

The Challenge of Muslims in Europe

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon addresses the urgent need for focused evangelistic efforts and prayer to reach Muslims in Europe amidst various challenges.

Duration: 40:51

Scripture: Ephesians 4:3

Topics: "Muslims"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of the audiovisual department in spreading the message of God. Despite its low profile, the department has made significant contributions, such as purchasing copies of the film 'Unlocking the Door of Islam' and distributing them to teams and ships. The speaker emphasizes the need for more opportunities to present the challenge of Islam and mentions speaking at Keith Green concerts as a way to recruit potential followers. The sermon also highlights the growth of the work in Pakistan and the significance of literature, films, and tapes in spreading the message of evangelism.

Transcript

I think there should be a regular French program. And I'm sure you're praying and working on that for the next few years, certainly in the area of follow-up. I think there should be a follow-up, continued evangelistic thrust among Austrians and Belgians.

I'd like to see us do something small but specific in Denmark. I think we should continue a summer thrust in Italy, in Spain, Southern Ireland. And I think we've got the leadership and we've got the experience to be able to do both.

It will mean, of course, in some cases, if one particular field has some really big plans for the next few years, they would have to be willing to sacrifice that to some degree because we would have to focus in on this. I don't think we're just going to find a miracle team that's going to come and put this all together. I think it has to be done within the individual countries as a vital part of the strategy for their country.

And in my talks with most of you personally in the past, you seem to indicate that this was also your desire. Well, I wish I could be with you at this time. I know each one of you has things to contribute on this.

And I know that we're never going to get, you know, perfect little lily-white agreement. We're men who have now been in the battle many years. We have strong ideas.

We may also, I'm sure I do, have some strong biases, some strong prejudices. We may even have areas where we've been hurt or we feel we've not been consulted or some other area where subtle forms of pride can come in and affect our decisions and affect our spiritual balance. That alone can enable us to make a really heaven-sent objective decision about this important matter.

In closing, I want to say I don't believe we can throw aside our united decision that this is also these coming years a time to lay the foundations. I personally don't see how we can go ahead, even with our existing programs, much less this new one, which, of course, would not necessarily represent a terrific increase of numbers in the summer. It may increase.

I hope it will increase. In terms of the year program, it will represent a shift of numbers, not such large numbers in France. It would certainly be one of the factors.

But I think all of this is linked with strengthening the foundations in our offices. In the area of computerization and even in terms of leadership staff, we've seen some significant growth and breakthroughs. There's still some big challenges there.

But I think when it comes down to the grass roots in terms of typists and office workers, especially skilled workers but not exclusively, we have a real man-sized challenge. And I don't see the burden some of us have to see a crash typing course in August to prepare people for one or two years in our offices as something separate from a decision to move ahead with this strategy in France or with this strategy in Belgium or with this united strategy among Muslims. I see it as something that is completely linked.

And I really would appreciate your prayers as I try to give a lion's share of my time and effort to building the foundation, existing relationships, which are crucial, relationships on every side, just doing everything and anything possible to lay the foundation so that we can properly process the applicants, so that we can follow up on the ex-O-M-ers and the graduates, and so we can deal effectively with the wide, overwhelming range of communication that we are dealing in our basic centers from all over the world. Thanks so much for giving me this privilege to share. It is a great privilege to be able to be on a team together with men and women like yourself.

If there's no women in your meeting, I certainly hope there are, carry my greetings back to your wives. Ministry in all of this is far more significant than we will ever be able to outwardly see this side of heaven. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you for this unique means of communication through this little 35-pence used cassette tape. We thank you for what we have seen accomplished through cassette tapes over the last 20 years and the reel-to-reel tape before that. Show us how the cassette tape and the videotape and every other means that you've given us can play a vital role in this full-scale evangelistic thrust to reach these 27 million Muslims of Europe.

We especially think of those locked behind the Iron Curtain, and it just seems overwhelming, the challenge of that task and of those unreached people's group. And we pray, Lord, we cry out for our thrust into the Eastern countries that it may receive greater help from all of us in the coming years, and especially those Muslims who are locked seemingly behind double doors of culture, of political extremism, and of religion.

