

Vision Bromley 3.5.85

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the spiritual needs of Europe and the importance of tailored outreach strategies through Operation Mobilization.

Duration: 45:22

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, John 3:8, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Missions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of social policy within the organization OM (Operation Mobilization). He explains that social policy is meant to be a glorified dating process, where consensus among the members determines the outcome. The speaker emphasizes the importance of leaders in OM understanding the organization's function and strategy. He also shares his personal experience of being burdened to make a difference in France and how Special Projects, such as a bookmobile, were born out of that burden. The speaker highlights the unity and like-mindedness among the members of OM in pursuing their vision for France.

Transcript

Normally we give a little more part on Friday morning to prayer and praise and testimonies, but I have something very important on my heart this morning. The recording of it also has to go quickly to some other places, so I'm going to be taking a little more of the time. I did want to say just a word about this thing called social policy, because I'm not around here much when these things take place and announcements are made.

But I might just say that sometimes people get the wrong idea of what the social policy is. The social policy is supposed to be. I'm not saying what it is for you.

You have to decide. But the original concept is it's really glorified dating. It's just a permission to start to talk and date and meet with a person.

It's not pre-engagement. It's not going steady. When I was 13, I went steady.

If you were married to a big football player, you hung his big ring around your neck in those days, or you exchanged something. And I went steady for about three years. And I tell you, if anybody got near my bird in those days, they got in serious trouble.

Imagine how serious I was at 14. I was the only freshman at the senior prom. And the girl, of course, weighed more than I did.

She never did marry. But when someone has social permission in OM, whoever that may be, it's not a thing to make big up. There's no way that, of course, anybody can do anything, whether it's Bible college or OM or even out in the world, which there is some excitement or talk.

I mean, you have to learn to live with that as well and not be over-spiritual and over-idealistic. Also, when people, perhaps something comes to an end, things begin, the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. It may not only be SP.

It may be even sometimes an engagement. Now, in the eastern countries, breaking an engagement is a very serious thing. In our part of the world, it varies from place to place and culture to culture.

But generally, a lot of people have been preserved from a lot of agony. They have the courage to break an engagement, especially in our part of the world. So I think it's good when we have these things, just to try to play it down.

You don't have to be phony about it. But sometimes it's an embarrassment if somebody just gets social policy. It's going to all end in a few weeks anyway.

People are congratulating it all. You made it! So that's the official line from the international level, whatever happens in Bromley. I'll let Neil and Mike Wheat contextualize it.

That's what OM is all about. Let's see, is there any other thing I wanted to mention? I don't think so. Let's just pray.

Let's pray. Father, you know our burden this morning is we focus on the challenge of Europe. We focus on the vision you have given us for this great continent.

And we just believe, oh God, that we need to grow an understanding of this area of the world. So needy with such a tremendous variety from southern Spain to northern Norway. From Moscow to Dublin.

From Lisbon to Istanbul. Grip us, oh God, with the challenge of this great continent. So ancient its culture.

So diversified its people. Yet so needy spiritually. And enable us to somehow move forward with great unity, even in the midst of this tremendous diversity.

For we pray in Jesus' name, amen. This little message is long overdue. And I'm happy to be able to just share a little bit with you of the burden and vision God has given us for Europe.

I think sometimes we forget here in England, and especially right here in Bromley, that this is part of Europe. This country is also part of the European common market, whatever your political view may be. In fact, that could be a great help to us with the ongoing visa crisis.

People in the common market, we hope will play a greater role here in STL and in the ministry in the British Isles. I keep trying to find out exactly how many Muslims are here in Great Britain. I've heard a million, a million and a half, two million.

I now have a figure that there's seven or eight hundred thousand Bengali and Pakistani residents. A high percentage of those would be Muslim. But people still are insisting they're far more than that, more like a million and a half.

My research goes on, but you can be sure. In God's providence, he's given us a great army of immigrants. Keep in mind that many of these people are highly insulted when they are referred to as immigrants, if they're second generation young people speaking English, studying in our universities.

