

# Q&A, Missions Conference March 22, 1990

## By Tony Campolo

Campolo:

It's question time. Question and- that's what this is, question and answer time. So depending on how creative you are will depend on how creative I am. You know, if you ask questions like, 'What's your wife's name?' It won't be that interesting. [audience laughing] Her name? Her name is Peggy. [audience laughing] So it's question and answer time. What great, probing questions are racing through your cerebral? Yes, sir.

Audience member 1:

Yesterday, after 10:30 session, my wife and I went to go have lunch in Buena Park, and saw an old man. He's out, dirty, beat-up, in this beat-up old [unintelligible], cruising down the street in front of Medieval Times. And I drove right by him, and Jeanine looked at me and I could hear your voice still-

Campolo:

Yeah, yeah.

Audience member 1:

-in my head, you know, [audience laughing] talking about that lady with the cup of coffee.

Campolo:

Yeah. Try Jesus walking by the guy on the side of the road. You know, I got the plot. Guilt. guilt. I could just feel it.

Audience member 1:

Yeah. I slow down, turn around, he's walking slow enough to catch him. Walked up to him, and he just looked at the ground, and I said, "Hi."

He said, "Hi."

I said, "What's your name?"

He said, after second, he said, "Joe. Joseph."

And I go, "Where you from?"

"New Jersey."

Okay, I said, "Can I give you a ride to where you're going?"

He said, "No, no, no, I'm just walking up to around the restaurant." You could tell this guy hadn't eaten or slept, it was really, really...

I said, "Well, let me give you a ride over there."

And he said, "No, no, no."

I said, "Well, let me just give you some money then."

And he goes, "No, no, no, no." There's some money in his pocket.

And he said, "Well, well do you want to go have lunch?"

I said, "Yeah, yeah, let's go have lunch."

He goes, "I know this coffee shop right over here."

So he got in my car, I put his bags there, in the back of the car, and rolled down the windows real quick. [audience laughing] And we get to this place, and apparently the lady there knew him, and he'd been going there, you know, a while. And I talked to her and I said, "What do you do for this guy?" And she goes, "Well, I give him coffee, and he usually won't eat." And I said, "How about a hamburger?"

"Okay."

And he was like, really, really distant, wouldn't look at me, and he goes, "I normally sit here."

And I said, "Okay, we'll sit here."

And I guess what he was trying to say is, like, 'I'll sit here, and you guys sit somewhere else.' But I didn't understand that. And so we all tried to sit together, but then, like, he got up, and I had ordered three hamburgers, I didn't really want to eat here. And he goes, "I'm leaving."

"Where are you going?"

He goes, "I'm going to McDonald's."

"But just ordered you a hamburger, I already paid for it, it's already on the Visa and everything."

[unintelligible]

"That's okay, I'm just gonna go to McDonald's."

Now, in a case like [Campolo laughing] that- I think he might have overheard me talking to the lady about, you know, "Should we call Salvation Army? Should we- you know, what should we do to get this guy off the street, so that he has a shelter?" What- I mean, I felt like I had failed.

This guy walked away.

Campolo:

Oh, no, you shouldn't feel like you failed. First of all, in dealing with the homeless in the United States, I don't know how it is here on the West Coast, but on the East Coast they fall into categories. And the problem is that you never know who you're dealing with. A significant proportion of the population that's on the street, you may know, is borderline schizophrenic. About ten years ago, there was federal legislation to deinstitutionalize people who were in these state hospitals. In short, unless somebody is really proven to be socially dangerous, you can't institutionalize them. And of course, that drives all of us crazy, because if you live in New York City particularly, there are 30,000 of these people in Manhattan. 30,000 of them.

I mean, you can't go anywhere. You go on the subway, they're all over the subway walkways, they're- everywhere you go, they're there. They're omnipresent, because the cities in the east are very different than the cities out west. I mean, the freeway system does not crisscross Manhattan. Do you know what I mean? I mean, everything's very concentrated. If you've been in New York or Philadelphia, you know these old cities.

So thousands of people running around the street are quite a problem, and a significant proportion of them are borderline schizophrenic. And, you know, there's all kinds of people on talk shows saying they ought to be arrested, they ought to be pulled off the streets. Basically, I think the greatness of America, to be perfectly frank, is that they're there. No other society on the face of the earth would allow borderline schizophrenics by the thousands to wander up and down their street. [audience laughing] I mean, do you understand that? There isn't another country that would tolerate them, because they're obnoxious. And in America, they're saying, quite simply

this: 'If they're not hurting you, if they're just [inaudible] presence, sorry, that's not a good enough reason to lock them up in a building where they can't have any freedom.'

Stop to think about this. I don't know whether you've ever dealt with borderline schizophrenics, but if you have, you know that they drift in and out of being very rational. There's a woman in Philadelphia that hung around the University of Pennsylvania called the Duck Lady. We used to call her the Duck Lady because she thought she was a duck. And if you didn't call her a duck, she wasn't happy, you know, and she always walked around going, "Quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack." Well, one day I was running across the street and I'm standing in the corner, and who's next to me? I could tell who it was before I turned, you know, I mean it's "Quack, quack, quack, quack, quack", and I turned over and I said, "Hey, how are you doing, Duck Lady? Having a nice day?"

And as though she was from a sophisticated family, she said, "Yes, matter of fact, I'm having a very nice day. It's lovely weather, isn't it, today?"

"Yeah."

"Do you teach here at the university?"

I said, "Yes, I do. I'm on the sociology department."

"Oh," she said, "I remember taking some courses in sociology." And the- you know, light changed, and all of a sudden, you know, "Quack, quack, quack, quack, quack, quack." And you're like, what- did that happen? Did that really happen? She doesn't hurt anybody. She's wandering the streets. Now, I ask a very simple question: if you were borderline schizophrenic, so that half the time you were rational- you understand, insanity is always a matter of degree.

