

After two years of planning and anticipation, I am finally here! At the same time, I am as dependent on the Lord as ever.

How did I get here? – The Story of God's Leading

Although I had been hoping to join the Operation Mobilization (OM) Logos II ship for a short-term mission trip later that year, I had all but given up hope. It was January 2004, and from my vantage point in Toronto, it seemed that God had closed every door.

Rewind to Zambia, 1998. I was 18, and my missionary dad suggested I look into becoming the “gopher,” or traveling assistant, of George Verwer, founder of OM. I had heard a lot about George Verwer. Indeed, my father's admiration of this missions leader, someone he had worked with in India in the 60's, had rubbed off on me. But I was not interested in becoming someone's lackey; no, I was headed for university and the business world.

What is OM? Operation Mobilization is an international, interdenominational evangelical mission agency. It is dedicated to motivating, developing, and equipping people for world evangelism, and to help plant churches, especially among the unreached in the Middle East, South and Central Asia, and Europe.

Back to 2004. Amidst the other missions magazines at the back of the auditorium at Leaside Bible Chapel (my home church) I spotted the latest edition of OM Canada's periodical. Opening it up, I noticed at the center the profile of a young man who was currently serving aboard the Logos II. When I got home I sent him an email. He wrote back, connecting me with the ship's personnel manager. Three months later I was on the ship. God wanted me there after all.

I was on the ship for four months – living and serving with people from all over the world, trying to avoid sea-sickness, providing customer service in Spanish... It was a time I will never forget.

When I returned to Canada I felt the Lord nudging me to reconsider my dad's suggestion of several years prior—to be George Verwer's gopher. I asked friends what they thought. Many pointed out that besides being used of Christ by serving George and contributing to his ministry, I could learn a lot from him as well.

In the Fall of 2004, George agreed to interview me – at MissionsFest in Montreal. I went, and after a stimulating interview, George tentatively approved me for the year 2006/2007.

For the one-and-a-half-year interim, the Lord soon provided me with a “dream job.” Partnering with an entrepreneur I had met on the ship, I co-founded “Bookling,” an online book business, in January 2005.

After seeking the Lord in prayer and through the godly counsel of my elders, parents and others, I have committed to being George Verwer's “Gopher 2006/2007.” I have completed the OM application process and spent four weeks in orientation and preparation. Having been officially commended by Leaside Bible Chapel, I am set to fly to **London, UK**, where I'll be based, in early August. Others are stepping in to take over my responsibilities at Leaside; and the business (Bookling) will continue in my absence.



Aboard the Logos II in Barahona, Dominican Republic, with my Spanish-speaking “little brother” Feliz

Who is George Verwer, and what will I do as his “gopher”?

George Verwer stepped down as the International Director of OM in 2003 but, as they say, he will always be the founder. As such, he is an in-demand missions speaker. George typically speaks 300 times a year in about 25 countries—mobilizing people for missions, distributing literature, teaching, motivating, encouraging, and exhorting believers to action for the advancement of the Kingdom.

People are people and nothing more. God is God and nothing less.

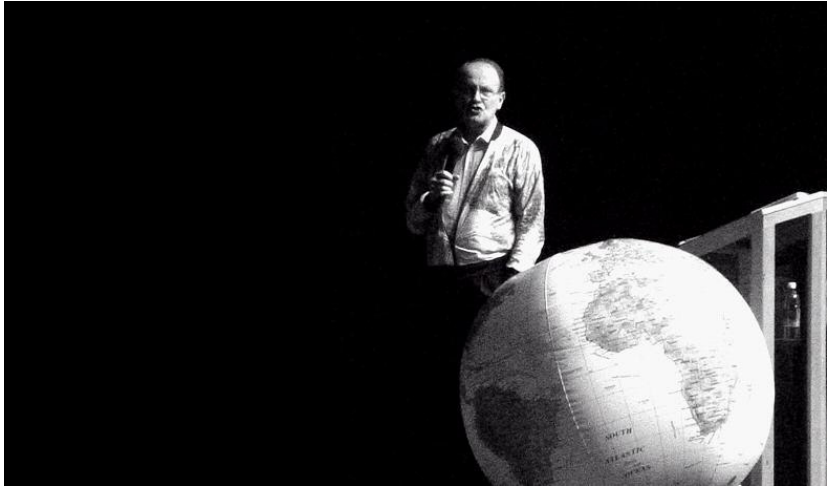
George Verwer is also the Director of **OM Special Projects** (the division of OM that I will also be part of), which seeks to meet pressing international needs by providing resources such as Bibles and literature. A key phrase for Special Projects is “holistic ministry.” This includes advocating for abused women and impoverished children around the world, and battling the spread of AIDS (one of George's chief burdens).

Among other things, George is also the Director of an association called the *Missions Mobilization Network*, and a regular *Urbana* conference speaker. As George's traveling helper, my responsibilities will include:

- Managing the **book table** (George won't speak anywhere unless he can give away books at the back), directing those who respond to George's missions-related challenges, **driving**, helping with **email** correspondence, assisting George's secretary, etc.

In this role, I will:

- Be a **servant** to another of the Lord's servants, **learning** from an older Christian whose interests uniquely line up with my own; **meet** many new Christian workers, business men, and leaders around the world; **see first-hand** some of the World's most **pressing needs**; and be equipped to move forward with a **broader perspective** from which to serve the Lord in my own life



"I am really excited about Nigel working for the next OM year which begins in August. I have interviewed him and believe he is ideal for the job. I hope he can find the needed support." – George Verwer, June 2006

What can you do?

I want to ask you to **pray**. Please add me to your prayer list and, if you put my photo **prayer card** on your fridge, remember me before the Lord each time you see it. Meanwhile, I will be praying for you. Please

fill out the **prayer response slip** (below) to help me do this, indicating if you would like to receive my **monthly prayer email**.

Also, please **keep in touch**. In my experience, full-time Christians and missionaries are no less susceptible to discouragement and loneliness than others. So I will covet your emails, letters, and phone calls.

Some of you have asked about giving financially. Because I will be doing so much traveling and flying, my expenses will be quite high. OM has set my **support** level at

CDN\$1980/month, and they ask that my first two months' support be in before I go in early August. For those who would like to give financially, please make any cheques payable to "OM Canada", with "for the support of Nigel Barham" on the memo line. Any support gifts can be given to me (e.g., with your "prayer response slip") or sent directly to the OM Canada address on my prayer card.

As well as my monthly prayer email, I intend to update my **prayer blog** at least once/week—with thoughts, updates and reports, photos, challenges, information on other ministries, and more. The address is www.nigelbarham.com. My blog will also include my up-to-date contact information (e.g., mailing address, phone numbers) and **itinerary**. Please visit my blog from time to time, and be encouraged.

God's Story is happening; what an honour to be part of it!

"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"— Romans 10:14-15a

Prayer Response Slip

Please return this form by July 5 to: Nigel Barham • 162 Glebeholme Blvd, Toronto, Ontario M4J 1S6, Canada

Name(s): _____

Will you pray for Nigel as he serves with Operation Mobilization? _____ Would you like to receive Nigel's email prayer updates? _____ If so, email(s): _____

Birthday(s) ☺: _____ Telephone number(s): _____

Mailing address: _____

Prayer requests (long-term): _____

Additional note: _____ (please include a photo if you have one)