Lord, we thank you that though we feel weak and inadequate, though we sometimes feel Satan is just hassling us and trying to confuse us and trying to discourage us and trying to bring disunity, that we have the shield of faith in which we can stand against those fiery darts of the evil one.

And, Lord, whether it's a fiery dart of disunity or pride or self-pity, whether it's a fiery dart of unbelief or laziness or midlife muck, that somehow we'll go forth triumphantly in your name, claiming the victory, until every person in this world is presented with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and until that great harvest of souls is brought in and those living churches, worshipping centers of converted, on-fire people are multiplying and functioning in your kingdom and in your way. We commit all this to you. Lead us, Lord, day by day in intensive prayer.

We know if any of this is going to become a reality, it's going to be through prayer, it's going to be through laying our lives on the altar of intercession and experiencing new depths of prayer and travail of soul that perhaps we have not yet experienced up to now. Oh, Lord, teach us to pray. We're aware that these weapons are not carnal but are mighty unto you to the pulling down of strongholds, even these strongholds that have gripped seemingly one little less than one-sixth of the whole world's population.

Oh, God, what a burden. It's too much for us. It's too much.

Because with it we have the burden for the man right down the road. He may be an Englishman, he may be a Frenchman, he may be a Belgian, he may be an American tourist. We're a burden for the whole world.

Lord, you alone know more of how hard we find it when we've got different visions and somehow this work has come into being in a way that we don't have just one vision or just one area of the world, but we've got India and the whole subcontinent with a billion souls and we've got the two ships reaching out in its powerful training and catalysts and evangelistic ministry to almost every nation in the world. And we've got the burden for our own home churches and our own home nations, even Canada and America and Australia and New Zealand, Sweden, Norway. Lord, we believe you can hold this together.

You can give us the flexibility, the brokenness. Lord, we know we have to appropriate the flexibility and the brokenness to be able to move ahead simultaneously under the guidance of your Holy Spirit in these different burdens and these different visions and enable us to do it in oneness of heart and unity that we may demonstrate biblical New Testament reality on every turn. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. The remainder of this tape is just a sermon sent from one of my home churches if someone wants to listen to it. But since this is an original tape, I'd appreciate it being brought back.

You can make some copies if you want, but brought back so that I can make copies. I appreciate any correspondence that I can get from any of you and look forward, of course, to getting a time of fellowship with Peter Maiden when he'll share with me what all of you have discussed. And, of course, I know there'll be some notes as well.

I look forward to seeing you in July and August conferences and other times. Just to say that any time, especially when I'm here, any of you brothers would like to spend one or two days here in Bromley, I have a place for you to stay or your whole family. We would really welcome you.

A lot is happening here. We'd love you to come and share with us and be together with us in God's timing. Thank you.

I would also just ask you to do anything possible to get leaders trained in preparation for the summer. I know that there is a shortened version of the leadership manual in the pipeline, but I think, meanwhile, we need to use the existing manual. There's a couple thousand in Belgium.

Together with these five cassettes, especially for people that have been on OM before, but anybody who's in a leadership position, on those five leadership training cassettes that I made here in Bromley, I cover a lot of basic issues, especially important material on the goals and aims of OM as a movement. I hope perhaps when you're traveling by car or doing something else, you also could listen to those five cassettes. I'd like to get a little more feedback.

I always appreciate feedback on any of the cassette messages that I've been circulating. I'm trying to get some new material out that I've done recently. And if you, of course, in your national language leadership manual editions could produce some leadership tapes in your own language to go with the manual, that would be really great.

Even when the shortened version of the manual is produced, I am going to continue to try to get people to study the longer edition. I hope that we can ultimately revise and update the longer edition as well, but we've got a couple of thousand of the existing editions. Anything like this can always use improvement, but I think we need to make use of what we have.

A lot of these things in the leader's manual, even some of this material in this tape, we take for granted as leaders. We've heard it so much. But a lot of new people today, even new leaders, are missing some of these basic concepts and ideas, and then they have trouble sharing and presenting it to others or answering sometimes the tough questions that other people are asking.

