

Urbana 96 What Did God Do

by George Verwer

Urbana 96 was a powerful and life-changing event that renewed and stretched hearts for missions, and convicted people to be radical in their witness and commitment to missions.

Duration: 39:56

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 13:2

Topics: "Urbana"

Description

The video mentioned in the sermon transcript is titled 'Lordship of Christ' and was recorded at Urbana 87. It was described as a powerful and widely circulated video even ten years later. The speaker, George Vower, was initially struggling with English as it was not his first language, but he became more comfortable and free when speaking through his wife and with interpretation. The video received positive responses, although some older generation leaders may have found it unusual.

Transcript

Well, it's great to be back. It was just about a year ago. I came back from Argentina and shared about Acts 13 Start that again praise the Lord it's good to push the wrong buttons Red one for record.

It's great. It's great to be back. It was just about a year ago that I Came back from Argentina just at this time and shared about Acts 13 and it's amazing as I go around To find out it's been of course slower than I would have dreamed but to find out how many people are taking on this acts 13 vision and I have people come up all the time write to me and say our church is now going to send at least Someone many many churches that have not sent out missionaries are now contemplating and attempting to send out someone and Sometimes it's a result of the acts 13 vision Which I would be happy to send anyone more information about but the main purpose of this time is to share about her better and I want to first of all, thank you for praying It was a one-year struggle and somewhat of an agony for me if I'm honest It's not my favorite kind of thing, especially to submit manuscripts and some of you remember the work we put into that not just me, but others and as you Some of you guessed we we never did actually use that manuscript Maybe that will end up going into into a book But somehow I had the I had the strength To just share from my heart God had met me in a very real way here in London on the train or the tube going to Randy Lohler's Team working among Muslims and had given me what I felt was just the the core of what I should share At Rabban at least on the first night and gave me the faith just to leave the second night Until I could see what God was doing because it was the fourth evening See what God was doing through all the other

speakers and through all that was happening there So it was certainly a momentous Occasion when finally after a year of thinking praying and orientation I stood in front of this great crowd and just Let loose I guess people would classify it as a bit over the top the first night.

I wore this this hat My global jacket, by the way, the OEM errs had the jackets with these Signs on the back. I didn't have one of those and They had over one Thousand five hundred people signed cards at the OEM store for follow-up just about OEM And I estimate that if we follow through with vision and strength and prayer Which is one of the main purposes of this tape. We like to think of this as a prayer tape Then I believe we're gonna see a lot of people for global action and I think every mission agency there huge numbers of mission agencies huge giant Gymnasiums filled with exhibitions are going to see recruits from Urbana.

I Think the bonding with this crowd was was very easy. They were hungry. They were prepared There were a lot of laughs and there was a lot of Things that might be considered a little bit unusual by the older generation But it was received well and I then prepared for of course The criticisms that often come from older people or leaders about this particular approach to communication But somehow it didn't come Dan did take me aside with But I guess it was Paula and Just to talk about the fourth night and I asked for permission to give a standing invitation to stand up not just to fill out papers That is not always been considered acceptable in the past at Urbana, but they gave me that permission and The only exhortation they had was that they felt my next message.

Perhaps I could be a little more serious telling George Bower to be More serious, you know like instructing dinosaurs how to how to eat But I decided I would attempt to be more serious on the fourth night It's not possible for me to describe that fourth night and some of the wild things That I still did in the more serious note But no no doubt those two videos will be going All over the globe in the next few years. I talked to more people through the Lordship of Christ video From Urbana 87 and probably I spoke at Urbana who knows but that video continues 10 years later to be widely circulated Let me share that which I've just received by by facts as I talked to Melanie Hanson and just wanted to get The official press release and just some of the official material that's going out around the world because some of you I know Haven't seen this Press release this is way back January 9th as a result of how God moved in Urbana 96 thousands of students from across North America have committed themselves to cross cultural missions and are beginning to consider their next steps in The fulfillment and fulfilling these commitments. These are written commitments a woman led the sort of printed written Commitment forms after I finished speaking on that fourth night and gave the invitation about one-fourth of the whole audience stood when I gave the invitation for Radical commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is Lordship and world missions.

