

Missions Conference 1997 Christ For, In, and Through You By Peter Kuzmic

Announcer:

Lord, I praise you for this day and for the honor of being at a school where we can take three days off and focus on studying Your word, listening to speakers and being challenged to obey Your command and do the Great Commission. And thank you for the privilege that we can be here today and listen to speakers. Open up Your word and explain to us. I pray Your special blessing upon our speaker this morning. I pray that you quiet our hearts and make us attentive to what you have to teach us this morning. Pray this in your name. Amen.

Everything about our speaker this morning is multiple. He was born in one country and then lives in another country, is a citizen in another country, now lives in a third country. He speaks numerous languages. He has gotten his degrees literally all over the world: America, Germany, Croatia. He has written many books. He speaks all over the world, is a chairman of a number of different organizations and committees. And one thing that I want to emphasize is that he is also the founding president of the only evangelical theological college with the graduate program in Eastern Europe.

But the most important thing is that he is from the same country that I'm from and that makes him very special. I'm very proud to introduce this morning Dr. Peter Kuzmic who will be speaking to us this morning. All these things are great. There's a big old biography here, all the great things that he has done. But the most impressive thing is his heart and his desire to serve. He lives in America and then also in Croatia, and just in talking to him and listening to him at Urbana and when I was back home hearing him preach. He really loves the people in Croatia and has sacrificed a lot in order to be back there. Found a school just this morning. He in passing

mentioned that he quit studying at Harvard so he can go back and found a seminary there. I'm really proud to present to you this morning Dr. Peter Kuzmic.

Peter Kuzmic:

Thank you so much. Irina, how do they pronounce your name here? Irina or something?

[inaudible response] But I am so grateful this morning that I'm being introduced in America with my name properly pronounced. My family name spelled Kuzmic and that C has a little bird on the top and that makes it itch. Kuzmich. I have been called in this country everything from Kutsmic to Cosmic. You will understand why. I am eternally grateful to my father for giving me the name Peter. So you are one of the three people in North America who can pronounce my family name right? And I suspect I know why. The worst thing that happened to me was back in the long time ago, I was the first Evangelical from what at that time was still Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia. To be able to go and study abroad in the mid 60s when our late President Tito opened the borders to Yugoslavia for people to go and work abroad. And I went to a Bible college in Germany, and Germans had a problem with my family name as well. Now, I don't know whether there are any German majors here, but they called me Küß mich.

Now, Küß mich, some of you understand Küß mich means kiss me. Now, keep in mind I came from a conservative evangelical home, from a closed society, from a family of five boys, no sisters. And the church rule was you don't talk to a young lady alone unless there is a distance of about five to 7 meters between you. And then to arrive in the Free West and I would walk through the dormitory and then you would see a beautiful blonde young lady call you down the hall and say, hey, Brother Peter, Küß mich. And I would become more red in my face than either the ideology or the flag of the country from which I came. So just call me Peter. That will make it much easier. I can hardly believe it that this last Friday I was still in the Balkans. And in

the meantime, I was teaching on Saturday for about 5 hours an intensive weekend class at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, which is Boston, Massachusetts, and then preached on Sunday. Some Massachusetts people here preaching on Sunday in Dallas in the morning and some place in Florida, I think, called Lakeland in the evening and then flying to California. And I am dealing with the jet lag. How many of you understand what jetlag is all about? Oh, yeah. You are world missions. World class world missions. College students. Since I'm kind of almost commuting between Gordon Conwell and the Minister in the Balkans, especially focusing on Bosnia, in the last few years on the Ministry of Relief and Reconciliation, I have come up with a new definition of jetlag. It's not copyrighted. You can use it. Just put your place of departure and destination in. Here's my definition. Jet leg is when your body is in Sarajevo, Bosnia, your stomach is in Boston, Massachusetts, or at Biola in California, and your brain is in a holding pattern somewhere in between. If you have not had the experience, you will but please spare me the question about what happens to the luggage.

In the meantime, one more preliminary remark. The way Irina I'll pronounce your name the way it should be pronounced, the way Irina introduced me will make you disappointed now because you will notice that I speak English with a heavy accent. I started learning English in my mid 20s. Now. I almost gave up when I started learning English.

I had some Western languages before, including German and various Slavic languages. There is a scientific theory that says if you learn a foreign language before the age of puberty, you will speak it like the nationals without the accent. If you learn it after that, you have no chance. Now, I don't want to discourage you. Many of you will probably become cross-cultural missionaries of one kind or another. You are more gifted than I am. You will learn it after the age of puberty and speak it without accent.

