

Understanding Om

by George Verwer

George Verwer discusses the complexities and challenges of the O.M. movement, emphasizing love and the ongoing journey of spiritual growth.

Duration: 46:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 13:35

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses some common misunderstandings and challenges in the strategy and execution of spreading the word of God. He emphasizes the need for creativity and not relying on having everything laid out in a chart or strategy. The speaker also acknowledges the difficulties and miscommunications that can arise in this work, but encourages the audience to trust in God's wisdom and guidance. He highlights the importance of counseling and personal work in the ministry, and the challenges faced by individuals from different cultures and backgrounds coming together. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for unity, perseverance, and a focus on the eternal impact of their work.

Transcript

I am going to try to speak to you on things that perhaps other people might not feel qualified to speak on. I don't think a guest speaker will come along and speak on the major misunderstandings of O.M. But having been in the work from the very, very beginning, I think I know some of our weaknesses, and we've got some real weaknesses. And I may know a little bit about some of the apparent weaknesses.

See, we have legitimate weaknesses. Then we have apparent weaknesses. Then we have even some strong points.

Then we have apparent strong points. Let's just pray first. Lord, help us as we talk about some of the areas of miscommunication, areas of weakness, areas where people get crushed instead of built up.

Help us to really see this as a time of preparation to be communicators for Jesus in Europe and around the world. Open our eyes to some of our own needs and our own weaknesses that we may be more useful in your hands. In Jesus' name, Amen.

There are many verses that come to my mind. Most of them are related to this thing of love. I feel that in so many ways, love is the foundation of everything.

When I say love, I say Christ as well, because you cannot separate Christ from love. In John's gospel, it says in this, they will know that you are my disciples because you love one another. We have those strong words in 1 John chapter 3 that says, if you're not loving people, you're in darkness still.

And we have so many other verses on this subject. And those of you who have gone through the Orientation series, you have been taken through one verse after another on the subject of love. But love and the doctrine of love is the easiest thing to pay lip service to.

We say, yes, love is the major thing and then we go on as usual before we ever had the doctrine of love. And this is one of our greatest burdens, that people will not just have a doctrine about love, but that love and the love of God will be a reality in their lives. When we come into something like OM, we have many, many paradoxes and we have also some legitimate contradictions that we may be trying to deal with, but they don't always disappear.

One of the greatest problems, for example, we have in OM, and you'll never understand OM until you understand some of these things. For some people it's taken them many years. But one of the problems you have as you come into OM is you're coming into a movement that, humanly speaking, is trying to do too much at once.

It's just crazy. And I will tell you, if I didn't have leaders, quite a few of them, willing to put in a 17-hour a day, seven days a week with a few days off, OM would just not exist in its present form. We are in so many things.

And yet, most of the leaders, if not all of them, are convinced that what they're into, God has let them into it. The Bible says, the harvest is plenteous, the labors are few. What we need is a businessman to come along and tell us, what are the implications of that? The recruiter says, the harvest is plenty, the labors are few, therefore we need more labors.

That's the recruiter's vision, you see. But the man on the field says, the harvest is plenteous, the labors are few. What problems are we going to have on the field in the light of this? We lack secretaries, we lack mechanics, we lack leaders.

Because we lack gifted leaders, we put men into leadership who are not so gifted. And a lot of problems come. And so, George Fowler stands up at a main leader's session in Europe, and he says, I believe it's time to cut back.

So they stone him, and they get a new international coordinator. Because I can tell you, you're not in a movement that's about to cut back. I am the brakes.

People think I'm the great pioneer. I'm the brakes. I've changed my role.

I've got people like Mike Evans in France, who wants to increase our total number in France to a hundred men, who probably wants to plant ten churches in the next two years, who's got visions for teams into Tunisia and already has his advance men in there. I have people like Jonathan McCrosty, who's supposedly the faithful number two man, who's not supposed to be pioneering things so much. He always tells me he's not a pioneer.

He's now got this new program to send teams all over black Africa, completely new to anything that O.M. has been thinking of up to now. We've always said, Africa, no. Let the North African mission take care of

that place and all these other great mission societies.