So I'd appreciate any effort you can make along that line. This is the beginning of the year, and it's great to give out little requests and pray, and we believe in that. But I'd like to lay one of the greatest burdens that's on my heart, on your heart, some of you already have it, maybe even more than me, because it will enable us to even focus our praying.

One of the greatest problems we have in OM, though it's a blessing problem, is that OM is not one thing. I gave a very important message on this at the conference. I'm not sure, it may have been the last week, and if some of you would like some of the messages from the evening of the last week, we can get them.

I talked about God's strategy, an OM strategy. There's a lot of fuzzy thinking about OM strategy because it is unique. OM is not a carbon copy of something that came before.

And in this strategy, we brought out how there are certain major emphases, like right now we're trying to emphasize the Muslim world more, and yet we already have the ships, which automatically are a huge emphasis. And now they tell us, and we agreed on it, this year is the foundation now. Now we're going to suddenly emphasize the foundation.

Now as we get a new burden and a new emphasis, what happens to the old ones? They keep going on. And we try to emphasize in that message that God has led us in each one of these fields we're involved in, and that as we go into new things, we don't want to neglect the old things. We may change them.

We may even be led of the Holy Spirit to make big changes as we did in Spain and Italy, but not generally to totally abandon something that the Holy Spirit has been doing. And we then try to give a little clarion call for places like Mexico, which isn't a Muslim country, and it isn't the most un-evangelized country in the

world, and yet the Lord led us there, and things are happening there. I just talked to Dave Hicks on the phone about some of the blessings in Mexico, and I'm trying to work out in my schedule to visit Mexico City.

But early in this decade, we announced that we wanted, by the grace of God, to make this a decade of Muslim emphasis, of emphasizing the Muslim world. And we'd like to carry that on at this time, including right here in Bromley, that in our prayer meetings, we continue to have this emphasis. In our literature distribution, we continue to have this emphasis.

We produce some tremendous leaflets, books. A lot of material is now available. We need more.

But often even what we have doesn't get distributed as well as it could. If everybody had this vision, then there would be seldom a literature table where there wouldn't be something that could really emphasize the Muslim world. We even resurrected my old booklet, *The Challenge of Islam in South Asia*.

The story of that, supposedly it was going to be 20 years ago, a chapter in a book for Moody Press. They asked me to write it. And the book was never published.

So we published the chapter on our own. And now I've just republished it. And it's amazing how many people even within OM don't really understand all that's happening and all that's available if they have a little vision, a little get up and go to move forward.

And I hope that this burden, as I share it with you, will help in that direction both in praying and in action because I don't think we should share one from the other. In trying to emphasize this decade of Muslim emphasis, it came to my mind that if you're driving a car down the road 30 miles an hour and you increase it to 40, most people would not notice it. Even sitting in the back seat you might not notice it, much less standing on the road.

I think OM's Muslim thrust as we came into the 80s was going about 30 miles an hour with a number of dangers that could have moved it back to 20 miles an hour and further. And we decided to sort of have some kind of program, some kind of challenge that people could somehow see. And with that we declared this decade of Muslim evangelism.

We didn't, I'm not sure, get 100% unity about it. And we certainly have, in wrestling with so many other things, we certainly have failed to drive it deeper into the fiber and the being of the whole OM body. But I think we have shifted from 30 miles an hour to 40, but it's a little hard to notice.

And I thought before I share some of the challenges for prayer and some of the really devilish opposition we're having to this forward thrust, I might just mention a few of the victories, a few of the answers to prayer that we have seen that are very, very encouraging. It's easy to take things for granted. The Berlin team.

Just take for granted. It's going to just go on and on and on. Well, when I visited Berlin and visited that team two years ago, I tell you, I was a bit shocked because in fact it's a tough team and that year hardly anybody on the team was thinking of permanently going on into Turkey.

There were a couple because they discovered that it's tough and they felt that wasn't their calling. This has been the history of OM's thrust into the Muslim world that we get a lot of young people very enthusiastic. But when they see what it's going to cost in terms of perseverance, they see that some Muslims don't

come to Christ even after praying continually for them for one year or five years.

They don't come. All kinds of problems come, even doubting the very faith. One man that we sent to Turkey many, many years ago is not even a Christian today.

