

Urbana 1996

by George Verwer

George Verwer challenges the audience to be witnesses for Christ by living a life that reflects God's love and character, and by prioritizing the supremacy of God in missions.

Duration: 1:01:25

Scripture: Isaiah 43:10, Ezekiel 22:30, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Missions Work", "Gods Love"

Description

In this video, the speaker expresses gratitude to Jesus for the impact of the speakers and videos during the event. They mention that tomorrow is the last day, which is difficult to accept. The speaker shares a personal story about the significance of a jacket for missionaries. They also talk about the importance of having a book to give away and the practicality of reading and taking notes simultaneously. The speaker encourages those who have already committed to world missions to stand up and make a radical decision, emphasizing that missions is a priority for God. They mention the love of Christ as a motivating factor for missions and reference a passage from Ezekiel about God seeking someone to stand in the gap. The speaker concludes by stating that the need for missions is even greater than what has been expressed during the event.

Transcript

I just flew in from London last night, went up to talk to the pilot, and got quite excited there in the cockpit of a Jumbo 747, and ended up giving them some literature. Hope my literature doesn't end up on the floor here. So I get excited talking to one person, and I'm excited to talk to you tonight.

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person. That's what the Lord told us to do. And we've been hearing about this verse, Acts 1.8, You shall be my witnesses.

Who is a witness? What is a witness? I think we all know the answer. I don't think you need me to give that answer. Every one of us here, every one of us who knows the Lord Jesus Christ, we are his witnesses.

Praise be to God. I want to just continue the time of prayer, which I think is just so significant, by praying for some things that I was reminded of this morning when I was in a motel outside of O'Hare, and they gave me, I don't like to buy newspapers, I don't have the money, but they gave me a free Wall Street Journal. Not exactly my favorite paper, but anyway, on the front page, it was amazing how many prayer needs there were there about the nations of the world.

They don't say in the Wall Street Journal, pray. But as Christians, as disciples, as his witnesses, when we read the papers, when we get the news, we hear about things like what's going on right now in Peru, we want to pray. So I want to just continue this prayer time just for a few minutes.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray for the nations of the world and we pray especially for the crisis there in the land of Peru with all those hostages right now. We ask that they may soon be released.

That situation would be resolved and we pray for your children in Peru, where some have been martyred because of your cause. And Lord Jesus, our hearts still go out even more to the situation between the Tutsi and the Hutu people of Central Africa, in Zaire, in Rwanda. And we cry out for that situation, Lord, that you would give them grace and give them strength and enable us to pray with love and compassion for those people.

And for southern Sudan, where the situation is actually almost as bad, though it doesn't get so much publicity. We cry out to you, Lord, for the crisis right now in the land of Israel. We pray, oh God, for the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan, where so many have been killed.

We pray, Lord Jesus, that somehow those few believers in Afghanistan would be given supernatural strength at this time. We pray for Sri Lanka, where so many thousands have died in that civil war with the Tamil Tigers and the Sinhalese people. And Lord Jesus, we cry out to you for this world in which we live, that you would send forth workers and that you would send forth many right out of this very auditorium.

For we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Praise be to God. I hope you will find that a major part of your life as you are his witness. I can testify without any exaggeration that I was only 17 and I was so influenced by men and women of prayer, including Dr. Billy Graham and his extreme emphasis on prayer, that I prayed this prayer as a young baby Christian off to college.

I said, God, I only want one thing in life. I want to know how to pray. I'm not a naturally prayerful person.

I'm not a naturally spiritual person. I'm from New Jersey. I mean, let's face it.

And for me to learn to pray, a hyper activist, his life up until Jesus reached out to me in Madison Square Garden through the ministry of Billy Graham was mainly women in nightclubs and fun and money and business. In fact, by 16, I already owned three little businesses to somehow suddenly become a person of prayer. You're talking about something way off the wall.

But it happened because this great Jesus revolution that God has called us into this great challenge to build his kingdom. It's not just evangelize the world, friends. It's build the kingdom in every part of the world.

And that includes Chicago and that includes Champaign-Urbana. And it's so important for us to understand that in the present mission mode, we actually have more Americans who want to go than we have those who will send. I remember when I was a young Christian, hearing Billy Graham say the hardest thing for a person to give was their money.

I thought, come on, Billy, you're my spiritual father, but that's ridiculous. We know the hardest thing to give is your life. Money, that's nothing.

