

Unreached People Year 2000

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the importance of reaching unreached people through grassroots efforts and shares inspiring stories from China and Ethiopia.

Duration: 52:07

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:24, Mark 16:15, Romans 10:14

Topics: "Unreached People"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding and spreading the vision of world missions. They acknowledge that only a remnant of people truly grasp the significance of this task. The speaker encourages the audience to consider themselves part of God's grassroots movement for missions and to share the principles discussed with others. They also highlight the principle of indigenization, stating that the vision for world evangelization must be embraced by the church in each nation, rather than being imposed from outside. The speaker notes that some countries, particularly in the third world, are ahead of England in terms of missions vision and engagement.

Transcript

I was wrestling with whether I should come this morning, and I got everything all packed last night. I felt I should come. I have some things I really want to share.

The title of my sharing, for those who hear this, my take is Unreached People. I was amazed in a meeting just recently, I took a little survey, in a meeting that was for a missionary fellowship, how many even understood what this is all about, unreached people, that kind of terminology. Only a few hands went up in the whole meeting.

Again I realized how so often what's happening in world missions is only understood by a remnant of people. We live with that remnant of people, and there's a great variety among them, and we get deceived by that. There's a whole mass of people there, even people who are interested in missions to some degree, like the people who came to this meeting, who do not understand what is happening, or what we are actually aiming at in the contemporary task of world missions.

So I want to share a little bit about that this morning, because every one of us should be considering ourselves, surely, part of God's grassroots movement to spread the vision of world missions. It's not going to be just done by special meetings and special speakers. It's got to take the ordinary person, or the

person who may not think they have public ministry gifts, to share something of this vision.

And I'm sure it's in God's providence that I get a phone call this morning and discover we have someone who's just arrived, a friend, a prayer partner who once was on Lagos, just arrived from China, I think actually by train or overland, maybe it was camel. And Shirley Gearing, I'd like you to come, welcome, and just give us a few thoughts that are on your heart about China or your overland trip, and I'm sure that will tie into my unreached people's burden. Please come.

Well, I really thank the Lord for this opportunity to be here. I had no idea I would be here, or see George, or see any of you. We first became acquainted with OM in 1973 when we were living in Ethiopia.

Had never heard of OM before, and the team came to Addis Ababa, and we became very involved. I was able to travel with them overland to the ship in Massawa, sail to Djibouti, and from then on we've been involved in many different ways. But the past, let's see, from 1985 to 1989, July 1 last year, we had the opportunity to live in China where my husband was working with all of the agricultural work with the World Bank.

And most of what we learned about China orientation was through OM, the Operation World seminars, and through David Abney. He was the one who told us a lot about the church in China. And then when Peter Conlon and the team went to first organize the Logos' trip to China, he would sometimes come and stay with us in Virginia, just outside of Washington.

He shared what was happening in those days. And so that's how we really learned about the church and what's going on in China. Well, since a year ago, since August 5th, we've been living in Ethiopia where my husband is working with the World Bank in Ethiopia, so I could talk a lot about Ethiopia, too.

But the Lord just gave me the opportunity to go back to China from America the first part of October for two weeks. And the main reason was to look up, to see friends this time, and see what's been happening in the country and what the Lord's been doing. And I didn't write anybody that I was coming because many... Well, we were very washed because we were involved with many Christians and having one-to-one meetings with different people.

And a camera was put in our elevator of our building, and it was always on when I was around, it seemed like. And so I just didn't want anybody to be in danger. You better turn off the tape.

No. So we just prayed about this particular trip, and different friends were praying. And in the two weeks there, I made a list of people I'd like to see.

And the Lord brought everyone into my path, even though I didn't have their phone numbers when I got there or hardly their addresses anymore. I hadn't prepared ahead. And other people we hadn't expected to see just were there.

And it was just amazing what happened. But the biggest thing, I had the opportunity to meet with three pastors that have all been in prison for their faith for many years. And I'll share a little bit about what's happening.

First of all, this particular pastor is Pastor Wu Muzha. Probably you haven't heard of him. But in the early 50s, 11 pastors refused to join the Three-Self Movement when the government took over the Church, including Watchman Nee, Wang Mingdao, Wu Muzha, a number of other pastors.

And they were all imprisoned or sent to work camps in northeast China during this time. And two years ago, another Chinese girl with OMF introduced me to a young Chinese girl in Beijing. And she said, This girl has no fellowship at all.

Would you please get together with her? And that week, I just didn't have time. The following week, Billy Graham came to China for his visit. And we were involved in the international meeting where he spoke.