So let's not take for granted that somehow the Arab team is still going on in London and now has expanded its satellite units to Belgium and to Italy and that the Berlin team is still going on, though very locked into a separate culture and out of the mainstream of OM with Larry Oren carrying the leadership all these years in that same difficult city. Last time I was there, I think it was only a mile from the Berlin Wall which is enough to depress anybody. So let's not take for granted what the Lord's done over the years and even these last few years as there has been a definite increase and some definite breakthroughs, though some of them may be small.

You know, one of the most significant messages at the conference was from the leader of the work in Pakistan, a Muslim country. And you know, one of the reasons he's still persevering out there in the Muslim world when others have returned is because he has this concept and that is to think positively and to see the little things that God is doing that may at times go unnoticed, especially if we're studying it from a distance. And certainly the growth of the work in Pakistan, all of which has been in the last three or four years, is one of the most exciting breakthroughs that we've seen as we move forward with this vision.

And we want to thank the Lord for that and pray for that even today. The 70s within OM, though the Muslim vision continued, the 70s was definitely an era of ships. And toward the end of the 70s and early 80s, I haven't got all the dates, we had even thought of the third ship, which brought no small amount of trauma into the OM body and in which we had to wrestle things out.

Where are we going? And as leaders, we decided we can't go everywhere. And that now that we've emphasized the ships and we want to continue to emphasize the ships, because you can't start something that big without continued emphasis. That by the grace of God, we wanted the 80s to be an emphasis for the Muslim world.

We felt we don't need new projects. We don't need new countries to any large degree. We don't need to buy a gospel.

Somebody came to me again, have you ever thought of airplanes for Christ? I get that question almost every couple of months. Yes, we have thought of airplanes for Christ, trains for Christ, buses for Christ, donkeys for Christ, but we feel that this is the decade to somehow reinforce the existing work, no matter how unglamorous the Muslim world may be, and to throw our time and effort and talent and those STL profits into the Muslim world. Now that fits with the original vision of STL profits, which was India, because there's 100 million Muslims in India and it's one of the areas where we've reached the most Muslims.

We've given more Muslims the gospel in India than all the other countries almost combined and have done the least to follow it up, because you need specialists. And one of the victories of this emphasis is that there's now a nucleus of young men wanting to return to India to work only among Muslims. Just as this seems to be becoming a reality, we talked about the new strategy in Katmandu this year, the visa thing, which would provide the foundation to do this, hits us on the head like a runaway train.

Let's not, however, be discouraged by that. It does mean a change in strategy. It does mean that even for in-depth Muslim follow-up in India, we are going to have to count on the Indians more than we had just

eight months ago in Katmandu.

That's something we need to keep in mind. Keep also in mind that as we went into the 80s, South America was born and going strong. Also, there was a strong push that we begin a major assault in the Far East.

And Taiwan, Korea, Japan, many other countries were coming into the OM with Muslim binoculars. With this coming at us from different sides, miraculously the Lord gave us unity to make this emphasis of Muslim evangelism. This decision has enabled us to make many other important decisions within OM, including the decision to stop quite a few things.

Now that may be only the initial stage, but you see, unless you clear the way for what you want to do, you won't do it. So some of the implications of our challenge for the Muslim world and this strong emphasis, some of them have been negative and some people haven't liked it. But God somehow has continued to give us unity and we're going forward and we hope that everybody in broadly especially will have this vision to help forward this burden, this challenge, whatever name we might give it.

The first step in this emphasis is linked with what we're doing right now, prayer. And there was a proposal set forth. I looked at the old coordinator's minutes from 1982 and there were some proposals made which actually I don't think they ever got completely agreed upon.

They were in some ways general goals. We couldn't force people to do these things. But we presented it as a challenge.

It's interesting to look at this and see some areas where we've been very successful, areas where we have failed. This is one of the things we want to pray about now. What does the Lord want us to do right here in Bromley? Because the first step is mobilizing the church and mobilizing prayer.

We have not seen as many recruits, at least for certain countries as we would have liked. But that was not the only emphasis of this thrust. It was to mobilize the church, to mobilize prayer and to bring about Muslim awareness.

Now a lot has been done in that area. There's not time to tell about it. But I tell you sometimes it's like trying to hammer a nail into granite.

