

Missions Conference Day 1 Session 1

By Dan Owens

Announcer:

...It goes into a conference such as this. The weather report. Usually I just give it about the beach, but no problem. This year it is so cold down there, a surfer yesterday froze to his board. So now in Huntington Beach is a Heisman trophy. This guy's frozen here like this. So I'm not worried about the beach. However, I am worried about our skiers. The cold front is supposed to bring snow down to 2000 feet tonight. I haven't done any research on the dangers of skiing, so I'm just sorry it's been all the beach because this time of the year I haven't had to worry about this skiing. So I'm stuck for a warning. Well, except I did read about the mountain lions that are up there. And then I just read this morning that the longest anyone that's survived under an avalanche has been 17 minutes. So if you're a skier and you need to ski, how about going off the Rose Library roof? It even looks like snow up there. Each year, Biola holds two conferences a missions conference and our Torrey Memorial Bible conference. We dismiss classes for these three days in each conference to reaffirm our historical commitments.

We're committed to knowing the Word of God and being able to communicate it. And so the Word of God is so important at Biola as we feel that the biblical worldview permeates all that we do and say. We have perhaps the strongest commitment to the amount of undergraduate Bible requirements of all the Christian colleges. Our other strong commitment is to see the word of God spread and these conference days are given so that you might focus on this second historical commitment. Why do we set aside these days and concentrate on world missions? Because there are two and a half billion people in the world today that have not heard that wonderful name

about which you'll be singing and thinking about and praising during these days. There are over 10,000 people, groups that have no gospel witness. And unless somebody crosses the cultural barrier, shares Jesus Christ with them, they will die without ever hearing the good news of salvation. So it's my prayer that God will use his time in all of our hearts to bring us closer to his heart and to understand his will for the world and for each of our individual lives. Thank you students, missionaries, faculty, staff for coming.

And I trust all of us will take advantage of the wealth of experience, love, compassion and commitment that these dear missionaries have as they live and move among us all these next few days. May God bless all of us and open our hearts to His Word. And as well, I'd like to have all the missionaries that are here with us now, just so please stand so we might welcome you. So all the missionaries that are with us. My pleasure now to introduce the mayor of La Mirada and our Biola colleague, Dr. David Peters. His Honor the Mayor.

[Applause]

David Peters:

Good morning for the 45,000 citizens of La Mirada I am pleased to welcome all of the visiting missionaries here this morning. Missions have a special place in my heart because I married an MK. My wife, Sherry was raised on the mission field in Nigeria, West Africa, and in fact, her parents, Reverend Virgil and Edna Klein Sasser, are here this morning. So I have a particular feel for missions. This morning I'm curious and wondering how many of our visiting missionaries know something about La Mirada. In fact, I'm wondering how many of our students and faculty

know something about our very special city. What I would like to do is just tell you a little bit about La Mirada which is indeed a very special place. First of all, La Mirada was purchased in 1890 by an immigrant, a man who was of Scotch-Irish descent. He was born in Ireland. He came to the United States and worked his way all the way to Chicago, where he founded the Rand McNally Map Company and publishing house. That was Andrew McNally. He bought La Mirada in 1890 for about \$54 an acre, 2300 acres. He built a mansion here, which is now NEF mansion.

And he also planted the world's largest olive grove. If you would notice the olive trees all over our campus and up and down Biola Avenue on the lawns of the homes, you'll recognize a remnant of Andrew McNally. Andrew McNally ultimately died in 1904, but his family kept the ranch intact. By the way, Andrew McNally made his real fortune. He was a multimillionaire many times over. And he made it by publishing the time schedule for all of the railroads west of the Mississippi River. To travel by train, you had to buy a 75 cent, or one dollar travel schedule. And so he published all of the tickets and all of the travel schedules west of the Mississippi River for the railroads. So he sold, or ultimately his family, though, sold, La Mirada in 1953 for three and a half million dollars. And it was then incorporated as a city in 1960. Tomorrow we will celebrate the 35th birthday of La Mirada. La Mirada is truly a blessed city in that in all of those 35 years, we have never spent more than we have taken in. In fact, we have saved millions of dollars. Today, we have over \$14 million cash in the bank.

And one of our highest sources of revenue to the city after sales tax is the interest on the money in the bank. So we feel that the federal government could take a lesson from the city of La

Mirada. By the way, missionaries and even students and faculty, we work very hard to keep La Mirada clean and pleasant. And so you will notice we do not have very much graffiti. If we see any graffiti, we paint it over or we sandblast it, and we also attempt to blast the person who puts it up. But if you should seriously, if you should see anyone putting up graffiti while you're here and you report it to the police and it leads to their conviction, you will receive from me a \$1000 reward. So keep your eyes open while you're here. Hopefully you won't see any. Speaking of sales tax, we hope all of the missionaries will go out while they're here. You see, the sales tax works this way. That's our chief source of revenue. The city council has never imposed a property tax in its 35 years, the city's existence. So we live on the sales tax. When you buy one dollars worth of goods, you pay 8.5 cents sales tax, and one of those cents stays at the point of origin of the sale.

So I want to encourage all of you to go out today and buy something. Preferably an automobile, but if not a car, at least a hamburger, because that is the city's source of revenue. In any case, we are delighted to have you here and we're looking forward, missionaries, to the challenge you're going to give us. God bless you.

Announcer:

This morning at 10:30, you will have an opportunity to choose which seminar you would like to go to. We have three options. Mark Matlock will be in the gymnasium. Reverend David Wang will be in Calvary chapel. And Dan Owens will be in Sutherland Auditorium. And they're going to come right now and just share their titles of the seminar. So you will know what to expect from those.

