute an average of a ton of literature almost every week around the world, exporting to over 75 nations. We've had to put a computer in there just to handle the invoices. Yet though we may have a computer there and though we may have a ship and though we may have a truck, our confidence is not in these things.

Our confidence is not in these things. Though we may have a few headquarters, we still hardly ever buy any property. We're not interested in putting money in property, but our dependence is in the Lord.

It's got to be. We'd rather sell the ship. We'd rather cancel the crusade than move out in the arm of the flesh.

This is why you cannot come to us to join an organization. You must go out, sense of God, and if you don't sense today and tomorrow that God is sending you on this campaign, don't go. If you're just joining us, if you're just coming to soldier for a summer, don't go.

But if you sense the call of God as we did in those early days and even to this present hour, if you sense God is leading you, God is with you, then go. And may God be with you. Let us pray.

Lord, you know our hearts. I apologize to you if I talk too long. I just carried away when I think of your mercy toward us as such a weak group of sinners.

And I thank you for every man, every woman, every prayer partner who's poured his life into this feeble effort. But Lord, again, we're out of Mount Everest as we think of a second ship, as we think of the problems of keeping Lagos going, as we think of the tons of literature that are needed, as we think of the hundreds of workers that you've committed to us and all the incredible things like the legal case in Istanbul and the fuel crisis and petrol at two dollars a gallon and so many things. God, we are cast upon you.

We are cast upon you. We are so weak and we're so scared like the little truck driver with a headache going down the hill. But you are God.

You can put it all together and you can put us together and we'll give you the praise and we'll give you the glory. Do not allow this movement to become a monument. Do not allow us to be sidetracked.

Do not allow us to just settle for anything less than your best power from on high, spiritual reality, answers to prayer, lives being changed, people being helped, sinners being saved, people being cared for, disciplined, loved, trained. Lord, do it again. Do it again and again and again in our own lives.

For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21137.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/the-birth-of-om/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net