The whole history of Britain is a history of immigrants, if you go back far enough, including the Roman invasion, which I was just reading about some time ago, a very exciting part of history. Realize how old Christianity is in Great Britain also is quite something to challenge. But we're not thinking about Britain this morning, we're thinking about Europe.

We have this map, and as all maps of the world, Europe doesn't seem like such a huge place, but represents, of course, a highly populated area. Places like the Netherlands have one of the highest square mile population statistics in the world. Often, in OM, we develop a rather narrow view of Europe.

We're usually thinking of the part of Europe we're involved in. But we want to try, as we think of Europe, to think of the whole of Europe. I was just trying to remember where Europe, in fact, ended, and was reminded by one of our geography experts, Mike Wee, that Europe goes all the way to the Ural Mountains.

Moscow is in Europe. When we think of Europe, we should think of the whole of Europe, not just because that's a geographical fact, but because that is the vision that God gave us, even without us really knowing it from the earliest days. For example, the vision for the Soviet Union in the communist country predates the vision we had for places like England and France, even Germany, not by much.

So, in some ways, that's not so important, because it was all in the early days when God put these countries on our hearts. But way back when just a few of us were praying at Moody Bible Institute, the Soviet countries were very, very much on our hearts. Now, one of the reasons I'm speaking on this subject is because I had a letter recently asking me to write an article for a newspaper, a Christian magazine in Spain, because it was the 25th anniversary of the birth of OM in Spain, which I hadn't even thought that much about.

So, I wrote this article, and it's caused me to do some thinking. The work in France also was born at that time in a very tiny way, but it was going through France on my way to Spain in 1960 that I was just gripped with the need of France. I already had prayed a lot for France, and it was a country that we were concerned about, because we were in the very, very late 50s.

Europe was really beginning to get mentioned a lot. At places like Moody Bible Institute, the Greater Europe Mission was just down the road. We had a lot of missionaries coming back from Europe, and it was considered, really, the neglected continent.

It was through studying, of course, about Spain. Also, during that same period, I remember seeing a film about Franco's semi-Nazi Spain, it seemed. That film just gripped my heart as a young student.

And, of course, I'd already been studying Spanish. I'd already been to Mexico. Some thoughts of Spain had been there previously.

But as I went through France, I realized, well, it wasn't certainly as needy as Spain. It wasn't closed like Spain, but, you know, it was so needy, it was difficult to make comparisons. I made a decision immediately at that time, around that time, to go forward and to see something happen in France, In a sense, Special Projects was born at that time.

I've always had this burden to help in special projects that might not necessarily be completely within OM's mainstream. The name OM didn't even exist then. It was called Send the Light.

We hardly ever sing that hymn anymore, Send the Light. We must sing that on our anniversary. Maybe you've sung it.

But I met a missionary over in Grenoble, and we agreed to go ahead with a bookmobile in France. I don't know how many months before that bookmobile was on the road, but that bookmobile in France, in a sense, represents the very beginning of the work there. A number of other things started to move.

But the burden really was Spain, so I drove on down to Spain. My wife flew in about seven months pregnant with Benji. Somehow, though, my vehicle had broken down, and I needed a new engine, and all kinds of things went wrong when I took the wrong route and tried to go over the Alps in a beat-up little tiny glorified baby carriage, which didn't make it.

But somehow I still arrived at the airport when her plane landed from the United States. We had nowhere to stay. We sort of drove around looking for a place.

We took another wrong turn, went down to another, it was in Madrid, but it seemed like a mountain. It was actually just outside Madrid, and we couldn't get back up. It looked like the engine was going to go again.

A very interesting day, our first day in Spain. Almost no contacts, no preparation, just the conviction that God wanted to turn this country. Well, I guess we used the term a lot in those days, upside down.

To make a long story short, because I don't want to focus that much on Spain, we, within a few months, had a Christian bookshop open, though we could only sell a limited number of books because it was all illegal. Everything seemed to be illegal then. We started sending out gospel literature through the post.