Any one of you, if we caught you at the right moment, [audience laughing] could be institutionalized. Agreed? I mean, let's face it. You know, you're on your way to class, you're on your way to an appointment, and you're all set, ready to go. You can't find your car keys. Ever been like this? Do you not go literally insane, starting throwing stuff? 'I can't find my keys! I can't find my keys! [unintelligible sounds]. God, why are you doing this to me?' [audience laughing]. And if somebody walked in and saw you doing this, they'd say, 'That guy needs to be institutionalized.' You know? I mean, you got me? It's only a matter of degree.

Now, if you're a person who's slipping from what we would call sanity into schizophrenia and into states of insanity, you're flipping back and forth, and you had the choice of being institutionalized in a little cell, being ordered around in these very dehumanizing circumstances, and being out on the streets where you could wander where you felt like wandering, which would you choose? So you got a guy who's borderline schizophrenic, he's probably scared to death of people. He probably doesn't want to talk to people. The fact that you did as much as you did was probably the most social interchange that he's probably had in the last five years. You know, what you do discover in the midst of all of this, interestingly enough, is that there's an awful lot of compassion out there, independent of the church.

I told you the story the other night, for instance, of my friend Jim Dagano and the AIDS funeral. My stories usually go on, as you can tell. I always- I have to drop them in the middle because I've made my point, but there's always more to the story. But Jim- I don't know. You heard me tell that story about the AIDS funeral. After the funeral was over, Jim said they got back in their cars, they started back to Manhattan, and they said, "Before we go back to your church, we have

to go up 8th Avenue because some people need to wait for us." And they came driving up 8th Avenue. This is sheer insanity. All these homosexual guys, they just buried this guy, buried him of AIDS. They come driving up 8th Avenue, he said they came to the corner about, like, 30th and 8th. And here in the corner, like, was about 70 or 80 streetwalking prostitutes waiting on the corner. And they drove up, they rolled down the window.

This prostitute came over, looked in the window, and this homosexual guy sitting next to my friend Jim said, "This is the pastor that conducted the funeral. It was really a lovely funeral. Everything's well." And all these women are around there saying, "Gee, we're really happy to hear that." Here this homosexual guy, he was evidently a big, husky guy, and he used to go around and whenever the whores were getting pushed around by the pimps, he would go and beat up the pimp. He became the protector of all the whores on 8th Avenue. And when he died- I mean, there's all these little dramatic stories of compassion in the underbelly of society. You know, and they came over and they all were saying to Jim the same thing: "You know, we really wanted to come to the funeral, but when you're like us, we just didn't feel it was right, and we thought, you know, it would be an insult, so we just-" But here they were waiting for the report on how the funeral went. And very very touching stories like that that go on and on and on.

I didn't tell you a touching story about Agnes. It's a great story. The story I told you about happened in November- February 25th, easy to remember because it's my birthday. I was speaking at Lynfield College delivering a lecture series in sociology. It was not a religious jag, it was a heavy. And I came out on the rostrum- on the platform, to speak. And there on the rostrum- I couldn't believe it. Here was this rostrum with balloons tacked all around it. You

know, all kinds of balloons, silver balloons. And I went up to the rostrum, and here was a big card that said, "Happy birthday, Tony. Agnes, your friend from Hawaii." How she found out who I was, where I was, what my birthday is, was beyond me. But these are the little stories that go on underground here.

And you probably, you know, you probably communicated to this guy much more than you think you did, number one. Undoubtedly, I mean, just from what you've told me, he's kind of borderline schizophrenic. Probably totally antisocial, totally afraid of people. He may even be more than schizophrenic. He may- you know, most schizophrenic people, you can tell that they're schizophrenic because they think that everybody's an FBI agent. Do you ever meet them? That they've got radio transmitters pinned to their clothes, and they're keeping- and, you know, and you say, 'But why would anybody bother?' You know, I mean, like 'Why would the FBI want to keep tabs on you? I mean, what do you know?' And that never occurs to them. [audience laughing] But I would say about half of the people on the streets fall into that category, number one.

There's a new group that's taking to the streets that are really problematic if you're in city ministries that we haven't even begun to deal with, and that's people who have been reduced to absolute poverty because of drugs. The whole drug subculture is producing a rising number of homeless people. I mean, at a rate that staggers the imagination. It used to be that you had these schizophrenic men and women wandering the streets, dirty and filthy. Now you see whole families out there with little children, and they are incredibly pathetic. So that's a whole other group. And that group, like most drug pusher people, have learned to go after money with no



holds barred, which means that they will exploit their children to this end. It's just absolutely horrible, and that becomes difficult.

And then there is a small group of people, very small, who generally can be helped on a long-term basis. What most of us think of in evangelism, what most of us think of in evangelism, is we meet somebody, we love them, because we love them they become open to us. We give them the story of Jesus. They accept the Lord, the Holy Spirit cleans up their lives, and three weeks later, they're walking with Jesus, and they got a job and they got a family, and it's wonderful. That very, very seldom happens. If as a missionary, you have to have converts every time you lay the Gospel on people, you're in bad shape.

The truth of the matter is, you did what needed to be done. Remember what Jesus said. 'The glass of water given in my name, the hamburger ordered in my name, has its reward.' Doesn't say that the other person even took it if you offered it. To be out there and to have an assembly of people of God, wandering around the streets offering things in the name of Jesus, is in itself evangelism. There is a presence of God that is being communicated. There is a power of God that is being communicated. We are too verbal and too cerebral on our whole approach. Paul says so well: "I did not come to you in excellency of words, but in the power of the Holy Spirit." When you stop this guy, maybe you realize very early on you can't communicate with this guy.

You know, what you need to do, and this is- when everything else fails, I always do this. I always say- ask them one question. 'Look, before you leave, I'd like to pray with you. Is that okay?' Always do that. You'd be amazed what the power of prayer itself does. He wouldn't take

your hamburger, he wouldn't take your coffee. You ordered him everything, did you offer to pray with him? You should have, you see. Because I find, incredibly, openness to prayer works when nothing else does. And generally, just pray for the person. You know, 'Dear Lord, be with this guy. Help him. I don't know what his problems are, you know what his problems are. Help him to trust in you for salvation. May your Holy Spirit minister to him, and guide him, and take care of him, and protect him. In Jesus name, amen.' Send him on his way. That in itself is evangelism. That's ministry. One sows, another reaps, God gives the increase. Amen?