Mark Matlock:

My name is Mark Matlock and our session will be taking place at 10:30 right here in the gym. And we're only going to meet for a few minutes and then we're going to scour the city and see if we can find some people putting up graffiti. So if you're having trouble paying your school bill this spring, you may want to come to my seminar.

Really if you've ever wondered what God's will is for your life, and if you've ever wondered exactly how am I to fit into the part of the Great Commission, we're going to be taking a look at the will of God and obedience in your life as it relates to your personal ministry. Ministry not only on the foreign mission field, but ministry every aspect of your life. As you know, I was a former student here at Biola I used to be part of putting on the missions conference. And so I know exactly kind of what's going on inside of your hearts and your minds right now as you think about what's happening. We're going to take a look at how you can effectively be in the will of God right now and in your future. Thanks.

Announcer:

Reverend Wang is not here yet, but Dan Owens will share what he's going to speak at his seminar in just a little bit. Right now, I would like to introduce him. He is the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association first full time associate evangelist. Mr. Owens joined the Palau Association in 1986, where he is now the Director of training. He has been involved in the U.S. Crusades and other English language crusades and has preached the Gospel in the United States, the United Kingdom, Jamaica, Romania, India and the Philippines. And tomorrow he is on his

way to Northern Ireland to preach for eight days. So please join me now in welcoming Mr. Dan Owens.

Dan Owens:

Thank you very much, Lisa. Well, it is good to be here at Biola. I've been looking forward to this for a long, long time. I have great memories of Biola. I've only been here one other time in my life. I was a youth pastor for about ten years, and I remember bringing a bunch of high school kids, about 75 of them, back from Mexicali and Biola was so good to let us stop in here and use this gymnasium to let us use the showers. The kids stunk to high heaven back then. It was really bad. The vans reeked with, we won't get in all the odors. But it was rough being down there in Mexico, and I remember stopping off here and hanging around here shooting hoops, and all the teenagers were taking showers. And I thought, man, it's great to come back 13 years later. I don't need a shower this time, which is kind of nice, but it's wonderful to be able to share. I have been in ministry for quite some time and have had the opportunity to send many young people down to Biola, and I appreciate so much the education that they have received.

I was just with a gentleman recently named Dale Gustafson, who was a student here and is now a youth pastor in the Bay Area, and we spent some time together, so I appreciate so much what has gone on here. And I was thinking also, wasn't that a great money making idea? You could see the kids, the students in their minds thinking what to do with \$1,000. In other words, you take someone out, a friend of yours, and they spray paint, let them be caught, and you split the money two ways. Man, you got quite a scam going on here. You can just see some of the guys sitting there saying, yeah, I've got this one nailed down. But I would like to say a word about the time

that we're going to have at 10:30 this morning. I want to speak on the subject Get Over It. Kind of in line with what the Eagles are singing Get Over It and how to remove guilt from Evangelism. Most of us feel guilty. Someone will come in and speak at chapel or speak at the missions conference and talk about Evangelism, and then we just feel guilty.

We want to crawl underneath the chairs and think that I should be doing more. And I like to share just a little bit with you about from my own life my own experiences about how God has taken me through these training times of not feeling so guilty about Evangelism. But I do want to say I am from San Francisco originally. That is my home, born and raised there. That's great. It's a great place to be from. My wife is from Berkeley, California, and even though she doesn't seem like she's from Berkeley, she's not weird or anything like that. And actually, I'm from San Francisco. And I'm not weird either. I want you to know that. I do have wife and kids and all that, but it is important. So I've been married for 17 years. I met my wife in college down the road at a place called, well we won't mention it, but I was down the road away, met my wife there, married for 17 years. We have two sons. Jordan is our youngest. He's nine years old, and he's a great heart for the Lord. I'm so impressed with how God works in children's lives.

So many people think that children can't come to Jesus Christ. Don't talk to me about that. I'm the wrong person, because I believe they do. My youngest son, Jordan, had a friend over not too long ago. They went back in the back bedroom, and they were back there a long time. I thought, man, what are they doing back there for so long? It makes you worried? Are they selling drugs? What are they doing? And it was so great. Jordan came out a little bit later, and he was all smiles, and he said to me, he said, dad, he said, I just let Jason to the Lord. You just let Jason to the

Lord? How old is Jason? He's nine years old. How old are you, Jordan? I'm nine. Jordan, tell me, how did you deal with the depravity of man? How did you deal with that? I want to know, man, what did you do here? But it was great, and he had a wonderful explanation of how he shared what sin was with this nine year old. I love him dearly. My oldest son, his name is Benjamin. He's pushing on 13. He's finally discovered that there are girls on planet Earth, and life is looking good.

And, man, he wakes up in the morning. I don't have to tell him to comb his hair, brush his teeth anymore. He's even figured out that you got to put deodorant on every morning. One shot does not last a week. And so he's doing really well, and he's into rollerblading. That is his life right now. And about a week and a half ago, he lost about 3 pounds of flesh on the street. And so he's learning some lessons about wearing helmets, knee guards, wrist guards. We don't have to tell him about that anymore as well, but they're doing quite well, and I am gone about 45% of the time, so I'm grateful that my wife, though we never planned on being in this kind of ministry of traveling. I planned on being a youth pastor for many years, which I was for about ten years. But the Lord moved me to the Luis Palau team about nine years ago as an evangelist and director of training, for which I will forever be grateful for. And I am so glad this morning that I am here with missionaries. I tell you, in traveling around the world, I've been to about 25, 30 different countries.

