

Workers Together With Him

by George Verwer

George Verwer shares his testimony and emphasizes the importance of prayer, obedience, and spiritual renewal in missions and evangelism.

Duration: 43:20

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6

Topics: "Co-Labouring"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his admiration for a man who spent 23 years in prison, at the age of 80, with limited sight, hearing, and teeth. Despite these challenges, the man radiated Christ and praised God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and the work it requires, even when we don't feel like praying. He also acknowledges his own struggles and the need for daily recharging through prayer, worship, and the Word. The speaker encourages the audience to learn how to pray and worship God effectively.

Transcript

The following message by Dr. George Verwer was delivered at 10 a.m. on November the 5th, 1980 for a chapel service held in Estes Chapel. This message was recorded through the facilities of Asbury Theological Seminary and is now made available to you through the seminary's tape library. Additional copies of the message may be ordered by contacting the tape library and giving complete identification of the message.

Since ownership privileges must be observed, the seminary is requesting that you take personal responsibility to see that messages are not transcribed in the manuscript form or other copies duplicated without the specific consent of the speaker. I appreciate the opportunity of again being back here at the Asbury Seminary. I don't know if this is my third or fourth visit.

We know that some of you have been praying for this work as it has continued to expand across the world. I'd like to read first of all a passage from 2 Corinthians 6. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee.

Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things commending ourselves as the ministers of God in much

patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in strikes, in imprisonments, in tollments, in labors, in watchings, and in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well-known, as dying, and behold, we live as chastened and not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

I trust when you have opportunity you will study this great passage of Scripture and allow it to go deep into your heart and being. You would think that after ministering in this way for 25 years that it would be just sort of an easy thing to do. You preach 600 times a year, so one more time you just walk up and you speak.

But I don't find it that easy this morning. And I come in much inadequacy, I come with a sense of inability to really communicate that which I've seen in the past months in communist China and Egypt and Israel and all over Europe and the Middle East where I've been visiting God's people and ministering in the churches. I'm glad that I've been able to come with a team, including one ex-Asbury seminary man.

I'd like him to stand up. Jim Rogers, way in the back, because if you want to see someone about the work of O.M., Jim will be available before and after lunch. He's brought an English friend with him.

And Jack Goley, who's been one of my faithful friends for over 20 years. Jack, could you stand up? He will be here all afternoon if any of you want an interview. And there are a couple of others on our team, I think some of them a little bit busy.

I hate these flying visits. I've just been ministering in a missions conference in Chicago and at the Moody Bible Institute. And I'm headed through to the student missionary conference of Southeast United States.

I don't know if they include Asbury in that. But students are coming together from all the Christian colleges, some of the non-Christian colleges, to meet for a weekend to consider the claims of world missions down in Georgia. And I have to be at Columbia Bible College tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock and by road since some of us are meeting for supper here together.

That's a little bit of an interesting trip. But in many ways, I hate to do this because I would like to get to meet more people and especially also get in tune with some of our friends over at the college. But it was either this or nothing.

So I guess I have to trust the Lord that he'll work things out. We have brought some literature with us. If you remember, our last visit was about two years ago.

I think very cold time of the year. We had some very significant literature that we encouraged people to get. I've just come from Edinburgh, the student consultation on world evangelism.

I was only there the first night. Then I had to leave. But I just heard on the phone this morning that God really met as hundreds came together from all over the world to consider the claims of the unrich people in a similar way to the great conference that took place in Edinburgh in 1910.

And it is exciting to see what God is doing in increasing the vision for the unreached people and men like Ralph Winter, almost a missiologist prophet, going around stirring people up. He'll be with us this weekend as well. And you know, you may feel that some of the things he says are a bit strong.

Some feel maybe he overstates some things. But the fact is that most of what he emphasizes is absolutely true that a very high percentage of all the missionary work, as tremendous as that has been, has still missed a vast sector of the whole world population, the hidden peoples, the unreached people. We're having a special conference also to focus on this in Richmond on January 2nd for three days, Operation World.