We have been involved in North Africa a little, because we have an Arab world commitment, and that to some degree, in a very, very, very tiny way, has included North Africa. Our original vision for the Muslim world certainly was more targeted, more aimed at Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, that sector of countries. But as the vision for the Arab world increased, we suddenly discovered there are Arabs all over the place.

One of our main thrusts this year is a new team, full-time team among Arabs in London, because London has become the center, in many ways, one of the main centers of the entire Arab world. A man told me recently he was in a hotel in London, and he looked at the book rack, and no books in English. They're all Arabic, in a London hotel.

The Arabs have so much money, they are buying hotels, you know, like you'd go out and buy a Big Mac. It's unbelievable. Before we knew what happened, we ended up having teams in the Sudan.

I never thought of, oh, I'm working in the Sudan. Years ago, I wasn't even aware that there were so many people in the Sudan speaking Arabic. I was more aware of the missionary work in southern Sudan, which is among the tribal people.

The great northern sector of Sudan is Arabic-speaking, and one of the most un-evangelized places in the world. What happens? The ship goes into Sudan, tremendous response. The Sudanese brother joins the ship, goes through two years of training, turns out to be one of the best leaders we've ever had in the Muslim world.

What does he want to do? He wants to pioneer the Sudan. What do you tell him? No, no, no, we're cutting back. A movement like I am, it doesn't cut back easy.

It grows, it goes, it multiplies. People are led to Christ, people are disciplined. It grows more.

They have more visions. And I am sitting in a whirlpool of evangelization that touches now over 150 nations in the world. And so this means we've got a lot of problems.

When a whole new army of people join us, as this summer, especially when we are so committed to remain a movement involved with people on an individual level. We're not an IBM corporation. You are not a number or a punch card.

You are a person. And we are the kind of movement that will cancel a whole morning of appointments, a whole day of appointments to deal with the problem of one person. And we have done it hundreds of times, hundreds of times.

But when you start multiplying the number of people and start multiplying the number of problems, eventually you begin to run out of steam. People wonder why Christian leaders have nervous breakdowns. Because many of these Christian leaders are committed to people and yet at the same time they are committed to a work and to evangelization.

They are not just running a clinic. This is not a clinic for the mentally unstable. And yet most of us have problems and perhaps could use some kind of a clinic, at least for a short time.

So on one hand, we're trying to reach the world with the gospel of Christ. And we now have a thousand people full time on the year program. Plus a heavy involvement with ex-OMers because we try to keep

fellowship with all those that have been in the family.

We feel they're very important. Especially in a place like India where when they leave OM, it's very, very, very difficult. In the West, if you leave OM, if you've got any degree of training, there'll be ten organizations on your heels, ready to recruit you.

No problem. In India, we have to run our own placement organization to place these brothers, to help them find a life work. It's incredibly difficult.

No one knows the pressure on Ray Eicher and Alfie Franks. And since Ray Eicher is here, it's on Alfie Franks to a large degree right now. That is the toughest job in OM without any question, in my view.

The man who runs the Bombay or the India work, 200 full time Indians in almost every state in India. Reaching 13 million people with the word of God every year. Coordinating the movements of 20 vehicles.

Keeping track with several hundred ex-OMers and many times welcoming them and shepherding them. And then a lot of other things, including about 300 publication projects in 14 languages, many of them being launched simultaneously. That one aspect, work in India, is enough to take all my time, even if I'm based in London, all my time.

I can be full time just for the work in India. Some ways I'd like to do that, because that's my first love. In all of OM's field, my first love is India.

My greater burden in some ways is the Muslim world, but you see, in India, I've got 60 million Muslims. And even the major groups working among Muslims have forgotten that there are 60 million Muslims in India. And we don't have 10 men in India, in the whole nation, that are specifically working among Muslims.

10 that I know of, there may be, I'm sure, some hidden people. What am I trying to say? I'm trying to say that a movement moving at this rate, in so many places, at this speed, is bound to generate misunderstanding and miscommunication. It's bound to have some weaknesses.

I could have lined this whole week up better. All I'd have to do is take three of my top men out of India, or the Middle East, and send them to Cedar Rapids. Six months in advance.