I might just say At the beginning of the meeting I asked how many were already before they came to Urbana Trying to get to the mission field and thousands Stood that's something very important What we've been saying here over the past year has been proven true at Urbana There is no in one sense lack of people wanting to go to the mission field There's a lack of funds and facility and many other things that are needed to make it happen But the initial volunteer stage is certainly not the biggest obstacle or the biggest problem Let me get back to this text Urbana 96 sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Canada drew more than 19,000 students. This is not an exaggerated or blown up statistic. This is on paper.

These people registered They were there the main auditorium only takes a little over 17,000 and so many had to through a system of alphabet go to the overflow auditorium In order to be there many of our own

OM reps in order to get a more inexpensive rate. I don't really know why we do that They don't even go to the main auditorium meetings. They go to some of them They're mainly in the exhibition hall and meeting with individuals all the time drew more than 19,000 students missionaries and others And I heard and understood it was about 900 pastors and a pastor's track led by Gordon McDonald To the campus of the University of Illinois, by the way, we had mild weather, but lots of fog quite a bit of chaos people getting there with planes canceled we got in just before the Fog, which is good because I was speaking on the opening night from December 27 to the 31st I might just throw in right here in the beginning that one of the highlights was breaking bread with 18 to 19 thousand people on New Year's Eve It took a long time But it was a time of meditation.

It was a time of heart-searching as we followed Sometimes the people who took the wine and took the cup took the bread and distributed it through this huge Stadium they did it in a very orderly way and that was how we brought 1997 into our lives mission agencies and Bible school representatives Representatives reported their days being filled with interviews of young men and women eager to make specific contributions to the world Mission of the church again. One of the highlights of Urbana is all the personal interaction And the breakthrough at Urbana came not because of any one person or one group of person, but a massive army of people interacting with students sometimes on into the night small groups Especially focusing on the unreached people and the Joshua project alone. It's just quite a phenomenal phenomenal event 15,857 delegates turned in Urbana 96 decision cards over 15,000 close to 16,000 turned in cards as an expression of their commitment made at the convention More decision cards are expected to be turned in delegates In the coming days We've only seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of everything God has done at Urbana 96 says Urbana 96 director Dan Harrison the statistics from the decision cards are an incomplete measurement of everything that went on during Urbana, but they do give some indication of the depth of Delegate interest and where we expect to see impact as a result of their time here for example about 2750 delegates declared their intent to pursue cross-cultural missions this summer and another 2,000 indicated plans to go on short-term mission projects at a later date and 2,600 2867 indicated they would pursue missions as a life work.

That's a key statistic almost 3,000 missions as a life work with 2,228 prepared to make one or two-year commitments 7,861 indicated they would clarify how and when they would pursue mission involvement 9,000 reconsidered committed themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ 180 I Lost that page now. I think that 180 statistic the number of people who actually made a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the first time I've actually got the original page. It was given out at the Press conference it probably has changed a little since then but at that time 157 had Indicated believing on Christ I was asked I guess together with others to make sure even though the whole thrust was world missions that I included the gospel and An opportunity for people to come to Christ because non-christians do go to Urbana Well that gives you just some of the statistics.

I think it might be of interest however, especially as many of you listening to this tape or Christian workers to get a little of the Background They took a survey on probability of mission service 14% definite 33% probable 38% unsure 7% unlikely One and a half percent none 5% no answer They did a survey and I might say one of the great days at Urbana was a day of racial Reconciliation which is an important theme in the body of Christ at this time around the world they had a couple thousand after the main morning morning was all plenaries a Much fuller and more intensive schedule than any OM conference I can assure you at least that I've been to except maybe if I went back to the 60s They just feel these people out there And so it's really from early morning to late at night every single day and that even on that final day