It's called, and involved in this conference will be Patrick Johnson, the author of Operation World, a book you can get from your bookshop, Viju Abraham, brother from India, Francis Steele of the North African Mission, George Miley, the director of our ship ministries, David Adeney, missionary from China, former leader of DTC in Singapore. If any of you can get those days free, we'd love to see you there. You can have your own little missions conference in your prayer closet with these little prayer cards.

And I would really recommend you get a set of these cards presenting 52 of the most needy nations in the world. Some of these countries have almost no witness. And I have found these little cards a great help in really praying for world missions.

We've been challenging people to get them together with a world map that you can use in focusing in prayer. My mind tends to easily wander when I pray. And I find praying over a world map is a great help.

Praying for missionary friends and for others, for nations and claiming nations for God. People always ask where to put this. I tell them I hang it right over the front of their television set.

It's an excellent, excellent place. And we hope each one of you, if you don't get any other piece of literature, you would pick up this little O.M. newspaper and you can use the back of this to request anything that you want. Now, that reminds me of Operation Feedback.

When I'm on a short passing through visit, I like to engage in Operation Feedback. So maybe I could do that this morning. I wonder if you could take out a piece of paper.

I wonder if you could possibly, you know, sometimes you get an aversion for paper as a student. But if you could get out a piece of paper and put my name on the top of it. My name is George Verwer.

The last name is hard to pronounce, apparently. And any question you want to ask me, since I very seldom get to the States, I've been overseas for 21 years. And when I get here, I get very emotional.

I've already had two major farewell speeches. Last night, Jimmy Carter almost brought me to tears. And now this morning, I have another farewell speech.

I don't know what's going to hit me before the end of the day. I know it wasn't exactly a farewell speech, but the beginning announcement of it. But sometimes I get carried away and I start offering free books, free cassette tapes, free trips.

So if you want to respond to anything I say, my secretary is with me, Jim Rogers, who has been faithful secretary for five years. Before that, he was here at the seminary. Before that, he was at the Pentagon.

So he can really get a good mixture. And I'll be happy to send you some of the things that I may mention. Some of the other books we have available today are Destined for the Throne, a book on intercession.

How many have already read this book? Amazing. It's good. I've heard that literacy is on the increase in Kentucky, so that's encouraging.

And then from now on, by Ralph Chalice, a book I'm sure most of you have not read. He's an Englishman. He writes in French, so identified with the French culture.

Not well right now with cancer, but one of the best books on spiritual growth ever put into print. True Discipleship and two other books thrown in it together. Where is Your Treasure and Lord Break Me.

One of the most powerful books now in 30 languages. Calvary Road by Roy Heshin. You can't come on OM unless you read this book.

And I believe it's the greatest need among God's people. Brokenness, Calvary, the filling, the reality of the Holy Spirit. And lastly, my favorite author, A. W. Tozer, The Root of the Righteous.

And I just commend these books are available in the Student Center together with free literature about OM like Facts You Need to Know About Operation Mobilization. I'm sure that many of you do not know what OM is. Not that that's so important, but we do come with a burden that I believe deserves some attention.

Now most of you know what OMS is. Some of you may know what OMF is. These are all graduate programs.

OM is an undergraduate program. And Wesley Doole, one of my very close friends, I know he just loves people to come on OM before they get the S, the OMS. Somehow or other, that means life.

Let me just share first of all a little of my own testimony because I'm sure I'm basically unknown. That again is no problem, except if you know a little bit about my background, it will help you understand some of the strong statements I may make as we get toward the end of this little session together. As a new Christian, I was a natural extremist, and I still have remnants of extremism hanging on to me.

I make extreme statements. People get very upset. I don't get invited back.

That's why it's a miracle I'm back here for the fourth time. It shows that this is really an avant-garde dangerous institution. But in order to try to keep all this in balance, I've written a book, Revolution of Love and Balance.

It's a \$2 book, and if you put it on your little feedback paper, I'll be glad to send it to you free because I don't have any more copies left. They all went out at Moody Bible Institute. After my extreme statements, they were desperate to find balance at any cost.

I was not reared in a Christian home. My grandfather from the Netherlands, a country I've just passed through, coming back from Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, he was an atheist. His son, my father, did not know Christ.