A number of full-time workers joined. Can you imagine somebody joining this unknown group, you know, within a couple of months after hearing about it? Quite an amazing story, how these young Spaniards joined full-time. Remember, the thrust of OM initially was for nationals to reach their own country for Christ.

It was not initially international. Our burden in Mexico was Mexicans to reach Mexico. Our burden in Spain was Spaniards reach Spain.

And so we got national workers, and we supported them. And that's how they joined. It was only after some understanding and realization, especially that for Europe, there must be a real equality in working together.

You couldn't be financing Europeans out of Chicago. Somehow Europe was beyond that. And you know, it's good that I did not come across from the United States with some nice little packaged strategy.

That would have been, you know, that would have been catastrophic. It's good that the board of directors in New Jersey never thought that they were the great managers and forward planners for the work in

Europe. This was a work being born of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit goes where He will. Like the wind you read about in John, it doesn't mean that today things should go on the same way. Of course, 25 years later, it will not go on exactly the same way.

But may we never get to the day when we're not totally, greatly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. It was after Spaniards joined us and became the leaders that God began to unfold more His strategy. Some of you know, the next summer of 61, Roger Malsted joined me in Paris.

I was on my way to the Soviet Union. I had been studying Russian all year, teaching English, studying Russian and advanced Spanish in a little school in central Madrid. And launched off for this great Soviet exploit, which proved to be basically a failure.

Many, many lessons were learned through that. Because on the way to the Soviet Union again through France, gripped by the need in France, out in the streets. In fact, when we were giving out tracts in the streets of Paris, Krista Fischer, destined to become Krista Eicher, was dancing in the streets of Paris as a confused, lost soul in another part of the city.

We found that out later when she came to Spain and became one of our first persons to come to Christ through the ministry of people outside of Spain. But we went into the Soviet country with our little printing press and our literature. Due to my own mistake, we got arrested after a couple of days.

We're kept in custody under suspect of being spies. They decided we were religious fanatics. Imagine that, I mean, lack of discernment.

And we went back to Austria, and there we had this day of prayer. And that's where all my thoughts about Europe, I've been thinking about Britain, I've been thinking about France, I've been to Switzerland. I've been thinking, of course, about other countries.

We had just been in Yugoslavia. We got arrested there as well, but we got a lot of the literature out there before we got arrested. That was somebody else's mistake.

I always remember that because we had a broken windshield, and I learned how to drive hundreds of miles with a sheet. We rigged up a sheet, a bed sheet, as a windshield. And just with, you know, holes in it.

And so the whole burden of Western Europe was really bursting upon us at that time. It was there, and it's true, in the top of a tree, in the mountains, in a day of prayer, that this name came to my mind, Operation Mobilization. And the vision was to see Europeans united in a revolution of love.

And to see Europeans reach out and shake their continent for Christ. The main vision was not, you know, that they all run off to the Soviet Union, or all run off to the Muslim world. One thing you have to try to understand about OM, there are parallel visions.

I spoke about this at the September conference, and I think it was a very important message. I'm trying to trace it down, it's on tape. But I shared the fact that when we have a new burden, or we increase our thrust in a particular area, like this decade, we're trying to increase our thrust in the Muslim world.

We've always had the Muslim world vision. We're trying to increase that. We're trying to focus on that.

But that does not destroy already existing strategies and visions that God has given us. Now that doesn't mean that the Lord cannot change some strategy. Doesn't mean the Lord will not lead us to move out of a particular country.

But that's separate. That has to be prayed through, and thought through, and wrestled through, especially with the persons within that country. But generally speaking, any new vision is built on existing vision, or parallel with existing vision.

This is why it is easy for visionary people like myself to get a high frustration rate with OM today. We want OM to grow, we want to be more effective, we want to see more projects, more literature. We want more of everything.

And yet when something is already this size, and this complicated, and this expensive, such an amalgamation of so many visions, so many burdens, it will often go slower. And you as a new generation who will determine really, you're the ones that will determine where this will go, will have to be patient. We at the same time must be ready to compromise.