I've met missionaries in every country that I've been to. I so appreciate missionaries and what they do, the work that they do, the work that God has called them to do. And many times they make tremendous sacrifices. But many times you talk to missionaries and they say, what

sacrifice? I'm serving the savior. I'm serving Jesus Christ. It's the greatest honor, the greatest calling that a person can have. And today I want to encourage you students, some of us think that missionaries are out of touch, out of date. And what in the world could they share with us? What in the world could they have that to say that would be relevant to my life at all? I encourage you, go by the booth, talk to them, and see what they have to say, because they have some things that are very relevant to your life. And we need a new generation of missionaries. And I pray my greatest prayers I thought about this conference is that there would be new missionaries that would come out of this conference this week, a new generation of missionaries that would say, Lord, I'll go wherever you want me to go.

I will do whatever you want me to do, Lord, because the greatest thing that I could do is be a servant of Jesus Christ. And today, in the world that we live in, when it seems like everybody wants to be a celebrity, everybody wants to be famous, everybody wants to write a book, everybody wants to be on television, we need servants of Jesus Christ. We need people that are humble, that walk with Jesus Christ and are willing to go wherever he leads. And my goal, my prayer is throughout the week, if one young person, one student here, would come forth and say, God, I'll go wherever you want me to go, I'll stop fighting You, I'll stop wrestling with you, I'll stop going to the missions conferences and sitting in the back and twiddling my thumbs and not participating, Lord, I give it all up. I turn around. I give my heart to you fully, and I'll go wherever you want me to go. That is my greatest prayer for this week. And I know that God will answer those prayers. I'd like to have a word of prayer with you and then get into the message that the Lord has laid upon my heart.

I want to be very careful of the time this morning, because they only gave me 3 hours to speak and I have to make sure that I'm in that time. Let's pray. Dear God, we thank you for your goodness. Lord, we ask that you would bless today the missionaries that are here, dear God, that you would encourage their hearts, that you would lift up their spirits, Lord, that you would remind them of their calling. And Lord, I would ask that you would speak to students today. Lord, you have said wherever two or three are gathered together in Your name, you're in the midst. And Lord, you're here. And what an incredibly awesome thought to know that you're here. You who died on a cross for our sin, you who are alive today, you're right here. And you know us. You know our hearts, you know everything about us. And God, we ask that you would speak to us today. Thank you God for this university. Call someone today Lord, the service for you in Christ's name. Amen.

I recently heard a story that I thought was quite humorous that I thought would be good to open up with. It was about a man that was out working in his garage. And as he was out in his garage he cut his hand open and he looked at it for a moment and he said, well that's not too bad, there's a little bit of blood trickling down. But his wife came out into the garage and she was quite panicked and she said, oh my, you've got to go to the hospital. I don't want to go to the hospital. He said no you've got to go to the hospital. So he said, okay, I'll go down to the hospital. He drives down there and he goes to the emergency room. And as he goes to the emergency room he finds out that there are two doors. And he notices the two doors. And one door says over 50. Door says under 50. He thought well that's easy, I'm under 50 years of age. And so he goes through the under 50 door. He goes through that door and he finds there are two more doors. And

one door says male. One door says female. That was easy. He was a male type person. He went to the male door, he went through that door and he found there were two more doors.

One door said upper body. One door said lower body. Now this was confusing because when his hand was below his waist it was lower body. But when he brought it up here it is attached to his shoulder, that's upper body. And he was a bit confused and so he thought, well I'll take a chance. And he went through the upper body door. He went through that door and he found there were two more doors. One door said internal. One door said external. He thought for a minute, internal. External. See it's inside my hand but it's not inside where my organs are. So I guess it's external. So he goes to the external door. He finds two more doors. He's getting quite confused at this time, two more doors, and one door says Major. One door says minor. He thought about it for a moment. He thought, well, to me it's major. It's my blood. You know, it's kind of serious. But in reality, and compared to other things that are going on here, I would say this is minor. And so he opened the door, went through the minor door, and he found himself out in the parking lot of the hospital again.

And he thought for a moment, he thought, Well, I guess if it is minor, it's minor. I don't need any treatment. And so he decided to go back home. And his wife was there to greet him. And his wife asked a wonderful question. She said to him, Honey, she said you went to the hospital. She said, did they help you? And he thought for a moment, he said, no, they didn't help me. But my are they organized down there. And I thought about that for a moment. I thought, you know, how true it is. How many things in Christendom are organized? How many things that we get involved in are very organized. But we have to step back every now and then, and we have to ask

ourselves, are we helping? Are we helping people? Because Missions is not about a conference. Missions is not about a budget. Missions is not about the program that you have back home at your church. Missions is not about how many missionaries you send out, how much time you spend on the mission field. Missions is about people, and it is about helping people find Jesus Christ. And the thing that the Lord continues to speak to me about in my own life, my own world is, Dan, you may be organized, which I'm not.

You may be organized and you may have everything in order, but are you helping people? I don't know what your idea about Missions is. I don't know how you think with regards to Missions. I came to Christ when I was 17 years old. I wasn't raised in a Christian home, never went to church as a little boy. And so when I came to Christ as a senior in high school, I heard about Missions for the first time. And then I had a romantic idea, romantic view of Missions. And I can remember the first time I ever saw the movie *The Peace Child*, Don Richardson, floating down the river, and there he is in that dugout canoe. Man, it would look so exciting. And the trees were hanging over the river and man, it looked like this is the life. Man, he's got his wife there and their little baby, and they built this house made out of sticks and, oh, man, this is wonderful. I thought this would be so exciting. And I read about other missionaries and missionaries that had been martyred. I read about Chet Bitterman and, of course, the famous one, you know, Jim Elliott.

