

Do You Love Me? Day 1 Session 2

By Tony Campolo

[audience clapping]

Tony Campolo:

[laughing] How do you like this? Look at this. Look at this.

[audience laughing and cheering]

That's wonderful. Just turn it around.

[silence]

Yay!

[audience cheering and clapping]

What time is it? It's-

Audience:

Party time!

Tony Campolo:

That's right. Missions. The declaration of the party. I'm glad you came back. They told me I was going to have a seminar, and I, you know, I had this picture that there would be ten of us sitting around a table exchanging ideas on urban ministry. Obviously this is not, it's more of a speaking situation, but just to get the thing- the guys are putting this up because they're trying to call attention to the fact that when I speak, I spit.

[audience laughing]

And they also have these folders from Urbana '90. I do want to give a plug to the Urbana Conference. If you've never been to the Urbana Conference, you must go. It is one of the most influential things in Christendom. I mean, more people probably commit their lives to the

missionary effort at Urbana than in any other single gathering anywhere, any place, anytime. Go to Urbana. Do you hear? It's over the Christmas break, it's absolutely wonderful.

Second thing: I mentioned that- to give me your name and address if you're interested in coming to work with us in the summer, during the summer months, and work in the streets of Philadelphia, on the streets among urban people. And I do want to say this very directly. People often say, 'I'd love to do that, but I got to go back to school, and I need to make a few thousand dollars in order to pay my tuition when I, when I face September.' My answer to that is always the same: we have one staff worker who does nothing else except work with people who come to serve with us in the summer to help them raise enough money to go back to school. You say, 'How do you do that?' Well, we're really great at writing guilt letters to churches.

[audience laughing]

I mean, have you ever- I mean, it's great. You know, we always interview you, we say, 'Well, now tell us about your church. Well have you just gone through a building program?' If they say 'Yes', we got it.

[audience laughing]

You know, you say, 'Oh', you know, you write the letter: Dear Pastor, Charlie's here working with us among the poorest of the poor in one of the most oppressive settings anywhere in the world. Now I know you don't have much money for this sort of thing, but just having completed a new building, and the cost of the carpet, and the pews, and the stained glass window, I'm sure there won't be much left over for this sort of missionary work.' It works every time.

[audience laughing]

So, you know, trust us. We'll work with you to try to raise the money while you're with us so that you'll have it to come back to school, because we know that that is a major problem for students.

Students just can't afford to give away a summer without having some means of support so that they can go back to school.

In dealing with the urban situation, I'm just going to throw out a few ideas and then answer some questions and discussion from the floor. The first is this: in our approach to the urban setting, we have to be aware of the fact that the structuring of American cities is very weird these days.

Increasingly, the white middle class has moved out of the city into the suburbs, so that the urban areas, the core of urban cities, tend to be made up of ethnic peoples. Cambodian, Black, Hispanic. And to a large degree, it's not only ethnic peoples, but people who are, for the most part, poor. We're having poor ethnic communities rise up in the city, surrounded by wealthy, suburban, Caucasian communities. There's this white ring of wealth around this downtown center of ethnic poverty. What has happened to the cities is just absolutely unbelievable. If you got on a plane and flew from here, let's say to Paris or to London or to Zurich, you would not find as much of a cultural change as if you went from the suburbs of Philly into the inner city.

The change is dramatic.

For instance, in the communities where we work, in dealing with males between the ages of 16 and 22- do you got that bracket? Males between the ages of 16 to 22. 57% of them, did you get that? 57% of the males between 16 and 22, 57% are either in jail or under the surveillance of the courts. That is, they're out on probation. They have already been arrested, they have already been judged guilty, their lives are already in a mess.

Other children are young people coming out of the Philadelphia school system. Just a little more than 70% of them are functionally illiterate. They have no learning skills whatsoever. We have- for instance, in the Philadelphia area, 60 to 70,000 jobs in the building and trade businesses that are available for people, the only qualification is that you know how to read and write. Those

jobs go untaken, even though they pay as much as \$15, \$16 an hour, because people cannot qualify, they do not know how to read and write.

The prevalence of drugs is absolutely unbelievable. I mean, I just see drugs everywhere. I mean, you have a youth group. At least half of your kids in your youth group are using drugs regularly. And I'm not talking about what we call kiddy drugs. We put marijuana and stuff like that in the category of kiddy drugs. I mean, we're talking about serious stuff. We're talking about crack. We're talking about ice that's beginning to emerge now to take crack's place. It's even more addictive than crack, and we didn't think anything could be more addictive. We have watched what that has done to people.

