

Police Missionary

By Robert Vernon

[Songs, Lord I Lift Your Name On High by Rick Founds (1989), 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus by Louisa Stead (1882), and We Fall Down by Christ Tomlin (1998) are preformed]

Ron:

Let's join together in prayer. Stephanie Warner, the disabilities coordinator, is going to lead us this morning.

Stephanie Warner:

Lord, just thank you so much for this opportunity for all of us to come together. I'm overwhelmed at all of the amount of people in this room who are believers, Lord. It's just so awesome. Lord, I just pray that you will bless Rosalba who's gonna share today with us and Bob Vernon who will be speaking with us today, Lord. Open our hearts and help us to really hear what they are saying, Lord, and bless their message Lord, and bless all of us for being here, in Jesus' name.

Ron:

Amen.

Rosalba is going to share in our ministry moments. Then we're going to have a chance to present Bob Vernon to those of you have who have not yet met him. Rosalba, share with us please.

Vernon: Police Missionary

Rosalba:

Hello?

Ron:

Try it again.

Rosalba:

Hello?

Ron:

Yay.

Rosalba:

Well you know I was here last year, up here I think it was, and I vowed never to do this again. The Lord has an odd sense of humor, because (chuckles) here I am. He asked me to share, just something, this morning and I was thinking about it last night, and I looked over at my wall, and I saw this. And this is a little piece of cardboard that I got in the mail last year, and it's Isaiah 41:13, and it says, "For I am the Lord your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you do not fear for I will help you." And I was going through a really hard time last year, and I hadn't told anyone, and like absolutely no one. And it was just so amazing that God put it in someone's heart to send this to me. And it was like if God was saying to you "Rosalba, don't worry about it. I'm gonna help you." And I guess what I wanted to bring this morning was: it doesn't matter--I don't know what your struggles are this morning; I don't know if you're going

Vernon: Police Missionary

through something. For some of us our struggles so being an international student, for some of us are our struggles our financial, emotional, psychological, for some of us it's even being a student of color; for some of us it's having a disability. Regardless of what your struggles are, the Lord is saying to you "do not fear. I will help you." Thank you.

Ron:

Amen!

[Audience Applause]

If you are among those that might be praying about going on a short term mission anywhere, you need to keep in mind the deadlines. SMU asked if we might nudge you and remind you that the deadline for those going to Haiti is coming up, and you might just go to the SMU office if you find that of particular interest. We hope you do. The short term missions students here, the number is the greatest in the history of the school, and we're very excited with that, and we know that the Lord is blessing, and honoring, and working, and moving, when we have a passion for the things that stir the heart of God.

Speaking of passion, Compassion, their get together, and the concert, and Lou Giglio will be tomorrow night at 8:00 in Sutherland Hall. You might want to come early--we are expecting a great crowd and, I smile as I say it because if part, if half of this crowd showed up there would be no room for any others. But, the Lord knows those things.

Vernon: Police Missionary

Welcome, will you, local Biolans, many parents, friends, sponsors, high schoolers, that are visiting us today from all over the area. Let's welcome them and thank them for coming.

Welcome y'all.

[Audience Applause]

We hope you get a good look and that the Spirit of God guides and directs you, which He will, as you choose wisely your school. It's a major choice. We're a little bit biased, and we think that--well we're just glad you came to look at us.

Bob Vernon could be introduced this morning. It would be very typical in the way things were going down, to introduce him as the chief of police in L.A. But D. L. Moody said "if God calls you to preach the gospel around the world don't stoop to be the king of England." And Bob Vernon, by the grace of God, was not placed in that position so that he can literally affect police forces, military forces, generals, all over the world. I have no idea where he's recently come from. But my guess is that Ukraine or China; he's coming and he's thinking, "why not just let me tell them, Ron." Let's welcome Bob Vernon as he shares the word (laughs).

[Audience Applause]

Robert Vernon:

Is this on? I call Ron the Christian answer to Dick Clark.

