

# How to Reach This Broken World

## By: Nigel Goodwin and Peter Kuzmic

Goodwin:

I was able to be here with you. And thank you for letting me be here again. It's a different accent. Two nations divided by a common language, as Winston Churchill said. But I hope you understand me this morning. I'm Nigel, and I have a few minutes to share with you. Every morning is a new morning. Every moment is a new moment for the Creator. Every second is a redemptive second in your life. You can live it well or lousily. How are you living, moment by moment, in the presence of the one who made this morning? We need to open the window and taste the rain. We need to find the signposts that point us from where we are to where we never dreamed we might go.

Every single person here this morning is in mission. You are not in remission. You are in mission. There isn't one person here this morning who is not in mission. We are called into mission. We are not in a career. We are in a calling. A holy calling from the Creator God this morning. A holy calling. And every one of us here this morning is gifted. And our gifting and our calling are to be received, unwrapped and given back to the one who gave it to us.

So they came face to face, Pete and his old man. Pointing his guitar at his dad, Pete said, 'Give me what's mine. You've been scratching around this hole for 50 years and you've had no fun nor nothing. I want my fun now. So give me what's mine. This godforsaken dump makes me sick. I quit. It's me for the wicked city.'

The old man coughs up. Pete waves so long to his big brother, the sucker always working in the fields. That twit. Stuff that for a life. Off Pete goes. Guitar slung over one shoulder, two spare batteries in one pocket and \$5,000 in the other. He stopped at the first coffee bar he comes to. That's where he met Dingo Bingo, Billy and Ben the Harmony Men. Pete soon changed all that.

First note he twanged, they knew. First scream he screamed, they staggered back. One waggle and it was all over. Pete and his prodigal men teamed up. First it was small time stuff: local pubs and coffee bars with coffee bar cowboys and coffee bar dolls. Pete was 18. His hair was jet black. No face showing, just hair. He dyed it pink when they played the Pink Casino. He was 19 now. The fans heard him. Now they saw him. Agent heard the screams. The night the fire brigade were called in to save the Palais from burning, another idol was born.

Pete had made the big time. Casino, Palladium, Paris, Moscow, then back to the wicked city Pete had sworn to flatten. Cor, what a life! Heroin kept him going. Then he hit the bottle. Then rumors went round and dates got fewer. So did Janes, Janices and Jeans. Pete was no meanie. He spent the lot. He borrowed off Bingo. Borrowed off Dingo. Dingo went bust. Billy and Ben joined the Harmony Men in a comfy government cooler down South, Devon way.

Pete was on his tod. No dice for him. The brass studs fell off his jacket one by one. He nicked a pair of pants from Steptoe's Yard. Then finally, no work, no money, no rent, no fish and chips, no Janes, Janices and Jeans. No heroin, no nothing. November. Wind turned east. Pete was 21, so he came back to Slitherslide Farm. Was the old man wild? No, sir. He seemed tickled pink.

What about big brother? He did his nuts. When he saw the fuss that dad was making of Pete - bags of food, a roasted goat to the barbecue - he said, 'Cor, it ain't fair. This great slog crawls home and they roll out the red carpet. Here, am I the only bloke what don't [inaudible]?' Dad explained, 'Pete's just a crazy mixed up kid. He's learned his lesson the hard way.' Pete grinned as he hugged Dad. He said, 'Dad's a square, but I like him. I like him.' Even big brother managed a smile.

Now that's a true story. Luke's gospel. Three wonderful stories about lostness and finding. And mission is about lostness and finding. Three stories told to you and me. By the way, that was a Cockney accent, if you didn't recognize it. The story about the physical world, that God so loved the world. Has God stopped so loving? S-O - tiny word, infinite concept.

You can't love them more than so love. You are so loved this morning. Can you take that in? You are so loved this morning. God doesn't make repeats. Everyone here is an individual. He only makes one-offs. He doesn't make a chorus. He doesn't clone. He makes one of each of us. We're one beautifully, fearfully, wonderfully made. Lost sheep. Ninety-nine tucked up in their woolly coats. God goes off to look for the lost. He doesn't stick it in his pocket or under his arm. He puts it on his shoulders and says, 'Woo-hoo! Hey, let's party. That which is lost is found.'