The following day, he had a meeting for the people who had been involved in making arrangements for his coming. And at that dinner, my husband Jim and I decided to sit at an all-Chinese table, people we didn't know. And I sat near this elderly gentleman.

Well, it turned out that he said he'd been in prison many years, and he was teaching Greek in the seminary at this time. And he also had a daughter who was married to a doctor in Inner Mongolia where our children were teaching English. So I gave him our name and address.

The next day, his daughter called and said, Did you know that you were seated next to my father last night at this meeting? And I said, No. So we got together. And he was a young evangelist, and he preached all around many, many different parts of China.

And he worked very closely with Wang Mingdao. This pastor is now 80 years old. And in fact, he spoke at Wang Mingdao's mother's funeral.

It was very, very close to him. And his youngest daughter was five months old when he was put in prison camp in northeast China. When she was five years old, his wife and this daughter, Ruth, were allowed to come and visit him for four hours.

The mother died in 1977 of lung cancer, and the husband was released the year later, the father. So he spent four hours with his wife during these 23 years, all the time staying faithful to the Lord. When he came back, he lived in Inner Mongolia with his children for several months, several years.

And then the church in Beijing, the Open Church, Three-Self Church, wanted him to come and be a part of their fellowship because they knew he had many contacts with the Western world in the past and was an outstanding evangelist. And he really didn't want to. He was more the underground.

He didn't want to be involved with the government. They also wanted him to teach Greek in the seminary. But then he realized that was the only way he would have an opportunity to share openly with other people.

So he prayed, and he felt this is what the Lord wanted him to do. So he joined the church. And he is a true believer.

He's only allowed to speak four times a year. And one time, it was a week ago last Sunday, I was able to hear him. It was the second time I'd heard him.

And there's just a hush over the whole church, which is just packed when he speaks because he preaches the whole gospel. And anyway, he has been allowed to go out into the countryside and minister to different groups during this time. The Lord's really using him.

But his health is beginning to fail now. Two years ago when we met, I said, Have you ever heard of David Adeny? And he looked kind of funny. He said, I worked with him as his secretary in InterVarsity from 1949

to 1953, but I haven't been in touch with him since.

And he was trying not to get in touch with foreign people, but he didn't know where David was. And so we were able to get letters going between the two. But the sad thing is the other house churches and even missionaries, we've introduced several missionaries to him, and they're very judgmental of the fact that he's with the open church, whether he really is a Christian.

So there's this going on even between Christians. And the people, the other pastors in his church, were the ones who had him sent to prison in the first place. And this man has just a total heart of forgiveness.

He is so humble. There is no enmity toward any of the people that were involved in putting him in who he now works with. Anyway, we have learned so much from these people.

His daughter is now studying in America at Lutheran Bible Institute. She got out miraculously. She never went to school because she was a child of the Cultural Revolution, and her father was in prison during this time.

So she wasn't allowed to go to high school or university. And so she only got a TV degree. And the Lord just opened the door and let her get out, even though she wasn't a party member and all the other things you're supposed to be.

So he still has his ways of working. Then this is a dear Christian friend who I met back in the first year we were there. Her name is Mabel.

She's a distribution point for supplies that come in for Christians. She lives in a ramshackle, three rooms. Her closest friend was Washman Nee's wife.

And Washman Nee was staying in her home for just a couple of days when he was taken to prison back in, I guess, the early 50s. She's 83 years old now, a doctor, graduated from the big Beijing Medical College, which used to be, I think, a Methodist college, and worked only about 15 years. And then she was sent to Tibet as a doctor during these years.

And her brother has been an invalid from 54 until last year when he passed away. But she's been doing all of this on the side, being a meeting point for many people who were distributing literature. And so last year we were in China during the upheaval.

In fact, we were a block from the square when everything happened. And then we were sent out of the country two days later, and we came back two weeks later for only one week. And the last week I went to see Mabel for the last time.

And everything around her had been totally leveled except her little room where she was living because she'd been fighting being put in this new apartment. They were tearing down all the old areas. And I was so glad to find her so I could find her if we ever went back.

But she's still in this area. And she found out from... My notes are all disorganized, otherwise I would... She found a book that a friend, let's see, James Taylor, Jr., was there. The third.

The third was there a couple of months ago and gave her a book, I think it had been printed in Taiwan, about her ancestors. And she found out where her grandparents had both been killed and two of their children, in an area just north of the Great Wall, a village. So since the last six months, she's been there

10 times distributing literature in the same courtyard where her relatives were killed.

And she wanted me to go with her on the train. I didn't have time, but I knew there'd be big problems because everybody knows who she is. And somehow the Lord just protects her.

