

KEEPING ON KEEPING ON

George Verwer is the founder and former International Director of Operation Mobilisation, which is a ministry of evangelism, discipleship training and church planting. He led this work from 1961 through to August 2003, when he handed over the international leadership of the work of Operation Mobilisation to Peter Maiden, who was the Associate International Director for 15 years. Since then he has had many people asking him how he is doing, and wanting to know how George – well known for his energy and activity – is handling the change. Here George reflects on the journey he has been on – throughout his leadership of OM and now at this stage.

I think that several people have been worried how I would react to this adjustment in my life. As I have thought about this, seven key words have come to mind. They speak of the grace, motivation, and reality I have experienced during this change in roles. They also speak of the continuity with my journey so far.

The first word is quite simply...

Change – I'm a great believer in change. I have been blessed to help to lead many major changes we made in the work over the years. I learned to accept change even when I didn't initially agree - marriage has helped me learn this. At times of change relationships can be challenged. Unity is so important; God's unity is in the midst of great diversity. Unity has a complex price tag that sometimes involves compromise and yielding to the plans and ideas of others.

People - I have as many opportunities to love and serve people now as I did before. I now have more freedom in whom I serve and how I go about it. It may sound strange to some, but even though I was heading up a mission organisation, a lot of my efforts needed to be put into spending very necessary time with other leaders and all kinds of other Christians. Now I am released from those responsibilities I'm actually getting more time with people who do not know Christ. And of course, that is the heart of mission.

Prayer - Almost since my conversion about 50 years ago, this has been one of my greatest passions. I have just as much opportunity for this as ever. In fact, I'm able to find more time to pray, which includes worship and praise as well as intercession.

Preaching - I started to preach at 17 and now almost 20,000 messages later, I still sense God's call to preach and teach. In God's mercy I am flooded with invitations from around the globe. As I write this, I'm on a flight from London to Taiwan to speak at a large student and young peoples' missions conference. Since my role change I have had over 250 meetings and hope to continue in this way as long as I have the voice and the health.

Projects - OM has allowed me to continue with projects (mainly literature and audio visuals) all over the world. I have been given a small field structure and the responsibility, with a small team, of raising all the money for the fund and also coordinating all the projects. It's a huge challenge! I always seem to have 4 times

more work than I can handle. There really is not much time to think about my old leadership role.

Trust - I have a deep trust, which is linked with faith, that the work I have been involved with all these years is God's work and I believe He will continue to have His hand upon it.

Vision - The vision has not changed, only my particular role. The vision for prayer, mobilization, world evangelism, and discipleship remain extremely strong and is a motivating factor each day - I can honestly say almost every hour of every day.

So that's the answer to the question of how I am doing. But this isn't all about me. We all live in times of great change. In closing I pray that those who read this and are going through a transition or change in their own life will lay hold of God's grace in a powerful way. I've always had many weaknesses and struggles in my Christian life and still have much to learn. I figure if a needy character like me can keep running the race in my senior years, then no one has an excuse not to.

Let's keep on keeping on.

George Verwer