So, you know, the whole style of ministering on the city streets is very, very different. I think you have to be- you know, we're so used to the suburban thing. The suburban thing is everybody's cool. We wouldn't think in the suburbs. That's what I like about the city as opposed to the suburbs. The suburbs? Everybody works up to things. You know, first you get them involved in a Little League game, and then you go on a retreat, and then maybe three weeks later, you get around to mentioning Jesus. You know, not us. In the city, you just look at people and you say, 'You want to pray? I'd like to talk to you about Jesus.' And the more- the more you play the suburban games, the worse you get.

Because in the city, everybody is suspicious. 'What does this guy want from me?' And if you say right up front, 'Hey, I'd like to take you to breakfast and talk to you about Jesus,' that's clear. [audience laughing] You know, the guy wasn't sure why you wanted to take him to breakfast. You know, he's scared to death of you anyway, you said you wanted to take him to breakfast. 'What does this guy want from me?' Maybe you should have told him 'I'd like to take you to

breakfast, and buy you a cup of coffee and a hamburger, talk to you about Jesus, and convert you.' [audience laughing]

You know, I do a thing. There are four of us that do it: R.C. Sproul, myself, Chuck Colson, and a guy by the name of Fred Federoff. But the four of us, that you don't know, but the four of us do this thing called a Gathering of Men. I don't know whether you ever heard of Gathering of Men. First of all, nothing fancy about it. Gathering of Men takes place in a city like, I don't know, Baltimore, maybe twice a year. It takes place at 7 o'clock in the morning, ends at eight. You get a cup of coffee and a doughnut. It's an attempt to evangelize upper-echelon corporate executives. You know, so you're dealing with all vice presidents of companies.

There's- build on this assumption. Here I am, I'm working in this corporation, here's this vice president. I've never talked to him about Jesus. It's a very simple thing. You go to him and you say, 'Harry, you know I'm a Christian, you know I go to church.' It's very direct. 'I've never really tried to shove my gospel down your throat, but I wouldn't feel good if I let it go on like this, because this is so important to me. Now, I know you're my friend-' we always tell them to do it this way- 'as a personal favor to me, would you come to a breakfast next week? It starts at seven, we promise you we'll be out of there by eight on the dot. And the purpose of this is to really make very clear to you what being a Christian is, and we're going to try to convert you.'

[audience laughing] 'And, now, as a personal favor to me, would you give me one hour? And I promise you I'll never talk to you about this again if you don't want to talk about it. But I won't feel good unless I know that I have been responsible for making the most important thing in my

life clear to you just once, okay? Will you do it for me? One morning, I'm never going to bother you again.' In 95% of the cases, what's the guy going to say? 'Harry, for you, I'll do it.'

When we get up to speak, the first thing we say- there's no music. They come in and got their cup of coffee. Everybody's got bleary eyes, donuts, all dressed up in their three pieces. You get up on the rostrum, there's usually about six or seven hundred of these guys sitting there around these tables, and you say, 'Today the speaker is Tony Campolo, or Chuck Colson. And we all know why we're here. We're here because he's going to really make a pitch, and try at the end of this meeting to get you to make a decision to give your life to Jesus.'

Now you have to understand, the reason why we do this is because you have to understand where these guys are coming from. These guys are coming from business. All day long, they're going to be sitting in the office, and one guy after the other is going to come in there, one salesman after another one. Everybody's got something he's trying to sell you. What these guys want to do, because their time is short, is what? 'Cut through the crap. Why are you here? What do you want from me?' The best way to deal with these people is what? Cut through the crap, say, 'This is why I'm here, we're here to convert you.'

'Oh, okay, I don't want to be converted.'

'Fine. Will you give me a chance?'

'Yeah, I'll give you a chance to convert me.'

And you sit there. [audience laughing] Generally speaking, out of- the reason why we always do these things is generally out of about 500 people at such a gathering, usually about 100 make

decisions for Christ, just because it's direct. And it's not that we're some kind of special speaker, it's that people are so tired of religious manipulation, they're so fed up with it. 'If you want to convert me, then please tell me that, and I'll decide whether or not I'm willing to listen to you. But don't come in and give me this razzle dazzle stuff and try to lure me. I mean, you know, I'm waiting for the hook, so let's go.'

And I think that in certain forms of urban life, we get too much suburban style. Suburban style is very- and Southern California is the worst place in the world. Everybody's cool down here, you know. Everybody kind of- you never know what you're getting into. That's why every cult starts down here, right? Because, you know, people get sucked into things before they even realize what it's all about. The Mormons do well down here, you know, because the Mormons come and say, 'I want to talk to you about family life.' Everybody says, 'Oh, that sounds lovely.' And they talk about family life, and the next thing you know, they're into something else. In Philadelphia, everybody's suspicious. You know, you- right? You've been to Philadelphia. Somebody opens the door, says, 'I want to talk to you about family life.' 'What do you want to tell me? What's the point? What are you going to tell me that nobody else tells me?' You know, and they're very upfront.

So don't feel bad. And I think that in street ministry, be very upfront, be very direct, and don't waste time. And be sure to pray with people. I pray with people all the time. I mean, it's the nicest thing you can do for them, and they feel so grateful when it's done. I mean, nobody's ever going to say to you when you finish praying for them, 'Gee, I really hated that.' [audience laughing] So that's what you should have done. Next time- realize that you made tremendous

progress, you got him in the car, you got him in the restaurant, that's probably more social interaction than this borderline schizophrenic has had in the last five years. Tremendous triumph. And you're upset because the guy is not going to the mission field today. [audience laughing] Another question. Yeah.