So I learned English too late and I guess I cannot get rid of my accent. My kids speak better English than I do. But I assure you and them I write better English than they do. So be patient with my English. I wish I could have a translator like the speaker this morning, my good friend from Latin America. But Irina refuses to translate for me. Can we stand and read the word of God the way we do it in Eastern Europe? Let's read the text that is at the heart of this missions conference. If you would open, if you have your Bible with you in 2 Corinthians 5.

While you are looking for the Scriptures, let me briefly recount the story. I have been working a lot in Romania. I called Romania the Korea of Europe, a land of great awakening. Matter of fact, I preached in Romania two weeks ago, and Romania under the communist regime of Ceaușescu. There are friends who work in Romania. I see them. Romanian church was persecuted. They had all kinds of difficulties. And yet one of the great, actually the only country in Europe, east or west, that is experiencing a genuine evangelical awakening. I remember we would stand in churches, small rooms, hundreds, sometimes thousands of people squeezed in, standing like this. I remember a church, they had some benches, but they would take out the benches because they had the right theology. They knew that benches would not make it to heaven. People would if they respond to the gospel. So they said out with the benches so that we can get more people in. And when you stood squeezed in like this, you could not wave your hand because you could knock somebody out, people standing all around you. Services would last five, 6 hours. Now they have grown a little cold. Their services are now about two and a half to three and a half hours. I remember a North American pastor was with me once and he had a good sense of humor. And we were standing like this, and he turned over and he said, Peter, in this place you can't even drop dead. And I turned to him and I said, I hope you went to the restroom before the service, because you won't get out for 5 hours.

First time I preached in Romania. 1969. Just before I was to open the Word of God, the pastor leaned over and he said, brother Peter, read much of the Scriptures and read it very slowly. And then he explained, he said, only one out of five families in my church have their own Bible. In most cases, it's just a New Testament. And he said, I have instructed them that when a preacher announces a long text, they will take out a notebook and they will take out a pencil, and they will write down every word you read. And that's how they collected scriptures. You will understand why we are so grateful that Communism is gone, that we have freedom now, that the Bible is available, and that some of you may be coming to Romania or Russia or Ukraine or Moldova or some other places in what is now post Communist Eastern Europe to proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

Let us read it now. The precious Word, the only book of salvation that shows us the way to heaven, and the only book of divine wisdom that teaches us how to live victorious, meaningful, purposeful lives down here on earth. We read from verse 14 in 2Corinthians 5, and I am reading from the NIV, which I think is the Orthodox translation here at Biola as well, right? It's not? It's King James Two? No? New American? Okay, that is more precise, but a more wooden English, they tell me. I am a Bible translator myself, so will you forgive me for NIV? I'm going to catch a New American Standard during the break.

For Christ's love compels us because we are convinced that one died for all. Notice the little word for. And therefore all died, and he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on, we regard or we view no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has gone, the new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us unto Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting man's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Let us pray for the blessing of the Word. Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for the living word Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior and Lord. But we also thank you for the written Word which we have just read, which we will be expositing in the next few minutes. And I pray that you will give us open minds and hearts to understand Your Word, to receive Your Word, to obey Your Word, to do Your Word. For you have truly called us to be Your ambassadors in our world at this time in history. We ask these things in Jesus name and for his glory and his glory alone. Amen. Amen.

Please be seated. Let me explain something, because some of you will be asking me about where I come from after that introduction. I am a native Slovenian, which is the most northern republic of former Yugoslavia, now an independent country. The most important, keep in mind, most important geographical word about Eastern Europe is former. Okay? F-O-R-M-E-R. Former Soviet Union, former East Germany, former Czechoslovakia, former Yugoslavia and many other formers so in former Yugoslavia. Former Republic of Slovenia, now independent country, just south from Austria. I'm a citizen of Croatia, which is the next country as you move south. I have lived for two years in Serbia, and I've lived for two years in Bosnia and Sarajevo and Banja Luka, the country where so much tragedy has taken place in recent years.

And so you may wonder, having come from a part of the world where people are frantically searching for their ethnic purity and ethnic identity, who I actually am, what's my identity? And I tell you, my primary identity is with the Kingdom of God and with that international family of the Redeemed that all of us are members. Of course, things get more complicated if I throw my wife last night into the picture because I met her in Germany, in college, where she came from Serbia, although she is Croatian, although her father is half German and her mother is fully checked.

