

Third Decade 3.9.1985

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing personal holiness, spiritual reality, and sharing the gospel with others, while also highlighting the dangers of perfectionism and the importance of reality first, geography second.

Duration: 1:17:50

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:14-15, Colossians 4:5-6, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Peter 3:15

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believers being witnesses and sharing the reality and life in Christ with others. They highlight the significance of personal, one-on-one contact in evangelism, while also acknowledging the value of mass and street evangelism. The speaker mentions the need for language study in order to effectively communicate with people from different cultures. They also discuss the challenges of expanding the organization and the importance of consolidating and maintaining a spirit-controlled approach.

Transcript

As I was going in to my third decade of being a Christian, I was converted to Christ in March 1955, and now it's 1985. I reprinted this memo, if you look at the top, 82 and 83, and there's a little introduction, and I said seven years ago, since I wrote this memo, I'm circulating this memo again because I feel that the points presented here are more relevant than ever before. I would appreciate rereading this, you're rereading this memo and praying through it.

When possible, please give me feedback on just one or two areas. I think it's so important both for those of you who are new, how many of you are going into the year program for the first time, not summer, year program first time. That's 80% of you.

Many of our longer term people, by the way, no longer can come back here because of the expense. Others will be coming next week. Others are recovering from 10 or 7 intensive days.

Some of us have been in 10 days of leadership meetings and training. Some in seven. Some have just been able to come to the general council.

The last three days and have had to go back because these different offices have to keep going, especially things like STL, which is a ministry but also has to function as a proper business. They cannot close. The orders are piling up.

Filey, one of the biggest book exhibitions we ever put on in the world off the ships. They need help. So that's a big challenge.

So many of you have not seen this before and I'd like to just go over it together with you because I think you want to know the heartbeat of OM. A brother from a particular country shared with me today, I mainly all day been having fellowship and discussions with various individuals. And he said, you know, in my country, the people seem to grasp some of the OM activities, campaigns, crusades, conferences.

But he said, I don't think he's a long term missionary. I don't think they grasp the spiritual life. He's known OM for many years, the spiritual message.

And we talked about the message of a cross without which OM and all of its activities is worth very little. And the emphasis on real prayer and communion with God and the emphasis on spiritual life and knowing Christ and walking with Christ. And I think that may be partly true in that man's country.

And that's a country where the people don't get to these conferences. It's a new situation. And they don't know yet, too many of them, the heart of OM.

It's possible to get the periphery activities of OM, you know, track distribution, door to door work, street work, even chalkboard, open air preaching. Lots of activities that are not part of the OM. And they don't get to this.

And miss the heartbeat. This memo is a plea to not lose the heartbeat of what it's really all about. So let's just look at it.

I think we'll just go down to the third paragraph. I do mention in the previous paragraph, second paragraph, the work has grown almost beyond our dreams. By the way, the first ship existed when I first wrote this, not the second ship.

So we thought the work grew when the second ship hit us. You know, we went into outer space, especially OM trying to do all of this with such a very small administrative base. Because all of us were involved in preaching and evangelism, minus those faithful secretaries and a few others.

There have been enormous disappointments and setbacks. I think it's good to state that. It's not all victories.

And OM's history is not all victories. At times also, it seems that things are going out of control. And we now have so many different leaders, programs, and countries in which we are involved.

I would like to use a key phrase for these coming 10 years. Consolidated Spirit Controlled Expansion. We found that much more difficult than it was to write this memo.

And we could not get unity on how fast we should expand. And some felt we were going too slow. And some felt, they proved to be the majority, felt we were going too fast.

And that people were getting walked on. And the thing was getting a bit like a machine. And God brought us to the foot of the cross.

And we asked him to help us have more personal care for each individual. And all kinds of seminars and programs have gone on. You wouldn't believe it.

To try to improve in our pastoral care, in our counseling. A number of men took specialized courses in counseling. To have Consolidated Spirit Controlled Expansion.

Growth is perhaps a better word. We want both to expand and advance, but we truly want to be led of the Holy Spirit. And this means an increase of true spirituality through the entire work.

Have you read Dr. Schaeffer's book on true spirituality? I think it needs reprinting. Dr. Schaeffer once came to this conference in the 60s and he spoke for three solid days. We actually put a lot of it on film.

We were the first people ever to film Dr. Schaeffer. It was from that that he got his vision for films. Later became the most widely used Christian films almost in the world among Christians.

True spirituality. Not extremism on one hand, not spiritual duplicity and lukewarmness on the other hand. It also involves an increase of like-mindedness, plus facing our failures and our weaknesses with a new dimension of faith and reality.

And you know, we want to go into this conference on this kind of footing. It was my hope that this memo would go into other languages, but I don't think it ever did because it's not easy to translate all this material. If you ever think that OM is not interested in the other languages, I'd like to have a personal chat with you.

Because as far as I know, no movement in missionary history has pushed more material into other languages than Operation Mobilization in terms of quantity. In terms of variety of languages, it would have to be Whitcliffe and the Bible Societies. So, you know, we believe in those other languages.

And we believe that there need to be more books written in the language, not translations. Books written by Germans for Germany, by the French for France. And we've been involved in that as well.

But this memo, maybe it got into some other languages, but I couldn't find any copies. And this is one of the other reasons this meeting tonight is good, that it's in English. OM cannot do everything.

Every week a new vision comes across my desk. And I'm already known for being almost crazy for taking on too many things. Someday I won't even be able to get into my office, which is becoming a warehouse of all the magazines and memos and books and everything.

People send me from all over the world their vision. The latest vision I've just taken on is the vision of those unreached people's maps. That I couldn't resist, you see.

I bought 500 of those maps, even though I don't have any money, much. I got some credit. There's a field in OM called special projects.

And sometimes a gift is given to me, and rather than just put it into the general working, even though that's always needed, it's sometimes designated to a special project. Like we have special projects among unreached people, special projects for India, special projects for the communist countries. I have some

credit in that special projects.

