

# Missions Conference Opening 2001

## By Viv Gregg

Worship Leader:

...Motivated by the need and missions, lord, we want to be motivated most of all by the fact that you are so worthy of proclamation, lord, we're not just here because it's the right thing to do, we're here because you are the best thing, Lord, you are the. Best thing. And we worship and adore. You, Lord, we do. And Lord, we long to be more like you. We long for you to. Lord. Lord. We choose to open our eyes. Lord. To Your presence within us. Lord. To open our ears. Lord. To Your spirit. Lord. So that anything that would impede us becoming more and more like Jesus. Lord. That. Lord. It could be removed so that. Lord. A wave of missions. Lord. That could go out and complete the great commission would begin to move. Lord. In this day and age. Lord. And Lord. We know that we don't have to beg you for that. God. Lord, it is the ache of your heart to be rejoined to your bride, Lord, it's probably us that need the convincing. So, Lord, here we are this morning, Lord Jesus, as we draw near to You, Lord, whether it be through songs or through Your word or through simply sharing some food together or a bit of testimony, just as we laugh together, Lord, we just say that this is for you and about you.

[Worship song starts]

You are holy, you are mercy. You are wonder, you are loved, you are faithful, you are gracious, you are lovely. You are God. You are holy mercy, you are loving. I open my eyes so I see Your lovely. I open my life so I know you're holy, but you are holy, you are mercy. Who could stand

against us? Surely you are, you won't. Your name is like your spirits, like water to my soul. Your word is the last to my feet. Oh, Jesus. I love you. I love you. Oh, Jesus. I love you.

Here are our lives, Lord, you are worthy of. We lift our lives to You, Lord, to not just be used, Lord, but to be transformed so that we're able to be used in a way that glorifies you. That, Lord, doesn't just bring about a few comments, but, Lord, brings about a revolutionary people movement of Christianity. Again, it is not marked, Lord, by churches and buildings, Lord, as much as it is marked by the church of the people of God who look like Jesus that sweeps the nations, Lord, and the only thing that it can be attributed to is to Jesus. No movement, no speaker, no band, no thing, but you, Jesus, Lord. That is a dream that we would lay our lives now for again and again. So be glorified Jesus, you are worthy, amen.

Announcer:

Our next speaker is coming all the way from New Zealand. He's an engineer who has spent eight years among the urban poor of Manila and nine years among the urban poor of Calcutta. He is someone who truly deserves to speak about the urban poor. He has lived in complete poverty himself and he is now the leader of the urban foundation. He goes around and travels all over the country and speaks with the leaders of the country and rises up indigenous people to set up mission groups around the world. So, I'd like to warmly welcome Viv Gregg [audio cuts out briefly]

Gregg:

...Seek revival. Some of you seek the depth of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And I would ask you to follow that Jesus who in John Twelve and verse 26 24 to 26 gave you a pathway into the knowledge of God. I tell you the truth. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. And some of you are lonely. Some of you are lonely. In the midst of the crowd you're lonely. And it says you'll be lonely. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. And some of you want your lives to be fruitful and productive. And here is the key to be a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me. That's interesting. Whoever serves me must follow me not in front, but behind the prince who became a pauper, behind the Son of God who left heaven and became a babe in a manger. Whoever serves me must follow me. Follow the man in the dusty sandals.

And where I am, there my servant will be also. And today I would call you to follow him into the darkest places on earth. For in the places of the greatest injustice, the God of justice dwells. In the places of greatest need, the God of mercy is compelled to go. And if he is there, then surely, we should follow him there. And in the following, my Father will honor the One who serves me. And this is my testimony and the testimony of a band and bands of brothers and sisters across the face of the earth who continue to multiply in the slums of the cities. And I bring you their greetings. It was Christmas in Calcutta a few years ago. I was in a little room, about 6ft by 6ft, maybe a bit bigger, 10ft by 10ft. A family lived in that room. And we were celebrating Christmas and I brought some beautiful lights, Christmas lights. And the family were very happy. And we began to read the Christmas story together and then to sing the Christmas carols. And the

neighbors came. This Christian family was in the midst of a whole Hindu community. And so, as they came, we told them the story of Christmas and we preached and we sang.