God is concerned for the environment. Mission to the environment. A physical world, broken, fragmented, turned into a desert. From a garden into a desert. God dies in a desert, but rises again in a garden. And the gardener is with us this morning. Back in the garden of the remaking of my life and yours, among us. The physical world. And then a woman has lost some money. The

material world. God is interested in the material world. He's interested to put some incredible things into this world. Material things. Not that we might have gluttony and possess our possessions, but that we might be freed in Christ with material things.

A woman has lost a coin under the Axminster. She gets out the Hoover Automatic of two thousand years ago and she goes, and then she finds that which is lost. She doesn't shove it in her apron. She says, 'Hey, everybody, I have found that which is lost. Let's celebrate lost being found.' And then two boys. It could be two girls. One is religious, one is in the presence of the father. The other one says, 'Give me my lot. I'm off.' And he goes and squanders. And when he's down in the gutter - this is a Jewish boy eating pigs' food down in the gutter - he says, 'I'm a dumb fool. I'm coming back to my father.'

Such love. Such love. Don't keep it to yourself. If you are loved, you will love. If you are not loved, you cannot love. What is in you will come out of you. What you've been given must flow from you. You don't keep it to yourself because you will explode. There's enough tension in this world. People are falling apart. We need to receive and to share.

'Who are you?' said the prime minister, opening the door. 'I'm God,' replied the stranger. 'I don't believe you,' said the prime minister. 'Show me a miracle.' And God showed the prime minister the miracle of birth. 'That's nothing,' said the prime minister. My scientists are creating life in test tubes. I've nearly solved the secret of heredity. Artificial insemination is more certain than your lackadaisical method. And by crossbreeding, we're producing fish and mammals to our own design. Show me a proper miracle.'

And God calls the sky to darken, and hailstones came pouring down. The prime minister picked up his telephone to the Air Ministry. 'Send up a met plane and sprinkle the clouds with silver chloride crystals, will you?' And the met plane went up and sprinkled the clouds which had darken the sky. And the hailstones stopped pouring down and the sun shone brightly. 'Show me another.'

And God caused a plague of frogs to descend on the land. The prime minister picked up his cell phone. 'Get the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,' he said to the operator, 'and instruct them to procure a frog killer, as myxomatosis killed rabbits.' And soon the land was free from frogs, and people gave thanks to the prime minister and erected laboratories in his name. 'Show me another.'

And God caused the sea to divide. The prime minister picked up his telephone to the Polaris submarine, 'Lob a few ICBMs into Antarctica and melt the ice cap, will you, old man.' And the ice cap melted into water and the sea came rushing back. 'I will kill all firstborn,' said God. 'Paltry tricks,' said the prime minister. 'Watch this.' And he pressed a button on his desk and missiles flew to their preordained destinations and H-bombs split the world asunder and radioactivity killed every mortal thing. 'I can raise the dead,' said God. 'Please,' said the prime minister in his cardboard coffin. 'Let me live again.' 'Why? Who are you?' said the prime minister. 'Who are you?' said God, closing the lid. Do you know who you are this morning?

We're blessed today to have Peter Kuzmic come and speak to us again. Peter is from Slovenia. Our oldest daughter Nicola is at this moment teaching in Nova Gorica in Slovenia. We have a dear friend from Slovenia, the little country that did not get into the war, beautiful little country, who lives on Lake Bled. A dear friend called Alexander Mejak. He grew up in our home when he first came to England, spent time in our home. And so it's such a privilege, Peter, to have you here this morning. We are all in mission.

Announcer:

One of the many good things about conferences like these is that this is where dreams and potential meet experience. And I can just imagine some of the theater majors here thinking, I wish I could be like Mr. Goodwin someday. And I think he's also excited that he can see students here who still have the dream to do something, to use their gifts for the glory of God. And our speaker this morning is here to present his vast amount of experience to encourage us. And as I think about going into ministry, think, 'Okay, I'm going to do this, I'm going to conquer the world.' But often, I get discouraged. Then I met - well, I met him before, but as I talked to Dr. Kuzmic, he had fought communism, post-communism atheism, Eastern Europe, all the evils that happened there, travelled cross-culturally, encountered all sorts of problems and still conquered them in the name of Jesus. And I'm excited to have him come again and speak to us and encourage us to continue dreaming, to conquer in the name of Jesus.