And this is why we want to pray even today and why I'm praying this little message will set the pace for prayer throughout the year. A couple of things specifically to think about and pray toward. Meetings and seminars.

We have taken literally thousands of meetings in these couple of years presenting this burden and this vision and seminars. I remember when the ship was down on the south coast going down and I was asked they've got other people better at this than me to speak on the challenge of Islam. That tape is available somewhere.

And we saw you know every time we have these meetings and we give this message it's often a part of an overall message for world evangelism and the prayer cards go out and Operation World goes out and Challenge of Pakistan goes out and the Middle East brochure goes out. There are always some victories and we praise God for that. In fact, there's not a single mission society working among Muslims that has not felt to some small degree the impact of this push because they have got recruits and there's an increase of recruits and during these last couple of years a whole new mission has been born founded by

an exo-emer that is getting many, many inquiries.

They are going to learn as we have learned that not all these people are ready for in-depth, long-term Muslim evangelism. You may not feel that's your cup of tea but believe me and this is one of the purposes for this plea and it is a plea what we do here affects this vision more than almost any other field because the vision was partly born here partly born in this environment wrestling with all the information all the challenges even the gospel submarine for evangelism in depth. We need your commitment.

The audio-visual department which as Ian shared with us at least from his sharing seems to be leaking and limping has still had a major contribution. The purchase of three or four copies of the film Unlocking the Door of Islam some copies of which have been used again and again and again other copies of which suddenly end up on a shelf and then I think it was even put into video cassette. There is much more going on in this little AV department than probably anybody knows because it hasn't a high profile because the work the real action is out on the teams it's out on the ship it's out where they get these videos and they get these films and they get this material only a small part of it is back here where it's visible.

Let's pray for more opportunities to present the challenge of Islam. You know the Keith Green concerts that I have to speak at I have to speak about going into all the world. They're not going to give me any other choice.

That's great. And I tell you there's potential recruits there. We've been battling to keep the bookstalls.

Last minute we almost lost the book tables. They wanted to take it back and we held out because we want to be able to put some of these key books that are on our hearts about the challenge of Islam. I'm not saying anybody would oppose that on these tables and push.

I just read in the STL leaders' minutes that some of these unreached people's prayer cards have dropped is that to ten pence? Because we're trying to sell them for one pound fifty I think when they first came out. We want, just on a memo hundreds of those prayer cards. The vision of the prayer cards is key in presenting the challenge of Islam as they emphasize to a great degree the unreached Muslim lands.

Literature, tapes, leaflets, even that printing press downstairs which we should be able to get a printer for all can have a part in this emphasis. And you are involved in that. Do not detach yourself from this vision.

If you are NOM you are part of the Muslim emphasis. And what you do faithfully enables others who may be more directly involved to do what they have faithfully. Some of you are selling books to book shops.

Do you try to get book shops to take any of these books about the challenge of Islam? Not generally the fast selling books. I don't know how well Goldsmith's book going with his name that should be a top seller. So literature, books, leaflets, prayer cards, operation world, many other related things are all part of extending this vision.

And then of course I touched on it. Films, also speakers. We've had many into our conferences like Charles Marsh, Lionel Gurney, Tom Brewster, who of course maybe Maynberg isn't just a Muslim world, but his tool is directly linked.

Contextualization and how to learn languages and really get among these people made an enormous impact. Working that out on the field of course is more difficult than listening to the lecture in Belgium and there's an ongoing discussion about that. Praise God for the new slide sets that have come out about

different Muslim challenges like Pakistan.

But sometimes they just sit. It's a great burden on my heart and I hope that we can all put our hands to the plow in a firmer way and go forward. As you know we launched this decade and it was a very personal thing to me as well as a group thing.

I made four major trips into the Muslim world. One in my little Ford which now Bob Hitching is the owner of through the Middle East and we produced a Middle East prayer film that wasn't quality enough for wide distribution though it has been continually used. And then I took the North Africa trip and the letter I wrote from North Africa some have written to me has been one of the strongest challenges they've ever had for that part of the world.