Money, that's, you know, it's God's will. He supplies, right? That's why thousands who wanted to get to Urbana couldn't come. But then I read what Billy Graham said a little bit later.

He said money represents a person's time and talent and energy and education and tears and toil and hard work converted into currency. And so when they give that, they are giving their life. I have a new hero as I come to Urbana 96.

A little bit different than my hero of Urbana 67 or 68 when I first came. Urbana influenced me. I better take my hat off.

I know that preaching with your hat on, it offends some people. You know, that's a real thought. Put on backward.

That's that's more spiritual, right? You know, I tell you, I love hats. I love hats. I don't know why.

I love people who scream. Did you hear the scream of this girl here? Whoa. Why is it you can scream for football? You can scream for baseball.

You can scream when you get excited at the Olympics, but you can't scream for Jesus. Amen. Amen.

Maybe you better throw it back up here. That's all right. Throw me back up here.

I may need it again when we talk about the 1040 window. Thank you. I don't know what I was even saying now that my hat's on backward.

Let's just pray again. Lord, I need help at this point. I think somehow my notes have got lost.

But you know our hearts. You know everything about us and you still love us. And Lord, whether we're from New Jersey or Chicago or Korea, whether we're from Brazil or India or Argentina, whether we're Eskimos or Pygmies, whether we are loud or we are quiet, you know everything about us and you love us and we are your witnesses.

And by your grace, we together are going to finish this great task of pioneer missions across the world. Grant this, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

I think I ought to get some notes here. I got some notes on this. I wanted to read this scripture that I saw in this terrific paper.

I love things that are free. They gave me this free. I came here.

This is the world's thinnest stool. You are my witnesses, says the Lord. And my servant whom I have chosen so that you may know and believe me.

Isaiah 43 verse 10. Now, I know when you come to Urbana, you get an information overload. But it is amazing.

Thanks so much. You get 35 free books for helping me on that. Thank you very much.

By the way, I hope you visit the book exhibition because it's just awesome. And you'll get more from those books than you probably get from this leaking faucet you're listening to right now. The best thing about my own books, and I think one of my books is going to be the book of the night or all the quotations I robbed

from other people's books that I put in my own.

But Urbana is often described as attempting to drink from a giant fire hydrant, and soon you can be on information overload. And so as I think of this challenge of being his witness, I want to just share with you just seven dynamic, mega life changing words that I believe can change our lives. By the way, it's amazing in a lot of Christian events.

They don't expect any big decisions to take place till the last night. You start real slow, boring and few pictures. And then as you get toward the last night, people start talking about repentance and revival and the Lordship of Christ.

People start to really get uptight. They're so tired they can't even see straight anymore. And then they pass out these decision cards, you know, sign here, boom.

The next thing you know, you know you're on an airplane to Mongolia. But I want to challenge you to be different. By the way, it's getting hot here.

Whoa, look at that. One of the things we're told in the orientation to be a proper speaker at Urbana is to be aware of any hidden agendas because she can get into controversy these days. There's a lot of controversy in the church, a lot of controversy about music.

People are always afraid that Burwer is going to get going on his music thing, you know. So we've got to avoid any of these. We've got to avoid any of these hidden agendas, cameras.

And let me give you those seven words. First of all, a faithful witness is a Jesus focused person. A Jesus focused person.

It's impossible to explain how God used a particular book to prepare me for Urbana. And this is the book by a man named John Piper, who comes from Minneapolis. It's amazing.

I'm sort of a bit of a rebellious type. And as more people told me to read this book, I put it further and further away. I had to repent of that.

And I started reading this book about the supremacy of God in missions. And I want to acknowledge with all my heart, and I believe all the staff of IVF and everybody are in unity with this. Above everything else here at Urbana 96, we want God to be supreme.

We want to give God all the glory for anything that happens here or has happened in these 50 last 50 years. A witness is a Jesus focused person. We're not here firstly to get you to go to the mission field.

Some of you look a little tense. Relax, relax. Even A.W. Tozer, one of the most heavy hitting authors you could ever read, said God knows everything about you and he loves you still.

Isn't that exciting? Jesus loves you. He's not trying to put you in some kind of guilt trip straight jacket. And if he sends you to the mission field, it's because it's going to be the most challenging, stretching, fulfilling, mind bending, exhilarating, overwhelming experience you could ever have.