And wow, that a lot to me. I remember one day several years ago, I was in a mall back up somewhere in the United States. I don't even remember where. And they were having this antique sale, and I came across all these magazines, and I stopped and I looked through the

magazines, and all of a sudden I saw this one dated in January 20, 1956. Great year, 1956. Best year there ever was. This year I was born. And here I was going through the magazines, and at the very top, on the right hand side, it said, Missionaries Jungle Martyrdom Diaries and Exclusive Stories. And it was all about Jim Elliot. And I looked at that magazine, and I took the cover off of it, and I began to leaf through the pages and the pictures in this Life magazine of Jim Elliott and the others as they laid there in their rivers. They were killed by the Indians. And I thought, Lord, you know, it is a romantic thing, but sometimes there are some difficult situations. I joined the Luis Palau team nine years ago. They don't have any training program. It's a great organization.

They don't train you. They just throw you somewhere. And they said to me, they said, Dan, we think that you may have some cross cultural abilities, and so we want to send you overseas. Now, the only place I'd ever been cross culturally was down into Mexico with high school kids. I said, yeah, I can handle this. I can do this cross cultural, no problem. Well, we're going to send you to India. To India? I mean, that's like over the ocean type India. Not Indians, but the real Indians. Yeah, we're going to send you to India. Okay, well, what city am I going to? We're going to send you to Calcutta. Calcutta, India? I mean, like the worst place on planet Earth that you could ever go to in your whole adult life. And you're going to send me there on the first chance I ever get? They sent me to Calcutta, India, and I'll never forget what it was like going to India, and for the first time, seeing 11 million people packed into the city, 2 million people living on the streets alone. It's the first time I'd ever seen poverty like that, where children were begging continuously, where the parents would literally cut off the appendages of their children so that

they would be able to beg when they grew up or they could provide where when you walk by on the street, the people's homes were right there in the gutters.

I mean, they lived right there, and the stench was incredible. And they would use cow manure and make patties out of cow manure with their hands, and they would let it dry, and no, they wouldn't eat it, but they let it dry and they would use it to cook with. They would light it on fire. And I watched this for the first time and I couldn't believe the mass of humanity that was around me. And I thought, Lord, this is missions. This isn't what I expected. And then as I was there on the preaching tour, they asked me to speak to a group of Christians, about 3000 Christians. It was Easter time outdoors, 117 degrees outside. And I was preaching along. And I got through my first point and all of a sudden my notes began to darken on me and I began to get a little lightheaded and I passed out. Boom. Right in the middle of my message. I mean, boom, right over. And they dragged me off the platform. Someone else took my notes and preached much better than I could have. And it was very embarrassing. And I laid there in a hotel and they were putting fluids into me and all kinds of stuff because I had a heat stroke.

And I thought, Lord, Missions, this is not what I expected. This isn't very fun at all. And all of a sudden, my romantic idea of Missions begin to go out the door. And I realized that, Lord, if I don't love you and I don't love people, I have no business being here. Missions is work. And this morning we're talking about we believe. What do we believe in? I remember reading of Robert Woodruff, who declared at the end of World War II in my generation, he said, It is my desire that everyone in the world have a taste of Coca Cola. That was his goal at the end of World War II. He said, My generation, everyone shall have a taste of Coca Cola. And I thought about that.

What passion. What incredible passion. What passion do you have? What passion do you have for Missions? We believe he believed in his product of Coca Cola. We drank it today. I drink it every day almost. We love his product. Do you believe in your product? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, savior of the world? Do you believe that if people do not know Jesus Christ, they're lost?

Do you believe that? And if you believe it, what impact does it have on your life? Not just in the future, but right now, in your own life? And I'd like to share with you this morning three things that I think we believe in. Three things about missions. Three things. And the first one would be this we believe in God's passion for Missions. Would you turn in your Bible this morning to the Book of Jonah? I'd like to read this passage to you. Jonah, chapter four. Chapter four. What a great guy Jonah was. What a heart, huh? Man, I'm glad he wasn't my friend. Listen to this. Jonah, chapter four. It's a tough one to find. It's back in the Old Testament somewhere you'll find it. Okay, Jonah chapter four, verse one. It says this but Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. Why? Because God took it easy on Nineveh. He let them repent and he didn't destroy them. And Jonah was upset about it. He prayed, oh Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love.

A God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live. I mean, this guy was really upset that God was merciful. God, I told you, this is what you're going to do. You're so gracious, you're so compassionate. If somebody repents, Lord, you let him off the hook. I knew this was going to happen. He was disgusted, but the Lord replied, have you any right to be angry, Jonah? Jonah went out and sat down at a place

east of the city. And there he made himself a shelter and sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God provided a vine, or a gourd, it may say in your Bible, and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head, to ease his discomfort. And Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day, god provided a worm which chewed the vine so that it withered. And when the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint.

I can relate to that one. He wanted to die, and he said, it would be better for me to die than to live. And God said to Jonah, do you have any right to be angry about the vine? He said, I do. He said, I'm angry enough to die. Jonah has got a real attitude problem here. He's really a mess. But the Lord said, have you been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow? It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh listen, this is the key verse. But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city? God's passion for the city, god's passion for the people there in Nineveh. Here's, Jonah. He didn't care. Man, scholars tell us that at that time that Nineveh could have had one fifth of the world's population at that time. It was like the evil empire of the day. I mean, it was an evil place. And Jonah thought, man, I don't want these guys to repent. I don't love these people.

