

Why Are We Here

by George Verwer

The conference is a call to action for short-term workers to take spiritual warfare seriously and to be part of the spiritual guerrilla force to evangelize the world.

Duration: 1:00:59

Scripture: Nehemiah 4:6-8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Prayer Vigilance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the rebuilding of the walls as described in the Bible. He emphasizes the opposition faced during this process and the importance of prayer and vigilance. The speaker also highlights the need for a serious and dedicated approach to the work of God, contrasting it with what he perceives as a lack of seriousness in some short-term missions. He encourages the audience to view their participation in the conference as a training ground for spiritual battle and acknowledges the growth and leadership of the work, expressing his own role as a follower rather than a leader.

Transcript

Having just arrived from England, I'm not sure if I have the credentials to welcome anybody to Memphis, but perhaps I could just add my welcome to each one of you. I think God has wrought many miracles to bring us together at this time. Every one of you could share the mountains, the obstacles you've had to see moved just to bring you this far.

Some of you, your parents, were against your going, and you saw the Lord change their hearts. Some of you had financial Mount Everest crashing down on your head. Others were beating their brains against exams, thinking you'd have a total nervous breakdown before the end of your school term, much less go on Operation Mobilization.

But you're here. We believe it's in God's plan that we're here together. And we just, by faith, are believing Him to really accomplish some great things in this week.

Now, I have to go off to Chicago, actually, for the weekend of meetings, some of which were booked before this conference was even put on the calendar. But I'll be back Sunday night, and I'm looking forward to being here the rest of the week. And then you'll have to look at me in Belgium almost every day, and I'm sure most of you will have more than enough of George Verwer by the end of the Belgian conference.

Then some of you will never see me again. It's hard to believe that this is our 20th summer crusade in Europe. Very hard for some of us to accept this.

And I have a 20-year-old son to prove it. He marks the beginning of the work in Europe. And it's interesting to meet sons and daughters of people who came on that crusade 20 years ago.

His parents came on that crusade 20 years ago. So O.M. is growing a little older, but we're just excited. We're just like big kids.

I warned Bert about that laugh. It was relatively controlled. But really, we're excited about this summer.

I just come from, actually, Germany before I was in England. I was only in England 24 hours and wanted to see my family. There were about 1,500 German young people in that meeting.

I had six meetings, actually. It was sort of a conference. And I'm just so excited about what God is doing in Germany.

And almost all of you will have Germans on your team this summer because of what God's doing in that country. I stopped in at the June conference in Belgium just for an hour and a half. Spoke at their conference.

About 200 are in the June crusade. We, years ago, didn't even have a June crusade. So that's exciting.

The crusade in Europe has already begun. And we're just excited. We don't like to spend much time looking at the past.

This is not of great interest to us. If we do, once in a while, it's just to give you a little bit of historical roots. But that's not really our interest.

We want to look to the future. And we believe that God has a great plan for each one of you. So we're excited.

Praise God for this opportunity to be together. I appreciated George Barathon. I just can't believe this brother up here making the announcements.

We met in Sri Lanka and then he was on my team. It's a miracle he survived that. Or I survived it.

And so, George, you know, next to me is so gentle and calm and quiet. You know, giving tornado announcements. Panic doors we got to go through.

I was here in Memphis the last time we had a conference here. My wife and I were sleeping in the choir dressing room. And there was a fire alarm, a false alarm, in the middle of the night.

That was the year we had men and women all sleeping in this one church. And I have been told this was an unbelievable mobilization. Everybody was out.

If the building had been consumed in fire, everybody would have been out. Except my wife and I. Because the choir dressing room has no fire alarm. So we slept through the night.

We were happy. It wasn't a real fire. I'd like to say a little word about the book since I'm not going to be here on the weekend.

I'd hate for you to miss out the whole weekend on getting to see the books. When I went into that book room, because I've seen a lot of miserable OM book tables. It has often distressed me.

People after several years in the work can't even put up a book table. So I like to see a good, proper literature display. And when I went into the literature room, I almost went into orbit.

I mean, there's avalanches of books. In fact, you'll have to be careful going in there. You make the wrong move.

You know, we'll have to lose one more under a mountain of books. So they brought a whole truckload of books up. Some of them are at unbelievable special prices.

There's some of those magazine books that they almost give away prices. Because I have a lot of books that I want to recommend, I need to start tonight. And I am so excited about the ministry of the printed page.

Now, let me just say this. I am so happy to be back here in the United States. I don't get the privilege of being here much.

God sent my wife and I out 21 years ago. We had never been back 21 years on a furlough. I only get back to the OM conferences or to preach.

Now, all over the world, I'm trying to be, you know, Mr. Cross-Cultural Communicator. I found out my first month in Mexico that, as Americans, we do things that are very offensive. I went to Europe and I found out we do more things that are very offensive.