Many groups are able to do this. Especially groups that are mainly American oriented. They've got a lot of men, they've got a lot of money, and if you're working mainly in affluent countries, as you work, it generates money.

When you're working with 200 men in India, the more you generate, the more you lose. Because these people, most of them, come with nothing. Some of our recruits don't come with shoes on their feet.

And our biggest problem, oftentimes, in India, is purely economic. How do the brothers eat tomorrow? We're not working in an affluent society. Our brothers don't drive cars in India.

We pray that our brothers may, after two years of faithful labor, be provided with a bicycle. And they will consider that the greatest breakthrough, some of them in their entire life, a bicycle. We like to give men who have been trained in OM, India, after a couple of years, we like to give them a bicycle.

When they're with us, sometimes they use a team bicycle. So, these are problems that many people don't understand. You will find aspects of OM that certainly are not as organized as they should be.

I am very aware of this. And yet, I know that to organize things more, it takes more men, it takes trained men. You cannot do everything with amateurs.

And I refuse to sort of pull in key men from this place and that place when something can go on perhaps not quite as planned ahead as we would like, perhaps not quite as organized as we would like. And you'll see this in the summer. And yet, it will still go on.

And the hand of God will still be upon it. And the people, in some cases, will learn a lot more quickly. Because there is a tendency at times to want everything done for us.

And I think this oftentimes destroys our own creativity. Let's get into some of these basic misunderstandings. We've just given perhaps some of the reasons why they're going to come.

What are some of the tough areas? Number one, misunderstandings in connection with strategy. People, and Americans more than most people, they like to have everything in a chart. They like to have everything very clear.

What is your strategy? Have people write to me. What is the strategy of OM? That's a nice question. OM has a strategy.

But that strategy greatly changes from one country to the next. Those of you who end up in OM, India, and those of you who end up in OM, France, you will think you're in two different organizations. If you're very strategy conscious.

Because our work in France is very different from our work in India. Our work in France is not yet under national leadership. It's under the leadership of a Welshman who is very, very French.

But he's still a Welshman. And one of his greatest struggles has always been to get national French leaders. Most of the teams now will be led by Frenchmen.

But our area leadership in Britain, I mean in France, is still under British. Two or three very strong British leaders. Our work in India is almost totally under Indians.

The last major strong foreigner has just resigned. He's just left. And so it is really under the hands of Indians.

The only one who is not perhaps totally Indian in the main leadership is Ray Eicher. Who has an Indian passport, born in India, and is sort of an Indianized or westernized Indian. I never know how quite to describe Brother Ray.

But he is certainly in every way in India accepted as an Indian. Speaking the language, being born in the country, etc. So the strategy varies from one country to the other.

And I have to be very honest in saying that some of our countries are very, very weak. They've never got the kind of leadership they've needed. They perhaps have been neglected by OM in general.

It's not easy to emphasize everywhere at once. And so some fields are weaker than others. I think something you may want to avoid if you're going on OM for a longer term is too much tearing and comparing one field with the next.

Because one field may have one weakness and another field has another weakness. And it's sometimes a waste of time to do too much tearing and comparing. Ultimately our strategy, as emphasized already in this conference, is to know God and to worship God.

That will be worked out in different fields in different ways. That will be worked out in different individuals in different ways. That is our greatest goal rather than perhaps the word strategy.

Another main item in our strategy, of course, is to see people disciplined. To see people converted and disciplined into mature believers. Without question this is our main strategy everywhere.

In churches, on teams, in many, many, many different levels. Through literature, through Bible study, through personal input, through counseling. You are coming into a very non-stereotyped operation, I can assure you.

And we are still learning new and better ways to present the claims of Christ and to accomplish the work of God in the Arab world and in Turkey and in Iran. And we are open, not only open to new ideas, we need them. We need new ideas, we need new blood.

And we have been able to absorb quite a lot of it in the past few years. So we want to see men disciplined, converted, disciplined, growing up, becoming mature. We could get eight different people to give us eight different stereotyped answers how that is to be done or why it's not being done more.

One of the greatest problems we have in maintaining communication with people is linked with this. Somebody comes on OM, they are already 20 years of age. Their life is largely set.