I want God to wipe them off the face of the earth. That's what Jonah wanted. He wanted them to be gone. He wanted them to be history. What a nice guy. Wouldn't you like to have him as a friend? No compassion, no mercy. Your friend doesn't like something, he just says, Get rid of them. Shoot him right here in the spot. That's basically what Jonah was saying. God, I don't want

him to get rid of him. What an incredible thought that he had. And God comes back to Jonah and he says, Jonah, shouldn't I be concerned about this great city with 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left hand? Many scholars believe that they're talking about children at that point. That literally the population of Nineveh was somewhere around 600,000, and the actual population for children was about 120,000. And he's talking about the children here, and he says to him, Jonah, shouldn't I be concerned even for the children's sake? 120,000 who do not know their right hand from their left hand. Do you ever think about children? Do you ever look at children? Ever think about God's love for them?

Do you realize there are 20,000 children today that live on the streets in Third World countries? Do you realize that there are 35,000 children that die a day? A day? 35,000 children die each day from diseases that could be prevented. My wife and I, we sponsor a little girl through Compassion International, and her name is Adelaida. She's in Kenya, Africa, and I get to go visit her next January. I'm so excited. We've been sending her money through Compassion International for several years. All the money, or 80% of the money, goes right to that child. Takes care of food, clothing. Maybe you've never thought about sponsoring a child like that. You ought to think about it. \$24 a month to help keep a child alive, to help provide food, to help nourish them, to bring spiritual growth into their lives. It's so important. And here God is showing his passion for the people. God is showing his passion. And the thing that is very clear to me as I look through this, here's a vine, here's Jonah sitting underneath this vine. The vine would grow to eight to 10ft tall. It was huge. The leaves on the vine could be a foot long, so it was providing shade.

But what God is saying to Jonah is this first of all, Jonah, you did not work for the vine. It didn't cost you a thing. But I made these people. I made the 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left. And I love those people. God has a passion for people. You may not have a passion. You may have a passion for your own life. You may only think about your own world and the only things you're into at this point. But God thinks about all people. God loves the world. It didn't cost Jonah anything. The gourd or the vine was short lived. It grew up one day, it was gone the next. God says to Jonah, Jonah, people are eternal. They have eternal souls. The older I get, the more I realize that I have a soul. I'm 38 years old. I'm getting old, man. My body is wearing down. I can't play tennis like I used to. I'm not as quick as I once was. I'm getting a few gray hairs and I got a couple of varicose veins on the back of my legs. Things are going down rapidly and I think in my life.

And I lay there some nights in bed and I say to myself, you know, I'm 38 years old. But I tell you, inside I feel like I'm 21. I still feel like I'm a kid. I think the same way. I listen to the same music. I still can get rowdy. I mean, there are still things that I like to do. I still can act like a kid at 38, I feel like I'm 21. Why? Because the soul does not age. The body ages. My body gets older and older, but the soul does not age. It is eternal. And God is saying to Jonah, Listen, man, the vine grew up one night and it's gone. No big deal. But those people that you want me to wipe out have an eternal soul. I'm very concerned about those people. The people were valueless to Jonah, but not to God. God had mercy on them.

When I was in India I didn't realize how prejudiced I was. My first mission, strip abroad. And I realized that I'm a prejudiced individual. Here I am, white, middle class America. God bless

America, and God loves America more than any other country on the face of the earth. Is that right? And that's the way I believe. And that's the way I felt, even though I never said it verbally. That's the way I felt deep down inside. And I didn't realize it until I was there. Jonah saw those people in Nineveh as worthless. Let me ask you this morning, do you ever see people as worthless? Do you ever see people as having no value whatsoever? Do you ever see people and you look at them and you say, they are not as important to God as I am? I'm much more important to God, man. I'm American. I'm middle class. And I had to ask myself, does God love me more because I'm white? Does God love me more because I have some wealth? Does God love me more than people around the world because I'm somewhat educated? Does God love me more because I wear clothing and there are other people on planet Earth who do not wear clothing? Does God love me more because I don't smell? Because I know how to use different personal hygiene items? Does God love me more because of that? Most of my teeth are in place. Does God love me because my teeth are not rotting out like they are in some people around the world because they have no dentistry, they have no one to take care of them.

Does God love me more? Does God love me more because I understand computers and I can use a laptop? Does God love me more because I pay my bills and I know something about finances and I invest money in stocks and bonds? Does God love me more because of that knowledge? Does God love me more because I am athletic and I may be good looking and I may have some abilities? Is that the thing that goes through your mind? Do you ever think that in your mind, God loves me more because I am this way? Because I am white, middle class, good looking, American? God loves me more. Have you ever thought that way? You know, we all think that way at times. And the thing that God struck me with, the thing that God convicted my own heart

with, is that God loves all people of the world. He loves the poor, he loves the downtrodden, he loves those that live in the streets. He loves those that do not have clean clothes. He loves those that smell, he loves those who do not have dental care. He loves those who are uneducated and have no worldly possessions, what at all.

And God does not look at me like I am more important than those people whatsoever. The Bible says God so loved the world, and he didn't put people in categories. God has a passion. He has a passion for those around him. He has a passion for those that we come in contact with. And the thing that disturbs me and the thing that drives me is I realize that in our day and age, we have lost a sense of urgency to reach out to people through missions, to reach out the people around us and share Jesus Christ with them. January 17, 1994 I was speaking at a church called the Church at Rocky Peak over in the Valley. And they had-oh there's one here-and we were over there. They put me up in a hotel over in Northridge. And that morning, at 4:00 in the morning, 4:30 in the morning, man, I had a jolt like I never had in my life. And I got knocked out of my bed and I passed my TV set in the air. The building began to come down and I ran out of that place as fast as I could, screaming the whole time.