He immigrated to the United States. My other grandfather on my mother's side, she eventually divorced because he was so cruel to her. He was a drunkard from Glasgow, Scotland.

At 16 years of age, I was almost, in some ways, a confirmed materialist, even though I mixed it with some nice good American liberal Christianity and social gospel. In fact, in my good liberal church, I was Christian to Methodist, of course, very important step. In my liberal church, because I taught the young people how to rock and roll, and I had a few other interesting things, I was elected as the president of the youth fellowship, then made the assistant to the pastor, and hardly anyone in the entire church knew Jesus Christ personally.

I certainly did not. But an elderly lady started praying for me. She had been praying for the high school near my home for 15 years, prevailing prayer.

And I'm here basically this morning to talk to you about God, to talk to you about prayer, and to talk to you about obedience, those three dynamic combinations. She prayed for 15 years in obedience to God. She prayed for me for three years.

Every year I got worse. I was even blacklisted, kept off the National Honor Society because of bad conduct. But she kept praying.

She sent me a gospel of John through the mail. I began to read this together with the pornography and other stuff that I was trapped into by then. And in God's mercy, it began to make a dent in my thick Dutch head.

Then Billy Graham came to New York City. I know all the criticisms against Billy Graham. Some people feel he doesn't quite preach the total, complete, full message.

Study missionary history and church history, you're going to find probably very few that did. You know, God is great. And even if you're not in favor of Billy Graham, God is greater both in you and Billy Graham.

And there's no man I've ever read about or studied that has brought more men to Jesus Christ. I just finished doing a restudy again of Wesley and the birth of the free church in Great Britain, where I've lived the last 17 years, except when I'm in India. And everything that's ever accomplished, anything for God in history, has had with it controversy, has had with it weakness, and has had with it also elements of disunity.

And the disunity that hit the Methodist church just before Wesley died and after he died, at least in Britain, where I know the history better than over here, is unbelievable. But God was still working. God doesn't wait until we're all perfect to work through us.

God works through us as human beings. One of the greatest things I learned in my hyper-idealistic state was that God works through earthen vessels. And I had to accept my humanity with its weaknesses and the reality of those weaknesses.

If you do that before you get into the ministry, you may last longer, I can assure you. In any case, I went to hear Billy Graham speak just one night. It wasn't a crusade, a one-night stay in New York City.

I heard the gospel. Many in our country, at least back then, hadn't heard the gospel. Now with television, there are not so many that haven't heard at least some form of gospel.

I heard that Jesus Christ died for me. That's the message I hope you're going to go out and preach. It's old-fashioned gospel, supposedly.

But it totally hit me like a spiritual cobalt bomb, and I have never been the same, not one day, since that conversion to Jesus Christ. I walked out of Madison Square Garden. My first witness was totally ineffective.

I didn't know what to say. I had this very beautiful girl with me. Some New York thugs insulted her.

I said, that's not right. Boom! He hit me. I was laying flat on the streets of New York within an hour after my conversion to Jesus Christ.

So I had a great vision from the early days of the spiritual warfare, and I've been preaching ever since on that subject. But I went back to that high school. We started prayer meetings.

God's Spirit began to move somehow because of my bad reputation. I had been elected president of the student body. This opened the door to speak to the entire student body after my conversion.

Before God was done, over 200 students in that ungodly high school outside New York City, where a third of the students were often drunk on the weekends, about 200 had surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ. Not all were converted, but many were. And a work was born.

A work was born that is still not known in America because it was transplanted to Mexico within two years and then transplanted to Europe. I've just come from 20th anniversary meetings of OM in Denmark, northern Germany, Norway, Sweden, all in six days. And of course, in those countries, we are 100 times more known than we are here.

And we believe that's God's will because there are already, even when our work was being born, so many great movements in this country, none of them perfect, but so many great movements that our movement was transplanted to Europe, first to Spain, and then through a fiasco on my part. Some of you know my good friend, God's smuggler, Brother Andrew. This morning you're listening to God's bungler, Brother George.

And that's the truth. I went into Russia. I had learned some Russian.

I was living in Spain. I had this great vision for evangelizing the Soviet Union. And in the second day, due to my own stupidity, lack of discernment, I was arrested by the Soviet secret police and accused of being a spy.