I don't have any money, any cash. Anyway, I got credit on 500 of those unreached people's maps. And that is a worthwhile investment to get one of those maps.

They are really something. And they're out there on the table. OM cannot do everything.

There are many good ideas, plans, and visions in which we will not be able to get involved. They wanted us to start OM Japan some years ago. I had letters coming off my desk.

And I challenged this one brother, I said, why don't you go join one of the existing missions that's already working in Japan? Praise God, that's what he's done. He's there now. Our burden is to see the total picture with all the different mission agencies, and then find our place.

There are many countries asking us to begin a work. It would be easy to spread out so much that we would come apart in the middle. And that almost happened to OM.

But God was gracious. We got our act together. We prayed together.

There was repentance. There was tears. And we pressed on as one body.

We must keep our main goals and emphasis constantly before us. And isn't it good in the beginning of this conference to just have some of these basic goals ahead of us? You're going to be thinking about your own personal goals. Now, I warn you, don't become too goal-oriented.

We're all different. And we approach this whole thing of aims and goals in different ways. Some people aim too high.

David Seaman's in his brilliant book, Healing for Damaged Emotions, and every copy we had here is already sold out. You can certainly borrow one. There's plenty of them around.

Points out the danger of perfectionism and sometimes aiming too high. For some of you, you're going to feel in the next couple of weeks, OM is over your head. It's just beyond you.

Challenge after challenge hits you, and in seven days' time, you'll be shaking. Learn to just take it a little easy. You know, one of the things that's so helped me here all this week, it's a very intensive week for me.

For a feeble character like me, it's the toughest week of the year. And every morning I've been out jogging. I don't jog a lot, maybe a mile, two miles.

And it's just, you know, you can jog around here in this old farmland. I went by one field, it was all bulls. Thirty bulls were looking at me.

Then I bumped into an Alsatian. It's always interesting when you're jogging. It's best to stop at that point and walk.

But it's so ministered to me, just jogging around these fields, around the woods, burning up some of that early morning energy. You may say, I haven't got any early morning energy. Well, maybe you need to jog later in the day.

But it's great to have some physical exercise. I'm the kind of person that needs to do physical work. It doesn't have to be jogging.

Physical work just helps me stay in balance when there's a lot of sitting. A lot of sitting. So I thank God for His grace.

And I hope we can keep these aims and goals in front of us without becoming neurotic. Number one, to glorify God in a life of personal holiness, spiritual reality. This is what OM is about.

Personal holiness, purity, honesty, integrity, victory. The main thing this coming week isn't geography. It's not really, what country am I going to? One minute you feel you're going to Afghanistan.

Next minute you feel you're going to India. The next minute you hear another challenge, you're sure God's leading you to Israel. Next minute you hear a leader in the Arab world, no, better go to Jordan instead.

And some people really get wound up. They sit next to somebody at the dining room. They're trying to eat a meal and the guy's laying on a heavy trip to work in the office in Moscow.

And he says, you know, isn't it providential that I'm sitting next to you here today? I think Nigel may have a full message on this, so I won't go any further. Just let me say this and you underline it. I didn't have this phrase back when I wrote this memo.

Reality first, geography second. Can you say that? Let's say it. Reality first, geography second.

It really helps a lot. Number two, to share this reality and life in Christ with others, especially on a man to man basis. Now, I didn't put all the scripture references in here because we have messages on every one of these subjects in the ON tape library and in the conferences and we get all the scriptures.

Maybe I should have put more scripture references. But this, of course, is one of our main goals. To share this reality and this life in Christ with others, especially on a man to man basis.

We do a lot of other things in our mass evangelism, street evangelism, but let's not forget that eyeball to eyeball, man to man contact. And for some of you, that's going to mean also some serious language study. Number three, to train men and women for world evangelism, spiritual revolution, for work both overseas and at home, in the streets and in the factories.

OM from its early days taught that discipleship can be practiced at home, in a job, as well as overseas. And I find some OMers are using vocabulary that I stopped using years ago. For instance, I don't easily tell people, you know, I'm living by faith.

Because if they're working in a job, that might communicate, what are they, living by unbelief? It takes faith to get a job, to keep a job, to be a Christ-like employee. That's also the life of faith. We threw this term out years ago and OM sort of picked it up.

I don't like it. Faith mission. Does that mean the denomination missions that pay a bit of a salary? They're unbelief missions.

Or they're salary missions. I want to tell you, some of the greatest missionaries in history have gone out from denominations with a salary. Now, of course, if we're just talking in the way of identifying a certain group of missions, we call them faith missions.

Fine, as long as we understand what we're talking about and we define our terminology. So we're trying to train people for secular spiritual penetration, as well as career missionary work. Number four.

To work with local evangelical churches. And to help evangelists to plant living churches in areas where there's little or no witness. Giving priority to Muslim and other unreached lands.

Remember, this was written in 1975 before most Christians were even talking about unreached people. That's why it would do well to go with enthusiasm to that video on the unreached people. That's why it would do well to at least study that map.

If you can't buy one, I'm sure every headquarters will get one. Because this must continue to be our aim. We have so much more information today.

Someone said to me, oh, I understand OM is now going into church planting. We were in church planting 15, 20 years ago. But it is not our primary goal, especially in the summer campaigns.

You see, there is a choice of strategies in OM. Try to get this. And it's up to the national leader in his country to decide what strategy of OM's choice of strategy that he's going to use.

And he has plenty of freedom. My brother Issam from Jordan, and I hope you'll get to speak with him. We just had a tremendous time together.

He is involved in Christian camps. Now, this was never one of the original strategies of OM, Christians camps. But OM has been involved in that, working with other missionaries in Jordan.

They're not OM camps. We're just helping. And Issam is just on the committee.

He's not the guru, director, chief, but he's on a committee. And that ministry has been greatly blessed of God in the land of Jordan. So we want to work with the local churches.