Much of OM's strategy is a result of compromise. It's an amalgamation of the vision of nationals and internationals within a country. They have a burden for their country.

They want to do this, they want to do that. It's a compromise between them and other leaders like myself who are outside of that country. Now we're involved in that country.

We've got to help find the manpower. We've got to help find the money. We've got to help keep the peace.

We've got to help build the credibility all over the world, without which they're not going to get the money or the workers, and they will get a lot of other problems. What we do in England affects the work in other parts of Europe. I will tell you, if our credibility goes down with the British Church, and we make some big mistakes in Britain, and suddenly the word is out that we're this or we're that, they will know that very quickly in the rest of Europe.

And in many ways God has used the work in Britain to be an example, to be a... I don't like the word pace setter, because different fields are setting the pace in different ways, but it has been that to some degree. And so I think it's important to remind ourselves, especially those of us who are really burdened about the Muslim world, we want to reach Muslims. We're increasing our efforts there slowly.

There have been some significant breakthroughs. This does not mean that Dick Griffin in Mexico goes into retirement, and that Mexico is no longer important. Mexico is very important, and we have been able to put more effort into Mexico in the last two years than before that, especially with David Hicks, Don Hammond, Jack Rendell, he's just back from Mexico again, really doing far more than I was able to do for Mexico, living in Bombay, or Kathmandu, or even London.

New specialized efforts don't destroy other parallel existing burdens or visions. OM's unity has to be in the midst of diversity. As we, and we don't have the time, think of each one of these countries in Europe, I've visited almost all of them, have friends in most of them.

Every one of these countries is unique. In fact, there's a great lack of understanding in England about Wales, and about Scotland, and about Ulster, much less about Dublin and Southern Ireland. These are separate nations in a cultural sense, in the people's group sense that people are talking about.

Today, a lot of the things that are happening in England are barely happening up in Scotland. They're more conservative, very different in their background. The wars they've been through, the Covenanters, the whole history of Scotland is very, very special, and that is true of every part of Europe.

That's why it is foolish to make generalizations about the Soviet Union. It's a land of many different people. There are some areas of common denominator.

Even Norway and Sweden are very, quite distinct. Many people don't realize that Finland is not Scandinavia. Finland is Finland.

Scandinavia is Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. They're supposed to have a little more in common. And I believe that any strategy, and this has been true in O.M. 25 years, any strategy in Europe must be tailor-made for the culture of that country.

And we have seen this. In O.M., Belgium has developed very differently from France. France is very different from Austria.

Spain is completely unique, as the Lord led us, I believe, very clearly, for a number of reasons, not one reason, at least five reasons, to let the vision and the burden in Spain flow within those people that we had disciplined. O.M.'s first strategy has always been men, seeing men saved, disciplined, turned upside down for Jesus Christ. We had a vision from the earliest days to see churches planted, but we weren't sure in the very early days how much we would actually do the structural part of planting the church.

We tended to think that we should be the catalyst. We tended to think we should see men saved and trained who would go back to their own churches, their own denominations, and into other church planting groups, and then churches planted. Any measuring of O.M.'s strategy and O.M.'s effectiveness over 25 years in Europe must take into consideration what our ex-O.M.ers and graduates are doing.

Otherwise, you are going contrary to the whole burden and vision of the work. The O.M. burden and vision is not just what are those who are in O.M. right now doing. No, it's what are those people who were saved through O.M., who were trained through O.M., who had their lives turned upside down through this work, through this vision.

I prefer to use even the word vision rather than the word O.M. Because many times we took a meeting, people were converted, people recommitted their lives, people started in a whole new ministry, and O.M. was never even involved except that we brought them to Christ in the first place. Here in England we see a very powerful kind of church growth going on. You could take a very interesting survey and find out how many leaders and key people in the church growth movement in Britain today who have been involved in planting whole new churches, got their beginning in their Christian life through Operation Mobilization.

I could give a lot of names, but there's not time this morning, and some would be left out. And I see that this is one of the most important parts of O.M. strategy. It's to give people a start.