They seem to be so receptive But they did a little survey who was at Urbana in terms of racial background and this has some negative and positive factors 64% white 20% Asian 2.28 African there was a major afro-american Conference going on at the same time down in Atlanta. That's a factor 2.34 Asian Korean 1.90 Hispanic 7 Percent others 57% female 43% male Shows the women are still ahead, but at least that's the men are somewhat in range very interesting statistics about where they What their campus relationship? And I was just talking with Melody Hanson on the phone on how we can increase mission emphasis in the actual inner varsity Chapters since this is an inner varsity event 8,700 people listed nothing in terms of campus fellowship 5,200 inner varsity 1,500 other 564 campus crusade they had many regional conferences going on around this time of the year 485 local Christian college mission groups 407 inner varsity Canada 282 fellowship of Christian athletes 182 navigators 153 young life 137 Baptist Student Union's by the way in American campuses for those of you are not Americans. There are often many different student movements not just one And then there's one or two other Listings there this might be of interest to you educational level 5% 12th grade 13% college freshman 22% college sophomore 22% college junior 26% college senior 8% master's level grad student 3% doctorate level grad student 1% postdoctoral grad student 116 nations represented at Urbana 1996 I've got some amazing feedback just from individuals because it's always good to hear what students Have to say and I thought I would read just a few of these about witness What are one of the one or two things that God has taught me at Urbana? How about 30 or 40? God has been teaching me about his character my sinfulness his name my future.

I'm committed to praying For two of my non-christian friends more regularly want to be more Intentional in my witness to them and that is so typical at many many at Urbana. I think a huge number of people made commitments in in connection with prayer and There was quite an emphasis on prayer even in the main meeting and it's so hard with such a huge a huge crowd and Somehow a number of people brought this feedback that these young people they want to pray they want to be involved in prayer We had a lunch a prayer and fasting lunch Which was very very encouraging and released an enormous amount of finance into into Into missions. Let me just give you that information 90,000 was raised for world hunger relief 90,000 these people already paid a lot of money to get there through a skip a lunch effort on December 29th more than \$285,000 was also given toward world hunger.

That's another offering December 30th and then another offering of 160,000 was given to support pioneer student work through International Fellowship of Evangelical students Lindsay Brown seemed to just show up on the last day other conferences took place right after Urbana and Others intend to give to I fees on a very very regular Basis what an encouragement What an encouragement? Many feel that Urbana broke the stereotypes concerning the X generation, which is a big thing in American vocabulary and thinking People had been at a number of Urbana's. This was my third Urbana. I was in 67 I've got referred to a number of times and some interesting pictures going around and then I was there in 87 This by the way was a celebration of the 50th year and this one of the speakers Sharing the night that I spoke the opening night was Christy Wilson who in his early 20s was the leader and the organizer of the first Urbana in Toronto Canada You can imagine the response that he had and then Betty Elliot who was involved Way back a whole group of people had come together.

They were sitting in a special section Who had been in Urbana back in those early days, of course, including missionaries returning From the field so that was That was quite amazing. Let me read a few others God has renewed and stretched my heart for missions He really really convicted me to be radical in my witness to my sorority sisters he also convicted me of the need to be specific and sacrificial in my

commitment to missions Another one God taught me that if I really care about my friends, I won't accept their religion with quiet tolerance And it was very bold at Urbana the challenge that Jesus Christ is the only way There's any area where the church is hedging and pussyfooting it is in that area But we had an Indian brother share Specifically on that one of the highlights of Urbana Was that he began to Choke and was unable to speak the same thing happened to the person who shared that message previously Urbana now has a very strong emphasis on intercession going on at the whole time their intercessors meeting privately interceding led by an outstanding woman Mary Ann who we Missionary to Latin America we had good fellowship with When this started to happen In front of all these people main stage I think was on the third night Dan went up and they of course brought up some water that didn't seem to Help and I saw Mary Ann praying there behind the stage people praying with her the students Just really respond to that this generation of students. I think respond more when people are in trouble People that look like they have it all together.