And you're going to love being a missionary. My wife, who's sitting with me here, and I have been on the field now 36 years. We haven't been able to squeeze in the first furlough.

We've loved every day, every year. By the way, I know a lot of people were worried that at Urbana I was going to do like I did at Cornerstone a couple of years ago. It got on the Internet.

Furwer takes down his trousers to show his global underwear. But my wife, for the sake of our marriage, she made me promise not to do that anymore. But I did.

I did bring them with me. I actually went swimming in them this afternoon. There they are, the famous global underwear.

Anyway, you know, when people start talking about Jesus and then they they say something that's humorous, some people feel that's a contradiction because they've got cockeyed screwball ideas of what spirituality is. And the fact is, no matter how spiritual we are, no matter how radically committed we are to Jesus Christ, we are still incredibly human. I, I became very extreme for a period of my life and wanting to be more like Christ.

And the more I wanted to be more like Christ, when I looked in the mirror and I tried to evaluate myself, the further away from him I thought I was getting. I still feel I have so much to learn about being like Christ, but I know that Christ accepts me with all my struggles and all my doubts. And I know that God loves and accepts you.

There may be someone here tonight, almost by accident, a missions conference, and you perhaps yet do not even know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And I would just urge you not to wait to the last night, make a radical decision on the first night. This is the grand opening at the Olympics.

The great night was the grand openings. The Olympics in Atlanta are over just in case you're behind in things. But God's Olympics are still going on.

And he wants you. He wants you with all of your weaknesses and all your struggles to be in his Olympics. And as God looks down on the world tonight, I really believe this event is big on God's heart.

Let's be focused on God. Let's make sure our motivation is connected with the supremacy of God and missions. Let's understand that missions is far more on God's heart than it ever could be on our hearts.

And as we get to know him and as we fellowship with him in all of our struggles and doubts and weaknesses, then he will become supreme in our life. Secondly, a witness to me is a grace awakened person. I have another book in this bag.

I don't know why they've kept it in hardback for so long. Charles Swindoll's Grace Awakening. It takes grace to just look at the price, but that's part of the book.

And I want to encourage you to save your pennies and buy ninety nine cent double cheeseburgers like I had last night and use the extra money to buy Grace Awakening, because I believe this is one of the most prophetic, significant books God has ever given our nation. You may not have a lot of time as university students to read extra books, so maybe you could start in the middle. The best chapter is in the middle.

I started in the middle and read both directions at the same time. It was tremendous. I mean, it was confusing, but I'm generally confused anyway, so it was not a big problem.

Because I believe that unless we, in the body of Christ in North America, experience some kind of grace awakening that we will never fulfill the goals and aims that God has given to us, because in many of our

churches and in many of our institutions, legalism still reigns. Grace killers are still hiding behind every corner to pour cold water on anybody who suddenly has a burst of zeal and wants to see a few changes made for the sake of the kingdom. My third word that I leave with you in describing a true witness is a new word that came into my life like a holy ghost twister out of heaven.

What a film that was, so I loved it. I love to see it backward. I love to see things backward, like the old movies.

But anyway, I was in Oregon, one of my favorite states in the top 50 and of the lower 48. And a guy gave me a book. I don't know if I can even find it in my bag.

That's got so mixed up. There is the British edition of Ragamuffin Gospel. How many of you have ever seen this book? To me, this was just like a fresh shower in New Delhi, where my wife and I used to live in the middle of May, because it's about grace.

It's about God using characters like me that, you know, don't quite have it together. Has the enemy ever tried to intimidate you? You know, don't quite really have it together. How am I going to be a missionary? My prayer life's a shambles.

I'm having trouble reading this particular Bible, especially this version. And I believe one of the best descriptions for so many of us here at Urbana is the cover of this book, Ragamuffin. What's a ragamuffin? Look it up in the dictionary.

It comes from England and it describes a young child in the street that's not dressed properly and the nose is running and got no shoes and the hair is a mess like mine, a ragamuffin. God uses ordinary people. And God wants to use every one of us here tonight in this great challenge of world missions.

I often wonder how and why God ever allowed me to help birth a new mission society now known as Operation Mobilization, with two and a half thousand workers across the world. And I figure it happened somewhat like this over New Jersey, when after my conversion, because a lady prayed for me and sent me a Gospel of John through the mail. And then I went to a one night milligram meeting in Madison Square Garden.