Everywhere around the world, mothers care for their children, except when people are on crack and ice. And then they don't even care about their children. They're willing to sell their children, they'll dump their children, they'll allow perverts to mess over their children. It's an unbelievable situation.

In the northeastern part of the United States, we have a large number of runaways. I hope you are aware of the fact that in the United States of America, which has 250,000,000 people, 1 million kids between the ages of 14 and 17- did you get that figure? 1 million kids between the ages- just over 14, got it? Run away from home every year. The overwhelming proportion of them survive by selling their bodies.

Friend of mine who is in a great deal of trouble right now, which I don't think he deserves because I don't think it's true, there's a lot of smoke, but I don't think there's any fire. A friend of mine, Bruce, works up in New York. He's in a network relationship with us. He, like I, was a sociologist, taught at Fordham University. He got confronted by some of his students who said,

"Bruce, you're detached. You don't know what's going on, you don't have any touch with reality."

Bruce took a leave of absence from his teaching job at Fordham. And he went into downtown New York and took an apartment on 8th Avenue, just above 42nd street. And if you've ever been on 8th Avenue, just above 42nd street, you know that every perverted, filthy, dirty thing that is possible- I didn't say imaginable, I said is possible- is happening within 200 yards of that corner. He went to his apartment the first night, and there were three girls on his steps. I say they were girls because one was 13 and the other two were 15, they were just young kids. And they propositioned him. If you go to 8th Avenue in New York, the thing that is so amazing is not that there are prostitutes there, it's that they are so young. They are so incredibly young.

And there are these runaways, and they proposition Bruce, and he said he couldn't do anything because he was a man of God and all that stuff, and he was on a mission and all that. And they said, "Look, don't hassle us. We don't have any place to sleep, and we don't have any food." So Bruce invited them up to the apartment, and he fed them and gave them a place to sleep. The next night when he went back to his apartment, there weren't three, there were 17. The word had spread. So he did the same thing. He fed them, gave them a place to sleep. Every night it continued to grow in number, until tonight. Tonight, when you go to bed, my friend Bruce will bed down somewhere between 758 and 800 teenage kids who survive by selling their bodies on the streets to the most despicable of people.

One time he was going to go to bed and the place was packed, and there was a knock on the door. He went down and there were these two little boys, I think runaway kids, somewhere around 11 and 12, and they asked for a place to stay, and he said they were out of room, they were out of beds, but to come back the next night and come back early and he could find room

for them. He went up to his room, and he looked across 8th Avenue, and there they were sitting on the other side of 8th Avenue on the curb. And they looked so pathetic that he thought he'd go down and say, 'You can stay in my room.' He got across the street and they were gone. And the next morning, those two kids were found having been raped and murdered, found in the alley alongside of the house. And he decided then that he would never ever turn a kid away.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of kids like that, that just wander the streets. And you know, when you get to know them, you'll discover something. They are not bad kids. I mean, I've been there when Bruce has called home and said, "We've got your daughter here, and she's very sick and she wants to come home," and I've been there when the mother at the other end says, "I don't have any daughter. Tell her to get lost, I don't ever want to see her again," and hangs up. And you know, Bruce always kind of lies, says, "Hey, I just talked to your mom, and she says you can stay here for a while and stay with us." I've been there when we've told the lies in order to conceal a truth that is too painful to bear.

I just know that you can make a difference in these places. Now, the whole style of doing ministry in the city is changing. You know, if you go into a missions course, they will always tell you this thing: 'The first thing you must do as a missionary is to go and to relate to the people and listen to the people. You must listen to the people and respond to their needs as they define their needs. You have no right to come in and impose your definition of what they need on them. Listen to them.' So we did that. You go in among the poor and you gather all the poor people together in a low-cost housing project like Passyunk Homes or Richard Allen Homes, you get them all there and you say, 'Okay, we're here in the name of Jesus, we want to meet your needs and love. What are your needs?' If you get a bunch of poor people sitting there in a room who don't know where the next buck is coming from, who don't know whether they're going to

survive, ask them a very simple question, 'What do you need?' Their answer is going to be inevitably, what? Jobs. They're going to say, 'We need jobs.'