And after that we began to eat. And I asked the old the neighbors came. This Christian family was in the midst of a whole Hindu community. And so, as they came, we told them the story of Christmas and we preached and we sang. And after that, we began to eat. And I asked the old man he was 76 and one lung was completely destroyed with tuberculosis. I asked him, how did you come to know God? And he told me a strange story. He said before, I used to be an Air Force pilot. Before I became poor, I had a crash and lost everything. Now I live in the slum. And while I was a pilot, I took my family up the mountains one day for a hike and a mist came and we got trapped in the mountain. And I was climbing up the cliff with my daughter in my arms. She's here now. She's 18. But then she was one years old. And I couldn't move upwards and I couldn't move downwards. And I didn't know what to do. And suddenly in the mist, there was a big shepherd with a staff beside me.

And he took my foot and he put it on the next step and the next and the next. And we got to the top of the mountain and could go down a road on the other side. And when I got to the top, I reached into my pocket to pay him for his help. And when I looked up, the shepherd was gone. And I asked my wife, did she see the shepherd? She said, yes. He just disappeared. He said, from that time, I have known the shepherd. You see, God had reached down into that slum in Calcutta and manifested himself. But no man had walked into that slum. No woman had walked into that slum to explain to this old man who the shepherd was. And among the 6 million people living in the slums of Calcutta at that time there was one church for the poor of Calcutta and Jesus while

he walked and people like Mother Teresa and others there was no man in that slum and the surrounding slums and the slums and the slums beyond that who could speak of that Jesus until the people of our Lord. For five years, I walked through those slums seeking entrance into that city.

It was a closed access city. You could not get in. God gave us entrance. For four years, we prayed for a breakthrough. God gave us a breakthrough. And the churches began to form. And it was quite simple how that happened. I had a friend who at university had come to Christ and he owned a forest in New Zealand. And he sold his forest and went to live in the busties of Calcutta. And this rich man, who became a poor man, every day he would visit the busties and he'd say, My name is Paul. I've come to learn Bengali. And he'd say this in Bengali. This is the phrase I'm learning today. Can you help me? And then he gets them to read the scriptures with him and teach him the Bengali scriptures. And one man became his helper. And then came the Puja time, the time of the worship of Khali, a great festival. And the people in the bustie came to his friend and said, give us money for the Puja, for the worship of Kali, the goddess of Kolkata, the goddess of death and destruction. And he said, Look, I'm sorry I cannot I have been reading this holy book.

And of this holy book, it says, you are to have only one God. I cannot. And he fled. And he fled to Paul's house, and he hid under the bed, and the people came to fetch him. And Paul sent them away protecting the man. And that night, a train smashed into this bustie for it's a bustie on a train track. And a train was derailed. And that night, two houses burst into flame. And the people said, this is because Kali is upset and the demons are upset, and I believe them. The next day,

Paul was praying, and the Lord spoke to him to take a basket of flowers and some fruit and to go to the family of those houses that caught on fire. Two children had been killed, and he did. And he took the fruit and the flowers. And I've asked the people in the bustie, and they told me afterwards, it was as if God walked in to the bustie that day, for on this man was the presence of God himself. And he took the flowers and the fruit, and he embraced the people, and they wept together. And that night, a message came to Paul send Calipoto back.

He can start a kindergarten, which is what he wanted to do. He can use the temple of Kali in this bustie. We know he won't worship Kali. We will put a cloth over the idols when he's having the kindergarten. And this is how the first church in the busties of Calcutta began. A man, a woman following a master. And I'd ask you to follow the same master. He's not very middle class. I'm not sure he sings the same music, though it's great music. I loved it. He's not very genteel, but he's your master. In Luke four and verse 18, it says he says it speaks of his mission when it says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach. Oh, that's good Biola the stuff, isn't it? To preach that part you love. To preach good news. That's right. To whom? To the poor. To the poor. To set up liberty, the captives to release the oppressed. To declare the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of jubilee, the year of justice, the year when slaves are set free and debts are canceled. To this Jesus is called are you in Christ?

Are you in Christ? You're not quite sure. Are you in Christ? Certainly, those without shoes are. If you're in Christ and that's his mission, that's your mission. You don't need any call to the poor. You're called into Jesus Christ. He's called to the poor. It's that simple. You do need a call to the rich. Jesus says that's a very hard call. But to the poor, you don't need any call at all. You just

need to follow Jesus. So, bring your greetings for me it began as a student asking God. It began in a poor woman's home. There was one squatter area in Manila. We'd planted one church, and then I asked them to ordain me. And so, the poor, brothers and sisters, ordained me as a servant to go to an area that we'd never been able to penetrate. And I went there and lived for three months and preached. And they threw rocks at us as we preached. And in the Philippines, this doesn't happen. People are very receptive to the Gospel. But this community loved gambling and drunkenness. And there was a woman in that community. And one day I heard feet pattering through the community, kuya Viv, which means Brother Viv, brother Viv, come quickly.