Do we have a recipe for confusion? Probably not, because you live in LA, and LA is even more multiethnic multinational. I tell people, if they think I'm confused, I just answer with the words of Robert Frost, a great poet, who said, no, I'm not confused. I am just well mixed. And I do feel at home at Biola, the passage of scriptures. If you have the Bible, keep it open in front of you because we will do a telegraphic exposition.

This is one of those texts where the Apostle Paul and remember, when we meet him first, he is not an apostle. He's the enemy of the Christian faith. He is the persecutor of the early Christians. And then that revolutionary event happens in his life that changes his perspective, changes his thinking. And the enemy, the persecutor, becomes the proclaimer, the apostle to the nations, the early church theologian, the missionary to the nations. And in this, this is one of the passages where he summarizes his theology, his thinking, his commitment, his vision. Everything is packed in these few verses.

Now, if you are looking for a central text, sorry, for a central word, singular central word in this text, you would, I'm sure, say is the word: reconciliation. It's repeated several times. Christ has accomplished the work of reconciliation. We have it here as a noun, we have it here as a verb. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. He speaks to us as we plead with the nations, with the

people, of the world, with our neighbors, as well as with people far away in cross cultural missions. Please be reconciled with God. It is possible because of what Christ has done on the cross. Reconciliation, a key word. You may want to do a paper if you're a Bible or theology major on reconciliation.

But another approach to the Bible study is not to look at the central word, but to look at the frequency of the vocabulary in a given text because that says a lot about the emphasis in the text. That reveals a lot thematically. And here the most frequent two words in this text. We don't have time to count the words now because we will not have a Romanian service, right? So I'm just running through here. You can check it tonight. The most frequent two words are one: Christ. Christ. Everywhere you have Christ. And the second most frequent word is a personal pronoun: us, we or us.

And this is what the biblical story of redemption is all about, the relationship between Christ and us. And since the time would not permit us to do a careful word by word exposition of the text, I want to summarize this text in three brief statements in which you have three little words, little words but with big meanings that relate Christ and us. This is a kind of, if I may say, a mini theology for missions. Little words, but big meanings. The first little words: for. F-O-R. Notice in verse 14 he died for all. Verse 15 died for all. At the end of verse 15 died for them. You go down to verse 21 he who had no sin was made sin for us. I am sure if you read in the American Standard or any other good faithful translation I know American Standard is very faithful you will find the same little word for an extremely important word. And the thesis here is that Christ is for us, that Christ is not an enemy of humanity, but that Christ is a lover of humanity, that God is not against us, but has expressed his great love for us by giving Christ to die for us on the cross. Christ for us.

Now, people around the world have different mental images of God. I've traveled extensively and I know that in some cultures around the world, God is not the one that loves humanity. God is the one who is out to punish humanity, who always demands a heavy price of his followers, who never makes them happy, who puts burdens on their shoulders that they cannot carry and makes them miserable in their lives. I remember for a little while in my childhood I had a wrong mental image of God. Must be because my parents were rather strict. You don't have strict parents, do you? And I remember my mental image was that God was like a policeman. That Christ was like a policeman.

What do you call that little [word in other language]? Is it [word in other language]? No, there's a piece that the policeman carries around. Billy club. All right. I told you, I'm still learning English. I thought that Jesus was like this invisible, heavenly policeman with this billy club following me around and hardly waiting for little Peter to make a mistake so that he would hit me. That was a wrong mental image of God. This is where we parents have to watch that when we are frustrated and don't know how to raise our kids that we don't threaten them with God and make God an enemy in their little minds.

The only open air evangelism we were able to do were the funeral meetings and funeral processions were very big. Sometimes the whole community would come out. Up in Slovenia, where I'm originally from a director of a building company who was a member of the Communist Party. His wife was converted, his two sons were converted. But he would never go to a church, not even close. But on the day of his retirement, he was suddenly in church. Never missed a service, never missed a prayer meeting. And one day, years later, he came to me as I was doing some ministry up there and he said, Peter, I was like Nicodemus and I was ashamed of Jesus. But he says, When I die and this day is approaching he says, there will be a big funeral.