I don't know if any of you have seen that letter but I was broken to pieces riding across Algeria when I dictated that memo that went around the world and then the two trips again into the Gulf area and last earlier this year three months out mainly all in Muslim countries. From this we released a whole series of tapes again part of the ministry here that have gone all over the world. and yet at times we had no money even to pay for these tapes and I cut back.

Alec Brackett had to increase the price on the tapes because he was in financial difficulty and I was demotivated though we still sent them out. We've had tremendous response. I don't think we can ever measure what God does through literature, films and tapes that go out right from here.

And to me this is one of the most motivating things about being involved here. A quick run down on some of the growth we've seen actually in the work. I think it's normal for the first couple of years of this kind of thrust that foundation laying, literature, communication, recruits, stirring of hearts.

It's been a tough battle. There have been some victories at the same time out in the fields. A phenomenal growth of the work in Pakistan despite many assaults from Satan and a number of people who now have made a decision through their short term in Pakistan to go life term, long term in Muslim evangelism there or somewhere else.

The victories and the growth of the work among the Afghans. Again, something that just is a name within OM, serve for a few people is a lot of work and a lot of money in a very indirect form of evangelism because it is legitimate relief work. It's the first major relief work that OM has ever been involved in.

Why do we do that when generally we don't go into that kind of thing ever and leave that to others? Why? Because it's a leading unreached Muslim country that's been on our heart for 28 years. That's why we rolled the policies down the river and started a relief work, giving it a different name, pushing it outside the OM technically even though most of the people are all OMers. And it's been a rough, tough, long term battle.

And right now Gordon Magney desperately needs a couple of long term right hand men, both in administration and evangelism there. Praise God for what has been done as we move forward to do more. The growth in Bangladesh, the decision even recently to increase the number of longer term nationals discipling Muslims and church planting among Muslims.

The increased thrusts that we've had in the subcontinent. Several major, major thrusts have gone among Muslims. In OM with all the things we do, it goes almost unnoticed.

Big push recently among the Bengali Muslims. At the same time, we still don't have the trained language speaking men to engage in the kind of follow up which is the second stage and the stage we need to move into more seriously in the coming months. Of course, the second stage is not always possible without the first stage.

I think the Middle East and the Arab world has had some of the toughest assaults from the enemy because we haven't been able to get an increase of recruits to any great degree except within Europe. Well, let's praise the Lord for that. Suddenly, Italy has got a team working among Arabs.

London has persevered and seen some phenomenal breakthroughs and now we have even a team among Arabs based in Zaventem. Who would have ever dreamed this five years ago? This is partly made possible when people heard about this. I tell you there was opposition but we could do it because this was the decade of Muslim emphasis and so we tried to, during this period, go the extra mile and when there's four things we want to do, we want to give priority to that thing that touches Muslims, not to liquidate those other things but to try to give priority.

We want to do that financially. We've been able to put tens of thousands of pounds into Muslim literature, especially out of special projects, which then dried up until a couple of weeks ago when we had a nine and a half thousand pound gift for it. Then back to North Africa, as you know, we now have a small team going into Nisha again.

I think one of the exciting things about North Africa have been the interest that others now are showing in that area, including Spanish-speaking people working among North Africans, especially some who know a little bit of Spanish in places like Utah. That's an encouragement. It's small, but it may be the beginning of something bigger.

Of course, as we go forward in this, at times it's really almost overwhelming. What have some of the setbacks been that we can pray about? Number one, the lack of money. This vision for the Muslim world came simultaneously with the biggest financial crisis in the history of L.A. It's a miracle that survived at all.

We need to pray specifically for money for the Muslim world. Every Muslim country wants more money for projects, except I think Turkey has money. Again, this is interesting.

You get such a great variety of countries, but Turkey has literature money. There are other holdups there. So the lack of funds has been big.

Number two, the lack of prayer. There is a lack of prayer. There is a lack of prayer.

People say, why are the prayer meetings so long? If we don't have extended prayer meetings, we can't even get to some of these places. There are so many different emphases. People always want worship.

We want worship. So we give the whole first hour of the prayer meeting to worship. We need lots of variety to keep up against enemy flack.

The third setback has been the state and the indifference in the church. It really bothers me at times that in OM we tend to, certain OMs, others know, take the blame for everything ourselves. And people really get discouraged, feel everything is our fault.