Audience member 2:

[inaudible]

Campolo:

You know, I really can never answer questions outside of the existential situation. You know, I always got to go in and kind of look around and say, 'Oh, it's obvious what you got to do here.' But I can't do that sitting here. I have a book called "Ideas for Social Action", which has a hundred ideas of what you can do with a youth group to get them involved. It's a book called "Ideas for Social Action". Zandervan has it out. The first half of the book is the theology, the second half of the book is just a hundred case studies of things you can do, including taking over the local political organization. Very easy to do, especially- [audience laughing] I assure you, very very easy to do. All kinds of fun things.

Audience member 3:

What's the name of the book?

Campolo:

What's that? "Ideas for Social Action". Yeah.

Audience member 4:

I had a question about a statement that you made a while ago that's kind of dangerous around [inaudible] circles. So- Jesus was God and only God because he was fully human. Would you still hold to that?

Campolo:

Oh yeah.

Audience member 4:

And if you do, what do you mean [inaudible]?

Campolo:

Well I didn't know- I thought you were going to say something else. That is not my most famous statement [audience laughing] by any stretch of imagination. I thought you were going to hit the other one. [audience laughing] And the whole thing is, for ten years I taught at a large secular university. Okay, get this picture. You're trying to witness day in and day out. I never took my role there as a quiet one. I was very, very direct in every class. Beginning of semester, I would always say to the students, and I had the introduction class, which was the animal class, everybody was there. "You know, if I was a Marxist, I would try to convert you to the Marxist orientation of sociology. If I was a structural functionalist, I would do the structural functionalist thing on you. I'm a Christian, so I'm going to try to make you all into Christians. Do you understand that? Any questions?" [audience laughing]

People laugh and joke, but you know what? You always do that. I said, "The only difference is, there is no such thing, as any sociologist knows, as objective sociology. All sociology is taught from a perspective. My perspective is Christian. You ought to know that so that if you're not Christian, you don't want to become Christian, you can defend yourself. Okay?" Everybody said "Yeah, yeah." So we started on.

In the midst of that kind of context, you begin to develop styles of evangelism. Let me give you the context of this answer to this heavy question. Student says, 'I don't believe in God.'

'Fine. Do you have any morality?'

'Oh, yeah, I'm moral.'

'Well what is the basis of your morality?'

'I'm humanistic. I think that humanness is the ultimate value.'

I like that. I'm not going to fight with that. That sounds terrific. Humanness is the ultimate value.

'So what you want out of life is what?'

'I want to become fully human.'

Does that sound good? That sounds terrific, man. That's right out of Abraham Maslow. 'What do you mean by human?'

'Self-actualized.'

Gee, it sounds like- you know, it sounds like the [unintelligible], [audience laughing] I mean, this guy's really into it.

'I want to be fully human, I want to actualize my humanness.'



'Do you have a concept of evil?'

'Yeah, evil is whatever diminishes humanity.'

That's not bad. That's not bad. Anybody gonna fight with that argument? That's a great definition of evil. Anything that diminishes humanness, that makes a Homo sapien less human, is evil.

Anything that enhances his humanness, that makes a Homo sapien more human, is good. Lying, murder, adultery, all of these are evil because they do what? They diminish our humanity.

Beautiful. Great statement. So we're clear. What's more is, I look at the guy and smile and say,

'We are in agreement. I like that. I got a couple of questions I got to ask you. First question: can you define what you mean by humanness?'

'Oh, yeah. I've read Abraham Maslow, I thought you were going to say that.'

'What did he say?'

'Being human is loving.'

'How loving?'

'Infinitely loving.'

'Well, that's wonderful.' I put that on the board. Infinitely loving. 'Anything else?'

'Yeah, empathetic.'

'How empathetic?'

'Infinitely.' [audience laughing]

'Well what else do you think human is?' Well, they can go on, the list will go on. Right?

Sensitive, open, forgiving, grace, kindness. I mean, they can list the list. They can put down that list of traits that make for total humanness. That's terrific. The only problem with the list is I've

seen that list before. [audience laughing] Right? Are you with me? Now, I haven't told him I've seen that list before, but I've seen the list before. Next question is this: 'You're a sociology student?' Because that's my bag. And I say, 'How do people take on these traits?'

Answer is simple. You take on these traits through interaction with people who have them, i.e., how does one become loving? One has an intimate, interactive relationship with somebody who's loving. Right? You become as loving as people that you associate with. So a kid that grows up in a loving home what? Becomes loving. Kid that grows up in a home full of hostility becomes hostile. We tend to take on the traits of those with whom we interact meaningfully. Agreed? Now, if one's going to become totally human, it is necessary for a person to interact with somebody who is?

Audience:

Totally human.

Campolo:

Question. I got a problem. Do you know anybody like this? [audience laughing] The answer is what? You got bad news. You want to become human, and there's nobody around to humanize you. Agreed? Does anybody know anybody like this? Everybody says 'No, except me.' I say, 'That's the bad news. The good news is I know somebody like this. And what's more is-' and you do this with tongue in cheek- 'He's dying to be related to you.' [audience laughing] This is the good news of the Gospel. Let's talk about Jesus, who is the incarnation of all of these traits. Remember, Jesus, who is the Son of God, always called Himself what?

Audience:

Human.

Campolo:

"I am a manifestation of humanity." That's what He said, not what I said. He is a revelation both of humanity and of God simultaneously. Chalcedonian Creed, right? He is very God, a very God, and very man, a very man. I know somebody who has all of these traits, and He wants to be personally related to you. We always would invite the students to talk about the Book of Mark because it's the most simple of the Gospels. Read the Book of Mark, come back tomorrow, and tell me whether or not the man you read about there is fully human. And the answer is always yes. Always.

'But you don't understand, Doc. I need somebody that I can talk to and walk with and be in constant relationship with, in and- day in and day out, if this is going to happen to me. This man's dead.'

'Fine. We're agreed up to a point. We're agreed that you want to become totally human, and being totally human is wonderful. Matter of fact, I agree with you. That's what I want to be. We agree that Jesus, if alive, could totally humanize you. The only difference between your perspective and mine is this: I believe He is alive. I believe that He is a genuine presence in the world. And I believe that you can have a relationship with Him because I have a relationship with Him. And that relationship is changing me daily.'