[Audience Laughter, Cheering, and Applause]

Vernon: Police Missionary

The eternal teenager. You know, it's good to be back home at Biola. I attended Biola, and those years were some of my best years of preparation. As I look back on all of the very schooling I've had, the various colleges I've attended--Northwestern University, a Master's from Pepperdine, and eventually the National Executive Institute of the FBI--I have to say my most important preparation, Ron, was here at Biola as I said under the tutelage of people like J. Vernon McGee, used to be a professor here. Some of you have heard him on the radio. He's been dead 10 years and he's still preaching (giggles). That tells you a little bit about kind of guy he is. Well, what a great time it was, and I like to think of Biola as the West Point of Christian the Christian world. Here you come, young men and young women, come prepared for the battle. Wherever God calls you, it is a battle.

And you know, I have to tell you, being a cop all my life I get all the latest cop jokes, you know. Just like if you're in a lawyer then, then you get--everybody comes to you with all the lawyer jokes. And I had someone send this to me on the Internet and he claimed it was a true story. Now it's one of those probably urban myths that everyone claims is true and you find out really isn't. But it's a funny story. So I thought I'd tell you anyhow. Seems like a highway patrolman pulled over a guy on the freeway, and as he approached the car, you know, the guy said "yes officer, what seems to be a matter?" He said, "I need to see your driver's license. You were going 85 in a 55." He said, "I don't think so. I might have been, you know, approaching 70. But I mean everybody in the freeway was doing 70. But nowhere near 85." And his wife sitting next to him said, "You were too going 85 and I warned you." The officer turned and looked at her, you know, and the guy looked at her and kind of, you know, give her a sign, and the officer said, "Not only that, but your left turn tail lights out, and I'll have to put that on the ticket as well." He said, "Really? I didn't know about that. I'll put that in the next turnoff where there's a

Vernon: Police Missionary

gas station if you just leave it off a ticket." His wife said, "That's been out for three months, and I told you about it." Guy gave his wife another dirty look, you know, and finally the officer said, "Not only that; the tab on your license plate is three months overdue--your registration--" "Oh, the checks in the mail on that." And his wife said, "It is not, you liar." And he turned to her and he said, "Would you shut up, you dummy." The officer leaned in and said, "Does he talk like that too often ma'am? She said, "No. Only when he's drunk."

[Audience Laughter]

Oh. Oh man was he in trouble. You know, I like to use, I like to use a police story to illustrate the difference between simple intellectual assent, belief, and faith. You know there is a big difference and I like to use this illustration of a bulletproof vest. I'll never forget the first time we had an officer hit with a bulletproof vest. That was, they were just issued, and this was over, maybe, approaching 15 years ago, when we first started wearing them. And they're made out of an interesting material called Kevlar. It's, it's not metal or anything. It actually gives, kind of like a nylon fiber. And one night around 11 o'clock I got a phone, you know a phone call, and, "Chief one of your men has been shot, and we know that you like to be notified of those things." And I said, "Right. Okay I'll be right in. Where is he?" They said, "Well he's at the hospital, California hospital right there on Hope Street, and the incident happened just about six blocks away. So they got him there soon, you know, he may be able to make it." So I said, "Okay, I'll get in my car," and I jumped in my car, and I put on my police radio, you know, and I found out what was going on. "I found out there was the captain at the scene, so they probably didn't need me there. So I quickly went to the hospital see how the officer was doing. As I walked into the room, he

Vernon: Police Missionary

was sitting up on the treatment table. He said, "Hi Chief." I said, "Hi Jim. They told me you were shot in the chest." He said, "Yeah I was," and he was smiling at me, and there was a young officer standing right next to him in uniform. They had his, they had Jim's uniform shirt off, of course, you know. And the young officer, who just got out of the academy, he was like a little kid (rushed), "Let me tell, let me tell." He said, "We went, I went on this side of the hotel, and Jim went on this side the hotel." He was so excited he didn't tell me what was going on. "And the bad guys were back there in the alley. They didn't see me but they saw Jim, and they began shooting a Jim, and the first bullet hit him right there, sir, right in the tie. And down he went, and he said the second bullet hit him in the arm, as you can see right there where they're repairing his arm," and I saw there was a bullet hole in his arm, you know, and they were working on that. And I said, "Yeah, and then what?" He said, "Well I went over and he said--Jim was laying on the ground, and he began giving me messages to his wife because he was dying, you know, and I was going to take them down." He said, "Suddenly noticed there was no blood coming around his shirt there by where he was shot. I could see the hole through the tie, but (stammering) I couldn't see any blood. So I, so I pulled the shirt out of his trousers," and he said, "there was a bullet proof vest, and there was a bullet still embedded in the vest." He said, "Hey, Jim! You got your vest on, man." And he said, "Suddenly Jim got well, and he sat up, and said, "That's right. I've got my vest on."