There just wasn't a chance to go. And it might not have been good for her either. But she said, I just can't quit serving the Lord and quit working, even though I'm 83, because everybody keeps praying for me and I just have to keep working.

So she invited me over one evening for jazzes, to make these dumplings. And then she also, while we were there, different people would come, and seminary students come. And they take supplies back to their villages and their parts of the country.

And this gal had come in by train, she was a seminary student, to get supplies. And on the way, she had led five people to the Lord. She was this radiant when she came into the house.

So Mabel gave her her supply of information and then gives her apple and all kinds of fruits to go on her way. And she just carries on this ministry. Just about two blocks away, a big new customs hall has been built.

I don't have those pictures here. Just magnificent customs hall. And while I was there, some people from Hong Kong also came that are in charge of this particular work.

And the one fellow said, you know, it's just incredible. God has such a sense of humor. Because here they built this magnificent customs hall within the last six months.

And he said, probably now the head customs official is sitting in there wondering, how can I stop these Bibles from coming into the country, all this information? And just a stone's throw, this little old simple lady in a ramshackle house, just falling down, has over 10,000 Bibles have gone out from out of her tiny hut the last few years. So God has a real sense of humor. He uses the simple things to confound the high and mighty.

This person, this fellow, was a student of our children when they were teaching in Inner Mongolia three years ago, teaching English. And then they sent a Bible for him, for us to give to him, about a year and a half ago we met. And so we had just a tremendous evening of fellowship.

He already had a New Testament. And then I was trying to put him in touch. He was a believer.

I was trying to put him in touch with an open church where they can go for fellowship. And he said, no, I can't go because I'm a party member. I said, oh.

He said, but just because we're party members, don't think that we don't believe this. He said, there are many party members who are Christians, and we believe the Bible. So that was exciting to know.

He's a doctor now working in Beijing. I was able to meet him about three times and introduce him to this elderly pastor and to Mabel. And he was able to get some supplies for his fellow students.

And he said now, he also was involved in student meetings and planning all of these things before it even started. Just not deeply involved. But he said, you know, now we have to go to political meetings every week, and they teach us to lie in the meetings.

We have to tell all these lies. So he said, we all lie in the meetings. And then we go out of the meeting, and we all tell the truth.

And I had the opportunity to talk to so many different people. I'd become friends. Very down-to-earth, ordinary people.

People like this. Several leaders of institutes. And nobody likes what's happening there right now.

And they're all just waiting. Someday there are going to be big changes. So, you know, something's going to happen.

Back to the church. The church is growing. The pastors have said the biggest thing is that many young people are coming to the Lord now.

College and younger. And the Sunday that I visited this open church, it was packed with about maybe 25-30% young people. They were there 30 minutes before it started.

Oh, this is the church. And the older people would be reading the Scripture with them, pointing out different Scriptures. And so it's exciting.

And many people said because of what happened last year has just opened the door for Christianity. But we know many people who are back as students and teachers and tent makers and think they're just so open now because they have nothing. They have no faith in the government.

But also the problem is one of the pastors said they will believe anything. So this is the golden time for people to go to China. This is one other pastor.

These are people for you to pray about. He's an itinerant pastor. When he was 2 years old, his parents, who had many children, sold him to a German missionary couple for something like 30 yen, maybe \$5 U.S., because they couldn't keep him.

And so he grew up in the church. He went out with them for a few years and came back to China. Then they were sent out of the country in the late 40s.

He's about 67 now. He became an itinerant pastor about maybe 500 kilometers south of Beijing. And I met him when he came in to pick up supplies once.

But he was at a work camp, but he's been in and out of prison several times. Now he's hiding in Beijing, waiting for the time that he's going to be free to go back to the country and preach again. And he goes all over pastoring the Word when he's out in the countryside.

So he's just praying for an openness to be able to go back into the country. So anyway, this is what's happening in China in a nutshell. Another pastor, Pastor Yen, Alan Yen, you've probably heard of him.

He's written a story of his life. And he said it's out of the country now, and after he dies, it's going to be printed. And he sort of gave me a lot of the history of what's going on.

And my notes are all really disorganized. But some of the things he asked for prayer, particularly, and they said that God gives courage to the Christians to continue on. That's one thing that they need.

They need more supplies. They need training for the younger believers, because the older ones have a solid foundation, people like Watchman Lee and Wang Mingdao, and people like this. But there's no solid training for the new pastors.

There are about 13 seminaries right now, and they're praying that people will have a chance to go out of the country and really study in good seminaries and come back. He said many people in seminaries are not really Christians. They're just there because they had this opportunity to go, and they want a way to get out of the country, and all of this is going on.