And that will get us involved in a lot of things. In Nepal, we use our trucks to carry the dead out to the secret cemetery of the believers. They have no vehicles in the Nepali churches.

It's a tremendous problem to get anybody among the Hindus and the Buddhists, most of them believe in cremation, to get involved in this. I don't know if they're still doing it. But last time I talked to one of the Nepali pastors, I used to live in Nepal, and it's one of the most challenging areas of unreached people that OM is involved in.

And Wayne Taves, if you're interested in Nepal, you'll find him very easily, I'm sure. But the strategy will vary from one place to the other. Number five, to engage in mobilizations in which all these goals become reality in our own lives.

While at the same time, millions are reached with the gospel. Does that click with any of you? That was the purpose of these summer campaigns that you've just been through. Double barrel.

Have you ever shot a double barrel shotgun? Boom, boom. I never got into it myself very much. And from the earliest days, our burden was to get young people into a mobilization in which their lives would be changed, in which they would be forced to put into practice what they've been hearing in Sunday school since they were knee-high to their cat.

And simultaneously, to reach millions of people in the process. People say, what is the goal? Is it to reach the millions, or is it to give these people a training program? What a silly thing to argue about. It's both.

It's both. There is a sense in which Satan does not allow any training program. Satan doesn't say, all right, you get some training and learn how to completely destroy me, and in two years, we'll get together for combat.

Satan is not stupid. From the moment you are born again, you are in real combat. This is why I really believe that some of the ideas that some of the seminaries give about training are totally unbiblical and false.

The idea that you're not ready for spiritual combat, you're not ready to do this, you're not ready to do that, you must just come here and study. So most of these seminary students, and I can tell this is the truth, know very little about prayer, very little about the spiritual warfare, very little about the tactics of Satan. So what happens by the time they graduate from these wonderful institutions, many of them are wiped out spiritually.

They may function academically, but they are wiped out spiritually. And I just believe it's part of a con, you know, a trick of Satan to get us to think that there's a period of time in which mainly we're just preparing, we're just training. There is no such period of time given to us.

We are in spiritual warfare. Now don't misunderstand that. Because of our long-range program as young Christians, our priority should be on laying a foundation, study, maybe even seminary if God leads.

But at the same time we must have on the whole armor and we must be in the battle. And I will tell you the greatest mission field, one of the greatest mission fields God ever sent me to was Moody Bible Institute. I went two years to Moody Bible Institute.

Half the students I met were spiritually, as far as I could see, just not functioning. They would hardly ever go to a prayer meeting. They even mocked going out in personal evangelism because it was required.

And in those days anything required, people were against it. And it was there at Moody, Dale and I had already met, we had already been to Mexico, that, boy, I tell you a lot of things were shattered in my life. And that's when I started to use the term revolution.

I was listening to Vance Havner. He's been ministering the Word of God for 53 years. And he was saying the greatest mission field, I just listened to this a few hours ago, the greatest mission field in the world is the church.

You may not agree, but Vance Havner has been ministering 53 years. He was sharing his testimony. Vance Havner began to preach when he was 12.

A number of years later, he dried up. He did a lot of study, a lot of academics, and he dried up. And then God, he got into the novelties, all the new novelties in presenting the gospel and a lot of new theology.

And God did a deep work in his life and he decided to turn away from the novelties and get into antiques and go back to the old-fashioned gospel. Only God knows how many tens of thousands have come to know Christ or rededicate their lives to Christ because of Vance Havner still preaching in around 80 years of age. Reality first, geography second.

The church, to see the church stirred. I was stunned when some people couldn't see any purpose in bringing the Lagos and the Doulos back to Europe for a while. I couldn't handle this because to me Europe also needs revival.

Europe needs the challenge those two ships can bring. Now they're headed away from Europe. Fine.

That gives us in Europe left behind a greater responsibility to follow up, to work for revival and renewal and reality in the church and with the church. And one of our policies or practices we've been engaging in over all these years is to have training weekends, FFA, that dynamic work penetrating immigrants especially from Asia throughout the British Isles hoping to have a new team this year in Bradford where there are 30,000 Urdu-speaking Pakistanis just in Bradford, England. A city that suffered much by the way where that tremendous fire took place in the stadium and this summer they suffered from a gas leak in which people were evacuated and many people were ill.

Other terrible things have happened in the needy city of Bradford. But they have these training weekends in FFA to mobilize the church, to work with the church. Some of the biggest events in the early days of OM were training weekends.

In London we'd have the thousand in a training weekend moving out across the entire city distributing a half a million gospel tracts. And I praise God that again various training mobilization weekends and weeks are being planned. Easter in France, Easter in Germany, Easter in England, Christmas in Mexico.

Number six, to distribute literature in every possible way in connection with other forms of evangelism in an effort of course with other mission agencies to see the entire population given at least some opportunity to know and hear the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers. You will never understand OM if you don't understand that. So if you want to understand what you're getting into get to understand that.

There's an enormous tension between digging in say in one people's group and staying there until you plant a church as we're doing mainly in Turkey for example and among the Afghans and in many many other situations. There's a great tension in that and reaching out not to the millions to the hundreds of millions. But I believe one of the purposes that God has raised up OM for is to reach the hundreds of millions.

And in the number of people that we have given the gospel to we are moving toward the 400 million mark around the That is a perhaps one of the greatest single answers to prayer in my entire life. It is a direct fulfillment of the vision and burden God gave us as far back as the early days at Moody and Mexico. Now because of many many reasons we shifted the early vision of OM which was emphasizing literature much more because a bigger vision even then was training nationals, working with nationals to turn their own nation upside down for Christ.

And that led us to make the training of nationals and then the training of internationals and then the kind of thing that was born in 61 and 62 when operation mobilization was first used as a name. And so the literature ministry became somewhat less but it's still one of the major goals. The ministry of STL based in Bromley, flooding literature out across the world, the French publishing house, the publishing program based in Bombay, based in Lahore Pakistan, many other publishing literature programs, one based over there in Vienna, reaching those immigrants that are coming out of those communist countries in every possible way and all kinds of other things that there's not time to talk to you about.