Their emotional makeup, the way they think, the way they talk, so many things, it's set. They come on OM, they are 19, 20. When they return from OM, especially if they have been with us a year, any mistake they do after that, any kink they have after that, OM taught it to them.

This is what they got from OM, this represents OM. And so all these little advertisements that have been on OM for a year, they came to us with their kinks and their problems and their hang-ups. They went through our training program, at least part of it.

They may have absorbed some things, they may have learned some things, most do. But in many cases, they will have not learned enough in that one year to totally take away their problems and difficulties and all the rest. And so when they go back home, when they do something wrong or they say something wrong or one of their idiosyncrasies or problems gets exposed, people think, oh, why didn't he get that resolved when he was on OM? This training movement, why has he still got this difficulty? And then it reflects back.

And so the temptation at that point is for somebody to come up with an easy answer. They say, this is happening because of this. And if you do this and this and this, then all these people will be living in victory.

For 23 years, some of us have been craving, praying and wanting to see more victory in people's lives. We have seen many people radically changed, even not only when they came to us when they were 20, when they came to us when they were 40, which is ample proof that the Holy Spirit can work and does change people. But at the same time, we believe that spiritual growth is a life process, a life process.

Some of the so-called mature missionaries out on the field have come to OM seminars and in those seminars, God has zeroed in on some of their needs and some of their sins and some of their problems and they have recommitted their lives to Jesus Christ. If a missionary on the field has to recommit his life to Jesus Christ after 40 years of service, what can we say? Recommitting our lives, spiritual growth, coming into maturity, it never ends. It never ends.

It's not a matter of coming on OM for a year and returning spiritual, disciplined, trained. No. Spiritual growth is not that quick.

And we've got to go on from victory to victory. I am convinced that God really wants to do a deep work in our lives this summer. A lasting work.

But it still will only be one summer in your life. And there is nothing you can get from OM or anybody else that will guarantee that from then on, after the summer, you will live a consistent, regular Christian life. No one can guarantee that.

I have been in all kinds of exposure training programs, many, many different groups, many different organizations. And yet I know I am facing things now that nobody could have totally prepared me for two years ago. You can even read in a Christian book exactly what you can do.

You can read exactly what you're supposed to do when you have three teenage children. We've got endless books telling us what to do when we have teenage children. It's all written.

All you have to do is read it and apply it. It's as simple as that. But it isn't so simple.

Because we are emotional beings. And because what I logically know and can even teach, when I get under pressure and my little 15-year-old has just uttered some utter rubbish, and his 17-year-old brother has told him he's whatever he calls him, and my daughter starts refereeing, and then suddenly the phone call, and then something starts burning, because the only way that I like steak, and I only have steak every, very, very once in a while, the only way I can barely eat it is if it's rare. And there it's burning on the stove.

That's enough to completely ruin any spiritual atmosphere in my home. Now, you don't have that problem yet. Too many of you.

In that exact same way. And I'm not sure I'm coming across, but what I'm trying to say is that no matter how much training you get, how much discipling you get, how much grounding you get, how revolutionized you get, you're still going to have to live on this planet, and there's going to be other struggles and battles and problems and setbacks. And no training program is foolproof.

William MacDonald says God is so arranged for us in this life that the Christian life has to be a continuous crisis of dependence upon God. There's no little, quick, easy answer that we can give you. I think that's important.

We've seen people discipled and going on wonderfully. We've seen others discipled and backslide. And I want to tell you, if you start working in the Muslim world, maybe Brother Steele can give you a better statistic than we can because they're far more advanced in this than we are, but nine out of ten Muslims that you lead to Jesus Christ, even if you lead them to Christ slowly, because any decision gathering in the Muslim world is utter nonsense.

Utter nonsense. But even people you sincerely lead to Christ and they seem to make a sane profession of faith, you can figure pretty well that nine out of ten will backslide. I've never heard too many people that can counter that.

And when this happens, and when the problems come into the work, the danger is then you start to grab for the easy answers. We have people travel through sometimes, the easy answer boys, most of them come out of the States. They travel through a field, people are laboring away, two years, three years, he comes along and drops a little sanctification theory.