There, I discovered that Jesus is alive and I experienced as I trusted him and believed upon him. I discovered new life in Jesus. And if there's anyone here tonight, you haven't yet experienced this.

You don't have to be from New Jersey to be a sinner. Wherever you're from, if you don't have Jesus, the Book of Romans says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. There that word is again, the glory of God.

And so you need to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus. But when the mission societies or the angels who are in charge of mission societies were looking through all the books, what possible mission society would accept George Verwer? They looked at me still struggling with lust, still struggling with bad temper, still struggling with bad attitudes, you know, quite a few other struggles. And the more the angels look through the books of existing mission societies, it's nobody's going to take him.

God of mercy from the corner of the heaven said, let him start his own. Thank you, Jesus. And somehow I went off to a Christian college that was no longer very Christian in Tennessee.

And I met a crazy guy named Dale Roton. And God brought us into relationship. And I'm sure many of you in these days together are going to be brought into friendship that is going to last for decades.

Dale and I have been partners in this work for 38 years. But I was warned about Dale. So be careful of first impressions.

A guy on the campus when I was just there for my first or second week said, hey, watch out for this Dale Roton. He's a fanatic. He's baptizing people in the showers.

That's amazing because he was a Presbyterian. But somehow that sort of attracted me to this character. And we've been laboring together ever since.

And together with others who have joined O.M. and quite a few of them are here. We've been able to give the gospel face to face to nine hundred million people. We saw these two ships launched.

We've seen so many things happen, especially thousands trained and sent into other mission agencies. And it can all be traced back to one praying woman. It can all be traced back to one struggling, doubting, needy character.

Yes, me experiencing the grace of God to weak people. Failure can be the back door to success. Some of you have had many failures in your life.

People talk about you can get Christian leaders can get you really uptight, can't they? Make sure you get plan A, you get plan A, get the right woman, get the right situation, get the right mission. Plan A, but probably quite a few of you are like me. You probably don't feel you got plan A or maybe plan C or D. Some of you may be, you know, way down plan H. You know what I say? Praise God for a big alphabet.

Press on. And if somehow a character like me with all my doubts and weaknesses and struggles can experience, and this is no exaggeration, can experience the joy and the peace and the reality of Jesus every single day since that moment of conversion, March 5th, 1955, then I don't believe you have an excuse. Anybody can live for Jesus because it's He who lives in us.

It's He who lives in us. We're grace awakened, we're ragamuffin, but we're also visionary. Let's not be afraid to dream dreams.

Let's not be afraid to think of new ways that we can help reach the world with the gospel, like this Joshua project that has been launched recently that we're hearing a lot about in these days. God is doing so much in the world today, and we don't have any excuse for not being excited. How can it be that young people across America are saying, well, you know, Christianity, that's boring, or the church is boring.

Somebody said, hey, do you know anything more boring than a missionary speaker? Guy said, yeah, missionaries lies. Hey, man, this cannot be. We are God's chosen people, not frozen people.

And let's pray in Urbana 96 for Operation Defrost, that we may be, yes, that we may be, yes, filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's my final word of Jesus. Witness is a spirit filled person, and God is willing to fill people at any time.

And we need to be filled again and again. D.L. Moody, even a secular encyclopedia said of D.L. Moody, overweight American evangelist who depopulated hell by two million souls. That's not bad for somebody overweight.

How about you? How about you? How about me? One day when D.L. Moody was going on about being filled again and again, a little lady in the front row said, excuse me, Mr. Moody, why do you keep going on about being filled again and again? D.L. Moody looked her in the eye and he said, Madam, because I leak. Whoa. Thank you, Jesus.

And this is my testimony. And this and with this, I will close all my Christian life. I've been a bit weak and I've been a bit leaky.

But hallelujah, I know where the free refills are. And they're here for you tonight. Amen.

Amen. Praise God. I have been so challenged and ministered to by the speakers, by the videos.

I just want to thank Jesus for breaking into my heart during these days. Hallelujah. Again, there's so much that we long to share with all of you.

And as we realize tomorrow is our our last full day, it's a bit difficult to think of that. I know that some of you maybe think that this jacket is just some kind of a gimmick, but this this is a serious thing for missionaries. I was in a jumbo jet.

Everybody's telling stories. So I'll tell you a story. It's true.