Kuzmic:

Good morning, Biola. We are not in remission. We are all in -

Audience:

Mission.

Kuzmic:

We are all in -

Audience:

Mission.

Kuzmic:

Amen. Thank you, Nigel. I don't know how - did you memorize all that?

Goodwin:

Yes, sir.

Kuzmic:

Wow. Well, we'll all have to enroll in your - is it School of Creative Ministry? Nigel and I come from the same continent. Our countries are multiethnic. The problem is that mine is divided and his is not yet. When I was first for ministry in Great Britain, one of the evangelical leaders there told me and said, 'Peter, do you know why in Great Britain everybody loves the gospel?' And I said, 'Really?' He said, 'Oh, yes.' He said, 'The English love it because it gives them something to debate. The Welsh love it because it gives them something to sing about. The Irish love it because it gives them something to fight for. And the Scots love it, above all, because it is free.' Sorry.

There was a wise man in China, many wise men in China, but this one particularly stands out. His name was Li Huang Chung. And a famous Western general visited the old, wise Chinese leader one day and asked him a question. He said, 'Mr. Chung, how do you think humanity is divided?' And Li Huang Chung said, 'There are only three kinds of people in the world: those that are moveable, those that are immovable, and those that move them.'

It seems to me that here at Biola, you're not only moveable - you were not moveable, you wouldn't be here. But having shared yesterday morning and having talked with so many on the campus in the meantime, I am convinced that in this audience we have movers. God has called every one of us. God is in the process of equipping and empowering every one of us. And as we make ourselves available, God is ready to send every one of us, empowered by the Spirit and motivated by the love of Christ, to change our world for Christ and his kingdom.



I want to thank the Missions Committee for a tremendous hacienda in your team. This is one of the best organized missions conferences I have ever been to. And I want to express admiration for administration and faculty for having canceled classes this week. In many- uh-oh. That reaction may be slightly misunderstood. I've been to a number of missions conferences at colleges and seminaries, and they usually just squeeze in missions in the chapel, and everything goes on as it usually does. And I think you're saying a very important thing here at Biola: missions has to have a priority.

We are God's missionary people. Our God is a global God with a global vision. He's a missionary God, and we are his people in the step with his Spirit. We want to be his missionary, life-changing, life-transforming agents in our world. Well, I've mentioned yesterday, as we did our expositions of 2 Corinthians 5, that we will move on to look at missions from a somewhat different perspective, but the same mission. All of us know the Great Commission, right? All of us, I hope, obey Great Commission. Matthew 28.

There is another aspect to the Great Commission, which I call the Great Compassion, that we may not know as well. And I want us to read that, because I want to speak to you this morning, or I want to share with you this morning, some basic principles on how to do missions in painful situations of our broken world.

I am sure you know statistics. Many of you are Intercultural Studies majors. Many of you have traveled the world. You know that 780 million people today live in absolute poverty, which is a condition of life defined by World Bank as, quote, 'so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy

and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency.' You know that roughly 500 million of these on the edge of starvation.

I have some friends here this morning, wonderful missionary leaders from India, David and Beth Grant. And they could talk to you for days about the children of India, and I could talk about Mother Teresa, with whom I was in Calcutta, and who comes from what was formerly my country, from Macedonia or former Yugoslavia, although she's Albanian ethnically. And you know how she has ministered to the poor of the poorest.

Another one and a half billion people in our world are malnourished, and you know the effects on how damaging that is, especially to infants and children. Of the 125 plus million babies born last year, born last year, 12 million already died without having experienced their first birthday. Another 5 million will not experience their fifth birthday. One child out in four suffers from malnutrition in our world. I know this is hard to believe if you have never traveled out of Southern California, but, my friends, we said our God is a global God.

We have to have a global vision. We need to repent of any kind of provincial or parochial vision. We need to be the citizens. We are citizens of God's kingdom, having God's perspective, God's view, and see these realities in other parts of the world because they are at the very heart of God's loving mission in our world, to which he calls us to join him in holy partnership.