During the Asian Games, 300 Koreans came in and brought literature, and some distributed to the open church, this church that I visited. And the next week, the pastor called the people. They took a list of the people who accepted Bibles from the outside, and they had them give the Bibles back to the church, because being Three South, they didn't want any to come in from the outside.

So there are a lot of problems, and there's such a need, and there's such a hunger, and there's such an openness right now. I could go on, China, but just real fast. We're in Ethiopia now.

Since 19... Well, the revolution began in about 76. We were living there 70 to 74. And then many of the churches were closed, so the system is very similar to what's happening in China.

But we attend an international fellowship there, which is made up of people from the churches that have been closed, that didn't want to go along with the government. And so there are four services each Sunday, and you have to come 30 minutes early to get a seat, and about 90 percent, 85 to 90 percent of those that attend are Ethiopians in these services. Friends who work with SIM out in the countryside in March decide for the first time in 16 years to have a big Bible-teaching conference.

In their compound. And they thought, maybe 2,000 people will come, because they've been working with small groups and local pastors during all this time. And they had this conference, because in March, Mendieta said, there's no more communism now.

Communism is ended. And now there's openness in the churches that there wasn't before. Well, 10,000 people came.

There was an average of 5,000 there, and one day there were 10,000 people at one time. They sat four days in pouring rain to hear the Word. Then in the same area, the leaders in one of the villages said, next week we're going to have a big celebration march to celebrate the new economic policies which the government had just announced.

And so they said, if you as Christians want to march together, that's okay, you can come and march. So 3,000 Christians put on their choir robes and marched through the streets for three hours singing hymns and choruses and praising the Lord. So this is what's happening in Ethiopia.

I attend weekly, I attend an intermissions prayer group with people from all the different missions, for anyone interested, come. And in one area, 1,200 people had been baptized last month. They had 12 local pastors, each one baptized 100 people at this big baptismal service.

So things are happening all over the world. I just came by trans-Siberian train, went through Russia and caught the train, got in last night, and I was thinking, I really wish I could share a little bit of this with someone from O.M. I'm sorry, it's been very disorganized because I haven't gotten my notes together. But

just keep praying for China and the Christians.

The people there are just wonderful. They are just... And they're just praying for what happens in the future. And someday, the Lord is in control and everything is going to be the way it ought to be.

Amen. Let's just pray. Father, we just thank you for these reports.

We thank you for these many individuals that you have touched. And we just cry out to you for China, for Ethiopia. We know you have your tent makers.

We know you have others. We especially think of those that know you in these countries, that you help them as they attempt to take the gospel to their own people. Just thank you for this challenge this morning.

In Jesus' name, amen. In these closing moments, I want to just share eight principles about world evangelism that I gleaned from the India Church Growth Quarterly that were originally shared by Louise Bush. I was just with Louise Bush, again, at a conference of Presbyterian pastors in California.

He is one of the leaders in the CNEC, Christian Nationals Movement. I think they've changed their name recently. And I hope that you can perhaps just jot down some of these principles yourself and share them with others, think about them.

It's always a little difficult to share in a meeting like this because a few of you have many, many years of experience in missions, and this may be a little bit basic, but many of you are new in the whole missionary challenge and you may be battling to try to understand more of what it's all about. And especially here in a behind-the-scenes ministry to some degree, though many on this team are out all the time with people, and we have a great variety of things happening, to say the least, it's so important to know why we are doing what we are doing. As I leave on a trip today, I know why I'm going, I have specific goals and aims.

Some of them, of course, may not be finely tuned. Exact number of people who are going to become recruits, exact amount of money that's going to be given, exact number of new prayer partners. But seldom in my life I have ever had a day where I haven't known what I'm doing, why I'm doing it, and what the ultimate goal is.

God gripped me with this when I was only 17, and it's never left. Of course, there's been plenty of fuzziness, struggle, failure, desire to pack it in, and all that kind of thing in the midst of it. And sometimes if you're somewhat of a natural visionary, you become impatient.

It's great, we had that book yesterday on awakening grace. This morning I was going to push this book by Lawrence Crabb, Inside Out, but there's not time, so I'll just mention it. Because there is that danger, the visionary can be impatient with the person who doesn't seem to have a vision.

I think many people have a vision, but don't know how to express it. Or maybe they're intimidated by the loudmouths, so it's good that I lead the team often, so you can all be less intimidated and get on with expressing your vision. One of the things that encourages me the most is when I get feedback from this team, written feedback.

Hey, I actually listened to that exhortation the other morning. Because I get all this feedback from all over the world, and sometimes you don't get too much here. And I think we do sometimes take for granted the information we receive, the literature, the exhortation.