I was on it. By the way, I want to apologize to the people in the front row here. I get excited and, you know, water comes.

I don't know where this water comes into my mouth. And so I got this towel here just. But I was on a jumbo jet and I went up to the cockpit to talk to the captain.

I had this jacket on. I was flying from Brazil, one of my favorite countries. This hat, by the way, is from Brazil.

I can't even read what's on the front of it. I speak Spanish, but I was flying from Brazil to Argentina. Amen.

Yes. They started discussing the pilot and the copilot where they were. And the copilot said, I believe we're over Ecuador.

That's way up here. And they use this jacket in the cockpit of a 747 to see where they were. We were flying over Uruguay.

I'm amazed at the amount of literature they're giving away here free. It's amazing. Bibles, books.

Some people here have whole suitcases full of reading material. And how are you going to find the time to read all this material? Well, one thing, if you're going to be a missionary, some of you are thinking about that. You're going to have to learn to redeem the time.

Ephesians 5, redeem the time. And one of the ways you're going to do that is by making sure at all times you have a flashlight. How many of you here have not brought a flashlight to Urbana's? I want you to just quietly repent in the name of Jesus.

Because it gets dark very early. We've had all this exhortation to spend this time in the word. We've got Operation World to pray through.

That is some book to pray through. Anybody without two copies is probably a backslider. Because you've got to have one to give away to your pastor or someone else who may not be able to afford it.

Now, I discovered, you know, we want to be practical tonight. And I discovered sitting in the back of a car, reading a book with my flashlight, it's difficult. Because I like to take notes.

And in answer to prayer, many years ago, God brought the ultimate weapon for redeeming the time. You can read, you can write at the same time. It's just awesome.

And you can hold the balloon and you can read and write all at the same time. So, what is the lesson in all of this? I'm sure Auntie will give us the lesson later on. Seriously, I want to ask something else.

I want to ask all of you who already made a commitment to go into world missions. Before you came here, you already made this commitment. I'd like you right now to stand up.

I don't know if these lights can go on more, but whatever. Could you stand up? Oh, my, oh, my. Oh, smokes.

Whoa. Whoa. Hallelujah.

Let's, let's right now just have a moment of prayer. Those of you standing near these people who are already standing, which is probably a couple thousand people, stand up and put your hands on them. Don't knock them over.

I've had so many people put hands on my head, it's gone flat. So be careful. Just pray for them because they're going to need help.

They're going to need money. You can put money in their pockets right now if you want to because the road ahead will be rough and it will be tough and Satan will fight us every inch of the way because world missions, as John Piper said in his book, is total war. Let's do spiritual warfare for these people right now.

Amen. Just pray for about one minute. And I want to tell you another story.

When I was in Urbana preaching about 10 years ago, I started by asking if there was anybody headed for my favorite country that I prayed and wept for for almost 39 years, the land of Turkey that now has more than 50 million people. And I wonder tonight, if there's someone out there, you're by God's grace, you're headed for this needy, one of the most unreached countries in planet Earth. Is there anyone? Would you stand up? I want to see you with my binoculars.

A lot more than 10 years ago. Thank you. You may think that's a little strange, but let me tell you, when I went to Turkey last May to minister at a retreat of missionaries, a young man came up to me.

I never met him before. Not even sure it may have been a young woman because one person came up and said they heard me on the radio just in one sentence mentioned Turkey on primetime America. I did a broadcast for them right from this great assembly hall this afternoon.

But all she heard was one sentence about Turkey on the radio. That's how God can use hot information. And she's in Turkey as a long term worker right now.

I may have mixed her up with the other man or woman who came to me and said, I went to Urbana. I heard you speak. I don't remember anything much, except you put the binoculars on and you mentioned Turkey.

And all I can think of the rest of the night was Turkey. And I'm here in Turkey as a missionary, as a result of that. Praise God.

God answers prayer. All of us who have participated on the platform, we are ordinary, weak, struggling ragamuffins, just like everybody else. Do not think of us as some kind of special or famous people.

It's only because there's so many of us here at once, the whole thing gets a little bit weird. My life is not mainly speaking to big crowds. I speak to more people on the telephone.

And I'd love to get a telephone call from any of you, not all at once. And you can go to the O.M. exhibition and they'll give my address and my name and maybe a free book and a free tape. And I'd love to hear from any of you personally.