So I just declared all-out war against, you know, what had been brainwashed into me for 20 years. De-Americanized, you know, to some degree. I've lived in England a lot for 18 years.

Often in the meetings, you know, if I'm a little too loud, boisterous, some of the English folk get a little bit, you know, a little concerned about that. Over in Germany, Germans, especially in their churches, like the preaching to be very dignified, very much in order. People that start shouting at them or getting excited, they have little memories about that in the past.

It's a very big thing. And, you know, I'm going away in Germany. This is just this weekend.

This is, you know, after 20 years of trying to learn how to communicate. A German girl comes up to me and she said, You know, I just want to tell you that some of us really feel turned off by the way you speak. You know, great encouragement.

So I'm really relaxed here, I'll tell you. And I like the South. I went to school in the South.

And I've always been very, you know, the first southern girl that came to my high school. I was a Yankee, born in Patterson. The first southern girl that walked in the door, you know who was at her.

Her parents weren't too happy, so that all ended in one night. But when I came to study in the South, I found these people are more friendly. You can be more relaxed here, really, these people in the South.

How many of you are southerners? Oh, this is great, this is great. You know, you can really be relaxed with these people. You won't understand what they're saying, but you can be relaxed with them.

No, that's not true. Let me get back to my books before we get carried away. If you ever feel you're becoming extreme, it can happen very easily, you know, Ed.

You're getting uptight. You don't know how to really find freedom in your Christian life, get a hold of this book. By the way, there are not many copies.

I don't know why. One of my favorite books, but you can't have big mountains of every book. It's called The Wider Place by Eugenia Price.

She lives in Georgia. Where God offers freedom from anything that limits our growth. I have many, many dangerous areas in my Christian life.

Extremes, things that I was not aware of. And this book and her other books have helped me beyond words. It's not everybody's book, you know, for the week.

But I believe that many of you want to get that book and be helped through it. Where God offers freedom. Ralph Shallis, very different kind of book.

From now on. This man's so identified with France that he wrote, he writes his books in French. We have to translate them back into English.

This is one of those books. Ralph is the longest standing visiting speaker to OM conferences. He's a saint.

He's got cancer, though it seems to be somewhat held up at present, cured. He's writing. I don't know how old he is.

Where's Malcolm Jones from France? Is he here? How old is Ralph Shallis? Do you know? 65? Yeah, 65, 70. He's really a saint of God. That is his book on spiritual growth.

Get it. It really should be required reading, but we have too many books. I was listening to the tapes recently by Elizabeth Elliott.

I listen to tapes in the bathtub. And that's the advantage of tapes. I mean, it would be difficult, wouldn't it, to have a live presentation.

But with tapes, you can do almost anything. So I was in the bathtub with Elizabeth Elliott, or listening to Elizabeth Elliott. And my bathing suit, of course.

And I am so impressed with this woman, really. How many of you have read her writings? That is also very encouraging. This is her book.

I don't know if this one is on half price. There are a lot of books on half price. But it's a little expensive if it isn't.

Try to get it for half price, you know. A little bit like an Arab. Treat it like an Arab market.

I was just getting orientation for my trip to Morocco next year. You know, if you want to pay a dollar, usually he'll start offering you whatever you're buying at two, three dollars. You've got to come down.

So, you know, bargain with him there in the literature. And this is Harley Rollins. He's a southerner.

Friendly. Operation World. How many have a copy of this? Wow, that is amazing.

What can I say? You already have a copy. This is the revised edition. Some of the slightly extreme right-wing statements that upset some people have been modified.

And we've put in some of the American missionary groups. As Europeans, we want to acknowledge that Americans are also involved in world missions. There have been other revisions.

This is a truly great book. And lastly, two outstanding books by A.W. Tozer. There's more spiritual meat in those two books than we can give you here this week.

Treasury of Tozer, collection of favorite writings and the best of A.W. Tozer. Between those two books, you have enough to digest in the next two years. I just strongly recommend this man's writings.

Let's just pray, because we can't go late tonight for a number of reasons. Let's pray. Father, help us now as we look into your word, as we consider what lies ahead, how we can get the best out of this conference.

I thank you, Lord, for the freedom. I'll be back here in my own country. I thank you, Lord, for the freedom you give in other countries.

Perhaps not as easy a situation, Lord, yet maybe I can be deceived by that. And I want your word this morning. I don't want to get carried away in some kind of Bavarian trip, but I want your word.

We want your word. We have not come here to seek the counsel of men, but we've come to seek wisdom from you. Guide us in this time together, in Jesus' name, amen.

Now, though my message starts now, what I've just said is also important, just to lay a little foundation for what we're going to share tonight. I want you to turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Nehemiah. How many have heard the tape on warfare? Orientation tape number one.

Raise your hand. Very good. Some people get so frightened by that tape, they never listen past that.