And they always say, 'Well, you know, we know you too well for that Campolo, come on.' And I always respond, 'You know, if you- you know, if you were Gandhi, that would be-' hey. I always say, 'If Gandhi was so wonderful without Jesus, can you imagine what Gandhi would be like with Jesus? And if you think I'm so rotten with Jesus, right, [audience laughing] have you considered what I would be like without Jesus? I am significantly more human today than I was the day I accepted the Lord. The fact that I am not what I ought to be misses the point. I am not what I ought to be, but I'm certainly not what I was. I'm still pressing towards that mark. I'm still in process.'

Now, Jesus is available. Now when I give this list, am I describing traits that are human or am I describing traits that are of the nature of God? What would you say? [audience responds inaudibly] What about the nature of man? [audience member responds inaudibly] Yep. You see- you see, what happens to us is that we have come to the conclusion, because we're Calvinist, that to be human is to be sinful. Quite the opposite. To be sinful is to lose your humanity. To be- to be human is to be- are you ready for this?- in the image of God. Get that? That's not my line. To be human is to reflect God, to totally reflect Jesus. To be human is to become totally like Christ. Thus, Jesus is God, not in spite of the fact that He has human traits, but He is God because He has human traits.

And in the book "A Reasonable Faith", I argue strongly, not only does Jesus have human traits, but He is the only human being that has ever lived. We have a lousy concept of what it means to be human. We think to be human is to sin. When men sin, when women sin, they denied their humanity and gave up their humanity and became less than the image of God. To be saved is to

have the image of God restored, and to grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ. Brothers and sisters, it has not yet appeared what we shall be, but when we shall see Him, we shall become-

Audience:

Human.

Campolo:

This is very crucial: that our humanity is not something that we possess. We are all Homo sapiens struggling to become human, not knowing how, because there's only one way we can become human, and that is through a personal relationship with One who is totally human. And ironically, the only One who is totally human is God. Is that a paradoxical statement? The only One who is totally human is God. That's who Jesus is. Thus I come at it this way, you see. Because working as I was in a sophisticated Ivy League school, if I went around and said, you know, 'Would you be free from your burden of sin?' Nobody was interested. They basically thought that guilt could be handled through psychoanalysis, that guilt was a conditioned response, a conditioned psychological response to an overly sensitive superego that was implanted into our consciousness by our parents. Agreed? That guilt stuff, sin stuff, never cut mustard with them, but they all wanted to become human and didn't know how.

When I preach that Jesus Christ is the answer, I mean it. Now, what this does is shifts a little bit the emphasis of the story of Jesus. What evangelicals do is put a great emphasis on what Jesus did on the cross, as I do too. He took care of our sins. This particular theology shifts the

emphasis only slightly. The most important thing is not that Jesus died. The most important thing is that Jesus was resurrected and is personally alive in the world today, i.e., it shifts salvation from the cross to the resurrection. And the Scripture does. Paul says what? If Christ be crucified and that's the end of it, then what is our faith? Vain? It's the fact that He's not dead. A dead Jesus can't humanize anybody. Only a resurrected Jesus who confronts me as a person.

'So I don't want to know.' See, and this is where I run into problems. When people say, 'What does it mean to be a Christian?' They say, 'Well, I believe in what Jesus did on the cross 2,000 years ago.' My response is, 'That's okay. But I know a lot of people who believe in what Jesus did on the cross 2,000 years ago who have no personal relationship with Him. And if you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, the cognitive acceptance of a historical event is not enough.' Those of you that are going to Europe would love Europe. How many of you are going? You know what you're going to find? You're going to run around Europe with little tracks that say, "Jesus died on the cross for your sins." Do you know how many Europeans are going to deny that? None. They'll all stand around saying-

I was in Ypenburg with Love Europe last year, and we were hitting all the places, we were grabbing the little old ladies on the street, you know, and pushing them up against the wall [audience laughing] saying, 'Do you believe in God?'

[Imitating German accent] 'Ya, ya, I believe in God.' [audience laughing]

'Do you know who Jesus is?'

'Yes, He is the Savior.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'He died on the cross for our sins.'

End of conversation. Let's get another little old lady. [audience laughing] Let me just tell you, everybody believes in Jesus. The Bible says what? Satan believes in Jesus. If that's what you want, Satan believes. Satan believes and trembles, which is more than the Germans were doing in Ypenburg. The question is not 'Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins?' The question is, 'Have you surrendered to Jesus in a personal relationship, and allowed Him to come into you and transform you and make you into a new person?' And what does that new person look like? My growing up said that that new person looked like a pious person, right? 'What does a Christian look like?' 'Well, he doesn't smoke, dance, chew, go with girls', you know that line. Is that what a Christian is? Or is a Christian somebody who is more alive, more human, than all the other humans you know?

Paul in the 8th chapter of Romans described the Christian this way, I love it: "You who used to be-" What? Smoking, dancing, drinking? No- "You who used to be dead." Man, that's it. Dead. You have been made alive. It's that indwelling presence that comes to a personal relationship that makes us alive, that is what Christianity is all about. And that's where, in fact, I go by my definition of 'What do I mean by human?' Being human is to be in the image of God, to reflect God's character and God's nature. That's what Adam was created to do and be, he lost the image because of God, Jesus came to restore us to what the first Adam was.

Get this. I love this. We not only become what the first Adam was, which was pretty neat, we become better than that. Through God's gift in grace, we don't become what the first Adam was,

we become what? What the second Adam was. Whooo. A reflection in the image of His likeness. And so to be human is to reflect the image of God. Jesus is the only one who is totally human, because He is the only one who fully reflects to us who God is and what God is all about. So it doesn't sound so dangerous when you put it in the context.