When 1967 I preached at Urbana in fear and trembling, I spoke on the danger of spiritual schizophrenia. I spoke on the danger of the double life, which I'm going to touch on very briefly this evening as well. And out of that experience in Urbana before that, I never wanted to write a book.

I was a book distributor, not a writer. But out of that experience and what God did is four or five thousand people stood to repent and commit their lives to Christ and world missions. I let this book go into print, which was called Hunger for Reality.

And that book, though it wasn't, in my view, that great a book, it was just my heart with all of its all of its needy and ragamuffin this brought me over these decades, twenty five thousand personal letters. And I've tried to pray for every one of those individuals at least once. And some of them, of course, have ended up long standing friends.

It is amazing. It is amazing what God has been doing here at Urbana over these past 50 years. I give God the praise and the glory.

And my wife and I, my wife and I, as missionaries sent out from Chicago way back 37 years ago, we want to pay tribute to the great international movement of IPs known in this country as InterVarsity. Nobody asked me to say this, but as I've observed their student work all over the world and I've had fellowship with their leader, the international director of IPs, Lindsey Brown, I can honestly say that IPs and University is one of the truly great cutting missionary endeavors of this generation. And I give a man.

And it is sad that in some parts of the United States, outside of the student world and sometimes in the student world, this is a rather well kept secret. And I hope you will be committed with me to spread the word of what God is doing among students and the need, the tremendous need among students. It's amazing here at Urbana.

You just mentioned the name of a place, some geographical place, and you get the response. I love it like New Jersey, Pennsylvania, one of my favorite states, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas. Well, the whole of the United States and Canada.

And when we think of places like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Nashville, Memphis, Miami or Orlando. We know that they are very needy cities and some of you are working in those cities, praise God. But what about Paris? What about Milan? What about Barcelona? What about Istanbul? What about Ankara? What about Tehran? What about Kabul? What about Delhi, Calcutta? What about Rangoon, Bangkok? Well, we don't know quite how to respond.

But when many of you start obeying the Lord and his commission, you're going to end up in those places. Sometimes there's a tension here in Canada and the states. Between those who want to go overseas, which, by the way, is a very, very, very tiny percentage of our population.

So let's not allow Urbana and what we just saw a few moments ago deceive us. It's tremendous. But if you go to Wimbledon, you will see tennis players.

But I don't think you believe tennis players are taking over the world. So when you come to Urbana, you will meet missionaries and you will meet people who are planning to go. But in fact, it is only a tiny, way too small of a percentage of people in Canada and the United States that are planning to go into world missions.

And this is what we want to change tonight. And we're going to be very specific tonight. We're going to ask you to consider actually going.

Missionary challenges sometimes become a little fuzzy. And we end up all deciding that we can be a missionary just remaining at home, which has an element of truth. And we are looking for senders almost as much as we are looking for goers.

But we need to be clear about what we're attempting to say. And tonight we're going to be giving an invitation, not only a paper to fill out and make an intellectual and heart commitment. But when I finish speaking, I'm going to ask those who want to make a radical commitment to world missions to go, especially to go, but also to send if you really seriously mean that.

And we're going to ask people to stand up and we want to warn you about that because we don't want it to largely be emotion. Nothing wrong with a little emotion, but for long term discipleship commitment, we need an act of the will. Billy Graham always talks about an act of the will.

And we need men and women who will who will will to follow Christ wherever he leads. The challenge to go needs to be more specific. Brothers and sisters, Chicago and New York City and all these cities we've mentioned are very needy, but I'm here to testify after living around the world for some 36 years that many of the other cities I've mentioned to you, including cities in needy Europe, that has not been mentioned very much yet.

And France and Spain and Italy and Austria and Belgium are tremendous mission fields, much less Eastern Europe and Russia and those places on into Central Asia. But many of those cities, and you can write this down if you want, have one tenth of one percent, one tenth of one percent. You know, one thing I really love is when my wife as my wife kisses me and she's been kissing me for almost 37 years, almost any any time, just I just bang like that.

In fact, if I went, she'd come up and kiss me right now. But OK, well, that was great. You probably think that's a bit over the top.

That's nothing next to the Bible. The Bible says, Be thou satisfied with the breasts of the wife of thy youth. The Bible is a liberated book.