It's all part of that goal. Number seven, to be a living demonstration of New Testament biblical Christianity, not firstly in word but in life and in practice. One of the things I like about OM is that a lot of things we don't let them set in concrete.

This never became the seven major goals of OM. It's just part of the thinking, the foundation. There are other ways to express our goals.

There's a new leaflet just published, the seven distinctives of OM. In the latter part of the leadership manual, which most of you have, others are more than happy to have a copy if you want one. It's got to be rewritten soon so we want to get rid of these present copies.

You'll find a section on goals and aims of OM and there are five cassette tapes, leadership tapes, that go with that manual and that deal with those goals and aims especially. But let's move on because I want to finish this, give you time to go to that India special slide night. Of course, such gold could be divided and subdivided and added to.

Now we're going to have to just go over this much more quickly and hope that you'll read this on your own. Someone once said OM has got too many visions. By the way, in OM, definition of a vision is not, per word, at two o'clock at night seeing technicolor dreams in the back of the old coach.

By the way, the last trip we took in the old coach, we brought my daughter's dog and I think he's left behind in the coach certain little insects that are now attacking me in the night. I'm still hoping it might only be a mosquito, but pray for us in the coach, three of us living in there. It's cheaper, by the way, when you live out.

If you go pitch a tent in the woods, save a few francs. I don't know if they allow that. All right, in the light of these goals, what are some of the main visions? We stay away from things that might be good, but not our principal ministry.

In this category, we include printing and publishing books. Why did OM just start a publishing operation in every single nation? Takes an enormous effort. France was a very strong work.

They had a vision for this. The Lord led that to be the exception. STL was the other exception, though STL started as mainly distribution, eventually was pressed into some publishing, especially these magazine books, specialized tasks, but generally we work with other publishers and they appreciate that very, very much.

We don't like to duplicate what other people are already doing. There's so much to be done. Then we become stronger than ever on teaching people the life of faith and prayer, teaching young people dependence upon God.

Although faith for finance is only one aspect of the life of faith, glad we were emphasizing that even 10 years ago, in a work like this, it is very important, just as a man is working in the job, it is very important that he arrive on time, that he do his job well, then he will get his salary. So with us, we're not saying we're better than him, but we are saying that if we don't know how to release finance through prayer, it's just not going to work. Please understand that OM is not underwritten.

Do you know what that means? There is no guaranteed money. There is no money to any great degree sitting somewhere, you know how some groups invest money and you live off the interest. Now, if some

prayer partner wanted to put some money in the bank and give us the interest, we're not against that, but we're not doing it or we don't have it.

And it's something very important for you to understand that praying doesn't mean we don't believe, and living by faith, trusting God, praying, whatever you want to call it, doesn't mean we don't believe in giving people information. We have always been very strong on giving people information. We were always very, very hyper-conservative to not give financial information unless people asked.

This was discussed in the last couple years at our general council until we're blue in the face. And finally this year, the Lord has given us a consensus, a unity, that in a careful way, in certain cases, we can mention financial information. We already started that a year or two ago when we sent that little leaflet to your church so they can know because the churches have strongly criticized OM for certain aspects of our financial communication.

And in the coming year, we hope we can be a little bit more down to earth in communicating the facts, especially to your churches. We'll get more about that at some other time. But we want to teach people a way of living and moving and walking by faith, whether they're in Christian ministry or back on the farm.

Number three, we must continue to maintain personal simplicity of lifestyle, also as much frugality as possible in the work. While desiring proper organization, we must run from organizationalism. We must remain more dependent on God and His main method, prayer.

You still believe in that? You won't easily grasp that because naturally OM seems so big. And when you first come, you cannot grasp all that we are trying to organize. You will also see wastage.

Some of you are very conservative with money. You will see people who spend more money. And you'll have people here who wouldn't feel maybe free to go down and spend 90 francs or what on some frits down on the corner stall.

And there'd be other people that would feel completely happy. Hilarious about doing that. I'm glad we have that in Operation Mobilization because otherwise I think the thing might become something of a cult.

Now there's no easy road, but let's beware of dragging into OM, not spiritual principles, brothers and sisters, our own psychological hang-ups from childhood. Because maybe your father never gave you a nickel or any money to buy an ice cream cone, and somehow you developed the idea that that was being spiritual. I almost did.

There will be wastage. Different OM leaders live in different sized houses. They drive different kinds of cars.

Almost all of them are fairly old and inexpensive. There may be an occasional exception when someone is given a little better car. Is that sinful to be given a little better car for God's work? Do God's servants always have to drive around in something that someone else scrapped? I find that God works in many different ways.

People ask why we don't have more new cars then, and with us it's a simple matter of priorities that when we get extra money, and God does give us money, we have a set of priorities. One, the Word of God. Most people don't have that.

To the unreached people, to the millions that have never heard. Number two, the support of an army of national workers as we have in India. Number three, well, I don't want to get into ten different ways that we're using God's money to evangelize films and literature and whatever else.

Number four, we must not become too big and impersonal. We should not measure by size, but be concerned about quality. Some of your teams, it's good to see a few leaders here tonight, they're not going to be as big as you're dreaming.

The key, as you know from years of experience, is not the size of your team, it's quality. I have a secretary right now named Vera. She can do the work of three people.

So that proves quality is she only eats and needs the support of one person. She's a single woman, very little to keep her going. Quality.

Now, of course, that takes time. Vera's been on a limb 10, 15 years. I phoned her today, she had to fly home because her sister is very ill.

My prayer for Vera's sister is unbelievable. Migraine headaches has just been top hospitals, they can't figure anything out. She returns home with these terrible headaches.

Vera Zabramsky's sister in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Well, I don't know, it takes too long to go in depth on each one of these points, but I hope you'll read point four. Point five, we must not slack off in the work of witnessing man to man, door to door.