The reason you aren't seeing blessing here is you don't have this experience. We've had whole teams chase after some theory. Man, when you're out there two, three years not seeing any breakthroughs, you'll grab anything.

And of course the result usually is just more confusion. More confusion. I don't believe there's any one easy answer to reaching the Muslim world for Jesus Christ.

Certainly if there's any answer, it's prayer, living a Christian life, persevering, revival in the church. They're basic answers, they're not easy answers. They're basic answers.

But as to some little easy answer as to how we're going to see the church planted in Saudi Arabia, perhaps you could share that with me if you haven't. Moving on from this area of strategy, which will be again spoken about, because of time, and because in some ways that doesn't cause so many difficulties. Let me just add that a big part of our strategy in some countries is church planting.

We have the literature distribution image, but that is not our main work. We fanatically believe in literature. Literature is a visible thing, isn't it? It's something you can see.

Therefore people think we're literature work. I give book reviews, so people think of course I'm a literature worker. I set up book tables.

My work at this conference, very little of it has anything to do with literature. Give a few nudges once in a while to Bernie and drop some new things on his book table and give some book reviews. But that is visible.

Most of my work here is invisible. It's in a closed room with an individual. It's sharing, counseling, discussing, praying.

It's behind the scenes. No one ever heard of OM as being a work mainly dedicated to counseling, the ministry of counseling. Who are OM? Most of our leaders give ten times as much time to counseling as they do to literature.

I'm talking about a hundred men, the main men who are carrying this work. They're in counseling, personal work, relating to people, problem solving, all that kind of thing, far more than they are giving out

tracts, going door to door. In fact, I'd like them to do a little more of that.

But you don't see that. And you can't see, generally, church planting. We feel it would be a hindrance to our work if we got known as some kind of new denomination, which we are not.

And we have managed to plant churches without them becoming in any way OM churches. I don't even know where they are. I certainly can't be the leader of it.

Any church we've planted in France, we've seen about 13 or 14, some of them very small, some of them growing very quickly. We've always done it on a cooperative basis with at least one other person, and we push the responsibility onto that person, then onto the elders and the leaders of the local church, and OM just fades out, just fades out. So there are churches in Spain, there are churches in Italy, there are churches in other countries, started by OM teams.

These are teams that maybe started in the summer. You can only start in the summer. You can't finish it.

But through the year program, we've followed up and churches have been planted, and then we've just phased out. So don't let anyone tell you that doing literature work in the summer, which a lot of you will be doing, especially if you don't know the language. Life is not just doing the best thing.

Life is doing the best thing in the light of the circumstances and with what you have. Otherwise only a tiny number of people are going to do anything. I don't know who they'll be.

And I believe in the light of the gifts that you have and the degree of training that you have that getting involved in literature evangelism this summer is one of the most sane, sensible, in-depth things that you could ever do. But don't see it as an isolated event in the middle of the summer. See it as part of God's program that other teams come in after the summer and follow up, and sometimes churches are born.

And correspondence schools follow up on the people who write in after getting the literature. We never can follow up on everything. And ultimately we have to know how to trust God's Spirit.

We try to put a lot of the work with the churches. All of our work among immigrants and Muslims in Britain, we try to get a local church involved. But we have many problems.

Why? Local churches don't want to be involved in this. We have to beg them to get an OM team to come and work among immigrants in their area. It's a major crusade just to get them to agree in some places.

Much less do an effective follow-up work. Because there's a lot of social tension in Britain today over the immigrant question. And some of the people don't even want contact with these immigrants.

And it's in the news right now, if you follow the news, that the Bengalis in London, they want all their own housing. This is a very, very big thing in Britain right now. So it gets a little more complex than perhaps it may sound.

So our burden is to see men disciplined and trained and revolutionized and becoming Christ-like individuals. We know that seeing living churches planted, especially where they don't already exist, is basic to these people going on and growing and multiplying. We also, of course, believe that literature fits into every aspect of this work and want to flood literature out across the world.