The whole company will stop where they will all come to my funeral because I'm a founder of the company. And he says, Would you come and preach at my funeral? It did happen a few years later and our Communist friends thought that they had their own funeral and they were eulogizing the man. And then suddenly when they finished the program, I pushed my way to the microphone and I was preaching about the love of Christ and about the Holy God who wants to invite us to life eternal.

And then the procession took place and a couple of thousands of people walked to the cemetery. I don't know whether there are other East Europeans they would remember how that happens in those places. And there you have another service. And I had another opportunity to preach the gospel. And then when we finished and as I was leaving the graveyard suddenly two angry men run after me and one of them actually grabbed me from behind. And I found out later that he was one of the Communist Party leaders in the area. And he said, Young man, why are you deceiving people? What is this thing you are speaking about God? You know that we are building a new society that will be not only classless, but also religion-less. And we have no room in our new society for this religious nonsense. He said, Christian faith is obscurantist. It's superstitious, it's outdated, it is anti intellectual, it's anti progress. And he went on and on. And then the other one joined in and they tried to nail me down. And one of them accused me of manipulating the people. And he says, how can you say that God is good and loving?

If he were, why is he sending people to Hell? And I finally was able to get a word in, and I said, Where did you read that he's sending people to hell? And I said, did you ever read the Bible? Never. They were proud that they never opened the Bible, but they were pontificating from positions of ignorance about theological and biblical topics. And I said, Friends, you have a wrong information. Our God is not our enemy. He is not sending us to hell. He is inviting us to

heaven. Jesus said, Come unto me, all ye who are burdened and heavily them. And he says, I will not cast you out. He is not the enemy. He's a friend. I said to hell, you will go on your own if you refuse to accept his loving invitation to follow Him to the heaven that he has prepared for you and made it possible. On the Cross the wrong mental image of God. But friends, scriptures everywhere tells us that God is for us. And the cross of Jesus Christ is the supreme expression that he is for us. For he who was without sin died for us who are sinners.

Jesus is the only person who walked this planet Earth whose lips never lied, whose hands never stole, in whose heart there was never a wrong motive, in whose mind there was never an erroneous thought. The only person in whose life you find a perfect harmony of word and deed, of theory and practice. And yet this perfect man, who was truly God and truly man, takes your sins and my sins and the sins of the world, the sins of the nations that we are contemplating during this mission's week and have them nailed to the cross. And God is saying, I am for you, Christ is for you. He has provided the way and there is no other way but through the death of Jesus, through his cross, through that message that the doors into life eternal open. Christ for us. Let me take you to another place in the Balkans. The year is 1972 and we had an evangelistic series in the city of Novi Sad, now Serbia. Beautiful city. I had a musical group with me and we decided there were many young people responding. Music speaks the universal language and young people were coming from the university and secular young people.

And then there was an accusation that we were manipulating with people and that we were spreading religious propaganda and proselytizing. And I said, okay, let's do it different every night after I speak, we will open it up for discussion. We have nothing to be afraid of, nothing to hide. Let people ask questions. And they did. We had a breakthrough number of young people who were saved during that week. Later came to our college, graduated, and many of them,

former Communists especially, became the best pastors and church planters that we have ever had because they were not burdened by Christian tradition or legalism or whatever. They didn't bring any of that baggage. They spoke the language of the street. They've experienced the power of the Gospel. It was not just inherited Christianity, it was experiential Christianity. And they became the best ministers of the Gospel. But I remember in that one evening I was speaking about the cross of Christ. And when we opened up for discussion, a man in his late 30s stood out and again an accusation. He says, You Christians are deceived and misled. He said, you don't know your history. He said, Why would you talk about this one, Jesus of Nazareth? And he added, if he ever existed and how he died, don't you know that when Romans marched their armies into Jerusalem that hundreds and thousands were crucified? And he says, Why would you pick out one and make a legend or a hero, a religious leader out of him? He said, you don't know your history. He says, I'm a professor of history here at the high school and university. And in a situation like that, you let the man speak, let him finish, and then you have your chance to respond. And I said, My friend, don't accuse us of ignorance of history. We know our history. Every one of us carries around a whole library of 66 books, most of them very deeply historical. And we believe that Jesus is a historical person and his message is totally reliable because it's based on what he has done in history. And he said, but then if you know and I mentioned, yes. And we have read Josephus and we know that others were crucified also. And he says, but why would then you pick out this one Jesus? And I said, for three reasons. First, he was innocent.