And so, I climbed down from my second story shack, plywood shack, and they said, Aleen Naner is selling her baby. Come quickly. And so, I went to her house and it was quite dark. And I went inside and she was there sitting with a baby in her house. And I sat down and just sat there for a while. I said, can I hold your baby? And she looked at me and she gave me the baby. I said to her, don't sell your baby. Here's 600 pesos. You take this and you use it for the cost of a baby. In Manila 600 pesos is about \$20. And we sat and we talked and we talked long. And she talked about her daughter a prostitute, 14 years old, beautiful girl, and her molestation the night before. And her son, a drug addict, and her husband murdered with a bullet. I noticed she had some plants along her window and I began to talk about it. And she says I'm an Ague Lario, which is a combination of a witch and a health, a healer with medicinal plants. And I talked to her about Jesus, that Jesus and his father.

And his father gave Jesus away. And I said, just as I've bought your baby and now I give it back. The Father gave you his son. You follow him. Let's help you develop the herbal plants. Leave

your witchcraft and follow Jesus. And she did. And she was one of the first in that community to turn. You see, the God of Mercy has to dwell amongst the poor for the Gospel of Mercy to be heard. And nobody else believed in that community until one day, President Marcus's son-in-law sent in the bulldozers to bulldoze down this community on his land. And the squatters stood in front of their houses whatever concrete they could, they put in front of their houses. They had no defenses. And along with the bulldozers came the marines with submachine guns. And one of the girls in the community began to taunt I'm not sure I can pronounce that in American. Taunts. You can hear me. To taunt the marines. And one of the Marines opened fire, and I can still see the blood and the cries of the poor. Reach up to the Lord of hosts. And the Lord of hosts, he looks down and he hears those cries day and night, day and night, day and night.

The 3 million of Calcutta, the 6 million of Calcutta, the 3 million of Manila. And I could go on city after city after city, the millions who cry out to the Lord in the oppression of poverty. And the Christians from our first church came and stood with the believers, with these people. As their houses were bulldozed down, they picked up the plywood, put it in the trucks, and sat on the top of the trucks and relocated with these squatters, these slum dwellers, and rebuilt their houses. And as they rebuilt that week, a church was formed among these hard, hard, hard hearted people because God was dwelling among the poor. There is no proclamation without incarnation. Jesus could say, blessed are you poor. For he was one of those poor. Blessed are you meek, those of you who are part of God's suffering people, for he was one with those people. To this he calls you. He calls you to follow. A gambling lady was the owner of my house. She was one of the first to turn. The question was, what would she have to do if she became a Christian? And the answer was, Leave your gambling. So, she did.



But what do you do if you're a gambler and you have no income? She became an evangelist throughout the community, the churches began to multiply across Manila. Today, there are over 500 churches in the slums in Calcutta today now there are multiplying house churches in the slums. But there are 1700 cities around the world where there is no movement among the poor. For there is no person to walk among the poor to begin to speak of Jesus. Nobody to dwell there and let the Spirit of God begin to touch hearts. Which city would you like to take of these cities? From Japan to Mauritania, there's a whole wave of cities across North Africa. I wandered up the river from one slum where I was living and began to preach. I'd go in and ask, is there any righteous person here? Anybody that prays? Perhaps some Catholic charismatics? Because that was a new wave then, no, there's nobody here like that. Try the next community. And in half of these communities, there was no man or woman of peace. But in some, I would find a believer. And then we'd preach. And as we'd preach, the demons would cry out we'd command them to be silent so that we could preach this word of God, which is the power of God.

Then we'd set them free. And as they are set free, other signs and wonders would follow and the churches would be formed. To this, Jesus calls you to preach, to teach, to heal and deliver, study your scriptures. Those four go together and all of it focused towards the poor. Towards the poor. I went back to my home country, sick, under tremendous spiritual attack. And God spoke to call the churches of New Zealand to the fore. So, I did. And the passage that's been preached in John 17, a band of brothers and sisters came and dwelt in the slums of Manila and Bangkok and Calcutta and Phnom Penh. And these small teams of six to twelve believers meet each week for worship and weep together with the pain of the lifestyle and then go back into their slum

communities, back among the prostitutes, back setting free the slaves administer and then come back, and the Spirit of God again refreshes them. And then they go back out again. And then into Brazil. I saw a great mission thrust. So, I called that mission thrust. And out of that have come hundreds working with the poor. And in the States the same.