There are plenty of churches and groups and missions that want people. Once they mature, they know how to pray, they know how to handle relationships, they know how to speak with wisdom and understanding, they know how to spiritually survive. Do you think there's any lack of places for such people to go? Contrarywise, one of the great struggles we have in O.M. is to keep a few people around with everybody else trying to recruit those who have been trained and caught the vision.

And that will always be an endless struggle. The tremendous work that God has done in France. People often ask, why has France received so much attention in God's work, even within O.M.? More has been done in France, more literature distributed in France, more time, manpower, effort, money than any nation in all of O.M. apart from India.

In fact, hardly any even come close to what we've put into France. There's a number of reasons, but one, that God gave in his sovereign way men of vision and drive, who also felt very united to the vision and drive of the whole of O.M. You see, you might find a Spaniard who's on fire and he wants to see Spain really reach, but he may not have the rest of the O.M. vision in terms of practical reality. You know, the Muslim world, India, the ships, STL, so many different parts of the work.

And the amazing thing about the work in France is that these men were so like-minded among themselves for what they wanted to do in France, but they were also able to maintain that like-mindedness with the rest of us and convinced us that what they had on their hearts for France was God's plan, and so we went with it. Didn't always understand everything. A publishing house, a church planting program, and this fits completely into the original vision and strategy of O.M., which was, Lord, give us men.

Originally, we thought more nationals. As time went on, we saw the strategic place of internationals. We saw the strategic place of internationals who were becoming like nationals.

People like Mike Evans, learning fluent French, marrying into the French-speaking world. People like Jonathan McCroskey, reared in Africa, most of his life after that now in Europe, marrying a European, learning one or two languages. We saw that God is no respecter of persons.

Just working with a national because he's a national is not God's strategy. It's an important factor, but we want God's men. And we felt, years ago, that God had given us a team of men in France, and we wanted to go along with their vision.

At times, it was much bigger than ours, at least as far as France, and there was great discussion. And, of course, there was compromise. Compromise, maybe you don't like that word.

There was partnership. O.M.'s strategy is a strategy of partnership. It's O.M. international, linking hands with O.M. national movements.

Each movement in O.M. is semi-autonomous. There's no official control. The official control is within the country.

It's in the hands of the board of directors. Now, we have some authority. We could put up a good fight.

If one section of O.M. really went astray, I suppose went into false doctrine, I believe it would be an interesting battle. We've never had to have that. We don't ever want it.

International council plus area leaders plus other boards of directors versus Operation Mobilization Board of Trustees, Yugoslavia. We've never had that kind of situation. We believe that in these next few years, we must strengthen the boards of directors in these individual countries.

As O.M. has become so big, the need for biblical autonomy is even greater. And I'd ask you to pray, those of you who hear this message, really pray that we may have the right men on these boards. They are the ones that have the power to remove the leader of that country.

We've seldom had that. But it happens in Christian work. I am thrilled that the board of directors in the USA and England have the power.

They'll probably have to get the agreement of the area leaders. It'll have to be a united thing. But it wouldn't necessarily have to be 100% agreement.

If it was a serious situation, maybe I had one guy who was really deceived by me and he was ready to stand against everybody, he'd go down. Because consensus would overrule. And I think it's important for leaders in O.M. today, and that's why I've done those five leadership tapes, to grasp a little more understanding of what actually O.M. is, how it functions.

And one of the reasons I share this with you is because some of you are praying about longer-term ministry within O.M. And if that's the case, you need to really understand it. Not just have a subjective, superficial understanding of it, which may come as a result of perhaps being in a particular place at a particular time, going through particular struggles. God has given us a different strategy for each European country.

At the same time, we've been able to unite together for special campaigns. All of Europe has backed these big campaigns in France. All of Europe backed the big Muslim push some years ago, which helped lead to the birth of many other things, in terms of our outreach to Muslims and immigrants.

Immigrants was the focus. Mickey Walker was very key in that, if you remember. We united together and had a full-scale thrust in Belgium.