And they never read the little letter I send around with the tape to say, you know, it's not always as bad as it sounds. And they never read spiritual balance, where they can learn that we have perhaps progressed a little bit since those early days in understanding what the spiritual warfare is. But I want to say right from the beginning that we don't want you to go to Europe if you don't believe there's a war in Europe.

There is a war in Europe, a spiritual war. Now, the way things are going on right now in Lebanon, Israel, Syria, and Iraq, we may be in Europe at the dawn or the beginning of World War III. And if you don't think that can happen at any minute, then you must be very ignorant of history and politics.

You say, well, what brought him to politics? Well, you may want to get in just a little bit to know that Russia is armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons, that our nation is armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons, that Russia is behind Iraq and Syria, and that our nation is behind Israel. Just add up the rest. Now, in this latest bomb attack by the Israelis on Iraq, Mr. Reagan, playing a little token commitment toward the Arabs, is saying, we're going to send you any planes.

Well, for how long? Two weeks? They have enough American armaments in Israel to take on the whole Arab world. You see, the Russians may not appreciate that. Now, I'm not going to get any further into that

because that's not my interest.

But if those people are concerned and are throwing themselves into that and are looking for committed men and looking for equipment and are preparing thousands and hundreds of thousands of soldiers, everybody in Israel almost is in the military. I've just come from Israel again a few months ago. How much more we spiritually must face the reality that this is a warfare, this is not a game.

My heart is so grieved by some of the short-term work that I have read about and been involved in because it seems to me like a big evangelical game with young people sort of running around taking snapshots half a day or touring the world on the money that some church provides. And I believe that God wants to baptize us during this week with a seriousness of purpose about what we are doing. One of the greatest problems in the present generation is the lack of seriousness of purpose in the things of God.

And this conference will be hard. It will be hard. I am just pushing myself to stay awake because on my watch and on my body it's 25 minutes to 3 in the morning because when you cross the Atlantic, things happen to you.

And the times change. And I'm over here for such a short trip, I don't even bother to correct my watch because this tells me what time my wife is at and she's more concerned to me than I am about myself. I can always find a clock around, so I keep it on English time.

Then I don't phone her in the middle of the night when I get lonely. There's a war on in Europe. We are here in a military boot camp to train you to go to battle.

And if you don't want that, if you don't feel ready for that, don't go because I am all in favor of cutting down the numbers. Now, years ago I used to lead the work. This work is growing so fast.

It's moving so fast. There are so many tremendous leaders who are more spiritual than I am, more dedicated, more disciplined, more loving. Fortunately, most of them aren't louder, so I still get an opportunity.

So I don't lead the work anymore. I just follow and I'm running out of breath. Mike Evans, George Miley, Dave Hicks, they're running all over the world.

We're in 35 nations. The way they're going, we'll be in another 30 nations before I even get my second breath. So I'm not going to worry if some of you decide to go home.

You come to Dave Hicks, you say, Look, this Verwar guy scares me. I'm going home. Now, of course, Hicks, he's been picking up pieces for me for 15 years.

He'll console you and love you and he'll sign you on the dotted line of the 25-year program. So don't go to him. Seriously speaking, and one thing that's very basic when you're in a warfare is to know how to laugh.

That's right. And I will tell you, if you don't know how to laugh, don't go on to him. You'll spend a lot of time crying.

There's no middle ground. There's no middle ground. There is a war.

We have been commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to evangelize the world. We take that with absolute seriousness. Some of us have been for almost a quarter of a century.

So many people thought OM would run out of steam 15 years ago. You can't imagine how many prophets of doom, letters, tape recordings, you know, telling us, look, you just can't live this way. Sure, late adolescence, okay.

Married without children, okay. But, you know, you can't go on year after year. Summer crusade, Easter crusade, winter crusade, 12 months a year.

25 or sometimes that many million people reached in a year, generally more like 12 million. But here we are. 25 years later.

Dick Griffin and I were just planning the 25th anniversary of OM in Mexico. I'm going to go to Mexico City. And the 25th anniversary, quarter of a century.

And we're still burning. It's burning. We're still in the war.

We still believe Jesus is king and captain. We still believe that God is on the throne and that we are just to present our bodies daily as a living sacrifice and to go forth in his name, dying to self. Now here in the book of Nehemiah, we have so many lessons.

We can't get into it. But we have Nehemiah going back to rebuild the walls. He spies out the land after much prayer, after seeing answers to prayer.

He spies out the land. In chapter 2, verses 12 and 13, the walls get rebuilt. In verse 3, there's tremendous opposition.

In verse 4, it's a sort of quick Bible study. And he got some people praying and some people watching. He preached some sermons, and they got back.

And we read in verse 6, chapter 4, So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together to the half of its height, for the people had a mind to work. This is a week for work. Sure, you're going to have a little relaxation.