So what do we in the church do? Well, we set up basketball leagues. They got this basketball league for the kids. Come back a month later, get them all together, ask them again, 'What do you need?' What will they say? 'Jobs.' So you set up a counseling center. You come back the next month, you say, 'What do you need?' They say, 'Jobs.' And we, we set up some other kind of program, a home economic program that teach people nutrition, and they keep on yelling, 'Jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs, jobs.' And we never hear them.

And the reason why we don't hear them is a very simple reason: we don't know how to create jobs. We know how to run basketball leagues. We know how to set up counseling centers. We have schools of counseling, right here on the campus. Right? You want to learn how to be a counselor, you are in one of the finest places in the entire world for learning counseling. We know how to do a lot of stuff. We just don't know how to do the one thing that inner city people want. We don't know how to create jobs.

That's sad. When the world needed hospitals, who created hospitals? The church. When the world needed schools, who created schools? The church. When the world needed counseling, who created counseling centers? The church. Well, now the world, the inner city world, the impoverished inner city world, needs?

Audience:

Jobs.

Tony Campolo:

Do we know how to create jobs? And may I say, those who are here from Third World countries will tell you the same thing: we need jobs. You know, we have all these programs. Please, if

you're not supporting a kid with Compassion International, you ought to sign up for a kid. \$21 a month. You can afford it, that's the cost of a- not all of you, but some of you can afford it- 21 bucks a month, that's the cost, less than the cost of a cup of coffee. You can clothe, you can feed, you can house a child in a Third World country, 21 bucks a month. But people, you know and I know that if you go to a poor country like Haiti or a poor country like the Dominican Republic, giving out food, setting up a feeding program for childrens doesn't solve the problem, because if you feed them, they're all going to be what? Hungry tomorrow morning. They need more than a handout, they need?

Audience:

Jobs.

Tony Campolo:

Does anybody know how to create jobs? It was out of this context that at Eastern College, where I teach, we started a very special graduate program. And this graduate program is training people on a new kind of missionary work. We knew there were medical missionaries, and there were agricultural missionaries, and educational missionaries. We are training the first generation of what we call entrepreneurial missionaries. Entrepreneurial missionaries. That means missionaries who will go into Third World countries, and in my case into the inner city, gather people together and start small businesses, small cottage industries, that people can own and run themselves.

We first started messing around in the Dominican Republic, started a neat little business in a slum called Guachupita, just on the edge of Santo Domingo. Neat little thing. We started a little business where we started making sandals out of automobile tires. They got automobile tires and you know, with a relatively simple knife, you can cut out something that looks like the sole of a

sandal, put a hole through it, little latches, and made sandals and sold them on the streets. Pretty good business. We would tell the children in the slum area that they would get 50 cents every time they brought us a pair of sandals- or rather, excuse me, an old tire. 50 cents for a tire. I want to tell you, it was ecologically the right move. Within about two months, every old tire in Santo Domingo-

[audience laughing]

-was in our yard. I mean, and then we started getting a lot of new tires.

[audience laughing and clapping]

And we realized that something was not happening according to the leading of the Spirit. But we got the business going, and we created jobs for people.

And secondly, we started a business with eyeglasses. We're getting Christians to give us old eyeglasses, and then we test people's eyeglasses, you know, test the eyeglasses in a lensometer, put them in envelopes, put the prescription on the envelope. And we'd go out to a village with about, like, 50,000 pair of glasses. And if somebody needed glasses, we'd test their eyes, for a dollar and a half, we'd match them up with a pair of glasses. It was a neat system. Great business, created jobs for about 40 people. It was really a neat deal. It was a lot of fun, too. You know, you get this big brawny guy and you get these glasses with, you know, pointed with rhinestones around.

[audience laughing]

Very very nice, very nice.

One of the funnier things was that with the Christian Medical Society coming in one time, they performed some cataract operations on this guy who hadn't seen anything for about 40 years. Removed the cataracts. We gave him this pair of glasses that were just perfect for him. Thick

jaws. I mean, they were wonderful. They fit, just what he needed. He put on the glasses. I mean, this is a guy who hadn't seen for years and years and years. And he yells, "I can see, I can see, I can see! Thank you God, I can see!" And his wife is there yelling, "Praise the Lord, praise the Lord," and he looks at her and he says, "Who are you?"

[audience laughing]

You know? And, you know, sometimes you're not being the blessing that you think you're being in all of this.