After three days in interrogation, they decided I was a religious fanatic and gave me a submachine gun escort back to Austria. It was there, actually in the top of a tree, praising God, one of the few places I can sing without disturbing people, that two words came to my mind. Operation Mobilization.

The vision was to see Europeans mobilize Germans, loving Englishmen, French, loving Swiss, and demonstrating the reality and power of Jesus Christ in Europe. By the next summer, 300 Europeans, two to three hundred, united in the first crusade. Operation Mobilization was only going to be the name of the summer crusade.

We already had a name called Send the Light. It was a bit dusty. And so Operation Mobilization stuck with us.

By the next summer, 2,000 mobilized. A very highly criticized movement of the Holy Spirit had been born. That has not ceased for some 20 years in Europe.

What have the results been? 22,000 have been trained in this movement, a very high percentage of them serving Jesus Christ somewhere in the world today. In places like France alone, over 15 new churches have been planted. Several publishing houses have been born.

300 million people have been presented the gospel face-to-face. As soon, this thing exploded through the nights of prayer and the emphasis on prayer, which is the unlimited potential. We have unlimited potential through prayer.

And it began to explode throughout the Middle East. We now have 150 committed to Muslim evangelism. It spread on out to India, where we now have 350 full-time workers in a day when workers in some areas of India are diminishing.

This is not in South India where it's incredibly easy to work for Christ and see results, but almost all of this is in the unreached areas of North India among the hidden peoples of that huge nation of 600 million. It then spread on to Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Singapore, and Malaysia, two of the main sending fields, as we now have over 100 full-time Malaysians and Singaporeans, some of them in training for moving into mainland China. Some of them have already been there.

It's hard to measure results, and I'm not interested really in telling about results. I'm personally more aware of our failures, our weaknesses, and our sins than I am of our results. But I speak of these results because God answers prayer.

I speak of these things because even if a nucleus of you here at this seminary catch fire for God and determine to believe God for the impossible, it can happen. God is alive. It's not a matter of being here to become one more theological egghead in a nation of theological eggheads.

It is God's will for you to be a spirit-filled believer. Many of our men have graduated from seminary. Our strongest source of recruits is actually Cambridge and Oxford and other British universities, a number of whom have PhDs, so we're not anti-intellectual.

But if you get it in the head and you don't have it in the heart, you're not worth even the floor you're walking on. And my greatest burden for God's people, whether it's in seminary or in a church, is that we be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is our message.

Our first burden has never been evangelism. It's been spiritual renewal. It's been to see people functioning seven days a week in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I believe that's possible. I'm going to get to that in a minute. So the Lord blessed this work.

These young people, they learned from their mistakes, from their extremes. Emotionalism at times came into our movement. Some of the prayer meetings were more known for noise than answers, and we had to repent.

We used to offend people even back when I was a student at Moody. My mouth was bigger than my brain, or at least it went faster than my brain. But we learned from literature, from many senior great advisors.

I could give a long list of names, men like Dr. Schaeffer, Alan Redpath, John Beekman, a hundred other mighty men of the Spirit who's through their tapes, books, and rebuking us. It's better to get a rebuke from an enemy than a pat on the back from a friend. We learned some of the error of our ways.

We learned about spiritual balance, about brokenness, and many other important biblical principles, especially outlined there in 2 Corinthians chapter 6. Where are we today? We feel in many ways we've just been born. Some of us started when we were young. I was 19 when I went to Mexico.

We're slow learners. So in some ways we feel we have just been born. On the other hand, we are desperately looking for some young blood.

We've always had a little trickle of students out of Asbury College and Seminary, and we feel overdue for a new trickle. And we would like some of you, I'd like to be very much to the point, to really pray about being involved with us. Now we know several other major missions get the lion's share of all the recruits out of Asbury, and we're thrilled with that.

All we want is a few. You know, even one or two really spirit-filled hungry learners walking Calvary's Road and able to keep their marriages together, we would be thrilled to have. Really, we'd like you to get informed about OM.