You're going to have some good meals, because an army needs to get decent food. And, you know, I even squeezed in a game of tennis already this morning at 6 o'clock. So, you know, we're not saying, just here 24 hours a day, nobody's going to smile.

That's not being a faithful soldier of Jesus Christ. But we're here to work, in a sense. Please try to understand this.

This was burned into my heart, again, reading a missionary book by one of the great missiologists, Herbert Cain of Trinity Seminary. How much training it takes to prepare people for cross-cultural evangelism. We are going to attempt in one week, and then another five days in Belgium, to get into your mind, and to some degree into your heart, which normally we would need a year.

Why are we doing that? Because we believe the world is an emergency situation. A.W. Tozer said the whole world is in an emergency situation. The church, to a large degree, has failed to obey Jesus Christ.

Therefore, half the people in the world have never yet had the gospel in any way, shape, or form. There are another ten reasons I can give you why I feel we're in an emergency situation. That's why I believe the Holy Spirit has raised up what old Ralph Winter calls the spiritual guerrilla force, Operation Mobilization, to

launch out now, and to help the struggling existing church in Europe and the missionaries in Europe to do the job.

We're not going to do the job. We're going as an emergency force, in training, in training, to help them do the job. And we've got to get, to some degree, into you in the next week, and in Belgium.

Of course, that's considering you've gone through the tapes, you've gone through the books. Without that, we're already in trouble. We've got to get into you what normally we would like a year to do.

I want to tell you some of the short-term workers going out from the United States are causing harm in existing missionary work. And we now have a number of key leaders in Europe who are opposed, opposed, to especially American short-term summer holiday trips. And they're speaking out.

One of them is Dr. Michael Griffiths, a very close friend of mine, very outspoken, now the president of London Bible College, formerly the director of OMF, the Great China International. You should hear some of his lucid descriptions of some short-term operations. I was concerned about this.

I wrote him a letter, and I was greatly relieved that he strongly is linked with us and would love people to go on OMF before they, of course, come to London Bible College or join OMF. And we just have to get some of this basic orientation over. It doesn't mean we're going to be perfect in doing it.

We won't be. Therefore, we don't expect you to be perfect in the response. But let's do the best we can, preparing to amalgamate our hearts with these Europeans who we're going to meet in a few weeks' time, preparing to work as servants, because this is the present place that American missionaries and trainees must go as.

If we are going to be accepted, if we are going to be appreciated, if we are going to leave something more than just the smell in some of these countries, we must go as servants. We must go as co-workers. No longer with the big, heavy American or Anglo-Saxon image.

That's why we're here. We're here to work, to study, to prepare, to discuss the problems, to be interviewed, to get the final confirmation on what we're doing. Praise God.

The wall was built because they had a mind to work, because they knew the God who would fight for them. Chapter 4, verse 20, Our God shall fight for us. These men were so committed to the task that we read in verse 23, So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us put off our clothes, except that everyone put them off for Washington.

Isn't that interesting? Last night, after being up too late the night before, being on jet lag, I went home at five or six o'clock in the afternoon, which was midnight or more, and I somehow just didn't make it, getting the clothes off. I just fell asleep and woke up. So I get encouragement by this scripture.

Now this became my habit before I was married. If you think I'm intense now, you just thank Jesus you didn't live around me then. You know, to me, there's only so many hours in the day, so many seconds.

Use them. Taking clothes off, putting clothes on, what a waste of time. So many nights I went to sleep with my clothes on.

The floor, chair, anywhere. Bed at one, up at 6.30. What is the purpose of taking your clothes off? I slept, I learned to sleep so well when I'm on, you know, I took them off. I didn't, I had to sleep.

Now this was one of the areas where I had to come into balance. When I got married, my wife somehow didn't go for this. Especially the shoes.

Boy, 21 years of marriage, it's been God's great graduate school for me. And I thank the Lord for that institution. So here's the biblical basis for that.

So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the Lord who follow me, none of us put off our clothes, except that every one put them off for washing. Now, we don't make major theological issue of this. So don't worry.

But do you picture the intensity? It was a warfare situation. People were ready to attack, tear down the walls, and destroy them. A lot of things that we feel are important, if we're thrown into a war, become unimportant.

And this is the problem. The church is not on a militant stance. It's not an invading army.

And I just feel this is why the world is not being evangelized, as it should be. Well, they had a lot of problems. But I want to jump over to the great revival that came under Ezra.

Chapter 8. Because I see in this passage, and there are many other similar passages, the biblical basis for gathering together in this way. Even if we were not preparing to go out into a spiritual invasion, there is a biblical basis for God's people gathering together. I am personally the kind of person, after all these years of conferences, that only come here under holy orders from the King of Kings.

I have a great love for people. I want to give my life to people. But I prefer one at a time.

One at a time. I find crowds very hard. I was very nervous in the dining hall at lunchtime.