By the way, I brought some more gospel tracts for distribution. They're there on the organ. They may not be the greatest tracts, you have to evaluate that, but they're good gospel tracts, some on the organ and some over the radiators.

So that as you go out into the streets of London, one of the megacities of the world, you can be using literature and, of course, speaking to people personally. Unreached people. I just wanted to share a couple of thoughts about unreached people that have been a real help to me.

What do we actually mean when we say that? Years ago, when we first launched out, we just talked about the nations of the world. We talked about those without Christ. We had different ways.

The word unreached, of course, was used. But it's only in the last 10, 20 years, through a number of different people, especially the Congress on World Evangelism in 1974, that I had the privilege of attending and actually giving a seminar on literature evangelism. I remember I was trying to organize a night of prayer with Bhakt Singh and we actually had to move because there was no provision for staying in the building later.

A lot of other interesting things happened. But at that time, there was a great clarion call concerning the unreached people. Either before or after that, men like Ralph Winter took up this cause.

He became a real thorn in the side of traditional missions because he pointed out that 90% of the work was really being done mainly among people who have already responded. I was absolutely amazed to discover, even in Andhra Pradesh, India, which we think of a massive church growth area. One of the reasons we moved our base to Hyderabad is because it's in a big church growth area with a lot of believers.

We want to mobilize these believers in India. We want to see indigenous movements among them. But research shows that most of the church growth in Andhra Pradesh is just among certain people's groups.

And other people's groups can be literally in the same town having a clue hardly what the whole thing is all about and are not responding. Now, if that's true in a state where there are so many Christians, what do you say in states where no people's group has responded? Like in most things, controversy came and they were unable to get agreement on the exact numbers of people's groups. But that I don't think is so important even if we have the smaller number of unreached people's groups in comparison to the larger number.

It's still so motivating and so important. Let me read something. This definition, let me go back a little before that.

Out of these early discussions came the concept of the people group, a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation or a variety of other factors. This definition had to do with forming a strategy to reach a specific group. As people set about to use it, we discovered that it would be helpful to add a supplementary definition.

A people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can flow along natural lines without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance due to culture, language and geography. I found that so helpful in trying to understand what we were actually aiming at. But this strategic definition fails at one point.

It doesn't give us an easy way to keep track of how we are doing in reaching such people groups in the world. Furthermore, it can become confused with the generally accepted ethno-linguistic idea of a people, say Urdu, all those who speak Urdu. This is another thing that I had difficulty understanding.

When we say we are attempting to reach an unreached people, do we mean an ethno-linguistic group that can encompass millions of people, or are we referring to a target group? Another definition was given. A people was defined as a human population with a common language, shared ethnicity and significant patterns of social interaction. It is immediately apparent that a people may contain numbers of people's groups.

You may not think it's important to understand some of this. I hope you actually do. A lot of new words are being used and some of the old-timers on the field get upset about these new words, which is unfortunate because every culture that's moving will develop new words.

I'm developing and using new words all the time. I've even had the privilege of inventing a few. That's part of culture.

I was reading something this morning in my time of study just the special kind of person it takes on the mission field to introduce new people into the culture and into the job. We've acknowledged a great failing in OM a number of times recently in giving proper orientation to people who especially come into the work from, say, the professional world. It's an amazing, amazing problem on the mission field.

One of the privileges we have actually on this team, right here in London and most teams have this privilege, is introducing you, helping you understand a new culture. You say, well, what's the new culture here? This is England. Most of us in this room, or half, are not English.

And we presume that it's just a simple thing to adjust to life in England. And I tell you, every year, as foreigners, we blunder about in this country. Of course, maybe we excuse ourselves because we don't think, well, we're not here planting a church among unreached people.

We're here serving. We're here facilitating. We're here trying to work together as a team to help British people go overseas.

If you think that's the only thing we're doing in Britain, you're a few years out of date because Britain has been declared a major evangelistic target field of OM International. Just to bring you up to the 90s, in case you're wallowing around back in the 70s. And an enormous amount of evangelism is being done in Britain.

And it's exciting. I don't think we can classify the English people as an unreached people's group or a hidden people's group. But some people would classify certain people within English culture as being hidden people.

Certainly, within the country, we now have all these immigrant groups. And some of those immigrant groups are classified, in the broader classification, as unreached people. Maybe there's a church among Bengali-speaking Muslims in the East End, but there could be other Muslim groups right next to them where there is no church whatsoever.

I have an enormous problem, and many people do, trying to decide when an unreached people's group has got to a place where we can consider there is work among them. I won't get into that. Another reason I think we should understand these things is that later on, we get on the field, we've been out there several

years, and we begin to start reading about missiology, or we get a magazine article, or we go home on furlough, and people are talking about things that intimidate us.