Four of every five children lack adequate healthcare. The poorest children are often parents themselves. Did you know that 40% of the first births in the two-thirds world are to girls 15

years old or younger? What about civil wars? In my country, former Yugoslavia, close to quarter of a million people have been killed. 3 million have become homeless refugees. What about the pictures that you see on TV now daily from Zaire? What about those horrendous events in Rwanda? What about Somalia? And we could go around the world, and you may, some of you, in your urban downtown ministry encounter problems, and you could provide stories, testimonials and statistics pointing to the hurting people of our world who need the message of life and hope. And that message is Jesus Christ.

Civil wars. You know, we are soon turning a century, actually a millennium. But when this century began, there was an unprecedented optimism in the world. And humanistic philosophers were saying, 'In this century we will resolve all the problems. All the injustice. There will be no suffering anymore. There will be no killing, because' they said, 'this is the century of the elevated human reason.' Alexander Solzhenitsyn, writing, recently said, 'This century of the great progress turned out to be the most cannibalistic century in the history of mankind.'

Just a few statistics again. If you compare the last four centuries, how many people, both soldiers and civilians, were killed in various wars? And by the way, there are right now in our world some 40 wars of various kinds and magnitudes - civil, ethnic, economic wars fought in the world where people are dying or people are being killed daily. In the 1500s, 1,600,000 people were killed in the wars. In the 1600s, 6,100,000. In 1700s, the number climbs to 7,000,000 people. In the 1800s, to 19,400,000 people killed in wars. That's the 1800s. Okay, the 19th century.

What about this century? It would be normal to expect the numbers to go down, but the numbers are 111,800,000 in this century alone, killed from human violence. More than in all the centuries in which the strong governments existed on the planet Earth. More people - one of the analysts says more people have been killed in war in our century than all the preceding five thousand years combined.

I do not want to continue with these kinds of statistics. It's obvious that we live in an era of culminating upheavals, unparalleled crisis. At the same time, unparalleled and unprecedented opportunities for the kingdom of God, because the crisis of this world always present the opportunity for the kingdom of God and the people of God, if they can only read the signs of the time and, led by their master, go and respond to the times of the crisis and to the people who suffer. Crisis that mount in complexity around the world.

Just look at the pictures of what's happening in a tiny country in the Balkans called Albania. Total anarchy. Hundreds of people killed, innocent children shot for no reason whatsoever. Violence. Leon Trotsky, in a totally different context, observed once and said, 'Whoever among us longs for a quiet life has certainly chosen the wrong epoch.' Now let me read the scriptures I wanted to read at the beginning, and somehow Nigel got me carried away. Thank you, Nigel. You've really inspired me. I don't know how you packed four sermons already in your message. This may all be superfluous that I'll be saying.

Matthew 25. Matthew 28, we have the great, classic Great Commission. 'All power in heaven and earth is given to me,' Jesus, the risen Lord, says. He is the only one that has legitimacy to

make such an outrageous statement. That's the foundation for missions, the cross and the resurrection. And then he says, 'Go, teach, preach, baptize.' And then the Great commission ends with the great promise: 'And I will be with you to the very end.' In Matthew 25, Jesus as he's talking about the last days, about the Judgment Day. And I will not read the whole story. Just to remind us, I'll read from verse 33 on to verse 40.

'And then he will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. And then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, prisoner, refugee. How do we respond? 'Then the righteous will answer to him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger, invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' And the king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

I was sitting in a wonderful office at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. The time was December '91. In the meantime, I had to evacuate my family from a city that was hit with 150 thousand shells in eight months. We were almost killed one night when we were running across

the street into the basement of our neighbor. Our youngest daughter, whom I was carrying on my shoulder, was heavily traumatized, when in that apocalyptic moment we were thrown into the dust when this shell fell so close to us.

I like the fact that in America you don't have walls between the houses, but in that case, a wall saved our life, because the shell fell on the other side of the wall. Otherwise, shrapnel would have cut us through. But it was one of those moments where emotional damages are inflicted and our daughter, several years later, still wakes us up at night. We had to evacuate the theological college and seminary that I'm president of, and I was at Gordon Conwell. It was actually arranged years in advance that I would have, for the first time in 23 years of ministry, sabbatical for one semester to finish a book. And I was working on a manuscript when the phone rang.