In Philadelphia, we just started a couple of businesses. The first business we started is now located in a high school, we used the shop of the high school for the factory. And we got eight kids from a low-cost housing project called Bartram Village. You know, we have eight kids who are running this little business. And the business is this. They get phones from the phone company for free. The phone company doesn't fix phones anymore because it's too expensive for labor costs. So, you know, if your phone breaks, they simply replace it, and they've got piles of these old phones. So we go and we get the phones. They love it because they get a tax write off for giving us the phones.

And we take the phones to Bartram High School on Saturday and on weekends. Friday nights, Saturdays, Sunday afternoons, they work on these things. And you say, 'Do they fix the phones?' No, we're not that sophisticated. We don't have enough moxie to fix phones, our kids don't fix phones. But they're very good at taking things apart.

[audience laughing]

So they take these, you know, these phones apart, and they take all the parts out, and they test the parts. That's easy to do, in a little machine that tests the parts. And then they put the tested parts,

the test positive in a box. When the box is filled with the parts, they sell the parts to the phone company.

[audience laughing and cheering]

Do you see? For use in the production of new phones.

It's a very lucrative business. They make, like, something like- it's a cooperative with these eight guys, and they're making- they made last year, which was our first year of operation- first year of operation, they made \$11 an hour. They'll probably do somewhere around \$17 an hour this year. And that is very important because you realize that when you're dealing with this, you're creating jobs. But the jobs have to be economically competitive with drug pushing, because drug pushing pays very well, and we want to be competitive. And we are.

[audience laughing]

Creating jobs for the poor, creating jobs among the poor. We're opening a thrift shop in one of the communities right now.

You see, we cannot come into the city with our suburban style. Suburban style comes in with kind of a Young Life model. That we go, you know, we do games, we sing songs, we have all of this fun stuff. And in the midst of all of this fun, our kids in the inner city aren't into all of this jazz. They don't really relate to it very well. And we have tried to impose the programmatic structures that work so well in the suburbs into the inner city, and they don't work well. But I can tell you what will work well: job creation. We got a whole youth group at a place called West Park that is built around a pizza business. We found a Domino Pizza was coming into West Park House, and we did some marketing research. That is, we grabbed the guy and asked him how many pizza he delivered every night.

[audience laughing]

Called marketing research. And we found that he was selling about 200 pizzas there a night. And so our boys decided that there was no point in an outsider making all of this money, and they decided to compete with him.

And he found it very difficult to come into West- I won't say why he found it difficult to get into West Park Housing, but he did not come back anymore, and our guys basically run the pizza business there.

[audience laughing]

And it's created jobs for about, I guess about 25 families in that place. Absolutely incredible. Absolutely wonderful project. And these kids in this context are being evangelized, are being built into Christian community, are being nurtured into the faith. It was the point of contact, it has brought them together. It was how we, we-

It's funny working in the city. We have a summer program that some of you may come and work with. At the end of the summer, the last two weeks, because people have to go back to school, we send everybody away to camps. I call every Christian camp anywhere within 50 miles of Philadelphia. Episcopalian, Lutheran, Baptist, Independent, I mean no matter what they are, I get the kids out of the city. So we send all these high school kids away. Young Life has a place down at Windy Gap, but it cost a lot of money. But Windy Gap was willing to cut us a break, but it would cost us, in the end, 20 bucks apiece for these kids to go for ten days, which wasn't bad. I got some Rotary clubs and people to chip in, but I still didn't have enough money. So I got all the kids together and I said, "Look, we want to go to Windy Gap." I showed them the film, you know, and they saw the water slides and, 'Hey, man, it looked cool.' So I said, "You guys have got to come up with 15 bucks a piece. And I told them about we had this lawn business that we had started, and they could work.

Well, everybody came up with the money. I should've known. Two days after they were gone, the police called.

[audience laughing]

And they said, "Dr. Campolo," I said, "Yeah," they said, "You're the one that got all those kids out of Passyunk Homes to go to church camp?" I said, "That's right." He said, "I understand that they were supposed to raise a certain amount of money?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Out behind Passyunk Homes, there are 14 stolen cars that have been stripped, and there's pretty good evidence that your kids stripped the cars in order to get enough money to go to church camp,"

[audience laughing]

And then he said sarcastically, "to get saved."