Every believer is a witness. We don't all have the gift of evangelism, but every believer is a witness. Number six, we must stay in tune with the local churches and the church as a whole.

Sometimes shortcuts I mentioned here can prove to be dead-end streets. Some young people, you know, I'm going to mobilize and get my church to stand with me. I'm going home for three weeks.

Well, you might get a little disappointed. Some of you, maybe before you go this year, you'll only get a week or two home. But if you're going to be a longer term missionary, you may have to spend a half a year or a year at home somewhere, building up that relationship with the church.

You know, Em, that's not, you know, just some kind of secondary activity. Soon as I leave this conference, I get a week or so at home and my wife and I are off for an intensive series of four weeks meetings in Canada, churches, Bible colleges. And a lot of my work is not within OM, it's in the churches.

OM is involved in depth with about 1,000 churches. And that is as key in OM's policy and strategy as all of our great praying, brothers and sisters. Because God uses the church.

In December, I'll be going right around the world ministering in the Gulf and in Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia, New Zealand, and on to Mexico and where else. I was talking to Raymond Koh, the leader of the work in Malaysia. He said, look, what title should we give to your meeting among Christian leaders in Malaysia? The Lord just brought this to mind.

He wrote it down. The local church and world evangelism. So that, of course, is often the title when I speak to Christian leaders.

Number seven, we must be ready to take up a part-time job in order to support ourselves. We must be ready to move back into more crowded and uncomfortable accommodations. You know, the tendency of man is, and we're all human, including in OM, is we like a little bit of better facility.

Even my own living facility, which has always been unbelievably small and usually a community, four families living in one, you know, long, old house somewhere. And then we changed. And as our children became teenagers, we finally got sort of a bit on our own, which we recommend when you have teenagers.

But, you know, God may give us a little better facility. There's nothing wrong with that. But we need to be ready.

We need to be ready. And I tell you, next year, we may not have this conference center any longer. They've now put a limit number of people that we can bring here, and it's way short of what we can do.

And I tell you, we are now cast upon God again, and the years of factories and tents and warehouses is not over. I remember having this September conference once in one medium-sized church, and that wasn't so many years ago, in London, everybody staying out in homes and churches and basements. That was, no leader had an office.

There were no special rooms. I mean, it was wild. I remember meeting one group in the back of a bus, having meetings.

I remember the 63 campaign in Paris when everything was intense, and when it rained, the entire women's tent dormitory was flooded out. They came running out at night with their wet sleeping bags. How many had wet sleeping bag experiences this summer, or wet rain experiences this summer? Any of you? Yeah, it still goes on.

Not so much. More churches. We've been involved in starting some of them, so now they welcome us to sleep in them.

By the way, an in-depth relationship in OM with a church doesn't mean sleeping in it. We're talking about sending workers, evangelists to campaigns together, support, all that kind of thing. You read that.

Need demands reality and discernment. All of our needs, in our way of thinking, are not always going to be met. And sometimes we get the idea, well, we need something, so we pray and we get it.

No, sometimes you have to wait. We need about eight more computers, if we count the small ones. But we're going to have to battle.

We're going to have to pray. We don't have any money. And then, very quickly, number eight, we must be more honest with each other.

Please read that. This takes courage, for it means love. We want this conference to be a time of honesty.

Don't be afraid to be honest with the person that interviews you. They're only doing something that they've been asked to do. Very few people are asked to go home from Operation Mobilization.

Very few people. You may decide, after you get to know us better, that OM is not your cup of tea. It's not your thing.

Fine. Nobody's going to lay a guilt trip on you if you decide to go home and wait a year. And I hope that this conference will be marked by honesty and openness and walking in the light.

Number nine, zeal, discipline, initiative, hard work, brokenness, compassion, humility. Wow. I'm still just struggling along in some of those areas, but that's at least our direction.

And then we must, number ten, give great attention to the large number who have left OM, now 37,000. Thirty-eight, I guess, after this summer. Many of them only came a short time.

We don't presume that OM is the biggest thing in their life. Isn't it good sometimes just to be a small thing in somebody's life? A lot of my ministry has just been a small thing in somebody's life. I often hear of people like Jeanette, quite a big thing in her life, my little message.

But a lot of times my ministry's just a small thing. I'm happy for that. I want to tell you, my life and the joy I often get, mainly little things.

Little things. The joy of calling by phone my own mother and father, who I've never lived with since I was 17 years of age, except a few days here and there, and just wishing happy anniversary on their 53rd wedding anniversary. To me, that's more significant sometimes than speaking to 2,000 people or some television program or something that people think is so important.

And just learn especially in your early days of OM. And little things are important. As I walk around the gardens here, I pick up tins, cans the Americans say, tins that people throw away.

It doesn't kill you to reach over and pick up a tin and put it in the rubbish bin. That's public property on the other side of the fence. Belongs to the local town.

It's a private tennis court, by the way, so don't get any inspiration by that. And I tell you, some of those people don't appreciate some of the things that have happened here. So, little things.

And I'm concerned for the people that have gone through OM. I hope you read our little ex-OMers newspaper called In Touch. You'll find one on the literature table.

I hope you'll help us get in touch with ex-OMers that we're out of touch with, if they'd to be. And I hope you'll read this. And perhaps you could do something that I should have done when I wrote it.

Put more scriptures there. Write all the scriptures that back that up. You'll find a few hundred.

And right on the back page, I left it blank. Yes, God has, in his mercy, raised up Operation Mobilization for a specific task in this generation. And we want to welcome you.

We'll welcome you again tomorrow night. But we want to welcome you and hope you realize that OM is so structured, get this, that the new recruit is the heartbeat of the work. Very few mission societies in history, apart from the early church, were so structured that the new recruit was the heart of the work.

Eighty percent of you, sitting right here, are new recruits, as far as the year program. You're not just coming for training. We have prayed for you for years.