[Audience Laughter]

Now. Now, we laugh at that, but you know as I said these vests are not made out of steel. They're made out of this Kevlar material, they do give, and the doctors later told us his ribs

probably went in somewhere between three or four inches from the impact of the bullet, and they bruised his ribs, and it caused a lot of pain. So he was hurt. He had a great big old bruise the next day--couldn't believe the size of it--but, but it saved his life that night. But you know what? Bullet proof vests cannot guarantee you that we will not be killed by a bullet because that vest. Because there are certain kind of guns will go right through that vest. AK 47 with a bullet piercing, you know that that kind of a bullet, will go right through the vest. High-powered rifles, 7mm magnum, will go right through the vest. It will protect against most handguns, but it won't keep you free from rifles.

Now, why am I telling you this story? This has a relationship to the Christian life. A lot of people thinks that salvation saves them from tribulation, problems, trials. You know nowhere in the Bible do you find that. In fact, you find to the contrary. John 16:33--just write that down and look it up--and here's what it says, I'm going to quote it to you, I've memorized it. Jesus says these words, and he's talking to his followers, his disciples. He says, "In this world," he didn't use terra, He wasn't talking about the dirt. He's talking about the world system, cosmos. He says, "In this cosmos you have tribulation." He's talking to his disciples. Now a lot of people think, you know they watch TV and they see some of these televangelists: "Yes. The gospel of health, wealth, and prosperity. If you just have enough faith, you'll never have any problems. You'll never get sick. If you're sick, it's a lack of faith." I say to them you better talk to the Apostle Paul about that. He went to God three times, said, "God deliver me from this thorn in the flesh." The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you." He didn't say, "No, you got sin in your life, you don't have enough faith." He said, "My grace is sufficient for you." There was some reason why He wanted that to happen.

And there's another verse I want you to write down and take a look up, and it's found in 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy 3:12. It says, if you're not being persecuted, you better wonder why not because it says, "if you're living a godly life, you will be persecuted." Flat out says that. So, contrary to what a lot of popular opinion seems to think, that salvation and a relationship with the Lord does not spare us from tribulation. I was not spared from tribulation and persecution.

I was the Assistant Chief of LAPD. I was supposed to be the next Chief, and I was kind of, so-called, the papers called me the "heir apparent," you know. I always did well on examinations, so I thought "well, I'll at least do well on the examination, then they have to select between the top three." Well guess what? They decided: "we're not gonna have an examination. We'll just bring people in and just interview them and there won't be any real examination. We'll just decide who we want." And then a group of homosexuals got together and they said, This guy is a Christian, he must be against us," and so they asked me, to talk to me, and so I allowed them to come in and they said, "We went through every one of your tapes out of Grace Community Church, and we went over 20 of them, and we found that about 18 years ago at a men's meeting, when someone asked the question 'are homosexual acts sinful?' you said 'yes.'" I said, "That's right." They said "Well, will you go on TV and repent of that statement?" They used the word "repent." I said, "No I can't do that because I still believe it." (Shocked) "You still believe it! You're a homophobe." I said, "No, wait. Let me clarify something. There's a lot of things that are sin; lying is a sin, adultery is a sin. None of those sins give me the right to go after people and persecute them." I said, "Because I think that homosexuality, that the acts are sinful, doesn't say that I'm going to persecute you or that I am going to give you special attention, go after you. But I can't lie and tell you what I what I believe is, you know, something I don't believe anymore. I still believe that. But I have a lot of officers that work for me that I know were in adulterous