But then when it comes down to the actual practice in a particular country, it is greatly dependent on the leader in that country, his burden, his vision, the people he has with him, the problems he faces, the government and a lot of other factors. We could be doing so much more in India. Our work in India could just be just so much further on if we could get long-term visas for non-Commonwealth people from them in answer to prayer.

The key in the OM financial policy is that the initiative must come from the others in answer to prayer. It's not a secret society. If somebody asks me, you know, right now, look, is there a legitimate need? I got \$5,000 in my pocket.

Is there a legitimate need anywhere in OM where this could possibly use? What do you think I say to him? Well, brother, we don't talk about this. Or, brother, ask the Lord. Because probably he's already asked the Lord.

And the Lord's touched him to ask me. And we're one body. There is a place for sharing needs.

But the question is, where does the initiative come from? Do you become some kind of a beggar? Or do you allow the Spirit of God to take the initiative? I believe the great plague in American Christianity is too much money, not too little money. Hudson Taylor said, God's work done in God's way would not lack God's supply. And money has been a plague on the mission field from almost the foundation of time.

I've uncovered more embezzlements out on the mission field and I don't even want to get near such things that I'd ever dare want to talk about. Money, too much of it, can be a great plague. We are conservative.

We are a little bit low profile. We're not saying we're perfect. We know we make mistakes.

But we want to press on in this way of learning what faith is. Also, we do not say that the man working for money and getting a salary, he is not living by faith, but we are living by faith. We don't say that.

He has to exercise faith in many, many, many other ways. I will tell you, if I had to come and take some of the jobs that my prayer partners had, I would need more faith probably in my present job. Because if I had to go down and work for some guy who's lining his pockets with a sweat on my brow, who's living high on the hog because I'm working in his factory making junk to sell to some other nut down the street so that he can have more junk, I tell you, I'm going to need a lot of faith for that job.

In fact, I know I can't get enough faith for that job, so I'm not taking it. I highly esteem the people who are working in secular jobs. I don't believe it's a matter of them looking up to us, the great full-time workers.

We can, if we're not careful, become the biggest band of lazy evangelical hounds that have ever walked the earth. Most of us have had it too easy. We've had too much laid to us on the platter and it's going to take a miracle ever to make disciples out of us.

We know it. That's why you're even risking coming on OM, the last thing some of you ever wanted to do. And I esteem these people working in secular jobs without any problem.

I esteem them highly. I believe it takes faith to hold that job. I believe it takes faith to be patient with some ugly boss who's mouthing and swearing every other day.

Not that all unconverted bosses are like that. Some of them are very pleasant and they keep it very nice in the office, take it all out on their wife when they get home. God, this is the key if you want to just get the

summary, works in different ways in different people.

And there are different kinds of faith. Faith for finance is not my great problem. It is sometimes.

But there's so many other aspects of faith. So many aspects of faith. Let us not call living by faith some little narrow thing.

It's just big. And I'm going to have my faith tested in whole new ways. I'm learning to live by faith.

We in OM are not living by faith in the final stage. We are learning to walk by faith. We're learning to walk with God.

Some of us take up jobs when we're in OM to support ourselves as the Lord leads. That takes faith. On the other hand, I want to be very clear.

If the world is going to be evangelized, we do need more people who are willing to leave their secular job and get every hour of the day into evangelism. It's just a practical thing. We need people who have got time to get the work done.

Another major area of misunderstanding is the social policy. You will hear other messages about this or at least questions answered. And we will be having question and answer sessions.

These are just, you know, little extras I'm throwing in and hoping it will be of some help. OM social policy is not legalistic. I do not believe it is legalistic.

It is pragmatic. It's sensible and sane in the light of the situation we are in. Here we come, two and a half thousand people together from 25 nations.

Interracial, interculture, international. Men and women, in many cases, working together, traveling together. Many of them will fight through times of loneliness when they are first taken out of their own culture.

It is a natural situation for one big conglomeration of messes. Social messes. This one feeling he is in love with that one.

He met her yesterday on the food line and a slight tinkle came off her eye that he felt was a deeper vibration of inner soulful tranquility that needed to find a resting place in someone else. No doubt you don't express it like that in America anymore. They never did.

We feel that for a summer crusade, dating is just out. The whole thing is so short. We are trying to get so much into your heads.