And we are praying about uniting together again, perhaps in a greater thrust among Muslims. That will not destroy, and we don't believe it needs to hinder, the individual strategies that must go on in each country, unless the Lord clearly shows us other ones. That's not going to mean we're going to fold up STL.

STL doesn't fit enough into the Muslim thrust, or it doesn't fit enough into this or that thrust. One of the greatest mistakes we make about STL is we think this is some kind of tent-making for India. I know that gets in people's minds because it's part of the strategy.

When you get married, you'll discover marriage is made up of many things. Don't ever say, I mainly got married because I needed someone to wash my shirts, and cook my meals, and take care of my children, and make my bed, and pick up my dirty socks. You're going to get in serious trouble if you go along that line.

Bringing the whole full marriage partnership, love, you know, that's supposed to come in there, love, you know, and all that. And so it is with the strategy of OM. It isn't just one thing in the strategy of STL.

It isn't just one thing. If we did not send a single penny to India, this work would continue as a vital part of OM Europe. And this work of STL has acted as a prototype, as an example for the birth of other similar works in and out of Operation Mobilization.

We could talk about the publishing in Sweden that was born directly out of this vision. Directly. And the publishing work in Norway, which was born directly out of that.

And the publishing work in France, which has some of its roots back in here. To me it's so exciting that our unity can be in the midst of diversity. That Johan van Damme, a Dutchman with an Austrian wife, he and

his men can get on their faces in Austria and they can get God's vision and program for Austria.

What do I really know of Austria? Am I going to transplant what I know from India into Austria? We've learned a lot about Austria over the years. We've learned that book selling isn't the greatest method generally to go about in evangelism. And so we have not forced on them a strategy from overseas, but we have let them find God's way with their retreats, with their conferences, with their endless discussions among themselves.

They are the people who are in this. They must find God's way. We can help.

We can hopefully send manpower and send money and mobilize prayer, which is so important. God's strategy is prayer. We often pay lip service to that.

And the way sometimes we treat our prayer partners in terms of when they get their prayer letters and the kind of communication they get from us is sometimes indicative. One of the greatest miracles in all of Europe in my mind is Belgium because it fits more my original burden. It grew in a very unique way with some very special people.

But the fantastic thing is that for the last few years the work has been led by an on-fire Belgian who has his own vision and his own burden. It's his own nation and yet he has been able to integrate that into OM's ways and OM's vision and all that we believe in. How easy it would be in some of these countries for them to throw aside book selling because book selling in some ways is the more traditional OM thing that came very much from my own strong bend in that direction.

And yet they haven't, in the midst of launching drama and launching church planting and launching this and that, they haven't thrown away some of these basics. France is another fantastic example of that with all their going on into other strategies, publishing, church planting, a lot of in-depth type of evangelistic work. They are still the largest distributors of tracts in all of Europe and they still have as much of the literature vision as almost any place in Europe.

There are countries that sometimes get neglected when we think of our strategy and what God has done in Europe because sometimes we don't think of them as main evangelistic fields. I think some confusion comes when we just try to neatly separate different kinds of countries. And let me destroy a few false ideas and just say that OM Britain is a major evangelistic field.

It was when I came here in February of 62. The bigger vision was British workers into Europe, British workers around the world. But just right next to that, we want to see Britain evangelized.

We want to see people saved. We want to see revival. We want to see renewal.

We were publishing one or two million tracts in the first one year of OM Britain. We blitzed all of London. We blitzed Manchester.

And millions of people were reached for the gospel in the various early days. And if you do a little study, you'll find out that probably more evangelism is going on through OM Britain than almost any other European country. You know, in Britain, we don't want to just be classified as some field off here that mainly sends money and workers because that's not true.

And when we think of the gift now that God has given people like Nigel Lee and Peter Maiden and a number of others, gifted evangelists as well as teachers, we think of friends from abroad, we think of the Arab work, we think of summer campaigns, which date back many, many years. We believe that Britain is to continue to be both a major sending field as well as a main evangelistic target area. You see, in OM, we play with words.