situations and I can't fire them, because the law says you can't, it's off duty you've got to let him on." I said, "Frankly if, if on duty a person of that persuasion is an effective officer, I'm not going to go against the law. I am going to obey the law." But they didn't believe me, they said, "Oh no, this guy's a right-wing, conservative Christian of some kind, and you must be a homophobe," and so they said, "If you won't go on TV and renounce that statement, you will not be the next chief of police here." I said, "Well so be it," and honestly, between you and me, I didn't think they had that much power.

And all of a sudden, man, all their coffers of funds kept going into, to politicians, and politicians begin to turn against me. And all of a sudden, I found that I didn't even have a chance; I wouldn't even be considered to be the next chief, and I thought, "God, well why don't you do something?" And I prayed to God. And they began telling lies about me. They said weird things like, "he begins his staff meetings with prayer. He makes people get down on their knees and pray." While both those statements were partially true, they heard me say on a tape when I go into the staff meeting where there's going to be important issue, I quietly shoot up a prayer to God. I don't close my eyes. I explained it on the on the tape. I said, "I don't want, no one in the room knows I'm praying, but, but I pray because I want God to give me wisdom." But they said, "He starts staff meetings with prayer," well that was an accurate statement, but not the way that-- "he makes officers get on their knees and pray." You say, "Where'd that come from?" Well, as one of the chaplains for the department, I married a lot of people, and one particular group--Ernie Kurtsing, you probably remember him--Jerry, and he came in and he said, "I want a Christian wedding and we're going to have it at the police academy." I said, "Okay." I said, "What do you want as part of your service?" And they laid it all out, and they said, "And we really like that end where, if you don't mind, Barbara I will kneel and you will issue a prayer blessing over our

marriage." I said, "Okay that's fine. It's part of a marriage ceremony." And so that's what they jumped from and said, "He makes officers kneel and pray." One time at a wedding, where they asked to, you know, and I was in an off duty capacity as a chaplain.

But you see, they took these things and they lighted--all of a sudden I was painted as some kind of a weirdo. And to make a long story short, I was not only put out of the LAPD, but my whole career in law enforcement was turned away. Because the Times gets reprinted, you know, because they go on cable and whatever in wire, and they go all over the United States, and all of a sudden I found out that, although I had been sought to be the Chief of Police for the last several years in many cities, now--although I applied to eight different cities--they all said no. And when I finally called one judge and said, "Would you ask the city manager why," you know what he told me? He said, "Well, you got baggage." I said, "Yeah, but all those accusations have been unfounded. In fact, there's a statement in the Times where they said he's been exonerated from all those charges." They said, "Well yeah, but all the other stories were on front page, you know, and your picture and all that, and that was way in the back somewhere." I said, "Yeah it was on page 18. I got a copy of it," and it didn't even have my name in it. All it had was the charges against, you know were, he was exonerated. But it had did not have my name in the in the headline. And so you know, God did not answer my prayer to vindicate me, publicly. And I wondered why: "God, I know you love me. You sent Jesus to die for me." I never lost my faith but I'll be honest with you, I lost a lot of hope. I didn't know why God was doing this. You know why did He set me up, seemingly, through all these years to bring me right up to that position and then (snaps) cut it off, and then only cut it off for the possibility of being the chief there, but cut it off from being a chief anywhere. (Pause) And I became depressed.

You know what it is to have a dream die? Do you know where it is to lose your reputation? I didn't know what it meant when it said in Proverbs, you know, "A man's name is more important than gold and silver, ye precious stones." I didn't fully understand until this happened. There's a lot of deep depression. And I began coming to the Lord in prayer and asking God, "lead me," and I'll cut through a lot of this now to the quick, as they say, and tell you that a few years, passed just a couple years, and suddenly--through a search for some of my roots over in Eastern Europe where my mother came from in the Czech Republic--I became introduced to the head of all the Czech Police, and he asked me if I would help them make a transition to a more democratic model of policing. And I came up with a three day course called Ethics in Leadership. The Christian Ethic, we call it. And they allowed me to begin there in the Czech Republic, and then the Hungarians heard about it and we went there, and then the Albanians, and then Russians said "What are you doing in our previous satellites? We want you to come to the College of Generals in Moscow." I've been there now four times. In fact I was there again this summer.