There are so many potential problems, miscommunications. The whole thing is impossible anyway. And then to say, well look, just feel free in the summer.

You know, we are not under law. We are under grace and soon he is wanting to take grace out. That is not the grace we are talking about.

It will work. We are not saying there is no problems. We are not saying there are not a few people that are going to misunderstand this and get a bit uptight.

But in praying, in thinking, in wrestling with this and in these years of experience, this seems to be the way. The miracle about OM is that most of your leaders, many of them, the longer termers, have followed this policy. OM is a young movement relatively speaking.

People, you know, didn't come in from here and now tell you to do this. They grew up in it. Jonathan McCroskey, the leader of all work in Europe, kept the social policy and followed the rules of the game as we say and was wonderfully married I think when he was 30.

OM is a little different than the average set up over here in that many, many people in Europe are willing to wait until they are 25, 30, even 35 before they get married. They are not paranoid. They are not as dependent on marriage as we are here.

At Cambridge and Oxford University, many students are married. You come to American University, you know, you think it's a used car. There are hundreds and thousands of cars because there are families and they need a car and many, many university students are married.

At seminary, I was speaking at one or two seminaries, so many of the students are married. At Cambridge and Oxford and throughout Europe, there are young marriages. Don't misunderstand me.

There are plenty of young marriages. But many are willing just to plow it on. They don't think of marriage till later.

This has been one of the greatest helps in doing what OM wants to do. And personally, this is going to frighten some of you. I believe some of you in this summer are going to get delivered from a boyfriend or a girlfriend that is not God's choice.

You are only hitched onto that person because you are impatient by nature or lustful or lonely or you got some other hang up. And you've latched onto each other and you think, this is love. And the bells are already ringing.

Those bells. Now, let me get the balance. You know, Wednesday night, balance.

I'm sure that some of you here, God has shown you your life partner. Praise the Lord! I got married at 21. That's enough to balance it out.

No sense in me talking about McCrosty. Of course, I was brainwashed. We will not ask Burt Kempis to testify at this time.

But it's been wonderful to see people realize that the major thing in life is not to get married. With one out of every two marriages in America ending in a divorce court. Don't you think we could turn our brains on a little more on this issue? Don't you think it would help to wait a little more? Montgomery, that great general, said, until a man is proficient in the warfare, let him not even consider the subject of marriage.

Now, I'm convinced if some of you get a little more proficient in prayer, communication, discipline, all these things, then when you get married, it's going to work. By God's grace, we've never had anybody in 20 years meet with NOM after even a little bit of training. Meet with NOM and ever come apart.

Not one in 20 years. The first one may come. That won't hinder my philosophy or my burden about this.

But I believe it's one of the proofs that if young people get some training and some grounding and get into the Lord and His Word and learn about discipleship and then such people get together, their marriage will work. It will not be some selfish satisfying of man's passions or some ego trip or mutual ego trip, but it will be from God. And so all we're saying is, look, for one year or for one summer, can we lay this aside a little and get on with growth, with evangelism, with prayer, with a disciplined life and all the rest.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Is not God capable of taking care of this great and important thing in your life? I believe He is. We want to learn what it is to wait upon the Lord.

Someone says, what if I fall in love with someone this summer? Look, if you don't fall in love with someone this summer, probably something wrong with you. All these beautiful people floating around. I used to fall in love with at least six every year, you know, six at a time.

Never one at a time until I met my wife and even then I was still confused. But falling in love, I better define my terms. In other words, getting a little infatuation for someone and little bells ring or whatever happens.

That doesn't mean, you know, this is from God, the Lord has spoken. And because you dream about her, oh, the Lord's given me a revelation in the night. I know people that dream about horses, but they don't think they should go out and marry a horse.

And actually, contrary to what some people may feel, we feel this is a more liberating way. You say, well, I want to be more social-rounded. I want to get to be able to relate more with the sisters.

That's not a great problem unless you do something, you know, extreme. It's the idea of relating to only one sister that's going to be the problem this summer. And I think it's good.

There's freedom. We pray together, talk together, we work together. You get to know different people, get to know different sisters if you're a man and vice versa.