I wanted to interview Suzy Buss because she came here as a little girl, 20 years ago almost, a little girl with her father who was a head mechanic in Sovington. And I started praying for her. And now she's a

woman, and Peter Maiden's personal assistant and secretary, carrying on a vital ministry.

Isn't it tremendous how God answers prayer? Isn't it tremendous how different mission agencies and fellowships are used in different ways, with different kinds of people? Aren't you happy that there is one mission agency, and there are a few others, who have at its heart the new recruit? If you don't function this year, OM doesn't function this year. We'll stumble along somehow, but we'll be missing a big part of our heart. So don't just drift into this thing, thinking you're in some kind of glorified mobile Bible school.

You have signed up for a spiritual invasion. When you leave here, you will go trained in weaponry, to some degree. And when you get out there, for some of you, all hell will be let loose to wipe you out on the front lines of spiritual combat.

Welcome to Operation Mobilization. Let's pray. Our God and Father, in your sovereign purposes, you've brought us here from Korea and New Zealand, from Australia, Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, from Canada and Finland, from Holland and Spain, from Italy and ERA, from Mexico and the United States, from Malaysia and Singapore, from Sri Lanka and India, from the Middle East, the Far East, South and North.

You brought us here from all over the world, some by train, some by foot, some by air, many by old vehicle. And Lord, you're filling our hearts with a spirit of expectation. As we become trained in the weapons of the warfare, as we begin to reach out by faith and touch the ends of the earth with the gospel, as we go out to fill those gaps that those who have returned or gone into other missions have left in almost every single ON field around the world, we are aware that this is a holy and awesome task, and we are humbled before you.

And Lord, I thank you that somehow as I go in to my fourth decade of walking with your Son Jesus in weakness and mercy and forgiveness, that I can renew my commitment to these major aims and goals, and somehow go forth another decade, if it be your will, to see this come to pass. Father, we think of all that you have done since this memo was written, the second ship, the move into South America, the Far East, Singapore and Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand, the deeper thrust into the communist countries, the deeper thrust into the subcontinent, especially Pakistan and Afghanistan, the huge literature warehouse in Waynesboro, the huge steps forward in STL, the birth of the ICT coordinating base, dozens and dozens of other ministries, all since this little memo was first written. And Lord, we know when we read this ten years ago and began to pray, you heard our prayers, you answered our prayers, and we want to just take this moment to thank you.

Though we have failed, you have been faithful. Though we have sometimes collapsed along the way, you have picked us up, forgiven us, and sent us back to the task. Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit tonight.

In Jesus' name, amen. We stayed in our houses for three days. We had telephones and could call each other until the Central Exchange was blown up downtown.

And when the Russians overpowered the four army bases around the city, then it got quiet and we were able to go out. But the thing that impressed me after that, as well as the whole year before that, when the country was under communist rule, was that I was living almost a schizophrenic life. I felt no personal danger, and yet all our Afghan neighbors were living in terror because of the midnight knock after 11 o'clock at night, when the military would come around and take men out of the houses, and they'd disappear into prison, and their families would never see them again, usually.

And people picked up off the street, and the nightlife of Kabul absolutely died that last year we were there. There weren't any young university students lining up at the cinemas anymore at six o'clock in the evening. The city was like a tomb, and everyone just stayed home.

Nobody had any enjoyment or enthusiasm for anything anymore. And I think about the people, many of our friends who have continued to live in Kabul. There's 74 of adults there right now, and they have been living in this kind of situation for five years.

Thank you, Grace. We really appreciate you sharing that with us. Let's just pray for Afghanistan.

I'll ask Gordon if you could come up and just lead us in prayer for Afghanistan and the refugees. Gracious Father, we do want to acknowledge that you are the God of history and the God of the nations, and we do pray for those that are in Afghanistan who have suffered the loss of family members who have suffered. Many of them have had to lose their own country.

We pray, God, that you will be speaking to them at this time of trial and revealing yourself to them, whether it be through the ministry of love, through your people out there, or whether it be through dreams or visions or however you choose. Reveal yourself so that many of these people will come to personal faith in yourself. We also remember those from Christian countries who are working in Kabul now, that you will protect and give them peace and use them as they seek to share Christ with the people in Kabul.

We thank you, Lord, that there have been folks saved even during this time of great difficulty. We do want to remember the refugees and the ones who have come to know you during the past few months, and those who have received baptism. We pray that you will protect and strengthen and use your spirit to increase and to extend the number of your people there.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. I'm going to ask Bob Rose, if you have that pile of leaflets, if you could get some people to help give them out. This is going to be our little text.

You won't have to take so many notes. We're just going to spend some time sharing this burden. We don't have enough perhaps for everybody, but if every other person could take one, then you can look on.

That will be very helpful. Now while they're doing that, let me just mention some of the literature that's available, pocket money you get around here. I think you need to know as an Omer that OM is fighting an enormous financial battle because of inflation, because of increased costs, especially we've never recovered, I don't think, from when petrol went up years ago.

Just the kind of work we're in, so much gasoline and petrol we use, just unbelievable what we've spent this summer. So please be praying about finance. And if you don't feel that you've been given too much emergency money, I think you can apply again after you use that little bit.

Most of the things we need are supplied. But there are these amazing magazine books, 10 Franks, True Discipleship, which most of you already have, Prayer, the Christian's Vital Breath, excellent book on prayer, and Gems from Tozer, and they're available on that special literature display. Some of the books I'm mentioning this evening, not just that some of you may want to buy these books and you can get a signature of your field leader to get them if you really feel that you need that book personally.

You probably already have so many books to read, but I just want you to be aware of these books because I don't get this opportunity so often. The Best of A.W. Tozer, 52 chapters from the writings of

A.W. Tozer, one of the greatest books I've ever read. Here's one on the half-price table, written by the president of Moody Bible Institute.

The greatest and the greatest of these, messages on the subject of love. And you know without love, OM is not worth an American nickel in a Russian slot machine. So we are trying to emphasize love.