And God's people are liberated people. And if you're not liberated yet, I'm praying that God's going to put some holy ghost dynamite under your seat. And when the invitation is given, you're going to go.

Now, some of the more intellectual ones among you will be asking me at this point, what are the reasons? And so I've got seven reasons, seven reasons why you need to go. The first reason is because the love of Christ constrains us. The love of Christ constrains us.

When Billy Graham spoke at Urbana way back in the 50s, I was not there, but I heard the tape about 20 times. He spoke from that word in Ezekiel. God looks for a man.

God looks for a person to stand in the gap and to make up the hedge. Ezekiel 22, verse 30. And he found none.

And tonight here at Urbana, God is looking. God is seeking for a man, for a woman to make up the hedge. And I believe it's for the glory of God.

I believe the love of Christ constrains us to do something about what we have heard during these days. Secondly, the need, the need which we have heard about a lot in these days is still, I believe, 10 times greater than we've been able to express. It really is.

That's why we want you to get involved in summer missions. That's why I'd like to get some of you on one of our ships traveling to seven or eight nations in one year. That's why we believe in short-term missions as well as long-term, because you need to somehow feel and smell and see the challenge, really.

It was when I went to Mexico at 19 years of age and I went out into those garbage dumps in Monterrey that I was radically changed and made a radical commitment to the poor. The need is 10 times greater than what we have been able to explain during this great conference. Thirdly, there are phenomenal open doors.

We again don't have more time, but as you've gone through the exhibitions and have talked to the missionaries, you've discovered open doors everywhere. What a sin, what a great mistake if we don't move through these new open doors that God has set before us around the world. Fourthly, and in some ways this is the most important for many of us here, if you don't go, people like you who come to a congress and a conference like this in prime vacation time, if you don't go, who will? Who will? Someone that's never been to a conference like this.

Someone that's never even seen such a book as Operation World. Someone that's never heard a challenge or heard a missionary speaker or watched a video. And the Word of God says to whom much is given, much is expected.

And for being here at Urbana, we will be expected to respond and to do great things for God. Fifthly, we should go because more than any time in history, the resources are available. I brought some books on this subject.

They're down in the exhibition, a book called Friend Raising, Building a Missionary Support Team, another amazing book that anybody interested in mission should read, People Raising by William Dillon, all about

finance and money. There's a book down there called Catch the Vision. There's more tools, more resources than ever before in history and in many different languages.

And it's an awesome challenge to think of a nation that has thousands of Christians who claim to be and are millionaires. And I'm praying that some of you are going to get the vision not to go, except maybe short term, but to send. I almost told you about my new hero when I first spoke the other night.

My old hero was Borden of Yale. He was a millionaire from Yale University. He gave his money away and he went to Egypt and he gave his life.

He was dead within a few months. And that was always the early hero of OM as we challenged people to go to the Muslim world. But after 41 years of ministry, I have a new hero.

He's a guy that came on OM and he heard me speak and he just got captured by the challenge of Central Asia, a new phenomenal open door. And so he made a commitment to go to Central Asia during an OM conference in Europe. But his father was a great sender.

His father was putting thousands into world missions. His father and mother had put their business on the altar and God was blessing that business. And it was a vital factor in putting many missionaries on the field.

When this young man got home with his new vision and his desire to go, his father was ill. And his father said, son, I know you've got this vision to join OM and go to Central Asia, but we need you here. The company's in trouble.

We're trying to produce so much money every year for world missions. Would you sacrifice that vision for a couple of years, stay at home and help in the family business to keep the money going out to the supply lines? That is my new hero. And I know you may not grasp that, but brothers and sisters, at present, we already have thousands of Americans trying to get to the field and unable to get the financial backing.

We have missionaries returning from the field and not able to go back, unable to find dynamic, live, cutting-edge, mega-motivated, Acts 13 sending churches. We must bring this into the equation. We must understand what it is to release finance through prayer and faith and put the ministry of sending on an absolute equal level with the ministry of going.

It will be a battle all the way. L.E. Maxwell, who founded Prairie Bible Institute, said, world missions is total war. And John Piper said the same thing in his book because it's a biblical teaching from the New Testament.

Sixthly, and this is so exciting for characters like me, boy, I tell you, it's difficult to sit down here next to Dan Harrison. I love Dan Harrison, but I always feel like I'm sitting there like like a horse in a race waiting for, bang, the gun to go off and I can preach. I feel a little more relaxed right now.