This, this year, this season between June and September, I went with teams first of all to Lithuania, then to Russia, then to Kenya, then to Uganda, then to Peru, then to Argentina, then Venezuela, then to Romania, then to Hungary. Just, you know, between June and September, and you say, "What do you do there?" We present this seminar, and you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give you a little sample. What time does that say right there, Ron? That's 10. I got 10 minutes. I'm going to give them a real quick kind of a sample of some of the stuff we do and how we are able, then, to bring in the gospel because of what we do. We can have the lights down. In front of at least. And let's see how this thing works. I know how these work.

Yeah. One of the things we do is we define leadership to them, and you know how they think you lead? They think you lead by intimidation and terror. They think you lead that, well, you either do what we tell you to do, or we're gonna send you to Siberia, or we're gonna kill your children in front of you, and they say, "How in the world do you lead without having to do that?" We say, "Well first of all, a leader has to clearly understand and articulate the goal, where they want the people to go. You have to be able to do that." That's real basic. Some of you say, "Well that's pretty basic," but you know what? That's a biblical principle. The Apostle Paul was like that. He had goals he talked about. He says, "I'm going to go out, and I'm going to go on this next missionary journey, and the purpose of this missionary journey is to collect an offering for the Saints back in Jerusalem. And I'll be back by Pentecost," even put a timeframe on.

Secondly, the confidence to be out in front and show the way to the goal. The Apostle Paul said, "You follow me. Watch me, I'm following Jesus. So you watch me, and watch how I behave, and then you follow me." Can you say that? Can you say that to others, to look at you and then follow you? That's a true leader. That's why the Apostle Paul was allowed to write most of the New Testament. He followed Jesus so accurately that he could say to others, "Watch how I act and behave. Jesus is not here right now. So watch me because I'm following Him."

Thirdly, the ability to convince people to follow as an act of their free choice. This is how God takes us. No one has to become a child of God. The Bible says, "Behold I stand at the door of your heart and I knock. If anyone will open the door. I will come in and sup with him and he with me." He doesn't say like a cop, "Behold I stand at the door knock. It's the police, and if you don't open up," boom, we're kicking it in. Jesus won't do that. He only comes to those who open the door. That's the kind of leadership He gives us. That's the kind of leadership we should be. And they say, "Well how do you do that?" We say, "Well look at the fourth bullet."

The desire to help people develop and pursue excellence. You know when people that you're trying to lead really sense that you sincerely want to help them reach your full potential, they're going to get excited about following you because you're going to help them. You're going to mentor them.

Look at number five. The ability to inspire people to achieve their full potential. Big difference between inspiration and motivation. Motivate: the carrot or the stick; reward punishment. Inspiration: from the heart. You convince them in their heart of hearts that this is the right way to go, and they get inspired. And guess what the big difference is? When you motivate someone, the boss has to stay around them in order for them to continue to behave like that. When you inspire someone you can go away and they're still going to act in that way because it comes from their own heart.

Then one of the things we do is we quickly go through some literature. I am only give you one example. It's a simple one. We go through some classic literature. This is a book by Josephus Larned. That's why we say "Larned on leadership." And he says, you know, "you need three basic things to be a leader. You need be greatly endowed. You have to have good basic intelligence, and the ability to articulate, and to speak. You have to have certain skills." I'm not going to spend a lot of time here because, frankly all of you in this room qualify here. You wouldn't be at the University; you've been selected to attend a university. You've got some basic skills, okay? Number two: great opportunities. You can have great skills, and if no one ever gives you the opportunity to lead, you're never gonna emerge as a leader. But guess what? We all have opportunities. Some people say, "Oh no. Only certain people get the opportunity to lead." No, no, no, no. Mr. Larned it makes a good point in his book. He says every single person in the

Vernon: Police Missionary

world has great opportunities, and I'm gonna make a statement. Everybody in this gym is gonna have a great opportunity within the next six months. Maybe two or three.