You say, 'Well, I still feel uneasy,' of course. And in the book "A Reasonable Faith", for which I get into all kinds of trouble, my argument is, I start that chapter- which the people who really dragged on me missed the whole point- I start off by saying in the last chapter of the book, chapter nine, starts off with, "You'll be reading this in years saying, 'I feel this is heresy.'" And my response is, "Of course." And then I add quickly, "All theology is heresy. If you mean by heresy a statement that doesn't tell the whole truth," right? "If you mean by heresy a statement that doesn't tell the whole truth, consequently, all theologies are heresy, because the Bible says they're heresy," right? I'm not the one who wrote in the 13th chapter of Corinthians, "We know in part and we prophesy what?"

Audience:

"In part."

Campolo:

And we have to wait until what? Until the Second Coming, when that which is perfect has come. In short, I don't care what your theology is, whether you're a Wesleyan, a Calvinist, I don't care what you, what your theology is. One of these days, Jesus is coming back, and I got news for you: He's going to correct you. [audience laughing] Do not get saved by believing theologies.



Theologies only point beyond themselves. Insofar as a theology introduces you to a personal relationship with the resurrected Jesus, it's a good theology. Insofar as a theology keeps you from a close relationship with Jesus Christ, it's a bad theology. And I have seen theologies that have done that.

So I just want to, you know, kind of make that point. I thought the issue you were going to draw, the one for which I've gotten heat, is a much more humorous statement. It's this one, which actually they had a whole conference at Asbury Theological Seminary on this statement.

[audience laughing] The statement is- it's really a question: "Can a Christian buy a BMW?" You see, it's all right to mess around with the Trinity and the Godhead, but don't mess around with BMW. [audience laughing] And that's the one that really upsets people. Usually when you really upset people on one thing, they try to get you on a theological issue, because if they can negate your theology, then they can discard everything else you've said. And the question I raise is a very simple one. This is one of the things that we have to say to young people. "Can a Christian own a BMW?" Can he go out and buy one?

The answer is quite categorical: no. A BMW, a good BMW costs what, between 30 and 40 thousand dollars? Agreed? The car is designed to do 200 miles an hour on German auto pawns. Agreed? Pennsylvania, it's worse than here. You can only do 55. Here, at least on the freeways, they let you do what? [audience responding] 65? Well, I don't want to be nasty about this. [Campolo mumbling] But you don't need a BMW, a Volkswagen. We'll do 65, 70. Agreed? Why would- [audience laughing] here is an automobile that is engineered to be a luxury speed vehicle.

Why would anybody buy one in the United States? And yet they're selling like hotcakes, because a BMW is not a car. It's more than a car. What is it?

Audience:

Status.

Campolo:

You all knew that, didn't you? Now, if Jesus knew that there were people starving 60 miles from here in Tijuana, He knew that, and He had 40,000 bucks, would He buy a status symbol that could go 200 miles an hour on roads that won't allow Him to do that? [audience laughing] Would Jesus buy- would Jesus take the resources of His Father and waste them on status symbols?

Answer to the question is obvious. What would Jesus do? And the Christian is always obligated to do what Jesus would do. End of question. I don't think you can win on it.

But that upsets people, because everybody has a BMW. I don't know what it is in your life, but you know what I'm talking about. The way we spend money should raise all kinds of questions. Look at all these mission- mission stands out here. I don't know whether you've gone to them, but most of them, if you say, 'Gee, this really sounds good, what do I have to do to get on board?' They'll say, 'Well, you have to raise your own support.' Have you heard that line? Hear it over and over again. I'm not against it. I think raising your own support is a noble thing. But you shrug and you say, 'Jeez, I don't know whether I can do that. And you know why you can't do it? Because Christian people don't have money to put into missions. They're too busy spending the money on?

Audience:

BMW's.

Campolo:

Exactly. And all of us have one, don't we? So that's the question that usually gets me into trouble, because they're saying, 'Well, what are you suggesting? That a Cadillac's as bad as a-?' Yeah. You say, 'You want me raising questions about how many clothes I buy, how many records I buy?' That's right. I think that the question has to be raised about our whole stinking lifestyle. And the issue is very simple. See, that's where you really get people upset. And incidentally, the guys that went after me on this, who went after me on this- [audience member makes a joke] [audience laughing] No.

There's a great little story, I was just telling Chris about this. That statement has continued to rebound all over the country. And I got a letter about a month and a half ago from a rich oil guy down in Texas whose kid came home and really laid it on him. [audience laughing] You know what the father's reaction was? I got a letter, opened up the letter, in the letter were keys to a BMW and the deed of ownership, saying, "I just bought you a BMW. You are one of us now, so say nothing more." [audience laughing and clapping] So I sat down, I said to my wife and kids, "Hey, I got a BMW, isn't that's terrific! I didn't have to pay a cent, nobody could accuse me of spending my money." My son looked at me and he said, "The Bible says to avoid the appearance of evil." [audience laughing and clapping]

So I wrote back and I said, "I am going to come down and pick up the BMW, but I ought to tell you now, I'm going to sell the thing." He wrote back and said, "Don't bother. I'll sell it for you and send you the money." Which he did.

Audience member 5:

[inaudible]

Campolo:

A dodge?

Audience member 5:

A dodge [inaudible].

Campolo:

Really? It's quite a nice, it's really a luxury model, isn't it?

Audience member 5:

Snow tires are good.

Campolo:

Snow tires? I mean it's a, it's really a wonderful car. We call it gargantua. [audience laughing] I don't know, it's about a 72, or something like that. It's in great condition. But I mean, it's one of those old monsters before the gas crisis. You know, it passes everything on the road except the

gas station. [audience laughing] But I don't drive in many places. I drive to the airport, but I mean, it's huge. I mean, people run. [audience laughing] I've had trucks plow into it and not leave a scratch. [audience laughing] You know, it's incredible. It's really a fun-

And you know, I'm not saying you ought to drive an old schlop. I mean, I'm saying you ought to get something- there's nothing wrong with having even a new car. The point is, there's a difference between a car and a symbol. There's a difference between a vehicle and wasting God's money. I'm not asking you to live in poverty. I said, according to the Book of Deuteronomy, you should spend 1/10 of your income on a-

Audience member 6:

Party?