And we hope you'll read that book, available at half price. One of the great stories of conversion in our generation is Charles Colson. Some of you have read Born Again.

This book is much stronger, really much better than Born Again. And I think it's available there at a special price. Life Sentence, Charles Colson.

This is a book on sexual purity that we're using in OM these days. It's dynamite, this book. And the content of this book is easily equal to any course, one course, that you could get at Bible College.

Because you know, if you don't get the victory and understanding and balance in this area, what else? You know, what will the rest do for you? So I recommend to you, Living With Your Passions, Erwin Lutzer, Christian's Guide to Sexual Purity. You know, everywhere we go, we see all the sorrow. For many, many months, many of us have been crying out to God.

For Ethiopia, we took a very small offering, a little bit of pocket money around Bromley, and sent it off to Ethiopia because people were starving. We've always believed, and it's been proven again, that people will give ten times more easily to the starving people than they'll give to Bible-less people and to unreached tribes. And now they seem to have more money than they know what to do with.

But I still think it's a great answer to prayer. What I read this morning in the newspaper, that the Ethiopian situation has greatly eased, and there are very few people in Ethiopia now who are not getting some food. Now there's a long way to go, because they need development, not just handouts.

But it's still an answer to prayer, and we hope you'll continue to pray for Ethiopia, for Sudan, where many refugees are as well. And if you get overwhelmed sometimes by all the suffering and the sorrow in the world, and even maybe in your own life, I commend to you this brilliant book, Don't Waste Your Sorrows, by Paul Bilheimer, who a year or two ago went to be with the Lord, a very great friend of O.M., and a man I spoke with regularly on the phone. But, you know, the Lord may have brought you here just to get this brilliant book into your hands, because it's such a needed message, and because most of us in life will face some pretty heavy sorrows.

Do take a look at the free literature table. My wife's latest family prayer letter. She always rebukes me when I call it a prayer letter.

It's a point of disagreement. We only have a few dozens. She says it's a newsletter.

Not a prayer letter. It's a newsletter. Okay, okay.

Newsletter. My wife writes it. I don't even censor it.

But there it is. Even as somehow a picture, you can see why people think my nose is a little long. You know, what God puts in place, who dare put asunder it? So that is my address and phone number in case you get lost in London sometime and you want someone to chat with on the phone.

My phone number's there. And then this little leaflet about Eastward Bound. This is one of the most dynamic leaflets you can ever read.

Now I was thinking we need to interview one more person, and Janet Hawthorne has stepped inside looking for someone. Please come up. We wanted one more woman to interview, and we wanted a secretary or an executive director or somebody in that particular field.

It's very easy. All you have to do is answer the questions. Janet Hawthorne from Canada, now working in Mosbach.

Is Dale here? Dale Roton is now here. We'll help you find him. Anybody, anywhere in the building listening to this, find Dale Roton.

This goes all over the whole of Belgium, you realize, of course. How did you, you know, get into Operation Mobilization? I remember you coming as a visitor to a conference, I think, in a place called Toronto. What happened that led from that day to this? I was one of those people who thought I would go with a friend to a meeting that George was taking in a church in Toronto, and I heard him speak and give a challenge on total commitment, which was the first time that I had heard such a challenge.

And to cut a very long story short, it was six weeks later when I was hopping on a plane with everything in order, joining O-M. I think you had, you were working, where were you working at that time? I was working with InterVarsity. And, you know, total commitment, you make a decision.

A lot of times, right, a year later that sort of just passes. But you've been around, how long have you been around? I was two years on the ship from 79 to 81, and then I went home on a break intending to come back to the ship, and I went on a detour. The Lord's detour is always the best.

And so I took up with another small home Christian work for two and a half years. But once in O-M, always in O-M, and it was in my blood and in my heart. And Dale's letters kept coming.

Dale's letters, what did he want you to do? He wanted me to come back. Come back as a secretary? As a secretary, yeah. I mean, you know, this movement, sometimes it appears in a little chauvinistic, men running around, giving most of the preaching.

You know, can a woman really be, you know, have some fulfillment and sense of accomplishment in this, or are they? Tell us. Can be negative, can be positive. Where do I start? Well, let me make the question easier.

Do you sense fulfillment in this kind of work, behind the desk, papers, phone calls? Is this a challenge? Yeah. No, there is. There are definitely days back sitting in my desk in a little town called Mosbach.

And being a person who doesn't know German, I feel very frustrated. I can feel very homesick. And I can really some days ask myself, what on earth am I ever doing back here? But you know, when I come to a conference like this, George, it's really a highlight in my life to see so many young people from so many different countries of the world, all coming together and then hearing what the ships are doing and that people's hearts and lives are being changed just like mine.

I say, yes, it's worth it all. Good. Thank you.

Sorry to just jump on you that way. But when you step into a room like this, you never know what will happen. And some of the greatest needs in OM are in those offices.

OM is a very complicated movement. It's a long-term missionary fellowship with people who are committed for five years, ten years, life, whatever. But it's a massive short-term training operation providing people for many other mission agencies, which means there's five times as much paperwork as an ordinary mission.

Five times. Because we have to recruit 1,500 to 2,000 new people every summer. And to do that, we've got to go through about 10,000 people, answer their letters, phone calls, applications.

It's far more expensive than it used to be. And it takes a lot of time. Computerization is going to help us.

But computers without people who can put in the right information aren't worth even the tin or whatever they're made of. You all know the famous expression in computers, garbage in, garbage out. Nothing in, nothing out.

We need women, men and women. One of the greatest joys I've had in the last few days, a young man just back from OM, India, has volunteered to work as one of my typists, answering letters in my office, at least after he gets some time back home. To me, that's as great a victory as somebody coming to me and saying, I'm going to India for two years.

And we hope you'll be praying that the Lord will be raising up people for the offices. We hope some of you will be considering that and going to our special information desk, little office advisory bureau, see maybe where you fit in to the challenge. And it's not just a work for women.