The only one that was innocent, as I said earlier, the only one that didn't sin, as we read here, he was innocent. Even the Roman governor's wife had, who tried to persuade her husband that he was innocent, made him wash his hands and say, I find no guilt in this man. The innocent one

died for us, the guilty ones. This is why the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of hope, the message of freedom, the message that sets people free from the burden of guilt and sin. This is why missions and evangelism is the most holy task, the most urgent task in our time on our planet Earth. And I hope that each one of us, in one way or another has a place in that holy international enterprise of the kingdom of God making the saving name of Jesus known to the nations. I said, secondly, he went willingly. Others fought back. They were kicking with their feet. They were scratching with their fingernails. Some tried to run away and then were killed in the process. But he carried his own cross. We read in the Gospels how he put his eyes toward Jerusalem.

He went willingly to the cross. It was not easy, friends, remember him in Gethsemane, how he prays if it were possible, Father, let this cup pass away, but not my will. Your will be done. And he goes to do the will of the Lord. Friends, salvation is a gift from God. We are saved by grace. We contribute nothing to salvation. As the great Anglican Archbishop William Temple said once the only thing we bring to our salvation is our sins. And he takes care of that because he's done everything needed. So it is a gift. But friends, it is not free. Sorry. It is free, but it's not cheap. Somehow, in our human pride we appreciate more those things for which we have worked, for which we have saved and sweated. Salvation is a gift. It is free, but it is not cheap. The Apostle Peter puts it in the following language we have been redeemed or we have been purchased. I'm translating in my own head now back into English. I think it's purchased not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the Lamb. Christ is for us. And I said and thirdly, not only was he innocent, not only did he go willingly to die for us on the cross, I said thirdly, there were some extraordinary events that accompanied his death.

And the most extraordinary one happened on the third day, when the grave and the power of death and the watchman and the heavy stone rolled at the grave could not hold him back.

Because, dear friends, we serve a risen Lord. Jesus rose from the dead. He was on the cross. He died on the cross for us. But the body was taken off, buried. And so the cross is empty. But praise the Lord also the grave is empty because he's a risen Lord. And it's the risen Lord that tells us in the great Commission all power, all authority, *pasa Exousia*, all authorities given to me. Therefore go in my name and teach the nations, and I will be with you to the very end. And there you have the great foundation, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. And then you have the great Commission. Go, teach, baptize, preach, and then the crowning of it is the great promise. And I will be with you to the very end. Friends, Christ for us that's foundational that is also history. There really was. What in English in America you call Good Friday? We call it a great Friday.

When Jesus died on the cross, there was that first Sunday. In Russian they called Sunday *Voskresheniye*. And *Voskresheniye* means resurrection. There was an empty tomb. That's the foundation, that's the historical fact that Jesus Christ is for us. But that's not where we stop. The second piece is here, And I will make this brief. The second little word here is in. In not only Christ for us history, the cross, but also Christ in us personal appropriation by faith, experiencing that U-turn conversion. That is where you move from historical Christianity to experiential Christianity. Christ in you. The same apostle will say in a little later, Christ in you the hope of glory. This is why in evangelical Christianity we speak about the new birth. This is why we speak about Christ inviting Christ into our hearts, into our lives. See the problem in Europe. And I do work in Europe, both east and west. The problem in Europe is that we have too much calendar Christianity. People will remember Good Friday or Easter or Christmas and that's as

much Christianity as they have. And they have calendars on their walls. And Christian holidays are marked in red color, but they do not have the living Christ living within them.

A lot of calendar Christianity and we say Christ must come off the wall and enter your heart and enter your life. Please pray for Europe during this Missions week. Do you know that out of 822,000,000 people living on the continent of Europe East and west, over 500 million have never opened the Bible? Some of you look shocked. Let me repeat that. Out of 822,000,000 people living in Europe, which was considered a Christian continent, which was the first sending as the Great World Evangelization and World Missions Movement was started, remember William Kerry and others. Count Zinzendorf, the Wesley Brothers, the Cambridge Seven and so on. Out of 822,000,000 people today in Europe, over 500 million have never opened the word of God. Friends, it's not enough to know that Christ is for us. Christ has to live in us. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation. That's where the ethnic barriers break down. That's where it's not important anymore whether you're Jewish or Greek, Croatian or Serbian, Russian or American, whoever is in Christ is a new creation. And you and I have to be young missionary revolutionaries for Jesus. That will tell the world enough of calendar Christianity and Christian tradition, enough of cultural Christianity.