You wouldn't think that. Do you think leaders are the kind of people that have it all together? You're just beginning. Because I tell you, you're looking at one leader who doesn't have it all together.

But I know a God who is somehow, by His grace, keeping me, keeping on. But I find conferences a little difficult. Already I've seen so many people I can fellowship with, not for five minutes, passing like two locomotives, but you know, let's go for a walk.

One of my closest friends in England is Peter Maiden. Last time we got together, we started talking. Then we started walking.

Then we started talking. We came to the highest mountain in England. That looks nice.

We climbed up to the top of the highest mountain in England. This was the dumbest thing you've ever seen. Peter Maiden with a suit coat and a tie on the top of Snowdin.

People were looking, hey, what's this guy doing up here? People die up there from improper clothing. Of course, this was a warmer season, so that wasn't too much of a problem. We had a whole day together.

This is what I want. Now these little interviews. Step right in.

Sit down. Let's have a great time together. Well, it was great to know you.

What was your name again? Luigi? Susie? Oh, I always get those mixed up. God bless you, Luigi. I'll be praying for you next.

You think we want this? No. But you see, if we're going to evangelize the world, if we're going to obey God, we're going to have to lay aside, at times, some of the things that we would prefer. The way we would prefer them.

And we're going to have to lock hands and lock hearts, believe the best. We will get longer fellowship with some. But we've got a war to win.

A battle to fight. I've come here because this is where God wants me. I'm not interested, really, at this point, in my emotions.

My wife and I never like to separate. It's always tears. It's always agony.

I am emotionally only half functioning without my wife. I don't understand that. But it is.

She normally comes with me. Last time I was in Memphis, she was with me. We had a wonderful time.

We actually came over by ship just to take life a little slower. It was a fantastic time. She had to remain in England because my son is in very, very big pre-university exams and wanted her to be there.

I'm here because I'm bought with a price. I belong to Jesus. I'm not interested mainly in how the vibrations of the conference are going on or how much emotional satisfaction and fulfillment I am getting from the conference.

I'm interested in the glory of God. I'm interested in obeying Jesus. And I know that means George Borough is going to have to be crucified.

Not destroyed. Crucified. Which means that Jesus Christ is going to live this life out through us.

And He is going to accomplish the impossible. So I feel it's sensible. It's reasonable.

It's biblical to gather in this way. That's what they did here for the reading of the law. Notice verse 1 in chapter 8. All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street.

Isn't that interesting? Have you ever studied those words? They gathered themselves as one man into the street. And there was before them a water gate. And they spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel.

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of the men and the women. And all who could hear with understanding upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the street that was before the water gate from the morning until the midday.

Before the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. Think of how much more we have today than those people.

The New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount, the deeper teachings of God. Yet they with just the book of the law, listening, attentive, were brought into revival. One of the most spiritual movements I've ever worked with.

They've got plenty of weaknesses. Every spiritual movement has weakness. Every spiritual movement has extremes.

One of those movements is the movement under the leadership of Bakht Singh of India. I've lived with this man, I've traveled with him, I've prayed with him. I've preached at his convocations.

And that's one of the backbone of their whole movement. They've planted 300 churches and more across India. One of the biggest factors in their whole movement is they gather in what they call a holy convocation for a week.

They gather, they live together, they share, they have nights of prayer. They have three hour Bible studies. Then they parade through the streets witnessing.

And the Spirit of God every year has poured Himself out upon those great holy convocations. Thousands have come to Christ. And that has been acknowledged even by men like Billy Graham as one of the great spiritual movements of our day.

Those of us who have traveled among those assemblies and lived with those people know that this doesn't deliver them from problems. I remember Bakht Singh sharing with me one of his men committed suicide. I call that a fairly substantial problem.

This treasure, beloved, is in earthen vessels. If you're looking for the perfect New Testament organization, you're in the wrong place. Get your ticket and go back home.

You will not find it here. In fact, I would say if you're looking for the perfect organization and the perfect church, the great final New Testament movement, you are on one big fat tangent. And the sooner you get off it and come down to earth, the happier you'll be.

We are linked heart and heart with the whole body of Christ around the world. Even those that don't agree with us, we feel linked with them. And our burden is not to exalt operation mobilization or certain men, but to just sense our oneness with the whole body and to bring glory to God in everything we do.

But we do at the same time feel that there are certain biblical principles we must obey. We feel one of those principles is that as God's people, we should gather in special times of prayer, worship, the reading of the law, the reading of the word. I can't take the time to read the whole chapter, but look at verse 8. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading.

And Nehemiah, who is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord. This day is holy unto the Lord your God, more not. Nor we, for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

And he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto our Lord. Neither be ye grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

It's fantastic. It just ministers to me that passage. Revival through the reading of the word of God.

We believe in these days gathered together God wants to meet us in revival. He wants to revive our hearts. He wants us to be caught up together praising Him.