OM in its handling of women is not as stereotyped as it may appear. There are women in very significant leadership roles. There are women in roles that traditionally in the past have gone to men.

One of our chief lineup persons for the ship is Jean Gift from ERA, Southern Ireland. And mine, it's tremendous to see men and women working together. And we praise God for men that are not in traditionally male, so-called male roles.

And that includes being secretaries. One of the best secretaries I've ever had for five years was a young man, formerly worked in the Pentagon. Praise the Lord.

I think we're to the place to look at this little memo. I wrote this. I really felt tremendous inspiration from God.

In 1975, as I was going in to my third decade of being a Christian, I was converted to Christ in March 1955. And now it's 1985. I reprinted this memo.

If you wrote this memo, I'm circulating this memo again because I feel that the points presented here are more relevant than ever before. I would appreciate rereading this. You're rereading this memo and praying through it.

When possible, please give me feedback on just one or two areas. I think it's so important both for those of you who are new. How many of you are going into the program for the first time? Not summer, year program first time.

That's 80 percent of you. Many of our longer-term people, by the way, no longer can come back here because of the expense. Others will be coming next week.

Others are recovering from 10 or 7 intensive days. Some of us have been in 10 days of leadership meetings and training. Some in 7. Some have just been able to come to the General Council the last three days and have had to go back because these different offices have to keep going, especially things like STL, which is a ministry but also has to function as a proper business.

They cannot close. The orders are piling up. Filey, one of the biggest book exhibitions we ever put on in the world, Off the Ships, they need help.

So that's a big challenge. So many of you have not seen this before and I'd like to just go over it together with you because I think you want to know the heartbeat of OM. A brother from a particular country shared with me today, I mainly all day been having fellowship and discussions with various individuals, and he said, you know, in my country the people seem to grasp some of the OM activities, campaigns, crusades, conferences, but he said, I don't think, and he's a long-term missionary, I don't think they grasp the spiritual life.

He's known OM for many years. The spiritual message. And we talked about the message of a cross, without which OM and all of its activities is worth very little.

And the emphasis on real prayer and communion with God, and the emphasis on spiritual life and knowing Christ and walking with Christ. And I think that may be partly true in that man's country, and that's a country where the people don't get to these conferences. It's a new situation and they don't know yet, too many of them, the heart of OM.

It's possible to get the periphery activities of OM, you know, track distribution, door-to-door work, street work, even chalkboard open-air preaching. Lots of activities and miss the heartbeat. This memo is a plea to not lose the heartbeat of what it's really all about.

So let's just look at it. I think we'll just go down to the third paragraph. I do mention in the previous paragraph, second paragraph, the work has grown almost beyond our dreams.

By the way, the first ship existed when I first wrote this, not the second ship. So we thought the work grew when the second ship hit us. You know, we went into outer space, especially OM trying to do all of this with such a very small administrative base, because all of us were involved in preaching and evangelism, minus those faithful secretaries and a few others.

There have been enormous disappointments and setbacks. I think it's good to state that. It's not all victories and OM's history is not all victories.

At times also, it seems that things are going out of control and we now have so many different leaders, programs, and countries in which we are involved. I would like to use a key phrase for these coming ten years. Consolidated spirit controlled expansion.

We found that much more difficult than it was to write this memo. And we could not get unity on how fast we should expand. And some felt we were going too slow and some felt, they proved to be the majority, felt we were going too fast and that people were getting walked on.

And the thing was getting a bit like a machine. And God brought us to the foot of the cross and we asked him to help us have more personal care for each individual. And all kinds of seminars and programs have gone on, you wouldn't believe it, to try to improve in our pastoral care, in our counseling.

A number of men took specialized courses in counseling. To have consolidated spirit controlled expansion. Growth is perhaps a better word.

We want both to expand and advance, but we truly want to be led of a Holy Spirit. This means an increase of true spirituality through the entire work. If you read Dr. Schaefer's book on true spirituality, I think it needs reprinting.

Dr. Schaefer once came to this conference in the 60s and he spoke for three solid days. We actually put a lot of it on film. We were the first people ever to film Dr. Schaefer.

It was from that that he got his vision for films. Later became the most widely used Christian films almost in the world among Christians. True spirituality.

Not extremism on one hand, not spiritual duplicity and lukewarmness on the other hand. It also involves an increase of like-mindedness plus facing our failures and our weaknesses with a new dimension of faith and reality. We want to go into this conference on this kind of footing.

It was my hope that this memo would go into other languages, but I don't think it ever did because it's not easy to translate all this material. If you ever think that OM is not interested in the other languages, I'd like to have a personal chat with you. Because as far as I know, no movement in missionary history has pushed more material into other languages than Operation Mobilization in terms of quantity.

In terms of variety of languages, it would have to be Wycliffe and the Bible Societies. So we believe in those other languages and we believe that there needs to be more books written in the language, not translations. Books written by Germans for Germany, by the French for France.

We've been involved in that as well. But this memo, maybe it got into some other languages, but I couldn't find any copies. And this is one of the other reasons this meeting tonight is, it's good that it's in English.

OM cannot do everything. Every week a new vision comes across my desk. And I'm already known for being almost crazy for taking on too many things.

Someday I won't even be able to get into my office, which is becoming a warehouse of all the magazines and memos and books and everything takes people send me from all over the world hoping that I'll take on their vision. The latest vision I've just taken on is the vision of those unreached people's maps. That I couldn't resist, you see.

I bought 500 of those maps, even though I don't have any money, not much. I got some credit. There's a field in OM called Special Projects.

And sometimes a gift is given to me and rather than just put it into the general working, even though that's always needed, it's sometimes designated to a special project. Like we have special projects among unreached people, special projects for India, special projects for the communist countries. I have some credit in that special projects.

I don't have any money, any cash. Anyway, I got credit on 500 of those unreached people's maps. And that is a worthwhile investment to get one of those maps.

They are really something. And they're out there on the literature table.

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