I don't think that's what really excites this generation I'm sure there's some exceptions. Maybe that's why I get such a great response. I just look at me They know this guy's in big big trouble So I get a lot of heart vibrations, but They really rallied in prayer and some feel this was the miracle of Urbana as his voice came back strong and he finished preaching this message this message on the exclusiveness of Christ and Jesus Christ as the only the only way Here's another one God showed me That he has a place for me in inner-city missions and taught me the true importance of living among the poor I'm a strong emphasize being reached out to and fully understanding their culture I also desire to follow God closely and soak up his word a huge traditional emphasis Generally found in inner varsity on the Word of God Jorge George and Dan said that you main-bible speaker in the Bible readings in the morning following in the steps of men like John stop and Ajit Fernando I Think everyone could see that he was he was struggling.

This was not his first language. He's a Spanish speaker in all these notes But the message was was good and people responded and on the final morning he spoke through his wife an American Through interpretation and you could see that he was a lot more Free This brother has such a powerful smile. He didn't really need to preach He just got up there these big screen.

Most people watch this on big screen five big screens You're just a little you look especially if you're small like me I did bring my binoculars, but most people didn't have binoculars can hardly see the speaker I went up to what they call the nosebleed section on the final night I was up there walking around that that actually almost led to riots and I had to leave but It's it's so amazing to Just sit up there and see the whole Auditorium, but this brother would just give this this smile and he would just he would really just radiate The Lord Jesus so God used him as each morning. He expounded from the Word of God from the Book of Acts a couple of other quotes from participants God taught me that I'll never be good enough to be a missionary But rather the sacrifice of Christ will be my hope to do his work Another one I learned from Libby littles talk that missions is not glorious And that if God calls me to that long term Then there will be much sacrifice, but that sacrifice no matter how costly is nothing in comparison to how richly God Blesses I've been committed. I have committed myself to God as Lord Seriously, I told God I'm willing to obey him He has absolute authority over me.

I've committed my summer to his service I will also inspire my church and campus for world missions I let another one I learned that there's an abundant blessing in my life that I've treated That I have treated as downfalls In my own message. I shared a lot about God's grace to ragamuffins that word became a major word at Urbana people had ragamuffin buttons on ragamuffin books were sold and Everybody knew who was the ultimate? Ragamuffin when I got up and spoke again on the fourth evening We emphasized a lot

God being able to use failures. So here's a feedback.

That's that's tied into that God is not calling me to fire missions at this time But he's calling me to love his young people of America as their teacher in public schools. I Plan on being a mission mobilizer more on my campus. That was another arrow that we shot Normally in this kind of meeting by the way You don't always get a lot of freedom for book pushes But they have a book of a day and that is featured on video on the big screen and those books just go out Operation world was the book of the day Last minute I was able to print a special edition in Chicago priority one five thousand copies We decided just to give those away.

They all went Nate here was involved in that My book somehow no turning back was the book of the day. It's available at the doors of the of the auditorium They went out one of the highlights that Urbana of course was was worship They did not have special music numbers at Urbana Then the program is so is so packed, but they had powerful Worship with a very very live band who really knew how to to lead worship the times of worship Again, I thought it was so good because sometimes the worship sessions get a little too long But to me they had God's mind about the timing how long and they had it of course different Intervals another highlight at Urbana was a young man an actor named Bruce Cone Is that pronouncing his name right name? Bruce Did a dramatization of the Bible reading every morning before George or Jorge spoke? He dramatized the reading from the book of Acts and he was brilliant. Did you ever get the opportunity to see that video? It's just quite amazing again audience participation so powerful when there's a healing from the book of Acts and just the way the way he Gave the word he ended of course for complete memorized I Refer in a vague way to someone because the country they come from is a high security Area of the land of Afghanistan, but this married woman who I believe been touched in Urbana years ago Was a missionary in fact the missionary from that country wrote me make sure I got to see her And she spoke in one of the morning sessions toward the end absolute opposite of my approach very very quiet serious woman and Shared about living in Kabul Afghanistan and it was it was it was awesome That that what she shared could be as relevant in the 60s 70s 50s 70s 80s as it was in the 90s and it is a proof again That we don't have to be intimidated.