But you know, as one member suffers, we all suffer. And a lot of people out in the churches, they think we're the most alive, aggressive, sharp thing that's working in the mission world today. Most of us in OM don't feel that way because we see our sins and our failures and our weaknesses and most of us so idealistic, it seems, compared to the task, what we're doing seems so small.

But if you go too far that way and get discouraged, then what you do is going to be even smaller and pretty soon you won't even exist, spiritually speaking. And I feel we must realize the church does not have this vision for the Muslim world. We are avant-garde, we are radicals.

They don't even want us to come. Many church doors are completely closed to me. And one of the reasons is the fear that I will challenge people to go to the regions beyond.

They wouldn't necessarily say Muslim world. To them, anything outside of their own church would be dangerous in terms of their thinking, especially with an interdenominational ragtime, charismatic, non-charismatic, you know. And I don't think we realize how much gossip there is against OM.

What we're seeing in Venezuela is, you know, that's a peak. We see that. The continued innuendos, the gossip, the negative things.

Get back to the churches and they decide they don't want to send any recruits anymore or the Muslim world is too big a challenge, they can't get their people to even evangelize down the road. It's the either-or mentality. We're constantly fighting and it's something we must pray against in a stronger way and realize our responsibility.

Then there's the setbacks through visas, children's education, illness, people being shot at the doorstep, people dying of weird diseases at night. End the setbacks. And we must take courage that despite these setbacks, somehow, we still got these armies in these various Muslim countries all over the world and the reinforcements by God's grace are coming.

Another setback, of course, is the fact there are so many burdens, so many challenges. We are interested in the abortion issue. We are wanting to be good Christian citizens.

I filled out my forms this morning to get my ballots. I couldn't even understand the form, but my faith filled out and I get my ballots so I can be a good American and vote. Who am I supposed to vote for? Maybe you can let me know.

OM is a movement that is trying to preach the whole counsel of God. Now, if you preach the whole counsel of God and you try to live the whole counsel of God, you're going to be a busy person and you're going to be frustrated. How many of you have ever been frustrated with so many burdens, so many things you long to do? Have you ever been frustrated? Oh, there's a major disease on the planet Earth.

Then, of course, another major setback has been the disunity. There has been disunity even within OM. This year was the year of some of the greatest disunity I've ever seen in terms of basic philosophy, not personal, and personality is always some of that, but basic philosophy, basic ideas.

Even in connection with the Muslim world, it's impossible to agree on one strategy. There are many different strategies. There are many different kinds of Muslims.

When David Hicks launched a real heavy challenge in that magazine, OM World, and released it to every prayer partner in the United States presenting the vision of the Muslim world to 20,000 people, of course, there were a few things there for security reasons that shouldn't have been mentioned. The memo started to come on his desk that I'm sure he found to some degree difficult. You see, that's part of the problem.

We're dealing with heavy security areas. One mistake in the literature and propaganda can cause a lot of difficulty. So, one hand, we want to emphasize the Muslim world, motivate the church, motivate God's people, make recruits.

On the other hand, there's still a small voice that says, don't say too much. Don't say too much. And those with a mouth like me that has an ability to get in trouble, it would be easier just to not say anything.

He says, I don't want to get in trouble with the security guys. I've already been in jail for that. The Russians, of course, not the Americans.

So, this is a challenge. And the enemy has continually tried, especially this year, to bring disunity, to bring in used gossip and differences of viewpoint to slow us down. Endless hours, times, days, weeks of discussion to get the ship of God, in a sense, all of O.M. I'm speaking of, back on course.

And I feel that through the last weeks, it's not perfect, but I feel that we more of my soul than I have in a year, a couple of years, that by God's grace, O.M., both the ship side and the land side, is back on course. It's not perfect. And there'll never be sort of simplistic total healing over all that we've been through, because there will be scars.

But I believe that O.M. ship is back on course. And I pray that these two teams here will commit themselves through love and work and Christ-centered living to help keep it that way. And that will enable us to have the greatest forward thrust in the Muslim world, together with the other societies that I believe the church has ever known up to now.

Let's pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21136.mp3>

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