Get an interview this afternoon. There may be a place, maybe only short term for a year or two or even a summer, that you never dreamed of. About 15 years ago, God put a burden on our heart to ask Him for an ocean-going ship.

And about five or six years after that, He gave us the MV Lagas. There might be some of you who want to pray about getting involved in that ship ministry. We need some men who want to go ahead of the ship, not on water skis or a motorboat, but by air to help line up the ports that we go into, like China, where the door, Communist China, is seemingly opening right now.

Lagas is in Thailand. We just rescued 93 boat people at mid-sea. They've been on the ship for three weeks, incredibly crowded.

It's a small ship of 3,000 tons, only to maybe twice as long as this auditorium. And all these people are living on the ship, and we haven't been able to find anybody or any government willing to take them. I thought I'd phone Reagan last night, but I figured he'd be a little busy.

But we need prayer that somehow we might find a place for these 93 people. Then a few years later, after seeing God's hand on this ship, reaching 15 to 20 million people through her ministry, seeing what an ideal training, on-the-job, exposure training type of program this was, especially for seminary graduates, we decided to ask God for another ship. Now, this seemed crazy, because we wanted to get a ship two to three times as large.

This meant we would need 15 or 20 million dollars. At that time, we didn't have any money. We often operate on a shoelace in OM, and half the time we can't find the shoelace.

But we had this burden to trust God for another ship. Three years ago, he supplied us with the oldest passenger ship in the world, now the MV Dula. A 6,000-ton ship has room for 300 people in her cabins, an auditorium that seats 600.

She's been sailing for three years. She's had a million and a half visitors. She's distributed millions and millions of pieces of literature, seen thousands and thousands come to Jesus Christ.

No exaggeration. In the last country alone, 10,000 went through the training conferences. That's just the conferences.

I don't know how many went through the book exhibition, which is for the larger numbers of people. So you see, it paid for that one lady to pray. Didn't it? Even the most dangerous cynics who might be here this

morning would have to acknowledge that.

It pays to learn how to pray. And I want to ask you, do you know how to pray? Do you know how to get through to God? Do you know how to worship God? A.W. Tozer said, worship is the missing jewel of the evangelical church. I've been with even Christian leaders on the mission field 15 years who acknowledged to me sometimes in tears that they never learned to worship.

They never learned to dwell in the Holy of Holies, where there's power and love and joy that will never run out. Now, you can imagine the trouble I got into 23 years ago when I preached like this. And the reason I've never been back to some of those places, because you know what people say, especially if you're intellectual.

Oh, I remember my little attack upon Dallas Seminary. I won't tell you about that. But you're told that this is youthful zeal.

You're told this isn't intellectual enough. And then when they found out I didn't go to cemetery or seminary, then when they found out I don't even have a degree, the door slammed closed so quick I almost caught my nose. Now, I'm not saying that most people should go that way.

No, I believe most people should go to college and seminary. And the key of my life has been able to recruit better men than myself. But God works in different ways through different people.

And when will we stop trying to mass produce men of God in our country? When will we stop trying to be carbon copies of other men and allow ourselves in prayer and in worship at the foot of the cross to be filled with the Holy Ghost and be God's original copy, even if it's through failure and difficulty and tears? There'll be no gain without pain in our Christian life. And oftentimes spiritual reality is not born in great success. It's born in tears and in failure and in learning what life is all about.

My greatest protest still, both to the Democrats, the Republicans, and everybody in between, that includes most of you, is that in America we are incredibly naive. We are incredibly naive. We're known for this all over the world.

And when people tell us that, we get very upset. I'm still a red-blooded American. I get upset.

But we are. So often, we're sincere. We've got our degrees.

We've got our little textbooks under our arms. We launch out to the Muslim world. We launch out to India.

And we do some of the dumbest things that have ever been done in the history of missions. And this is why it is my conviction that we don't need a shortcut to the mission field. We need a longer road and that missionary candidates, as surgeons, need an internship program, preferably on the field, where they will de-Americanize for a couple of years and where they will be hit with the hard knocks of life, the realities of marriage, the realities of discipling people cross-culturally, the realities of tearing down the Islamic strongholds in the name of Jesus, the reality of holding high the shield of faith wherewith we can stop all the fiery darts of the devil, including the fiery dart of impurity.