So we ought to at least have enough information, enough knowledge, so that we don't suffer from this kind of intimidation. Because what happens? People then feel they must drop out for several years of study to catch up on all that they've missed. It seems to me it's better to just keep studying as you go along, then you don't have to drop out for a couple of years.

Though I know that sometimes God is calling people to have a year of study, and I think that's great. Let me just quickly share some of these principles that Louise Bush shared. And it's interesting, you may not be aware of this, that within India, there's a church growth movement within India.

Indian church leaders are talking about all of these things. And we need to realize that the biggest potential missionary-sending world is now the third world, what some people call the third world, others call it the two-thirds world. And it's exciting.

I think it was around 1980 that the number of evangelical believers in the third world countries, the two third world countries, bypassed the number of believers in the rest of the world, including all of the United States. I mean, that's a phenomenal fact. Now, it's going to take a long time before they're able to get, perhaps, the resources mobilized and all the people sent out.

Eight principles. The principle of spiritual movement. God has sovereignly worked throughout human history in a series of movements rather than isolated events.

Effects can be traced to causes, events. One of the most outstanding occurrences in all of history is the exodus when God brought his people out of the worst kind of bondage. God's people today are not in one physical location, as at the time of the exodus.

But the same movement toward fulfilling his vision will take place as the body of Christ in different regions of the world identifies with a common vision of world evangelism by the year 2000. That's something, of course, I shared. I might say that tape toward the year 2000 is one of the most listened-to OM tapes in the history of the movement.

I had another letter yesterday of a lady listening to it several times. God's sovereign. These thoughts, to some degree, follow on from that.

Number two, the principle of indigenization. For the world to be evangelized by the year 2000, the vision must be owned by the Church in each part of the world. Rather than an imported idea, the vision must be born of the Holy Spirit emerging out of the body of Christ in each specific nation.

And what's happening through Comey Bomb in South America, what's happening through other similar organizations all over the world is phenomenal. In fact, in the Third World countries, they're ahead of us in England. In fact, England is very sluggish at present in many ways as far as unreached people, as far as missions vision.

This is not where the Church is at in Britain. Part of the Church is there, but if you go around and you start talking about these things, people, they really will look at you and wonder exactly what you're talking about. Things that we are very familiar with.

Most people aren't sitting in a Tuesday night, half-night of prayer, with people passing through from all over the world. Most people are not going to meet Shirley off the Trans-Siberian Express and suddenly get news about individuals in China. So we get to see through all this.

I perhaps less so because so much of my time is out of OM. It's out in all of these churches. And even when I'm back in Britain, every weekend is an overdose of balance in one way or the other.

So indigenization is so important, and we are working for that here in Britain. We don't want Britain to give up ownership in regard to world missions. We don't want people to be deceived into thinking the Koreans will do it, or the Brazilians will do it.

It's every nation. And Britain, and I can't get into that in this message, has enormous potential and resources to still be one of the major mission-sending nations in the world. Who could ever doubt that? Number three, the principle of consultation.

Consultation in the Church is an essential aspect of world evangelism by the year 2000. I remember when the Berlin Congress on Evangelism took place. That seems to get forgotten now.

And I was a little bit critical. I was very young. I thought, how can they spend all that money? I was a penny-pincher par excellence.

How can they spend all that money and have this big jamboree in Berlin? Praise God, we had one or two OMers go. We were always spying out the land, trying to figure out what was going on. And I wrestled through the years, especially because of my small-mindedness and lack of vision, with some of these Congresses.

And I heard a lot of criticism about them. But looking back at 35 years, I am absolutely convinced these different Congresses were a major part of God's strategy. And it was because I didn't have a bigger picture that sometimes I couldn't fully grasp what was happening and the importance of it.

With any Congress, like anything we do, there are positive and negative factors. The large amount of money these Congresses cost in the minds of some may be negative, but it could be positive if it could wake us up to the simple fact that to evangelize the world is going to cost a hundred times more than the Congresses. And if the Congresses got key people, because to these Congresses many went who were not full-fledged evangelicals, and through these Conferences they crossed the line and became out-and-out evangelicals.

If over here we have the missiologists, and over here our seminaries are basically denying the great doctrines, where are we going to go? We're not going to go very far, because we're going to plant churches, we're going to have pastors who lose their faith pastoring those churches. We saw that in India. And so I believe this whole thing of the principle of consultation is important.