You know the difference between the leaders and the, and the common people? Leaders, number one, recognize opportunities for what they are, "There's an opportunity!" And number two they have the courage to jump through that window that opens: here's a window of opportunity, (whew noise) I'm going through it. You know what, in the Bible in 1 Corinthians 16, the apostle Paul in sending a letter back to the, to the Corinthians, said this, "there is a great door of opportunity before us. And there are many adversaries." It's really interesting that in the Bible you often see opportunity linked up with adversity or problems.

I learned something in China. I've been to now, communist China, in Beijing, three times to deal with their leaders. Not only the police, but they had me speak to the 31 provincial province leaders of the Communist Party: the top Communist Party people, and I was able to share with them principles from the Word of God. Can you believe that? It's--and they said, "You know the most important part of your seminar is when you got down to those 10 ancient principles you got from the Hebrews." They were talking about the Ten Commandments, you know, we call these ten ancient principles because we know they like ancient principles. And they love the Ten Commandments, they just thought, "These are fantastic! Where'd you get these?" "Well, from an ancient document." They said, "Which one is it? We'd like to have it reprinted here," and we said, "the Bible." They said, "oh yes, we heard about the Bible. Yes, okay, yeah."

[Audience Laughter]

And they gave us permission on the next time we came to hand out Bibles, and believe it or not, there's a great opportunity in China right now. They're allowing people to print Bibles, as long as you print them in China. They don't like you to bring them in from outside. They want to give business to the local people, right? I don't fault them for that. That's no problem. So fine, let's pay a little money here, or actually they'll do it cheaper there than over here. And so you can literally give out hundreds of thousands of Bibles in a real good way. So, you know what? You have to say this and I learned something from the people of China. They said, "you know there is a word that is called crises, and in the Chinese language we put two characters together, and we say to those two characters that forms the idea of crisis." Guess what the two characters are? One character represents danger, and the other represents opportunity or hazard an opportunity, danger or hazard an opportunity. When you put those together, you've got a crisis. Are any of you facing any crisis in your life? Have you ever faced a crisis? Guess what: somewhere there's an opportunity in that crisis; an opportunity to lead. If you just ask God to give you the wisdom to see it.

Now, we go on and we do some other things with them that I won't take the time to do, except one more thing, and then we'll begin to wind this up. We go through a little exercise. We have them write down on a piece of paper, in this seminar--and by the way everything is in their language and it's on PowerPoint, so it's animated and all that, so you know it's coming in--and we say, "we want you to write down," and before we show them this this particular presentation here, we say, "We want you to write down the behaviors you like to see in people you enjoy following." And they write down some things, you know, and then we begin bringing in the bullets on the PowerPoint that you see here, and there, you kind of hear a gasp almost, because guess what? Wherever we go: whether it's Russia, Mongolia, Peru, Kenya, or here in America,

it's the same behaviors that people like to see. And we say, "Oh these are the behaviors that you'd like to see in a leader you enjoy following: they're decisive, they listen to your ideas--may not always give you what you want, but at least they're good listeners. They keep their promises to you. They're consistent, they have good judgment, most of the time they're right; and we go down this list with them, and then we ask this question: "Now be honest with us, how many people have you been under as a leader that has behaved like this consistently?" If you've all been under 10, put both fingers up like this all ten, you know if it's nine... Okay, and if three, okay, and if one, like this, if none just put up a zero." And guess what? Most of us go (pause) big zero.

We say, "Wait a minute. Everybody agrees, we made this slide before we came here and it agrees with what you just wrote down. There is agreement on this. And yet you're telling us no one behaves like this, wonder why?" They're scratching their heads, "Well we don't know why, but you're right we agree. These are the behaviors, but man, we don't see much of it." And we say, "Well you notice we put a house here? That house represents these behaviors: you can see the house, you can see the behaviors; you can see when someone makes a decision, you can see when they're a good listener. Why would a house fall down? If it doesn't have a good foundation. And that leads us into our discussion of Christian ethics.