Campolo:

Buying a car is part of the party. [audience laughing] Nothing wrong. See, that's why it's simple life, that's why we have those verses. Because it's to keep you from giving all of your money to ministry. God says, 'Now I know what you want to do, you want to spend it all on ministry, but by divine declaration, you must spend 1/10 on the-

Audience:

Party.

Campolo:

Spending money on celebration and enjoyment is fine. See, the tithe concept in the 14th chapter of Deuteronomy was not to tell us how much we should give to ministry. The 1/10, you see, is not a statement of how much we should give to ministry. It's saying that you must spend 10% on partying. The other 90% must be spent then on ministry. Ministry to your family, to your community, to your church, for the work of God in the world. Do you see that? We got the equation backwards, don't we? Especially in Southern California. We spend 90% on the party and then we don't even give 10% for the work of the kingdom. But it's interesting the way we twist the Scripture around. You read that passage, see whether or not tithing refers to partying. It does. One more question, we'll call it quits. Yes.

Audience member 7:

So how do you decide, like, what you can buy? Like, this shirt or this record?

Campolo:

You got 10% of your income. Just spend it on what brings joy. We're coming out of Disneyland, see, I got my little boy with me. We're leaving Disneyland, and he says, "I want one more ride on Space Mountain." No, it's not space- yeah, Space Mountain. I said, "We're out of time, we're out of money." This was back in the days when you had to have a ticket for each ride. I said, "We're out of time, we're out of money." He said, "Jesus wants me to go." [audience laughing] I said, "How do you figure that?" He said, "Sunday, when you were preaching, you said, 'Whenever we cry, Jesus cries.' You said that whatever we feel, He feels at the exact same moment we're feeling it. You said that. And if that's true, if Jesus feels everything we're feeling when we're feeling it, [audience laughing] then when I'm on the ride and feeling good and laughing, then He is, too. I

think He would love it if I had one more ride on Space Mountain." [audience laughing and clapping]

That is not bad theology. Jesus does want us to be filled with joy and happiness, you see? And there has to be limits on it. So if you buy this shirt, you have to ask, how much money do I spend? How much money does this leave over? It's when we begin to get to these exorbitant levels. I think you've got to be pretty reasonable about these things, you know, pretty sensible. But I'm just concerned about the fact that we live in a society where we spend very little of our income for food and for real care.

Most of our money is spent on symbols. Our dresses become symbolic. Our clothes have become symbolic. I mean, my gosh, it's become absurd. You actually don't even want clothes unless the label is on the outside where people can read it. I mean, we're old enough to remember when they put the labels, what? On the inside. We didn't- you know, the worst thing they would say to you, remember when you were growing up? 'The label is showing now.' You wear 'Levi'. I mean, the jeans, big leather things on the back. And you pay \$500 to carry around a suitcase that has little symbols of the company that made it all over it.

You know what's funny? Have any of you ever been to Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong? Have any of you been over there? What's funny is that they have these companies over there that turn out all of this stuff that looks just like it, with all of the symbols on it, so you can come back with a Rolex watch. It will look like a Rolex. Nobody will know it's a Rolex- if it's not a Rolex, and you can get it for \$7. I'm not kidding you. Right? I mean, why would anybody want a Rolex?

'Well, it keeps good time.' Stop it. What are you, some kind of astronomer that says 'I've got to keep-' [audience laughing] Come on!

And we know what to- see, so what we are really all about is this. Let me close with this little story on lifestyle. Incidentally, I believe that homosexual behavior is a sin. Have I made that clear? Having said that, what does Jesus say about homosexuality? You know, the Bible. What, do you have to take 30 hours of Bible here? What does He say about them?

Audience member 8:

It's a sin, [inaudible]

Campolo:

Yeah, but what does He say specifically about the sin of homosexuality? [audience responds inaudibly] You're right. Nothing. Takes on a lot of other sins. As a matter of fact, the sin that He loves to go after is the sin of being rich and living with indifference to the poor. He loves that one. He goes after that one all the time. Isn't it funny that in the church you'll hear sermons, after sermon after sermon, about homosexuality, and how [imitating belligerent voice] 'The perverts are taking over America'? But very seldom do you hear any minister say from the pulpit, 'If you want to join this church, you should sell whatever you have and give it to the poor.' Nobody would say that. That's the sort of thing that Jesus would say. Of course, we can't expect that from the church.



You say, 'Well, wait a minute, what are you suggesting?' I'm suggesting that Jesus told the whole story. There was a certain man who fared sumptuously every day. Had fine clothes, had a nice house. At his gates was this guy named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. The dogs licked the sores, and he lived in extreme poverty. Hey, I'm talking about San Diego versus Tijuana, am I not? And what is the sin of the rich man? Because the Bible says that when he dies, he goes to hell, doesn't it? What's his sin? Does the Bible say he committed adultery? Did he kill? Did he steal? Did he lie? No, he didn't do any of these things. The Bible says what he did: he lived sumptuously. That's all. Just lived sumptuously while people all around him were suffering. That's all. He probably belonged to Rotary. Guy with that much status, that much wealth, probably got to be a deacon in the local church. No problem. He never committed a homosexual act in his life. He was pure and holy and good. He just lived sumptuously, and he goes to hell.

And what does God say in the story? 'You lived well while Lazarus suffered, and you paid no attention to him, so burn.' That's scary. I hear all these people saying, 'I love Jesus, I love Jesus, I love Jesus, I love Jesus.' We all know John 3:16. How many of us know 1 John 3:16, 17, and 18? Which says, "If you have this world's goods, and you know of people who are in desperate need, and you stay rich while they suffer, how can you say you have the love of God in your heart?" Well, that ends the argument, right? That's the end of the argument. How can you stay rich while people are suffering, and say you have the love of God in your heart? It's amazing to me that the church has very little to say about affluence in the face of poverty, but it condemns everything else. It doesn't condemn the one sin that is blatantly visible in the congregation.