Man that scared me to death. I'm a Californian, but I never went through anything like that. I was amazed at how people responded, the urgency. People are trapped. We got to get these people out of here, man. It was amazing how the communities came together to work, to try to help these people. I was in Miami a couple of weeks ago preaching. Hurricane Andrew. We saw the devastation there, and it was amazing how the people across the nation came to the rescue of those people that survived Hurricane Andrew. My wife, my children and I, we took some

clothing and some food. We went down to the local store. They had a big semi truck there. And we loaded our stuff into that semi truck and they took it all the way across country to help provide for those people that were the victims of Hurricane Andrew. Some children over here in Pacoima, South Los Angeles, they came to school and they broke their piggy banks and they put together \$800 and they sent that to the people there that have been the victims of the hurricane. There was a cook from Davenport, Iowa, that had \$11.35 in his pocket, but he wanted to help.

So he hitchhiked all the way across America, or halfway across America, got down there to cook for the people who didn't have any food down there. And he said at that point, he said, it felt so good. I know my being down here makes a difference. And he felt good about that. I saw him the other day. I stepped into a hotel room. I was speaking up in Seattle. I got into the hotel. I turned the television on, and there are these people, hundreds of people saving a whale that had been beached, and they had the SeaWorld boat pulling it off the beach. And all these people, they're shoving this whale out into the ocean. And they interviewed all these people afterwards, and they were crying. They were weeping. I mean, they were weeping, and they were saying, oh, it was such a moving experience to help the whale back out into the ocean to bring life back to this whale that was going to die. They're weeping over this thing. I thought, hey, I'm into whales. I mean, I love it. Hey, I saw Free Willy and I'm into that stuff. But I mean, when you think about it, do we ever weep about people?

I mean, we'll come to somebody's rescue that goes through some physical crisis. But what about the spiritual crisis? What about those around us that you're around every day that don't know Jesus Christ? Does it ever enter your mind? I remember a couple of years ago, I was in Romania,

northern Romania, and I was up in a city called Suceava. I heard of a woman there who had nine children. Her husband was killed by the secret police, and I wanted to hear the story. And so I met with the family, all nine children and the mother. They told me this story of their husband, how he would smuggle Bibles across this bridge over into Russia, and he would strap the Bibles to his chest. He would strap the Bibles to his leg, and he would walk across the train trestle, and he would give the Bibles to the Russians over there because his burden was for Russia, because he felt like they needed God more than they did in Romania because they were going through more difficult times. In Romania it was not a piece of cake. And they would smuggle the Bibles. One day, the secret police caught them saying, listen, you don't do that, man.

You don't smuggle the Bible. They took him to prison. They beat him, kicked his face in, broke his teeth out. They said, we don't ever want you doing this again. And he said, okay, I won't do it again. A couple of months later, sure enough, man, strapped the Bibles on again, strapped it to his legs, strapped it to his hands, and he went across and again he delivered the Bibles. But again, he was caught by the secret police. The secret police took him to prison. They beat him. They broke his back. They mutilated him. I mean, they tortured this man. And they said to him, listen, if you will tell us who will give you these Bibles, if you tell us who gives you these Bibles to deliver, we will let you go back and we'll let you live with your family. The guy said, I don't think I can do that. The secret police said, Listen, we're going to let you go home for 24 hours. You discuss it with your wife. You make a decision, and we'll take your answer in 24 hours. He goes home to his wife. His wife is pregnant with the ninth child.

He says to his wife, Listen, if I tell them where I'm getting the Bibles, they'll let me come home. If I don't, you'll never see me again. And his wife says to him, you cannot tell them where you're getting the Bibles from. And 24 hours later, the secret police came and they took him away. And she never saw him again. They killed him. And I'm standing in this room with these nine children that are not bitter, that are not angry, that are not "Man you wait, I'm going to find those guys and I'm going to kill them." That's probably what I would have said, but they didn't say that. And I'm looking at a 15 year old boy named Florentine. And I said to Florentine, Florentine, when you grow up, what do you want to do with your life? And Florentine said, he said, you know, I want to do exactly what my father did. I said what? He said, I want to do what my father did. I said, what do you mean? He said, I want to smuggle Bibles just like my dad did. And he began to cry. He said, I want to do what my dad did.

My dad smuggled Bibles for God. I want to smuggle Bibles for God. I said, Florentine, where are you going to smuggle Bibles to? He said, I want to smuggle Bibles to Albania. Albania really needs Bibles bad. He said, Bangladesh really needs Bibles. I'll take them to Bangladesh. And I thought to myself, oh, God, a 15 year old boy. He understands missions better than most of us in America. He understood that God's passion is for people to come to know his son, Jesus Christ. God has a passion for missions. And then I think of the passage, because we believe not only in God's passion, but we believe in God's plea for missions. God has a wonderful plea for missions, and I love the passage. It's a familiar passage to us in Isaiah where God says, or Isaiah is writing. He said, Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send and who will go for us? And I said, here I am. Send me. And it was so wonderful. A recent scholar wrote, do you realize that God was not addressing Isaiah? He's not saying, Isaiah, will you go for me?

God is having a heavenly conversation. And Isaiah is so tuned into God, he overhears the conversation. He overhears it. God is saying, who shall go? Who can we send? And Isaiah says, Lord, I'm not much here and I don't have a lot of talents, but I'll go, Here I am, Lord, send me. He overheard the conversation. But let me ask you, it is very, very important. How is your hearing today? How is your spiritual hearing? Do you hear the voice of God in your life? He said, Man, I heard the voice of God when he called me to Himself years ago. Fine, but do you hear the voice today? You see, the call of God depends whether or not your ears tuned to God. What is going through your head? What is going through your ears? What do you listen to every day when you get up? Man, most of us, we get in the morning, we turn the radio on and we got tunes going all day. It's great, man. It's happening. We're loving it. We get in the car, we turn the stereo on. It's great. We're listening to things all the time. We go to school, we have professors teaching us.