Every one of these based on a biblical principle. Integrity, courage, discipline, humility, loyalty, conviction, diligence, and optimism. Can I have the lights up again, now? And so, then we get into these ethics, as we get near the end of the session--which in foreign cases takes about two and a half days. In the case in the United States we can do this in one day, as we go through these eight ethics. And we get near the end of the presentation we say, "Now did you see any problem with this? Are you agreeing that these ethics are attached to these behaviors that you all

Vernon: Police Missionary

said you'd love to see and people like who lead?" And they said, "Yeah we do see a connection." "Are there any problems?" "Yeah, it's, it's, it's hard to live a life of integrity. It's hard to have loyalty as one of your virtues. It's hard to be disciplined. It's hard to to have humility." We say, "No, no, no, you're wrong. It's not hard. It's impossible." And they look at us, "Why have you wasted our time here in a seminar?" We say, "Well it's impossible, but we found that there is one way, and that is if you have the presence of God in your life. And so, we're going to have an optional seminar now and we're going to dismiss everyone. Everyone must leave the room, even those that want to stay for the optional seminar, and only those of you who want to hear about a relationship with God--we're not going to promote a church, but we will talk about our relationship with God through His Son, Jesus. If that's gonna offend you, please don't come back in the room." Guess what? In most cases they all come back to the room.

Here in the United States, we get a few that won't come. You know, like 85 percent stay. That's about the lowest percentage we get--90 to 95 percent usually stay in foreign countries. They all stay, in fact, in Russia. The General got up and said (Russian accent), "You may all leave the room, but you must all come back. It is an order."

[Audience Laughter]

College of Generals, they all came back in, you know. In the Chinese situation they said (Chinese accent), "don't even have an option, just go ahead." And we're able to do this. It's amazing. And then, here is the incredible part: consistently, the minimum number of those who respond favorably to the gospel and say, "Yes this is what I want," the minimum percentage is 40

percent. It ranges from 40 percent to 92 percent. That's the statistics we've had from June to September this this year in these various countries.

I'm going to tell you one story in closing. It's a wonderful story. It's a true story. It was in Lithuania. It was our first seminar for this season. We had just finished with the basic eight ethics and we were going to transition into the Ten Commandments. And I said, "Are there any absolutes?" And they all said, "No. Everything is relative." We were talking through interpreters, you know, I don't speak Lithuanian. But they had, you know all the seminar was in Lithuanian. And I said, "Then you're saying there are no absolutes. Are you sure of that?" They said, "We're sure, there are no absolutes." And I said, "Well now, we know there is at least one absolute, and that's there, there are no absolutes." I mean if that's an absolute statement, and they kind of look like, "Whoa, he tricked us," and I said, "Now, do any of you have any children?" And one man that was in about the second row about, he raised his hand, he said, "Yes." I said, "Well, what is, how many children have?" "Well we have two. Our youngest is our daughter, she is a nine or ten years. I think she's turning ten years old this month." I said, "Okay, suppose someone breaks in your house ties you and your wife up at gunpoint, and then attacks your daughter, and then slits her throat and kills your daughter in front of you. What if she is saying, 'Father please help me,'" and you can see he was getting angry at me even suggesting that, and you can see the other people saying, "This is very rude for this instructor to even say something like this." I said, "Now sir, may I ask you this question: under any circumstances could that be considered right or moral?" And he said, "No!" Very loud, and all the rest of the people joined in, and some of them even stood up: "No!" And they're pointing at me. I said, "Now we've established there are at least two absolutes. I wonder if there are any more out there." And they kind of--now they had a question mark and they begin talking to one and another, and they got into an argument, and it

Vernon: Police Missionary

was kind of heated, and they were shouting, and they were, you know. And the translator turned to me, and it was a female transfer, she said, "Should I stop them?" I said, "No. This is fun. Let them go."