See, I mean, I know that when I stand up before a congregation, I know when I stand up before a group like I was last night, I know- what was there, about 500 people there at least? I know there's got to be like 50 homosexuals in the audience, all pretending they're something else. I know there's all kinds of other sins represented in that congregation, but you can't see them. The one thing you can always see is affluence. Nobody wants to talk about that. But I will dare tell you that there are over 600 passages in Scripture that deliberately speak to the fact that to be an imitator of Christ and to be in the will of God, requires that one uses one's resources with great sensitivity to meet the needs of the poor and the oppressed. So in answer to the question of what does one have to do to be a Christian, I ask you a question.

For instance, I went to Philadelphia College of Bible. I had to sign a pledge of things I would do and wouldn't do. I don't know, do you have to do that here? Well, Philadelphia College of Bible made us sign a pledge. And it ticked me off, said that if I signed this pledge, I couldn't go to movies, I couldn't drink, couldn't do this, couldn't do that, went down the list. You say, 'Well, did that really upset you?' Yeah, it upset me because it told me what I had to do and what I didn't have to do, what I should do, what I shouldn't do. But it never dealt with the thing that Jesus dealt with most. I'm still looking for the Bible college that says, 'If you're going to attend here, you must sell whatsoever you have and give it to the poor. 'For if any man would be my disciple,' says Jesus, 'he must deny himself.'

Jesus says that, Bible colleges don't, and claim to be biblical. I don't know why they're so hot on the issue of inerrancy, because after they prove that the Bible is inerrant, they never do anything it says. [audience laughing] And that's scary. That's scary. You can go to any Bible college in

America and ask this question: 'How many of you believe in capital punishment?' Boy, the hands will all go up. Says here in the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful." Isn't that what it says? Well, isn't that what it says? Then why is it that people who believe the Bible aren't merciful? You say, 'Well, they're murderers!' Of course they're murderers. So are you.

See, you think it's just symbolic, but it's not. You really are responsible for the death of Jesus. Let me say it again. You really are responsible for the death of Jesus. If killing a bad person is bad, what is it killing the only decent person that ever lived? And you did it. If you were the only person that ever lived in time and history, Jesus would still be spiked to Calvary for you. So who are you? I mean, you talk about mercy. God was merciful to you, the ultimate murderer. I'm not saying let people loose on the streets.

I always have this one. This is one I used at Urbana that probably- I'll never get back there again on this one. Talked about the fact that I read the book "In His Steps" by Sheldon. Great book. How many have read that book? Great book. Simple thesis, isn't it? 'To be a Christian is-' what? 'To do whatever Jesus would do if Jesus was in your place.' I have my draft card with me to prove if anybody wants to see it afterwards. I got drafted during the Korean War. You didn't even know there was such a thing, did you? Before Vietnam, Korea. [audience laughing] I got drafted. And I went down to the headquarters, they wanted to know whether I was a pacifist. Well, I didn't know about all of that, or else I would have gotten into the Mennonite thing or something. [audience laughing]

I said, "No, I just read this book 'In His Steps' by Sheldon, and it said that to be a Christian is to do whatever Jesus would do if Jesus was in my place, and I was convinced." And the guy said, the colonel who was interviewing me said, "Well, you know, what does that mean? Does that mean you can't kill in battle or you can't drop bombs?" I said, "Oh, no, no, no. You can put me in the airplane, you can train me. I will fly over to the enemy village. I'll put my hand on the throttle to release the bombs. But the moment that I'm ready to release the bombs on the village, I will have to ask a very simple question: Jesus, if you were in my place, would you drop the bombs?" And the colonel yelled back at me, "Dumbest thing I ever heard. Everybody knows Jesus would never drop bombs." [audience laughing]

Now, here's a very interesting question: Would Jesus drop bombs? You see, we have all these theological questions in seminary. 'What is the nature of God? What is the nature of Jesus? What is His ontological ground of being?' I have a very simple question: Would He drop bombs? Because I want to imitate Jesus, amen?

Audience:

Amen.

Campolo:

I want to do what Jesus would do. So it's very important for me to have an answer to this question. And the colonel had an answer, he said Jesus wouldn't. And I said "Gee, I'm not sure that that's the answer, but if you say so, then I can't be in the army." They rejected me. [audience laughing] I will show you my draft card. I have it, I'll show you afterwards. They didn't know

where to classify me. I wasn't a conscientious objector. They created a category for me.

[audience laughing] I am 5D. I'll show you the card, I got 5D. And I said, I said, "What does 5D mean?" He said, "It's up to you, you can name it, it's your category." [audience laughing and clapping] So I named it. The name of the category is Follower of Jesus. I am officially, according to government declaration. [audience laughing]

Question: how could you- how could you read the Bible and come to another conclusion? So I'm really one of those guys that is saying, 'To be a Christian is to be a radical imitator of Jesus.' You say, 'Well what if everybody did this?' Then the kingdom of God would become a reality. You say, 'Well, it wouldn't be safe for America.' Of course not. You don't understand. My American citizenship is of secondary nature. I belong to another kingdom. I'm only a sojourner in this one. This is not important. You say, 'Well this kind of talk becomes politically and socially dangerous.' And my response is, and when did Christianity cease being socially and politically dangerous? Because that's when it ceased being Christianity.

My point is that whenever they talk about being fundamentalist, they say, 'Oh, he's not a fundamentalist, he's one of those radicals.' My reaction is, fundamentalism is the most radical thing that's ever come down the pipe. I am radical because I am fundamentalist. I sound like Bob Jones Jr. If the Bible says it, I believe it. That settles it, baby. And when you read the Bible and take the Sermon on the Mount for what it says, you will be such a weirdo that this world will not know what to do with you. And the fact that we fit in so well in America says that we're more committed to America than we are to the Sermon on the Mount. Who do you follow? That's the question. Let's call it a day. Okay? Thanks.

Unknown speaker:

Thank you.