We go to work, we have the radio, and we go at home at night, we're studying with the radio, my kids study with the radio on, I can't figure out how they do it. I mean, they're studying all the time. But you got music. You always have things going on. My friends, you ever get alone? Do you ever get quiet with God? Can you hear his voice? Can you hear what he's saying to you? Oswald Chambers wrote, the majority of us have no ear for anything but ourselves. We cannot hear anything, god says. Guy, while he was here, he goofed around, smarted off, got drunk half the time on weekends. He was just pretty much a party boy here at Biola University, and he would not mind me sharing this story. He was the son of Dr. Luis Palau. The school kind of decided maybe it was best for him not to be here. And he kind of decided it was best for him not

to be here. And he went off on his own, went to the secular university, continued to be the party boy, just living a crazy, crazy life, never denying God, never hating Jesus Christ, just a party animal, just a party guy wanting to live his own life.

And finally, a year and a half ago, two years ago, living in Boston with his life a mess, he turned his heart over to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the thing that he said is, I disciplined him, a few months later, we began to develop a great relationship. He said to me, he said, the greatest thing that has happened to me. He said, the thing that surprised me so much, he said, I always knew that God was going to bring me back to himself. But he said, I always thought it was going to be in a tragedy like hitting a brick wall in my car or something. He said, I never realized God's power, the power of God's small, quiet whisper. He said, all God did was whisper to me. He said, God spoke to my heart, and he crushed my heart. And this guy repented. He cried literally for days for all the anguish he brought to Jesus, all the anguish he brought to Luis Palau, his father, all the things that he had gone through. God broke his heart. And maybe you're here. I don't know you, man. I'm here today, I'm gone tomorrow.

I may never see you again. Probably won't see most of you. Are you listening to God? You ever stop? And does God just speak to you and say, hey, man, give me your life? Isn't it amazing how we think if we give God our life, he's going to make it miserable? I don't understand that. Okay, Lord. Okay, God. You could take my life, I guess. Yeah. And God goes, yeah, now I have you. You know, we think men. And God says, I've got you under my thumb. I will show you what real misery is all about. You think Biola has been hard? You've seen nothing yet. Wait till I get you to Calcutta, man. Somehow God is going to just make life miserable for us. Oh, man, I've

got you now, God says, and I'm going to destroy your life. I can't imagine how we think like that. I've got two boys I love very much. What do I say to my sons? Yeah, man, you're my sons. Oh, baby, I'm going to make life miserable for you. Do I do that? I yell at my sons, Get out of the street. Why? Because I don't want them to have any fun.

No, I don't want them to be a roadkill man. I don't want them to be smashed out there in the road, you know? I love those boys. We take our sons on vacation. We're taking them to Hawaii, frequent flyer miles. It's a great thing. I mean, I want them to have fun things. I'm into my kids. I want them to enjoy life. I want them to have good experiences. I take them to the Crusades. I want them to experience great things. God wants you to experience great things, easy things. Not always, but God has great things for us. He's not here to make your life miserable. He's here to bless your life. He loves you, man. The Bible says this. Man if we're evil in our own hearts and we know how to give good gifts to our children, what do you think God's going to do with you? Make your life miserable? Man. We pray to God. We say, oh, God, bless me, heal me, give me, forgive me, strengthen me. And then we walk away. We never stop and let God speak to us. It's amazing. Lily Tomlin said it very well. The comedian, she said, Why is it when we talk to God, it's called prayer, but when God talks to us, it's called schizophrenia?

God does speak to us, and he wants to speak to you. Had a young lady that I led to Christ in my office one day, 17 years old. She was a valedictorian of her high school. She came to me and she said, Dan, I want to come to Christ. I said great. She said, But I can't come to the Lord until my whole family is here. I said, okay, fine. So the next day, the next Sunday, she brought her whole family. We sent my office, and I let her through the passages of scripture, and I asked her, I said,

Lisa, do you want to pray to receive Jesus Christ? Yes, I do. You want to pray right now? Yes, I do. I let her in prayer. She began to weep. She began to cry. She opened her heart to Christ. Her mom, dad, her brothers and sisters are sitting there wondering what in the world is going on. But that day, Lisa was gloriously converted to Jesus Christ. Lisa ended up marrying a young man by the name of Craig Gustason. Craig Gustason was also in our youth department, and Craig Gustason was one of the young people that I worked with.

Craig and Lisa got married. Lisa went on, went to UC Berkeley, graduated with honors from there as well. Craig came down here to Biola. Talbot got his degrees here. Two months ago, I was with Craig and Lisa speaking up at a youth camp in Northern California. There they were, to my surprise, I said, Craig, what are you doing, man? What are you getting ready to do? He said, we're getting ready to go to the mission field. Craig, where are you going, man? We're going to the Philippines to work with the children in the dumps. You're gonna go what? We're going to go work with the children that live in the dumps in Manila. And I cried my eyes out. I wrapped my arms around Craig. I said, praise the Lord, Craig. Go for it, man. Go for it. Here's this gal, no Christian background whatsoever, comes to Christ when she was a senior in high school, marries this guy, educated. Both of these guys are smart, intelligent, good-looking people. And then they're heading off to the Philippines to work with kids that live in the dump. People would say, oh, what a waste. What a waste.