We don't have to be try to be someone else when we're sharing the missionary vision if we've got something our heart if God's done something in our life, we can just share whatever way that we share and God just mightily used That woman in all of our hearts and I tell you the Muslim world and the 1040 window and the unreached people I Believe got a greater challenge at Urbana than certainly most mission conferences Many that I have ever been to so that is also a big item of praise one of the prayer requests that we want you to especially take to the Lord is Concerning what's happened on the world wide web many people listen to this live on their computer This has never happened before at Urbana because Maybe it did happen three years ago. I don't remember hearing about it But this is certainly a major thing today if you want the website of Urbana, it's www.urbana.org Or G And I'll just repeat that for those of you who are getting this tape Because there is so much on the event Urbana website that could be of an enormous blessing and those of you here tonight It's just it's just amazing what you can get about what God has done their challenges about the future possibilities to interact so it's www.urbana.org Or G and that will get you into unlimited exposure On Urbana for all of you, especially who missed it By the way, there were a lot of people turned down as it was fully booked weeks before the event Many many disappointed people were not able to get there. We hope They will be able to get in on this Through email through the video cassettes audio cassettes all of which have already gone out in considerable quantity by the way about 2,700 people made a commitment to be more involved in in student witness And I think we

need to understand It's not easy for these students to witness in their universities And some universities even here Britain People who are attempting to witness are being mocked They're being attacked sometimes for their position on abortion or on homosexuality huge complexity One of the most highly attended special sessions and all kinds of special sessions You can't imagine it was for those that wanted sexual healing 2000 came to that session one of the powerful testimonies from a young man who I think Had been on OM but Was mainly from Wheaton College.

He shared about the mini revival that came at Wheaton about a year or so ago And a thousand a thousand five hundred stayed after that meeting To pray that kind of confessional prayer and to get right with God and to repent So that was another emphasis that really really flowed another thing that impressed me about Urbana and whenever I go to these events, I'm always studying and trying to learn People of different racial backgrounds a tremendous mixture of people of different national backgrounds The brother each day who really helped lead in the prayer was a Korean brother Just a very very strong communicator and the number of women different backgrounds of those women who shared main stage and It was it was really it was really beautiful and the Holy Spirit used that in a very very powerful way another Group of people about 2254 people Made a commitment to get more involved in missions focus in their own church And that's another prayer request because some university students are not really with it when it comes to the church and we tried to bring this out in the message the Importance of local church and acts 13 Sending out workers into the Harvest field. There's so much more. I would I would love to Share, but I think we've got more than enough here that we could Take to God in prayer.

I had this other Little item Asking special prayer for follow-up wondering what pool what What tools to use to follow up your students who attended Urbana? Maximize material they already have by the way, everybody got a Urbana Bible 19,000 Bibles went out for the special Cover, I mean the amount of literature and that's a real prayer request because these students are already on information overload Pray that this literature doesn't just get laid aside buried by their all their university studies Let me finish reading that maximize the material they already have encouraged them to read through next steps Everybody received a copy of that volume one which delegates received in their Urbana bag It's a booklet of reflections on life at Urbana 96 Its goals are to encourage help fulfill the decisions made at the convention to offer new ideas Delegates will receive volume 2 in early March Also encourage them to visit the Urbana Website, which I already gave you Here's another little article that's gone out to the press Xers students at Urbana shatter Stereotypes over and over again missionaries and exhibitors at Urbana 96 Sat said how impressed they were with a high caliber of students at this convention They said students were asking good questions We're seriously considering the cost of commitment to missions We're already taking steps toward involvement while at the convention mission agencies and Bible school representatives reported their days being filled with Interviews of young women and men eager to make specific contributions to the world mission of the church One of the things I kept saying to people and especially when I had a radio interview is We really do need an Urbana for adults I was so privileged to be able to speak at this event and I counted it a privilege to bring in my strong appeal for Sending and that came across and people responded to that And I gave I think I can't even remember perfectly what I shared but I think I managed to squeeze in This battle against the clock. They did give me a few extra minutes or I took them or something but the new hero fellow that stays home and helps Supply the money that concept is foreign to many young people And I really believe we are going to see the release of finance directly and indirectly From Urbana though with many of these people it'll be a while. So that's another prayer request that we can remember their parents Some of these people when they share with their parents that they're thinking about becoming a missionary many parents are not Christians They are

going and they're gonna have a very difficult time.