And it was the mayor of my city, a gifted young politician, a good friend, Dr. Kramarić, about whom some people talk about maybe future president of the country. And he said, 'Peter, I finally got your phone number. I understand you're in America. Do you know what's going on here since you left? He said, 'The hospital is about to start operating without anesthesia.' And then he mentioned several other towns that you would not recognize, but were very meaningful to me, and said they are already operating without anesthesia in those places.

He says, 'People are going hungry. There is total despair, total discouragement. There is only one little road leading into the city, and we don't know whether we will survive it because they are shelling that road to cut off this region to get to certain oil fields beyond the city of Osijek.' And then he stuck me. He said, 'Peter, you are Christian.' The mayor is not a Christian. He's an

agnostic. An agnostic intellectual, a postmodernist in many ways. And he said, 'You are Christian. What will you do about it?' He says, 'You cannot be indifferent, as a Christian, when people suffer.'

And suddenly there was a conviction in my mind and my heart that I was involved in a very selfish academic exercise, promoting my career. And I pushed my manuscript aside and, as tears started flowing down my cheek, I said, 'Lord, I am going back.' And I did. It's a long story that I will not recall on how we got in and out and how we were finally able to get some food and how we established a relief agency to alleviate human suffering which has saved thousands, thousands of lives.

But friends, we live in a world of hurting multitudes. How do we, as God's missionary community, how do you and I, as ambassadors of the kingdom of God, remember 2 Corinthians 5 that we expounded yesterday? How do we respond? How do we bring hope into despairing situation? How do we bring a message of life to the people who are dying and starving? How do we become instruments of reconciliation on behalf of the One who has provided for reconciliation on the cross where he, instead of killing his enemies who deserve it because of sin, killed the enmity by shedding his own blood and by letting himself be killed on that cross to which he took the sins and the guilt and the crime of humanity, including you and me? How do we respond?

I want to suggest this morning several principles for ministry, for missions in our broken world. In answering that question, I'd like to speak about the five C's of the ministry in painful situations

in our world. We may not be able to cover them because time in North American meetings always flies much faster than in Eastern Europe. But let's try it.

The first one: context. Context. Here at Biola University, a distinguished evangelical school, you pride yourself, and rightly so, to be the experts in the holy text. I am surprised how many students I have met, even in Intercultural Studies or Business or Computer majors, who have studied Greek. And I rejoice, because I taught Greek 25 years ago. Why would we study Greek and Hebrew? Because we consider scriptures to be very important. Because we consider this word, this written word of God, to be wholly inspired, infallible, the rule of faith and practice of our life. We are people of the text, holy text.

But, friends, ours is a journey, and missions is a constant two-way traffic between the holy text and the unholy context, between the holy word of God and the sinful, alienated world that God created unto himself, but was the world that is alienated because of sin. And so we have to know the word. But at the same time, friends, we have to know the world. Sometimes, in our faithfulness to the Word - and I know that at Biola we don't run the danger of liberal schools - I think the temptation here may be that you become so faithful, so preoccupied with the Word that you begin to ignore the world.

And, friends, if we ignore the world, we betray the world. Because our mission does not take place in a vacuum. God so loved the world that he sent his Son, and he sent him into the world. That's why you need to be at home in a boat. That's why you need to be excellent in your knowledge of the world. But you also need to have well-informed minds about what is going on



in the world, because you need to relate the holy text to that unholy context, motivated by his love, well-equipped. And you have chosen one of the best places to be equipped for a ministry in the world.

We are people who are called to build bridges between God's Word and God's world. And this is where it's so important that we don't become preoccupied with ourselves. I was recently asked in a media interview what I thought was the biggest problem of the church in the West. And I don't know whether I was right. I would like to argue that I was. I said, 'The biggest problem with the church in the world, especially the church in the West, is that it is preoccupied with itself.'