But I'm convinced the devil is going to try some of his ugliest tactics in this area. Now, if you have an extreme problem in the area of lust or sex, and there are people who have this, I think you should share that. If you feel you cannot get through the summer without getting messed up, I think you should share that.

Not that we're going to say in most cases, well, you can't come, you know, we don't want to take any risks. Our whole movement is all risks. But we'd like to know.

We'd like to be able to pray for you because that's very, very important. Well, there's other misunderstandings, but I think if I don't finish, I'll have another one on my hands because the time is up. I think that the Lord can give us wisdom.

We want throughout the summer your feedback as to things that you feel we need to improve on and learn about. But more than that, we need your arms, we need your legs to help us to work together to get the job done. One of the hardest things in some places, especially when we want to be honest and we're willing to face our weaknesses, one of the hardest things in turn is to get loyalty, to get people loyal to a particular effort.

We're not asking you at this stage to be loyal to OM for the rest of your life. We hope we can be loyal to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. That's what our loyalty is.

But unless we have a degree of oneness and pulling together, even for the summer, because it's one thing to talk about the future, but we've got something big right now. Right now we've got to do it. It's not all theory.

We've got to go out from this conference and actually put this stuff into practice. It's very, very real. I've got to do it living on that ship with my family this summer.

And a lot of other things that I'm not too keen, as we say in England, too keen on doing, but by God's grace, I'm going to do it. And we need people pulling with us. We don't mind you asking questions.

We don't mind people sharing, especially when they go through the right channels. And if you have something against a brother or something against a leader, there's only one channel, him or her. Isn't it amazing how strongly Bill Gothard has emphasized this in his seminars? But where are the people to put it into practice? Because it's one of the toughest challenges in the Christian life to stand and work through God's channel of communication instead of gossip and backbiting and negativism and cynicism, which just spreads like cancer.

And what do they call that? I can't think of the word, but when we hint at something, intimidation, we can intimidate someone. Well, that's another whole message. But I just pray that somehow through our fellowship groups, through these practical sessions, through the question and answer times, when we arrive there in Europe, we will be to some degree of one heart and of one mind and ready to, in one sense, stop discussing, but we can always discuss and work.

Because I tell you, there's a lot of work to be done if men are to be reached with the gospel. Miscommunications are bound to come. Some of you in this very conference are not going to get the attention and the love that we would like to give you.

You just won't among 400 people. And in the summer, some of you are going to be missed. Sometimes it's almost by a freak, almost by a... We can only say the providence of God that some people get so linked in and get so blessed and come back.

This is the greatest experience of my lifetime. They write articles for this and that and others come back. I made it.

Whatever way you come back, whatever way you come back, God is not dead. And Christ is alive and He's in you. And our loyalty and our hope is not O.M. or a summer crusade or a program or a set of principles.

It's Jesus living, working, abiding in us. May our loyalty be, Jesus. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you that we can speak in a sense, heart to heart. It'd be easier if I could just have an hour with each person here and we could just go take a walk and rap about these things. But somehow, 20 years after it all started, it just doesn't work that way.

At least for everyone. And so we thank you and I thank you for the freedom just to open my heart. It's a bit of a mumble jumble.

But I believe you can put it together. I believe that many of these young people can sense what I'm trying to say and that we can pull together and believe you to help us solve the problems and to deal with the miscommunications and to be joyful servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, this summer despite some of the difficulties we face. Lord, you know sometimes even the things we say in some of our messages, they would have been better not said.

Sometimes even an announcement we make doesn't even make sense. Oh God, you alone can put it all together. Some of the littlest things the old devil tries to get going and bring confusion.

We need your wisdom and we just believe you're going to keep this together to make this summer count for eternity. Lord, you know those that have got social relationships that are not really from yourself. We pray they may at least be willing to wait and to make sure.

We pray for those that are confused about praying and finance. Lord, you'll first of all let them rest in yourself. Better to relax than you and not have any money.

And we believe you can then provide. It's going to be a battle. Teach us about prayer.

Teach us about faith. And make us realize we're not going to learn all this in one week or one summer. We give you the glory now.

Thank you for this time together. In Jesus name. Amen.

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