Let me read just one other thing about that. The objectives of these consultations are to encourage one another through reports about world movement of the Holy Spirit to review the participation of the national church in missions efforts so far, to highlight the extent of the remaining task within the country, that would be national consultations, to consider how to involve the churches of the country more actively in the task of world evangelism, and to document the missiological efforts so far. Just a few days ago, we had one of our own ex-O-M-ers come back from a consultation on evangelism in... Who remembers where? Quick.

You couldn't forget that. Moscow. Do you think that was an important consultation or not? A land of 250 million people? Where do you think the Soviet Union is missiologically? Where do you think the churches are missiologically? It's going to take meetings, consultations, and all kinds of other things if we're going to reach the unreached people of the Soviet Union, and they are a nation probably with one of the bigger, larger numbers of unreached people groups.

Number four, the principle of involvement of every major element within the church. World evangelism by the year 2000 is an all-encompassing task. It requires the participation of pastors, young people, women, professionals, lay people.

It needs commitment of denominational leaders, executives of parachurch organizations, mission agencies, and theological educators. And this is something that we in O-M, somehow in God's providence, we have so many friends and so many contacts, so many prayer partners, so many Christian leaders that are to some degree favorable toward us. Think of what Doug Nichols said here just yesterday morning.

And what a privilege to put copies of Operation World into some of these people's hands. I put one in the hands of Bill Gothard. He immediately asked me on the phone if he could have each one for his staff members.

We cannot just sell these books. A lot of people are never going to buy a book about missions. They're never going to buy it.

That's not where they are. They don't have that much money. They may buy it if they get a hard sell.

But how many people get a hard sell on a book about missions, huh? You can go for four years in a church and never have anybody push a book about missions once from the pulpit. And I believe one of the things God wants us to do, and we just printed another edition for those that burned up in the fire, is continue to push this book and the prayer cards and other similar material like the book Priority One into the hands of every Christian leader, every lay leader that we possibly can in the world, of course, working together with anyone that has the vision. Number five, the principle of research of the harvest field and the harvest forces.

Someone was sort of joking that one or two of our new headquarters, coordinating bases, was referred to a research or training center. I don't think we're sort of famous for this in O.M. I dare to say, however, that we are doing a lot of research because we are reading people and we are taking what we read and we're putting it onto tape. We're sharing it in literally tens of thousands.

O.M. takes tens of thousands of meetings around the world. And so I think it is legitimate to consider part of our operation, wherever we may be working in our offices, in our headquarters, as research. It needs to be better organized.

We need to take advantage of all existing research because I think one of the greatest things we can do is take what some sort of scholar has produced over here in a corner and through our O.M. network make it known to the whole world. That is something I get very excited about. Number six, the principle of cooperation.

The task of World Evangelism by the year 2000, and we don't have to have an argument about whether it's going to be finished at the year 2000. I think a lot of us don't feel it's actually going to be finished by the year 2000. But a lot of people feel this is a good goal, it's a good aim, we need to set goals.

And of course, as we set those goals, we realize that we're probably going to have to continue on the next day. We're not going to necessarily all leave on the 30th of January 1999. And the actual movement, and there are many different movements, and they're not all interconnected, but some are, have talked about this movement as the year 2000 and beyond.

So let's not fight over that little thing, as some people are doing. We now have almost an anti-year 2000 movement. In fact, among God's people, whatever you do, someone will attack it.

It's just part of their nature, part of the ethos of God's people. Number six, the principle of cooperation. The task of World Evangelism by the year 2000 is too great for any one single organization or denomination to adopt as its own, of course.

That's why whenever we talk about the goal for Love Europe, to reach everybody in Europe by the year 2000, I was not the originator of that goal or that phrase, but it's come and we've got to live with it. We're still counting the costs, but certainly whenever we have said that, we have included in that everybody working for Jesus Christ in Europe, whether they're tied in to Love Europe or not, because they're never all going to tie in to Love Europe, but they are tied in to God. That's the common denominator, that God is the overseer by the Holy Spirit of all that's happening, even the things that seem very small and are never written about in the Gospel Gazette.

When there is cooperation, the potential is enormous. Emerging missions are a tremendous new wave that could penetrate the last vestiges of enemy strongholds. But the experience and resources of Western and traditional missions is absolutely necessary to come alongside this new wave if we're to accomplish the task of World Evangelism by the year 2000.

And you'll never understand where O.M. is in the 90s if you don't understand that God, whether we have chosen or not, I think we have, has brought us right alongside the whole big third wave mission movement in dozens of ways that I may speak about in some future date. With that come all kinds of complexities, all kinds of things that we're trying to wrestle with so that we can do things decently and in order. And when we see people leaving from here to fly off to Latin America or to fly off to Asia or to have conferences in Malaysia or to go down to other parts of Africa, it's all part, it's all tied in with this principle of cooperation, this principle of coming alongside what the Spirit of God is doing in Brazil, in Argentina, in Taiwan, in Korea and making ourselves available.