But I've been sitting there all these three days. I've been watching Dan Harrison as these lovely women give their testimonies. They come back.

He smiles at them and gives them a big hug. I've been waiting three days for Dan Harrison to hug me. Oh, I feel so much better now.

But here is the sixth point. If you go, if you go, you begin to move. It takes a while to get there.

I'm not planning for all of you to join me in O'Hare tomorrow to fly to Mongolia. Relax. Some of you look very tense.

But as you begin to go, you start prayer groups. You start giving out information. You become a missionary mobilizer.

Others will follow. You may never go because the providence of God is a major factor in all of our lives, is it not? You may not go, but others, because of you, will go. Make a commitment.

Be willing to take a risk. Put it all in God's hands. You cannot go wrong.

Lastly, I just say this. We can, we can go, we can make this decision, even though we may fear failure and we may have many other hangups, because as we've seen already this week, failure can be the backdoor to success. Don't be afraid to fail.

You're looking at the international traveling secretary of the fellow ragamuffin's failure club, but somehow I've experienced the grace of God every day. Don't be afraid to fail. I remember years ago, I had this great plan to go into Russia.

Some of you've heard of Brother Andrew, God's smuggler. Tonight you've got Brother George, God's bungler. I tried the same thing.

I blew it. I got arrested by the secret police. They put me in the newspapers as an American spy.

It was a fiasco, but after that fiasco, I went for a night of prayer or a day of prayer, and it was during the day of prayer that God gave me that new vision and those new words, operation, mobilization, and the rest is history. Failure is the backdoor to success. I picked up a book some time ago by Erwin Lutzer.

I think it may be out of print. It was so exciting. I just almost wept and recommitted my life as I got into this book.

Well, it was called Failure, the Backdoor to Success. I said, praise God, there's hope for me. I never even read the book.

The cover was so powerful. It's a wonderful thing to speak about revival. Praise God.

Let us continue to pray for revival, but let us understand the biblical teaching that plan A revival is very simple. It's Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, living in you. And if a character like me can experience some of that revival every single day since that conversion in Madison Square Garden, then you don't have an excuse.

Don't wait for some special, great, mystical experience in which you start floating around the gymnasium at your university, but somehow do what the Word of God says the Lord Jesus repeated again and again when He said, if any person follow me, let them deny self, take up the cross, and follow me. Revival is your inheritance and your privilege in Jesus Christ, and we want you to make sure when you go away from Urbana, you're living in that tremendous reality. Let us pray.

Let us across the straight auditorium, bow our heads for this divine moment, this moment of destiny. Now, God is speaking to different people in different ways, so you just pray about your own situation. Some of you have never even come to Jesus.

I personally know people who were saved and sent on the same night. That might happen to you. There are others here that you know you've been playing games with God, you've been living some kind of spiritual schizophrenia, some kind of double life, one thing on Sunday, something else throughout the week, and you tonight need to stand to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord in your life.

Over your time, over your social relationships, over your struggles, over domestic difficulties, over your future, your education, your time, and your money. And in one sense, that's my greatest heart cry, that tonight you may make Jesus Christ absolute Lord of your life. And that may be a crisis tonight, but we know it will have to be followed by a process, or it will become one more abscess.

We don't want that. And for many, tonight will just be one small but significant step. For others, you're going to stand because your commitment is to go, at least for a couple of years.

And others, you're going to stand because tonight God's confirmed that you should begin pushing doors and moving toward long-term career missions. And there's others who are going to stand because God has zapped you about giving, about praying, and about being a mega-motivated ragamuffin sender. And so that's my invitation.

And we're battling the clock, but I'm going to ask you right now if God has dealt very powerfully with you during these days, and you want to take this step of faith to present your body as a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and to be a goer or to be a sender in a specific, radical, dynamic, ongoing, whatever-the-cost way that I want you quietly, wherever you are, I want you just to stand up right now for a prayer of commitment and dedication. If you don't feel you're ready, you want more time, you want to ask questions more, you remain seated. We don't want to manipulate or push, but we have been here for several days.

And some of you know in your heart the Spirit of the Lord has prepared you for years for this moment. Is it not true? I believe it is. And it's normal when God has brought this company of select people from around this whole globe to this place, it is normal that we have many who will respond to this challenge.

Is there anybody else?

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10981.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/urbana-1996/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net