Think of the things they could do here in the United States. Think of the things they could do in the secular field, man. There's no waste. They're giving their lives to Jesus Christ. God has called them to that place. They are so excited, they can't think of doing anything else. They can hardly

wait to get there. God's plea. Lisa and Craig overheard God saying, who are we going to send? And they said, hey, we'll go. Do you hear God's voice this morning? Does he speak to you? We have power from God's passion for mission, god's plea for mission. And finally, as I close, God's power for missions. God is powerful. I love the passage in Colossians 1:6 where it says all over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, and how we have in our minds today that somehow God is losing, Satan is winning, and nothing is happening around the world, my friends, it's just not that way. God is doing incredible things around the world. I remember speaking to a man one time in Romania. He picked me up at the airport. He was bent over. He had a gray beard.

He looked very old. I thought he was 65 years of age. As I spoke there in Bucharest and Romania, and we began to get to know each other a little bit, I said, Tell me about yourself. And he began to tell me about himself. And actually, this man, Yana Keem, was not 65 years old. He was 40 years of age. But he had been put in prison for six to ten years for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ while he was in prison, one of the funnest things, the greatest things for the secret police to do, they broke his back. When they broke his back, they would not let it heal. They would not give him any pain medication. They would not let it set properly. So he was hunched over all the time. He was beaten, he was abused. And Yana Keem said to me, he said, you know, when I was in the prison cell and I would be there without my family, he was married, he had children. He didn't see him for six years. He said, as I was there in jail, he said, I used to pray, oh, God, one day, may the gospel be preached in the stadiums of Romania.

That was his prayer. And God answered his prayer, because when I was there, I was with Luis Palau, and we were having crusades in Romania. And the national Stadium was filled with 50,000 people each night to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. And the stadiums were filled in Oradea, and they were filled in Timisoara. They were filled all over the place as different ministries would go in and hold meetings. And we know that over 600 churches have been started in Romania since those days in early 1991. It is amazing what God is doing around the world. God is alive. I read the other day 140,000 Albanian soldiers have given their hearts to Jesus Christ and they were led to Jesus Christ by Albanian Christians. God is at work around the world, and God is at work here. If you'll just look around and say, God, would you use me? God wants to use wherever you are, not on a foreign mission field far away, but whatever God has called you into. I have a friend that I led to Christ not long ago named Sean Hildebrandt. He graduated from here. He's an architect. And I said to him a few weeks ago, I said, Sean, what are you going to do with your degree in architecture?

He said, Man, I'm going to the Third World. And he said, I'm going to be a tent making missionary. I said, Praise the Lord, man, go for it. You use it for God. But maybe you're going to be here, maybe you're going to teach, maybe you're going to be in business. No matter what you do, man, let God use you. Let God use you. I was so impressed. Long. About 1991, I was in Aminabad, India. Northern India. I was speaking there at an Easter festival. I met some missionaries and I said to the missionaries, how did you get here? How did you end up being a missionary in India? I mean, you're not supposed to be missionaries in India. They wouldn't allow that for many, many years. And they said to me, they said, you know, an interesting thing happened back in 1976. Indira Gandhi, who was the prime Minister of India, went to see

President Jimmy Carter. And when she went to see President Jimmy Carter, she said to Jimmy Carter, no matter what you think about it, it's politics. I'm not talking politics. She said to Jimmy Carter, she said, your country has done so much for the United States of America.

What can we, as the people of India, do for America? What can we do for you? You've given us food. You've given us financial relief. You've done so many things for us. What can we do for you? And Jimmy Carter? Without batting an eye, he said to her, would you please allow our missionaries back into your country? And then, dear Indira Gandhi thought about it for a moment. She said, Well, I'll see what I can do. And Indira Gandhi came back. She went to the minister of interior and she said, how many people are right now are waiting for visas are waiting for visas to be missionaries here in India? People have given up long ago trying to get into India, but the minister said there are 250 people waiting to come into India and Indira Gandhi said let them in. All 250, no less, no more, let them in. And the people that I was with, that I was speaking to were some of those missionaries that Indira Gandhi led into the country. And I thought to myself, you know, no matter where God takes you, no matter what you do in life, no matter what your vocation, God has a work for you to do.

God has a work for you to do. My friends, do you have a passion for missions? Do you have a passion for people? I pray that God would speak to your heart and like that little boy, 15 years old, Florentine in Romania say, man, God, I'll do whatever you want me to do. Some of you here today, I know I've been where you are, gosh. We wrestle with God and we say, God, not this time, you're not going to get me this time. I pray some of you would break down and say, God, you've got me, you've got me. I want to serve you Lord, and I want to go wherever you call me.

The Lord bless you. I pray this is a rich week for you in the name of Jesus Christ and I pray many of you will have the opportunity to lead people to Christ throughout your lifetime. And I pray that you would know the voice of God and your own soul. Let's pray together, shall we?

Dear God, we honor you this morning, we worship you. We bless your name, O God, and we are so grateful this morning that you are not dead, you are alive and you are doing your work.

And I pray this morning, dear God, for the Andrew Palaus of this group, the guys that are just here having a wonderful time, which is good, but Lord, they haven't gotten serious with you. Oh God, may they hear your voice, may you speak clearly to them and may they be obedient. Lord, may we not just feel sympathy towards people and say we feel sorry, but O God, may we feel compassion to people and say I will help, I will help. Oh God, use us, use this missions conference. We give all the glory to Jesus Christ who died on that cross for us in Jesus name, amen. Lord, bless you. Thank you very much.

Announcer:

We're going to have a short time of worship right now, so if you'd like to stay for that and after that I'd like to encourage you to go visit the booths and interact with the missionaries in and around the sub area. Thank you.

Worship leader:

Okay, let's all stand up and hold hands.

[Worship music plays]

Worship leader:

Thank you so much that we can trust in you. Thank you that we can put our lives in your hand and that you have great plans for us. I just pray that you'd guide us throughout this day. Help us to be in the center of your will. In Christ name. Amen. You're dismissed.