We have been created, we have been called. We have been cleansed. We've been empowered to live for others. Context. Our mission in context. And Jesus is an example here. What did he do? Jesus, the model missionary. Jesus, the missionary par excellence. He did not broadcast salvation from some kind of a safe distance. He did not get stuck in the third heaven or some kind of a remote sky up there above Los Angeles, picking up a big heavenly megaphone and shouting down to the inhabitants of the planet Earth, 'Repent, or...!' No. He entered our human history. He took upon himself human flesh. He took our pain. He was hungry and thirsty, just like you and I are. Incarnational missions. Context.

If one thing we have learned - and yesterday I told you about commuting between Boston and Bosnia - if we have learned one thing in our evangelism, in that painful situation in Bosnia, is that evangelism - and that's not only true of Bosnia, that's true of so many places in the world,

and some of you are experiencing it right downtown LA in your missions outreaches. And that is that you cannot do evangelism in antiseptic conditions.

Second principle: compassion. Great Commission we've already mentioned. The evangelicals know the Great Commission. Hopefully we all practice the Great Commission. But I would like to suggest this morning, my friends, that to Matthew 28, the Great Commission, we must always add Matthew 25 that we have just read - the Great Compassion. The question that I was struggling for a long time as we started ministry in Bosnia, it was how do we evangelize in a situation like that without appearing as if exploiting human suffering? How do you evangelize when proclamation alone is almost counterproductive? Because it smacks of religious propaganda and proselytism.

Because people have not only ears to hear what we have to say, they have eyes to see how we live and what we do. People have not only souls that we save and register for heaven, people have empty stomachs that need to be filled so that they can hear what you have to say about the one who is Bread of Life. Without a living and loving concern, without a sacrificial engagement, without becoming contextually sensitive in that solidarity of redemptive love, without loving them the way Jesus loves them, we have nothing to say to them.

And it seems to me that we need to, as evangelicals, develop also in this area facing enormous challenges in our world. We need to develop a new evangelical spirituality of engagement, because very often we have just fallen prey to some kind of a spirituality of withdrawal when we

face situations like that. Oh, friends, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the glorious and powerful message for all of the painful situations, for all of the hurting people of our world.

George Bernard Shaw said at one point, he says, 'The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them. That is the essence of inhumanity.' And when Time magazine was reporting about those horrendous events in Central Africa two years ago, in a reader's response, one reader made the same point. He said death in Rwanda in harrowing proportions came not only from massacres and cholera, but also from apathy. Lord forgive us if we are ever indifferent. Compassion. Jesus saw the crowds and he was moved with compassion.

Thirdly: credibility. Credibility. We had a great congress. I was a member of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization for a number of years, and we had a number of great congresses, but in one congress, I remember we had a real conflict between the Western mission leaders and the third world, or two-thirds world mission leaders because they were coming from a different perspective. And the motto, or the slogan, of the congress was 'how shall they hear?' And I was asked to mediate in some way, and at the following press conference I said, 'Well, 'how shall they hear' is biblical, because it's taken verbatim from Romans 10, but it is not fully biblical, because not everything is biblical that's quoted from the Bible, except you quote the whole Bible, and especially not biblical if you quote it out of context.' There you have it again, text and context.

And I said, "How shall they hear?" depends, to a great extent, on 'what shall they see?' And the conflict there basically was the Westerners were saying it's a question of methodology. And the

third world people were saying, no, it's primarily a question of authenticity. Sometimes you may be tempted in this great land of the United States of America to think that missions can be done and anything can be accomplished if you have those three famous M's: money, methodology and management.

But, friends, to do mission in Jesus's way, we need authenticity and power. We need credibility. And our message has no credibility apart from the visibility in transformed personal lives, in new, quality relationships in the Christian community and a loving concern for the needy. And the problem today is not that we lack a credible message. Oh, the gospel is the most credible message. Jesus is the most credible person, but the world is looking for credible messengers. Are you willing to be one? Credible messengers, people whose lives are in harmony with the gospel, and are thus able to share it with authenticity and power?