If there's anything I would choose to speak on, if I had one more chance to speak, it would be the fiery dart of impurity. I was talking to William McDonald, the author of this amazing book, on the phone last night, and he was saying how amazed he is. He has a discipleship training program here in this country, in San

Francisco.

He was saying how amazed he has been at the number of Christian leaders knocked out this year, the fiery attack on the Bill Gothard seminar program, the fiery attack on Anita Bryant, the fiery attack on Al Lindsay, a story that's never got out, a fiery attack on many others. Praise God that some of the stories never do get out. They're so horrible.

Why is it that so many top men go down when the fiery dart of impurity comes at them? I'll tell you why. Because we don't know how to pray, because the midweek prayer meeting is hardly attended in our churches, because even in a place like Moody Bible Institute, less than 10% of the students show up to prayer meetings, because we think that our devotional time is optional, but getting our degree is priority. But if you get that little piece of paper and don't have holiness and power with God and strength of character so that you can resist the subtle, unbelievable, hellish darts that will come out against you in your ministry, you will be one more casualty.

So don't point any fingers at your own young age at anybody else. We're told in the book of Hebrews that our God is a consuming fire. Again and again I have read those words, and I've had to work my way back to Calvary in repentance and in brokenness.

A man named Bringle, sort of the number two man under William Booth, once gave a definition of fire that I'd like to read to you. What is fire? This is in his book Resurrection, Life and Power. I'm sure it's in your library.

What is fire? It is love. It is faith. It is hope.

It is passion, purpose, and determination. It is utter devotion. It is divine discontent.

Oh, may God give us some of this. With formalities, ceremonialism, lukewarmness, indifference, sham, noise, parade, and spiritual death. It is singleness of eye, a consecration unto death.

It is God the Holy Ghost burning in and through a humble, holy, faithful man or woman. Will you be that man? Will you be that woman? You may be able to testify that you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit ten years ago, three years ago. Hallelujah.

Billy Graham said, I don't care how you get it, just get it. But I want to ask you, where are you this morning? Are you filled with the Spirit now? Acts 4 31. And when they prayed, the place where they were gathered together shook, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And they went forth and spoke the word of God with boldness. Yes, the Holy Ghost will bring a holy go. And if you're not going for God, if you're not a bold witness for Jesus Christ, you are spiritually anemic and you are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

You may be orthodox in the head, but you're heterodox in the heart and your feet are frozen. So easy it is in the day in which we live of compromise and lukewarmness to be God's frozen people instead of God's chosen people. Now, there's a danger that you may think I've come along with a little message to give you with certain choice words.

Actually, I have no message of that type this morning. But I just come with a heart crying out for reality, realizing that I have not arrived and have a long way to go, and I wish you could have been with me on

Sunday morning in this very staid church in Chicago, where at the Great Missions Conference I spoke on the confessions of a missionary. Maybe I should give you an outline.

Some of you in the homiletics, you want an outline. This was my outline. The eight major problems of my life, fear, bad temper, lust, ego, trouble with doubt, home and marital difficulties, difficulties with extremism and then discouragement and depression.

You see, the missionary is not a man who's arrived. He's not some kind of spiritual bionic man or bionic woman. We are also fellow strugglers.

We also find it incredibly difficult at times to go to prayer meetings. I'd rather go watch a good film sometimes. We're not sort of naturally spiritual.

I'm a natural backslider. If God doesn't recharge my battery every day in prayer and worship and the Word and praise, I go downhill quicker than I don't know what to say. And this is the danger.

There may be a few of you that perhaps are more spiritually-minded and perhaps God has done a deeper work in your heart. But probably the majority of you, if this is a normal gathering of human beings, find the Christian life a struggle, prayer, witness, relating to people, loving. So many today have trouble loving their wives.

The Bible speaks about loving enemies. We have dear brothers so caught up in the emotional trip of life, failing to realize what marriage really is, a commitment to God, a commitment to one another, sort of a spiritual graduate program. Instead, we think it's sort of a mutual pleasure trip for mutual satisfaction of various emotional quirks or some normal things as well.