They can mean different things to different people. You can't get all of this up on a chart. It doesn't always easily fit on a page in a notebook because we believe the Holy Spirit will lead different people in different ways.

I am convinced that Germany is also an evangelistic field. One of the greatest events in Germany is the Easter campaign. But I think the way that OM as an international body should have evangelistic input into Germany should be quite distinct from Austria.

In fact, the more it goes on without people knowing that OM has anything to do with it, sometimes the better it is. We're not trying to gain credit. We're not trying to produce material to write a book.

We want to see people saved. We want to see the church renewed. And in some cases, the better way to do that is to work your way out of the job or to get behind the scenes and let it go through the existing churches.

Let it go through the existing other evangelistic movements. This has generally been our strategy for Sweden, for Germany, for the Netherlands. Evangelism, training, renewal, but through existing structure.

In other lands, like, for example, Belgium and France and Austria, where there's much less structure, there we've had to see some new structure born. I believe there's tremendous possibilities in this coming decade for the work in Europe. And that as we continue the ship ministry, try to increase the Muslim thrust, as India continues to be a major part of our work, that Europe will continue as a vital, all of Europe, including those Soviet and Iron Curtain countries.

That's part of Europe. OMS has a phenomenal work there. We don't talk about it, but it must be considered in our thinking, in our praying.

And this is why sometimes one part of Europe has to be a little bit controlled in its vision and its burden. This is why we may not be able to launch immediately a big thrust into Italy and Spain or Portugal and Greece, when we've got all these other countries where at present we are short of long-term personnel. We are short of fighting.

And I believe ultimately, and we know, I wish I had time to talk about what the ship has contributed to Europe, far more than I believe is seen on the surface. And how to follow up on all this is an enormous task. But one thing is for sure.

If we're not of one heart and of one mind, if somehow we allow the old devil to get in and things get out of control, then it's going to slow everything down. And today the work in Europe is a work of enormous diversity. And it's been contextualized in each country.

And it's going to take a lot of wisdom and a lot of love to see unity in the midst of this diversity. I pray that here in Britain we really will continue to seek God's face for his strategy for this country. God has given us a great foundation, some great people.

I pray in Austria they'll do the same, in Belgium they'll do the same, in France they will do the same. We're in a new day in France as the work has grown so large and in such a significant way. And perhaps one of our greatest needs at present is for us to get on our faces in each one of our countries and to get God's mind as much as we can for that country.

And as different countries share that vision with the other countries and with the rest of us, let us as much as possible reach out, even though we may not fully understand, and stand with them to see what's on their heart accomplished. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for all that you're doing in Europe.

Lord, we thank you for 25 years of miracles, for so many people that have come to know you personally and are laboring with so many different groups and fellowships and organizations, some in literature work, some in church planting, some in other organizations, some still in OM, linked hand and heart with this revolution of love that you began here on this continent 25 years ago. Lord, help us to find new visions and new plans without denying our roots. And help us, Lord, to really count the cost of what it's going to take to see even the existing work, however small or large we may think it is, that summer campaign in Spain and the other related works, that summer campaign in Italy, those small efforts in Denmark, the beginning of that greater growth in Norway, the forwarding of the work in Finland, so easily neglected.

Lord, help us as we pray also for Portugal and Italy and Greece, Switzerland, as we cry out to you for Albania and Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, the Soviet Union. Father, we think even of the fact that part of Turkey is in Europe, Cyprus is aligned to Europe. Lord, this is an overwhelming challenge.

And when we think on top of that of the ships and South America and the subcontinent and the Muslim world, we say in ourselves, Lord, this is too much. It's too much for us. Lord, it's not too much for you.

And so we're trusting you and believing you for wisdom and unity and oneness of heart as we go forward to see Europe and the world shaken for Jesus Christ through preaching, through literature, through church planting, through ministry of media, through personal evangelism, man-to-man discipling, summer campaigns, year programs. Grant us the grace to find that unity in the midst of the diversity, for we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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