For 25 years I was directing Evangelical Theological College and Seminary in former Yugoslavia, now Croatia, in Osijek, and under communism, when we would take students out and I would travel in a van with them every Sunday to evangelize and plant churches, and we were facing the opposition from communism. And sometimes the student would ask, 'What is the primary message we have?' And I remember saying, maybe our main task is simply to wash the face of Jesus, because it has been dirtied and distorted in our European history through the centuries of institutional compromised Christianity, and then again, dirtied and distorted in this century by Marxist atheistic propaganda.

Friends, let's go out there and wash the face of Jesus. It is not Christianity, it is living Christ. It is Jesus who died on the cross. It is the risen Lord. That's where the credibility is. That's where the power is. You may have heard the two C's. The last two C's we'll have to cut out: the community, because you cannot do it alone. You need it for prayer and support and protection. Creativity: God is creative. The Holy Spirit is creative. Enrolled in a school of creative ministry. Nigel will give you the information. But back to credibility for a moment.

City of Bihać, Northwestern Bosnia. For three years, Bihać was totally cut off. They were shelling it from three different sites. That hospital was operating without anesthesia for a long, long time. UNHCR, Red Cross - nobody could get in. There are over 1,050 small children who lost their parents due to indiscriminate shelling. And some of our brave relief workers from Agape Ministries got in. They risked their lives. And as a result, when Bihać finally was opened up, we were the first Christian relief agency registered.

We received a nice place in the center of the city to distribute food and clothing. We were paying 500 German marks, which is probably about \$370 a month for that. And then the mayor invited me as the founding president of Agape and our executive director for a special meeting. And then he took us for supper. And we were into this long, wonderful conversation, about two hours. And I turned to him and I said, 'Mr. Alegić, you are Muslim and I'm a Christian. How is it that we get along this well?' And he had a smile on his face and he said, 'Dr. Kuzmic, that's because I'm not the kind of Muslim that people in the West think when they hear the word Muslim.'

He says, 'I have been raised in Muslim culture. I have a Muslim name, but I'm not a fundamentalist. I don't have a deep commitment,' then he says, 'to Allah,' but he says, 'I'm increasingly interested in your Jesus because of who you people are and what you do.' And he said, in this order, 'who you are.' Being is more important than doing, because the doing has to be the outgrowth of the being, or we've got things in the wrong order.

And then he says, 'And besides that, Dr. Kuzmic, you are not the kind of Christian that we Muslims think when we hear the word Christian. You did not come with a political agenda. You did not come with territorial claims. You did not come like some of those others.' And he named them, who in a medieval fashion came with a cross in one hand and with a sword in another, and who raped our women and drove us out and inflicted so much pain and shame and suffering on our people. He said, 'You just came and loved our people, and you didn't ask what nationality and what religion you are. You just love them all.' And then he said a few things that shocked me. He said, 'You don't have to pay a penny anymore.' And he signed right there that we had this beautiful, large place free of charge. And then he said, 'Feel free to distribute your Christian literature and to start your church.'

Now, that - a Muslim mayor encouraging an Evangelical to start a church, the first Protestant church of any kind - that is a miracle. And when he saw the shock on my face, when he saw the shock on my face, he started explaining it. He said, 'You know, we trust you people. Go ahead and do it.' And we did it next morning. There's a church there. Oh, yes. He said, 'We trust you.' And then he made a statement that I want to develop into a missiological principle.

He said, 'You are credible with us because you became vulnerable with us.' Credibility has something to do with our availability. Credibility has something to do with our vulnerability. And when I heard that, that gave me an opportunity to witness to him about Jesus. You know why he's credible? Because he became vulnerable. Vulnerable at the point of entering our history, vulnerable to the very death on the cross, to provide salvation, to provide hope. That's why he, and only he, is the way, the truth, and the life. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, you're not only a mighty creator, ruler, and sustainer of the universe. You are not some kind of distant divinity. This morning, here at Biola, we address you as our Father, Abba Father. It's all possible because of Jesus, that great missionary son of yours that you sent into this world. And he said, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

Send us, Lord, filled with your great redemptive love. Help us to be contextually sensitive. Help us to become vulnerable in order to be credible the way you are. Help us to love people the way you love them. Help us to be obedient to the Great Commission as we practice the Great Compassion, in Jesus's name and for his glory, and his glory alone. Amen. Amen.