And the reason we have so much difficulty in our marriages is the same reason we have so much difficulty in our spiritual walk. We live by feelings instead of by faith. We've never learned what it is to deny self and take up the cross and follow me, follow the Lord.

And I just believe that spiritual victory and the power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit is a message for strugglers. It includes knowing what to do when you fail. It includes knowing what to do when you feel lonely or depressed or confused.

As one great Bible expositor in Britain said, great faith is not made in the absence of doubt or fear. It's made as we battle through to the position of faith. If you're going to be truly intellectual in the 20th century, you're going to have questions.

You're not going to just skip over the inerrancy problem as if it didn't exist. You're not going to talk about whether the heathen or lost like some little discussion over the menu at Bob Evans restaurant. These are weighty issues.

Thinking people will find fiery darts of unbelief moving in upon their intellectual life. Beloved, I don't believe we ever arrived intellectually. We're constantly learning, growing.

I know far less in some ways than I did when I graduated from Bible college. And I've read a few hundreds of books since then. Great faith is not made in the absence of doubt.

It's not made in a vacuum of theological cliches. It's made as you thrust yourself by faith into the warfare, asking God to fill you as you go, coming back to him daily in your quiet time, in brokenness, sometimes in

fear, sometimes in confusion. As I've seen the state of the church worldwide, and I have a slight cynic streak in me and another slight negative streak, which if I let it go would destroy me.

And that's why I meditate on Philippians 4, thinking on that which is good and that which is positive. After all, anybody can destroy a building. It takes an architect to build one.

And so I have found that through the struggles, through the failure, 25 years of it, the Holy Spirit has been faithful to me. And I've known his filling every day. Oh, that doesn't mean a total hyper experience, because I believe no matter how filled you are as a human being, you can be more filled tomorrow.

Forgive me if that doesn't fit into one of your theological slots. God wants us to go higher. We never arrive.

There are always higher plateaus in the things of the Spirit. And Tozer said, very few are going after these higher plateaus in the things of the Spirit, because so easily we measure one another with each other, and we lack somehow the Spirit-filled apostolic example that we see roaring across the pages of the Book of Acts. And I was in China, a friend of mine, I was not given the privilege, met with Wang Mingdao, the great Chinese pastor, first foreigner to interview him.

I've seen pictures of him. My heart just broke. 23 years in prison, 80 years of age, cannot hardly see, can hardly hear, hardly any teeth in his mouth.

And that picture of him radiating Christ, and that recording I've listened to eight times of him singing the praises of God, 23 years in a prison without a Bible, but with the ministry and the reality of the Holy Spirit. That means prayer, fervent prayer. Prayer is work, hallows be said.

We don't always feel like praying, but once we've met with God, we come out of that knowing by faith, not always by feelings. My feelings change. I don't know about yours.

Mine can go up and down seven, eight times in one day. It's good most of you look a little more stable than that. But whatever your stability, there is still a reality that you can have if you really want it.

And I pray that a hunger, a fever for God's power and God's love and spiritual balance may move upon us in these days, and that the result will be at least some desperately needed recruits for the Middle East, the Muslim world, and the unreached people. Let us pray. Our God and Father, we thank you for the reality of your love.

We thank you that there's grace for sinners and failures. We thank you that we can come in our sense of inadequacy, in our weakness, in our struggles, and we can take your hand and pray a prayer of faith, and that you will fill us with your Holy Spirit. And we thank you that this is not firstly some exotic evangelical experience, but a dynamic down-to-earth reality that can last us not for just our late adolescent periods, not for just when we're studying, but also when we move out into the front lines of spiritual combat and catch the devil's bullets in our arms.

Oh God, wake us up. Deliver us, God, from spiritual naivety. Deliver us from the chains of our culture which so easily give us more Americanism than spiritual reality.

Take us forth to the regions beyond, not as the people who feel that we have the greatest nation in the world and the biggest church in the world, but as humble servants working together as co-workers with our brothers and sisters in Asia and Africa and other parts of the world. We thank you for this great institution

and pray that the winds of power and love and spiritual balance may blow in these days as we walk together in Jesus' precious name.

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