We are an army of praise. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. Mighty unto God are the pulling down of strongholds.

The weapon of praise, the shield of faith. God's spiritual boot camp is very, very unlike a military boot camp in so many ways. There are a few similarities.

Most comparisons in scripture, beloved, only go so far. I went too far for a while in my teaching on the militant. I was reading war books and how Rommel did it in the deserts of North Africa, and God just thanked me.

And I haven't touched many war books for many, many years. Because the comparison only goes so far. And that's very important in understanding scripture, not to take the comparison further than the scripture takes it.

Because the scripture has many other comparisons. We're not only soldiers, we're pilgrims. We're not only pilgrims, we're servants.

Jesus said more than servants, friends. And if you don't get the balance of all these things, you become lopsided. And you become some kind of, you know, a military freak, which is actually very obnoxious in the work of God.

And you get little generals. We had some of our early leaders, they thought they were Napoleon. They thought they were, you know, Okay, line up, you guys.

What do you mean you don't feel that you're loved? Boom, I love you. And, you know, God's had to give us many spankings. Because we so quickly, you know, went to one extreme or the other.

Yes, we're soldiers. But our joy comes from the Lord. And the joy of the Lord is our strength.

We're pilgrims. We're friends. We're servants.

We're high priests. We're careers. Don't think of yourself as some little private joining this, you know, army.

There's General Hicks in your private Susie Bell. I think there's actually a girl by that name that may be coming here. Forgive me.

You know, that's carrying the comparison too far. We as leaders are not generals. We're servants.

Shepherds. And we just want to love you. We want to help you.

Don't think because I do some of the speaking at this conference, some OM conferences, I don't even go. I haven't been to the MD Dugas in one year. I say that because some people think, George Murray, he's the big leader.

We don't operate that way. Our whole work is led by a team of people. Each field is somewhat autonomous.

Basically, they do what they feel led to do out there in Pakistan and France. If I see something that's unscriptural, even then I contact some of the other leaders. We pray about it.

Then we may go and have a chat. Every major decision in this movement, the whole movement, is led on a team basis. The brethren, of course, are all very kind.

Still call me the international coordinator simply because for the sake of continuity and pressing on in the work, it is good for someone to be often the voice to express the final decision of the body and to help through the authority the Lord gives them to try to carry that out by prayer, by persuasion, by weeping, by every possible biblical, sometimes unbiblical, I try to stay away from that, method. What a blessed day it was when the law was read, the Spirit moved among these people, and revival came. Let's pray for revival in these days together.

In closing, let me give you one of my lists. You know, I'm famous in my messages over the last few years for my lists. And I just have a few points on this list just on how you can make this conference really count, how you can make this Holy Convocation really count.

Number one, make God your goal. We often sing that. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

Make God your goal. Not firstly the summer, not firstly evangelism, or discipling men, or planting churches. Yes, we're into all that very much.

But our goal is God, and that has helped keep this movement on the narrow road. So easy to get our eyes on other things. Even that money.

Some of you are a little neurotic about that money. Oh Lord, who put money in it? That's not the big thing, whether your money comes. I'd rather stay at home and worship God than just get caught up in some kind of extremism about money.

God can provide. It doesn't come by a series of neurotic jerks. Religiously jumpy.

They know that the Lord is watching their every action. So they become very jumpy. And he goes on to say, and when Tozer said this, I almost came right out of my shoes, God is easy to live with.

And I believe that if OM is a movement of God, I pray it may be, that we will be easy to live with. And if you don't find us easy to live with, maybe this is not God's place for you. And we will respect you.

Now personally, I don't think you can know that at a conference. That's why we have a summer crusade. Because our big interest is the year and two-year program, and on the summer you can get to know us.

And if by the end of the summer, you just feel uptight about it all, the way it happens, this thing, that thing, the leadership, the message, praise the Lord, a charter flight is already booked to take you home. Those that come for the year or two, we hope you'll find God easy to live with. And we hope you'll find God's work.

We'll never be as easy to live with as God, because we're human, we fail. And that will hurt you sometimes. Don't go into Christian work if you don't want to be hurt.

Forget it. In fact, I don't know how you can handle this planet without being hurt. Maybe you ought to sign up.

I heard the Swedes are planning big holidays out in outer space in 1987 or something like that. Sign up. Maybe it's better out there.

But if you're going to be on planet Earth, you're going to get hurt. You're not going to join any church. You're not going to join any spiritual fellowship.

You're not going to go on any arm team. You're probably not even going to be able to be at this conference without something happening that may hurt you. And we're only getting started here.

God is our goal. Number two, the right attitude. God is concerned about our attitude.

This is an area where the Holy Spirit has been working in my own heart a lot in the past years. I want a revolutionary attitude toward all of God's people, all of God's organizations, all the churches. I want to learn how to believe the best.