So of course the grace awakening challenge came right Through what we were attempting to share By the way I finally after several years of praying I've made a deal with the publisher to do our own edition of grace awakening And instead of \$22 a copy the present hardback price in America I'm gonna be able to buy ten thousand copies at one dollar thirty one cents It cannot be sold in bookstores. It will be the student Missionary special edition with the cheap kind of paper they're using in Bulgaria But if you're going to give a lot of them away, I don't think we need to worry about that and certainly the grace awakening Challenge came strongly through there at Urbana. So pray that as they share with their churches they share with their parents We pushed Betty Bartlett's book on friend raising as they realize how difficult it is to raise funds We pushed also the challenge of tent making and that was they the tent making booth was one of the busiest booths And a lot of these students they they they are thinking more of how they can be a tent maker their career people So that's something else we can incorporate into into our praying Again, I want to thank every one of you either here tonight or out listening to this cassette who have prayed for a banner prayed for me personally, I want to also encourage you again to get into the Website or to get some of the cassettes and through distributing those cassettes video and audio cassettes You can spread the vision not firstly of Urbana the vision of reaching the entire world With the gospel we try to emphasize our burden isn't just to evangelize the world, but it's the build the kingdom Everywhere and that means all these students back in their universities and many about a thousand missionaries and exhibitors were there They're building a kingdom right now and we are as we go back to prayer in this prayer meeting.

Let's pray Lord I just thank you for this Awesome event there in Urbana three weeks ago And as the message goes out through people's lives and by cassette and video and through the World Wide Web we ask that this may be Brought into this huge stream of missionary vision Motivation that's going on across the world right now. We thank you for that telephone link up with a missions event Down in Panama and the missions event in Mexico We thank you that so many organizations and so many leaders of different organizations were involved with this and for the balance of truth that was shared in the midst of a Conference that was especially focusing on world missions We pray that many many leaders in America who are not emphasizing world missions Many pastors who don't even allow time in their pulpit for missionary speakers to any degree That many of the people who are considered the shakers and movers in the United States and other nations in Canada will somehow through what they hear about Urbana decide to become proactive and To really begin to build sending churches Lord unless we see sending churches unless we see finance Even in terms of all we want to do in the follow-up task Then we know many of those who made this commitment will never go many will never even go short term We haven't time Oh God We haven't had time tonight Oh God to emphasize the opposition the complexities the heartaches the fiery darts of Satan Which we've seen Coming even since we walked out of that great Auditorium and so we pray there may continue to be a an ongoing sense That for most people or many people Urbana was just the beginning or just one more step in their ongoing Dynamic and revolutionary walk for you.

We pray for those that went away hurt or disappointed For those that had deep emotional struggles and maybe didn't get the counseling or help that they wanted or for those that stood up, but now their Emotions are down or they're depressed and they feel in in a time of Confusion may they somehow come and and bring this whole thing into perspective and may that Message of your ragamuffin grace and your ability to use failures come back to them at their moment of need Lord, we pray for Dan Harrison as he now moves on from inner varsity and Goes into a different ministry as he has several major open doors and we pray

that you lead and guide him and his family and all those who Are and were involved in the organizational side of this event Lord how we thank you for so many hundreds that Were behind the scenes in the in the offices and in the organizational side that made this happen and we commit them to you, especially our sister Paula and Asked that they would be strengthened as they now move into the next phase of their ministry Lord, we would give this heart cry again for the parents the mothers and fathers of those who are at Urbana That somehow they would be able to understand The importance of Biblical action and if they're not Christians May they realize that you Lord Jesus are the way the truth in the life And there is no other way and may we hear of parents and friends all over the globe Coming to know you because of the ongoing impact of this huge event and all that's come out from it We ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Amen

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