We are their servants. We're not going there to lead this. I'm not going there to lead this.

We are their servants and we want to make the knowledge we have, the 35 years of experience as a movement that we have, they don't have to make all the same mistakes over again. We don't want to reinvent the wheel. And I think the principle of cooperation with all the networking is so important.

And then there is the principle of encouragement. Another book I wanted to push was Lawrence Craft's book on encouragement. I'll do that maybe when I come back.

When Moses first received the vision for mobilizing God's people into action, he contacted his brother Aaron. In spite of the seeming impossible odds, Aaron greatly encouraged Moses and shared the vision of all God had spoken to his brother. And we need more Moses and Aaron type of encouragement and partnership.

So often we get trapped into trying to think the way a secular company thinks when it comes to leadership structure. We can learn from that, but we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We work as partners.

We're not conniving to see if we can get somebody's job higher up in the pyramid so we can get a higher salary. Someone once said, and it's been quoted many times, it's unlimited what can be accomplished if we don't care who gets the credit and how hurtful it is when sometimes our own egos get their way and we find things happening because somehow we want to get some credit in God's work. And then the last principle, the principle of a major event as a focal point.

I'm not saying there are not other principles. I've taken this outline from this paper by Louise Bush. The great mobilization of God's people in the exodus from Egypt did not begin with the event, but their preparation and vision focused on the event.

In the same way, the year 2000 presents a major focal point for world evangelism. But dates need to be set, which will become steps, as in the exodus, for the major united mobilization of the entire body of Christ. I believe this could be accomplished by breaking the task into the regions of the world, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania, Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and North America.

Within each region, an immediate focal point could be established for the clarification of the commission of the world evangelism by the year 2000. This could follow a process of consultation nationally and regionally within a country and a documentation of the harvest field and the harvest force demonstrating effective models of how that work is being done. During the last five years of the century, the expectation would be that the entire body of Christ in every region of the world would be mobilized for a final thrust and become actively involved in the accomplishment of the task of world evangelism by the year 2000.

Probably the Church of Jesus Christ is never going to agree on all the fine details. They may not even agree on what certain things mean in terms of that particular year 2000. But surely this is an hour in which we need greater faith, greater expectation.

And I know in my own ongoing struggle to maintain my motivation and just to walk with God, reading these articles, reading what other people are thinking, listening to their tapes, reading their books, going to some of these meetings, I find very inspiring, I find very invigorating, especially listening to younger men, especially listening to people who, like Joseph de Souza, come from these countries, in his case, India. So let's not allow any spiritual rigor mortis to set in to OM. Let's not get stuck because we didn't use this vocabulary ten years ago or because we don't really understand what incarnational theology is or we prefer to talk about friendship rather than bonding or discipling people rather than some other term that someone else is using.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the excitement of being involved in one of the greatest world missions thrust, perhaps the greatest world mission thrust in the history of the planet, 2000 years since Pentecost. We praise you for everyone that's gone ahead of us.

So many hundreds who laid down their lives in China, as we spoke about China today, just in OMF alone. So many that laid down their lives in Latin America and Africa and other parts of the world. We don't despise anything that anyone has done in your name in the past.

But Lord, we want to move forward. We want to dream dreams. We want greater visions.

We want also the little visions of how we can, as individuals, help the big vision become a reality. Whether we're standing in a church speaking to thousands of people or talking to one individual on the telephone. And Lord, we cry out to you for a massive mobilization of your people on every level that we may see the whole world reached as quickly as possible.

Yea, at least by the year 2000. And we know, Lord, there are many complexities in this. And we know it's easier for us to talk than it is to walk.

And so we ask you for grace. We ask you for mercy. We ask you, Lord, to deliver us from some of our pettiness.

Deliver us from some of our small-mindedness. We know, Lord, it's going to take hundreds of millions of pounds and Deutschmarks and dollars and rupees to see this job done. And we ask you for that money.

We ask you that people would understand it's more better to give than receive. We ask that the vision of sacrifice in Acts 2 and Acts 4 may not be lost among your people. And that love would cover our differences.

We want to hold to the basic biblical truths. But we don't want to strain at gnats and swallow camels. Strengthen us in this task, we pray.

In Jesus' name, that every unreached people and group in the world may, in these coming years, have a church in their midst. And that they would be able to reach out around them to their neighbors till everyone in this world has been at least given the gospel. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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