[Audience Laughter]

And they argued, they argued, and when they got through, you know I let them go for it seemed like 10 minutes, probably only three or four. I finally said, "Okay Jurgita, stop it." And she said, "So you're gonna to stop them from arguing?" And I said, "No. What were they thinking about?" She said, "Well now they agree there are absolutes out there. They are now just arguing how many."

[Audience Laughter]

And I said, "Now is a good time for us to consider these 10 ancient principles we got from the Hebrews." And I went through the Ten Commandments and when we got through, the man who had the daughter had both hands in his face like this, and he seemed to be agonizing, and he looked up at me, and I could see his eyes were red, wasn't crying yet but he, his eyes were all red, and he raised his hand. I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Sir. Do you have any hope for someone who has lived his whole life wrong? Is there any way I could start all over? Is there any hope for me? Is there any way to have a new beginning?" And you know what? I had just been praying, "Lord give me a segway into the Gospel." And to be able to introduce our optional seminar, and when he asked that question and it was interpreted to me, I said, before I answered

it, I said, "Thank you, Lord." And then I announced, I said, "Yes I do have an answer, but we must have it as an optional seminar. And I will tell you how personal relationship with God can give you a new beginning, a new start, a fresh life, and the power to live His way. Now you must all leave the room," and they did and, "you must stay out five minutes," and I can see them out there watching their watches, and they all came back in, and we presented the gospel. And this man along, with about 70 percent of the rest of them, check their cards "Yes, we want this relationship," and I sent them the literature, and I got letters back, and one of the letters was from this man, and he said, he gave me the date. He said, "After reading your literature, after thinking about what you said, after meditation on," he said, "on August 11th, a very important day I became a new man. I began a new life. I received Jesus as my savior. I'm a follower of Jesus."

(Pause) God closed the doors to a city, but he opened the doors to the world. Yes there was persecution. Yes there was pain. Yes I was depressed. But I don't know if I can really put it in words how excited I am now, how thankful I am that God shut the doors to L.A.. How grateful I am that I'm able to talk with members of parliament, not just police departments. In Uganda, we got through the police and military, and they said, "Can you speak to the parliament?" "Yes." "We will get them here tomorrow." They were there. The Parliament heard it. "Can we bring in the mayors of the cities [inaudible]?" We said, "Yes." "We'll have to put out the word tonight, some of them who have to drive all night on these rough roads." The next morning we had to go from one small room in the Uganda [inaudible] Sheridan, and we had to go into the grand ballroom. There were over 250 people who heard the Gospel, and once again somewhere between 70 and 80 percent responded, "Yes, this is what we want." Guess what folks? These are leaders; people that have the power to change nations.

(Pause) Does God have plans for you? He sure does. He has a plan for each life here. He wants you to be a warrior for the cause of Christ. He may not want you to be a minister of the gospel in the classic sense. He may want you to go into a profession, like me. He may want to mold you and make you for a mission that He has, or He could use your business. But never lose sight of this: wherever God leads you, be an evangelist. One on one, or with princes of cities like I am. Wherever God leads you that is powerful. God has a specific place for you to fit into. He wants to use you. The only thing that requires is for you to be willing and clean. You say, "Are you telling us you never sin?" No I sin, but I confess. I repent and I confess. No one here is perfect. We're all sinners. We must begin by knowing Jesus as our savior. In a crowd this large, there's got to be a few of you who don't personally have that relationship, as I've talked about. You've got the belief in the bulletproof vest, but you've never put it on. You need to do that. Those of you who are Christians need to be willing and you need to be fessed up. Need to keep short books with God. Need to be clean. And as you have Him in your life, and a clean heart, and a willing spirit, I'm here to look you in the eye and say God will mightily use you.

Let's pray. Father. I'm so grateful that you've led me on this sometimes perilous path. But a wonderful path. Thank you Lord, for being so gracious to a sinner like me. Now I pray for all my brothers and sisters in this room. These who are preparing to serve you in a variety of capacities. Who are your training school? These who are looking for what do you have them to do, and Lord I know you will lead them. Just first of all bring them into your family. Then Lord, cleanse them daily and make them willing. In Jesus name, amen.