I want deep soul surgery and crucifixion in the area of the disposition because I'm the kind of person that, you know, outwardly I can say praise the Lord and shake your hand and inwardly I might be depressed or upset or in some other emotion. How's your attitude toward your brothers and sisters? How's your attitude toward those who refuse to pray for you? Those who have opposed you in the past weeks or months. God wants to operate on our attitude.

If you come in with a wrong attitude, a basically cynical or negative attitude, no matter how hard we try, no matter how many things go right here, you'll probably see the things that are going wrong and get discouraged, upset, or depressed. So much is hinged not on just what we say here. It's hinged on your attitude and mine.

Number three, prayer. The quiet time, waiting on God. Those who wait upon the Lord, Isaiah says, will be renewed in strength.

You might want to study the whole 40th chapter of Isaiah. Try to get that time with God in the morning. I don't always get a good quiet time, but this morning, I tell you, I met with God for two hours in His Word and prayer before that tennis game.

And that has set the pattern for today. People who know me, I think they've seen something in me today that they don't always see. I met with God.

And sometimes I have these little crammed quiet times, you know, ten minutes of the Word, scooping up some prayer, you know, Operation World. I mean, it's alright, you know, basic survival, but you're not getting what God wants to give you. You're not getting what God wants to give you.

In the Word, I'm not saying two hours. For most people, even my own life, an hour in the mornings is a beautiful thing. Sometimes you can't get that.

Number four, don't presume. I've already touched on that. We're in a warfare.

It's going to take commitment. Number five, faithfulness. Faithfulness in some of the areas that have been mentioned to us, like the meetings, the attendance.

And then you're going to be given some chores, things to do. As you're faithful in little things, God will enable you to be responsible for bigger things. A lot of the things that Brother George Barathon did in this work, I think for the first, what, five years, in my view, a lot of them were quite small.

When he came on my team, he didn't get any big responsibilities. I said, George, this is it for today. Set up a book table for a meeting of eight people.

And I watched Brother George Barathon for one year on my team, working as my assistant, just doing the simplest things. Here's a big job for you, George. Carry this paper up and give it to Sue.

And I watched the Lord just move George into other responsibilities until he was lining up ports for the ship and 300 people to come in and carry on their ministry with all the details and headaches and problems that that would involve. As you're faithful in little things, God will move you into other things. Number six, learning submission.

Now, I know there's some extremist teaching about submission. You won't find much of that in O.M. If anything, we're over here too much. But we believe that you must learn something of submitting to those over you in the Lord.

You study Hebrews 13, 17. You study 1 Thessalonians 5, 12 through 13. You'll see the biblical basis for leadership.

At the same time, we as leaders, we have to learn also to submit to you. We learn from you. We want to listen you out.

We're a movement that operates not by dictatorship but by negotiation. And so we submit to one another. We read about that in the Word of God.

It also says the leader should not lord it over God's heritage. So without the two things, it gets out of balance. But for most of you, your big task isn't learning not to lord it over God's heritage.

That's not where most of you are in your faith. It's to learn something of submission. And until you can submit to some things that you don't understand or don't even agree with, you haven't accomplished very much.

I believe that for the sake of world evangelism and the reality of the spiritual warfare, we need to agree on a plan of action. That's one of the reasons we're here. We need to agree on a plan of action and a strategy and policy to carry out that action even when there are things we don't like or even agree with.

We're never as evangelical Christians with all of our strong ideas going to agree on everything. But go ahead. We're not expecting you to agree on every little jot and tittle of O.M.'s policy and what's been burning in our hearts.

We as leaders, we don't agree jot and tittle on all these things. But we have a like-mindedness and a submission to one another and a love that enables us to move forward as a mighty army. Number seven, patience.

That's one of God's most important schools. I'm still in it. It's a long-term training program.

God's going to teach you patience even during this week. Some of you may feel this is not going fast enough. Maybe the food line isn't going fast enough.

Why does it have to be a line just to get to the john? I mean, isn't this place organized? Why don't they put in a few extra toilets for us? Didn't they know we were coming? I want to tell you, if you think you've got a

toilet crisis here, we're going to take you to some countries where you're going to have experiences that you will never forget. Especially the ladies. I won't go into details.

Patience. God has His wonderful way of teaching patience. Number eight, unselfishness.

Not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Some people are disappointed in OM because they think of OM as a giant ministry gun. And they're going to get in front of the gun, and George Burroughs is going to light the fuse.

Boom! They're going to get ministered to. That's not how you get ministered to. You get ministered to by ministering to others.

And only as you give out and put into practice what you receive, then God can give you more. Then God can give you more. The little ways that we can minister to one another.

And then very quickly, the last couple of points, and we're going to close, the balance of our ideals and the reality of the situation. Young people often coming into OM are very idealistic. In one way, that's good.