We need living Christ. Christ in us. Christ for us. Christ in us. And that leads me to the third thesis, the third little word. It's mentioned here in verse 20. He's making his appeal through us. Through us. So we are moving from history to personal experience. And now we are moving to missions. Now we are moving to ministry, to our personal availability so that he can speak to us, he can forgive to us, he can communicate through us. And Christ wants to speak through you. Whether it's cross cultural mission somewhere abroad or in your neighborhood, whether it's in the scientific laboratory you will be working in when you graduate, whether it's in a secular

school classroom where you will be teaching. All of us, my dear friends, are called to be God's servants. That is not a designation just for preachers. All of us are to be God's missionary people, and he wants to minister through us. What we have here is this third level. I say this is the highest level of Christian faith. I can't make three steps here. If one could illustrate this, if this is Christ for us, the foundational, the historical, but that knowledge is not enough.

He said we need to have a personal encounter with Him and we move to Christ in us. And that's where many evangelicals do, and we know the Lord. You will forgive me if I do something unorthodox here, OK? Christ for us, all of us agree with that. Christ in us. Is that the reality in your life? Do you have an assurance of salvation sometimes even a Christian college? You're not sure you can know it, but don't get stuck there because that ends up in a selfish, self serving Christianity. It's not just Christ in me, Christ through me, the ministry to the world. And that's where you enter the third level. Okay? Can you see me back there? Yeah. Christ threw me. I want to invite you to invite Him not only to live in you, but to minister through you. That's where you find the fulfillment and the joy and victorious Christian living. Let me conclude in Moscow, I've gone for many years to former Soviet Union and now Russia to preach and teach. We've started a number of geological schools there. You know that in Moscow, as well as in all of the other capitals of Eastern Europe, there was one big day they all celebrated the Bolshevik Revolution.

They said the Bolshevik Revolution is our Christmas. The biggest celebration was always held in Moscow, celebrating what happened in 1917 when Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, through the brutal, bloody revolution, brought a Communist society into existence. And you would have in the Red Square, if you have been to Moscow, right there in the center is the Lenin's Mausoleum against the Kremlin walls. And in this huge open air theater, you will have a tremendous display of

Communist triumphalism as extra size pictures of the Communist leaders were carried. And then red flags everywhere, and then big slogans announcing worldwide victories of Communism. And then followed by thousands of soldiers who would march in perfect order. And that would be followed by the latest display of the splendor and power of the Soviet Army as the latest rockets rolled through the Red Square. And of course, the Communist leaders and generals would stand on the top of the Lenin Tomb, proudly saluting. 1989, the most tumultuous year in recent history. Gorbachev introduced the Perestroika Glasnost. A little bit more freedom, but still very much a controlled Communist society.

The parade was somewhat different at the 72nd anniversary. Namely, a small group of brave, uninvited, unofficial small group of these brave men dared to join the parade at the end. And as they started walking somewhat clumsily in that big parade they unfolded their own banner you may have seen it on CNN you may have forgotten it. In the meantime, the banner read 72 years on the way to nowhere. 72 years on the way to nowhere. What a telling criticism of the communist history. But when I saw that my dear friends use a Wesleyan expression, my heart was strangely warmed and I said, I thank You, Lord, that we are the people who are on the way to somewhere because we follow Him who is the way, the truth and the life. President at this mission conference let us commit and recommit our lives to Him not only to follow Him as we move towards the eternal city. But to allow Him to live in us so that we will know the joy of his presence. But also allow Him to work through us. To speak through us so that we will invite the people on both left and right side of this eternal journey to join us on the way to somewhere because Jesus is the way. Truth and life.

Let us pray. I thank You, Lord, for this privilege of sharing with my friends here at Biola University. We thank you died for us on the cross, that you love everyone present in this

auditorium, that you don't reject anyone Christ for us. But we also thank you that you're not a distant for us. You want to live in an intimate relationship with us, in us. I pray that every one of us will know that walk with you. Christ in us the hope of glory, Christ in us the victory over sin, Christ in us the joy of salvation. And then, Thirdly Lord, we want to be your servants. We want to be Your instruments, we want to be Your ambassadors. You have completed the work of reconciliation on the cross, but you have given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Work through us. Work through me, through every one of us for Your glory. For we ask in Christ's name and with the help of the Holy Spirit, Amen.