And so, workers have multiplied, team after team after team, working among the poor. But behind them, God calls for another movement of men and women who don't go. For some of you can't go. Some of you are sick. I was born sick. Perhaps you were too. And you don't have the capacity to take this kind of suffering. Some of you emotionally are not strong enough. Some of you need some years of healing and it's not your time to go. And so, the Lord calls you also to follow Him here as part of this great movement to rescue and redeem the poor and those areas of poverty across the face of the earth. And he calls you to take your shoes. And where you've got 7000 shoes to give away, 6998 or 97, how many pairs of shoes do you really need? John the Baptist came preaching and he said, if you've got two shirts, give one away. And how much junk do you have? It's falling out of your drawers. You can't shut your doors because of it. If you've got kids, you don't know what to do to keep their rooms tidy. You spend hours every week picking up toys because there are so many stuffed animals.

And every week you throw them into the garbage bin, but they keep coming. And you go to McDonald's and it fills up your house with plastic toys and you don't know what to do. And it kills your spirituality. You choose junk or Jesus? That's your choice. In Matthew six and 24, Jesus gave you that choice. Junk or Jesus. You cannot choose mammon and choose God. Yes, you've got to live. You've got to have a house, you've got to have a car, at least one that goes

most of the time. You may need a few paintings on the wall and money for a children's education. There are basic necessities that Jesus promises you, but you're to keep them limited. You are to choose a simple sacrificial lifestyle. And so today, when you give back your shoes, some of you need to make a choice to follow this Jesus that I know of, this Jesus who walks among the poor. And as you follow, he will reveal Himself to you. And the presence of His Holy Spirit and the outbreaks of revival will just begin to happen around you. For as you follow his promises, he will honor you with his presence.

And the glory, the Shekinah glory of God will come down around you. And that's the experience of this band and these bands of brothers and sisters across the face of the earth. And that's what's happening as great movements of poor people come into the kingdom of God. For some of you, that's the choice. For some of you, it's a choice, a tougher choice to go to those in positions of power and to advocate on behalf of the poor and to change the structures of society. And that's my call-in life, and it might be yours. It's probably the mayor of this city. That's his call to speak out and to do justice on behalf of the poor, for he's a God of justice. And for some of you it's to remain and to be middle class. And yet in that middle classness, to live simple sacrificial lifestyles, banking up workers among the poor, and every week doing something for the poor to the poor or among the poor, constantly sharing what you have every Christmas, obeying the Scriptures. For there are clear commands about how to have a Christmas party. And you'll find them in Luke Chapter 14.

There's twelve to 14, you invite the poor into your home. Which of these is your choice? For some of you, your choice is to do nothing, and you'll be someone who remains alone and lonely.

That's your choice. Choose Jesus, give back your shoes and tell your friend what your commitment is and nail it down as you get back the shoes if you want to get back the shoes. And after that, I think we finish and you have a break. And then this afternoon there are the seminars.

Worship Leader: Motivated by the need and missions. Lord, you want to be motivated most of all by the fact that you are so worthy of proclamation. Lord, we're not just here because it's the right thing to do. We're here because you are the best thing. Lord, you are the best thing. And we worship and adore You, Lord, we do. And Lord, we long to be more like you. We long for you to lord. Lord. We choose to open our eyes. Lord. To your presence within us.

Lord.

To open our ears. Lord. To your spirit. Lord. So that anything that would impede us becoming more and more like Jesus. Lord. That. Lord. It could be removed so that. Lord. A wave of missions. Lord. That could go out and complete the great Commission would begin to move. Lord. In this day and age. Lord. And Lord. We know that we don't have to beg you for that. God. Lord, it is the ache of your heart to be rejoined to your bride, lord, it's probably us that need the convincing. So, Lord, hear where your heart this morning, Lord? Jesus says we draw near to you, lord, whether it be through songs or through your word or through simply sharing some food together or a bit of testimony. Just as we laugh together, lord, we just say that this is for you and about you.

[song plays]