But if that idealism isn't balanced off with biblical teaching, reality, an understanding of what life is really about, a deliverance from naive views about problems, about life, about people, about so many things that we easily pick up, then we're doomed, I believe, to a cul-de-sac. We call that in Europe a dead-end street. In the most disciplined, organized Christian work, mistakes will be made.

There will be problems of disorganization, no matter how organized we are, no matter how much we plan ahead. Plans have gone into this conference months and months ahead. In one sense, over a year ahead, we met for leaders for a whole week to wrestle with our problems, to try to improve every aspect of the work.

And yet, sometimes we find ourselves making the same mistake we made 15 years ago. Especially because one of our policies is to constantly throw new men into leadership. And they've got to, as they're thrown into leadership, have the privilege of making the same mistakes we made.

Some of you, to your surprise, are going to end up in leadership this summer, in some form. And you're going to have very interesting lessons. Pray that doesn't come upon you prematurely.

Because in OM, sometimes it does. And then learning to believe the best. I think that's so important about people.

We are, as human beings, tend to very quickly judge other people. Generalize, judge people by their outward appearance. Americans misjudge Europeans by outward appearance.

You can meet a Cambridge graduate who will be absolutely brilliant. And you, as an American, never having been in England, looking to him, maybe even talking to him, you would judge that he had not yet been in school. Because he's just so different from you.

His dress, his appearance, his vocabulary. We get some Americans that think somebody they're talking to, on OM, is a communist. Europeans understand this.

They believe Americans are paranoid about communists. They always get the wrong stories. That's the way the media is.

And you're going to meet dedicated, Christian, born again, socialists. Because Europe is socialist. But they won't be the kind of socialists you've been reading about in some of your little books.

And I will tell you some of the interesting things we've had. With little Johnny right-wing American who sees communists coming out of every bush. Meeting a leader, OM leader, former vice president of the Cambridge Socialist Club.

This just, nobody told him about this at Bible school. Hell, I can assure you we don't have any communists in Operation Mobilization. And most people would classify as an anti-communist movement though we don't like such classifications.

Because in one sense the greatest opponent to communism is the preaching and the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But Europeans and Americans do not always see it the same way. We're going to a very complicated continent that has hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and thousands of years of history.

We come from our relatively newly born nations into this great cultural continent. And we need wisdom. And we need to esteem them.

And we need to, with all of our hearts, find a balance in what we say and what we do. And between our ideals and the reality of the situation. And we need to believe the best.

And then willing to change even from what we may think is God's will. Maybe you're absolutely convinced you should be on God's will. God's will is a year program.

Okay, you're convinced. But be willing for one of God's surprises. Be willing for one of God's surprises.

And then lastly, learn. Please, please, I beg of you, learn something of organization. Organizing your papers.

Organizing your briefcase. Writing down addresses, phone numbers. Organization is so important.

Just recently in India, one railway engineer made one mistake driving his train in North India. It happened last week. And a thousand to two thousand people were plunged to a hideous death.

One mistake, one man. One of the things I was naive about as a young Christian is how much mistakes cost. We cannot afford to be flippant.

We have got to learn to be diligent. Many of you are going to be driving vehicles. One mistake and you plunge a whole empty out into eternity.

Hopefully they'll go to heaven. But we don't tempt God. We need as many people as we can get for World Evangelism for the next twenty years.

We need people who will learn to organize, who will learn the secret of the ordered life, who will be disciplined in food and time and diet and reading and in all these other aspects of the life. We know this doesn't come overnight. That's why we'd be happy to welcome as many of you as possible to the two-year training program.

And you can put in for a third year with no trouble at all. And we're happy that at least you're coming for the summer. May God give us a spirit of expectation.

Perhaps that's more important than anything else. A spirit of faith. Hope, of expectation.

That He's going to meet us in this place. He's going to teach us wonderful things. And though we feel weak and inadequate and maybe even in our own being we'd just love to run out the door and run home.

Like me. God will meet us here and will bless us and teach us. And this will be revival.

A holy convocation. A time set unto God to praise, to worship, to grow. To be His praising, worshipping, joyful children.

Let's pray. Our God, we just thank You for Your Word. We thank You for this challenge from Nehemiah.

And Lord, we ask that there may come a spirit of revival upon us in these days together. Lord, we ask by faith for a spirit of expectation. We ask by faith for the wisdom and discipline to put into practice these principles that will enable us to get the most out of this conference.

Enable us to see this, Lord, as a military training camp in which we're being prepared to go into battle in Europe. And yet, let us not in the process of that miss these other great truths about our kingship, about our friend relationship with You and all the rest. Oh God, it's great.

It's really great. Thank You for all these Europeans who are over there waiting for us to come and work with them. We want to be a blessing to them, and if we're going to do that, You've got to bless us right out of our socks.

Because we haven't got it in ourselves. We're just going to go over there and make one big mess. Unless You move in our hearts and break down the barriers and crucify self.

Do it, Lord, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

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