[audience laughing]

I was really depressed. I said, "Oh, I just wanted them to-" He said, "You shouldn't feel depressed." I said- he said, "You really- this has really been a tremendously successful program." I said, "Officer, I don't want to be nasty about it, but this does not sound like success to me. I mean we're doing all this Christian stuff, and the kids end up stripping cars in order to go to camp." He said, "That's the point. That's the point. They always strip cars. Now they're using the money to go to church camp instead of drugs, don't you think that's an improvement?"

[audience clapping and cheering]

You sit back and you say, "You're right.

[audience laughing]

This is an improvement." He said, "Now, you got them spending the money right. The next step is to make sure that they earn the money right."

[audience laughing]

Absolutely right. The kids came back, they got off the bus. I got them all into the community center, sat them down on the floor, and I read the riot act to them. I mean, I came on like, tough. I really gave it to them.

[audience laughing]

When I was finished, I said, I said, "Any questions? You disappointed me. You disgraced me. You disgraced the program. You disgraced the name of Jesus. Any questions?" One kid said, "Yeah, man." He said, "Where did you think we were going to get the money?" I said, "I thought you were going to work for it." He said, "Work? Do you know how much work it is to strip those cars to sell that stuff?"

[audience laughing]

He said, "We worked our heads off!" And all the other kids were saying, "That's right, man. We worked, we worked!"

And it hit me. Of course they worked. Is it hard work to steal cars, to strip cars, to sell that stuff? Please don't ever tell me that the people in the ghetto won't work. They will work. The problem is, there isn't enough legitimate work for them to do. And it becomes the task of the church to create legitimate employment. Amen?

Audience member:

Amen!

[audience clapping and cheering]

Tony Campolo:

And so my argument is that there's going to be a whole new breed of missionaries, not only in the inner city, but in the Third World. Missionaries who come in, who know how to do evangelism, know how to build community, know how to get people to start small businesses

and cottage industries that they themselves can own. Oh, our little telephone business is incredible. Last summer, for the first time, I watched it happen. The kids were going to school, going to work in the morning, because in the summer, they work full time. About the second week, I realized there was something weird, but I couldn't put my finger on it. And then it hit me all of a sudden that these guys, on their way to work, always brought their own lunches, because there's no lunch place at the school in the summer. They always brought their own lunches. They brought their food, made their own lunches.

And I realized about two weeks into the summer, that they were taking their lunches to work in briefcases. Do you understand what was happening, man? I mean, you don't take your lunch, you get your briefcase and you walk down the street, people say, 'Where you going, man?' 'We have a little business that we run.'

[audience laughing]

You say, 'What is this?' This is called dignity in the name of Jesus. This is called dignity. We got to build dignity. And that's what this is all about. In the name of Jesus, when you give somebody dignity, you have done something of the kingdom of God. You have done something of the kingdom of God.

And so we're into that. We're into job creation. In Third World countries, it's much the same. Please understand. If you go to a place like the Dominican Republic as a medical missionary, you will find something that will be quite shocking. The Dominican Republic produces more doctors per capita than the United States does. We get this idea that Third World countries are a bunch of- that what they really need is education. They've got more universities in Third World countries than you can count. They're all over the place. You think they're a bunch of ignorant

people? They're not ignorant. They are well-educated people down there. They're turning out university grads by the scores.

Problem. You graduate from the university with a degree, and you got a problem. There are no jobs. So if you're a doctor graduating from a medical school in Santo Domingo, the first thing you want to figure out is what? 'How do I get out of this country? How do I get to the United States, or- lesser, perhaps- to Puerto Rico, where I can make a lot of money? Because nobody will hire me.' There are doctors in the Dominican Republic that are totally unemployed. Cotton, sugar. No jobs. They turn out teachers, they turn out all kinds of professional people. But what is happening, and you know it, is that the rich countries exercise a brain drain on the poor countries. What's the answer? The answer is that we've got to create an economic substructure. We've got to create a lot of small businesses on the grassroots level to create jobs for the professionals that are educated within the country.

One thing more. Everybody's talking about an indigenous church. I mean, that's the biggest thing in missions right now. 'We've got to turn the church over to the nationals.' I always ask one simple sociological question after you've turned the churches over to the nationals. Here's the question: who pays the bills? Who pays the salary of the indigenous pastor? And in nine times out of ten, they say, 'Oh, we've turned over the leadership to the indigenous persons, but the money still comes from the United States to support the work.'

People, let me break it to you. Whoever controls the economics of a mission controls the mission. Just because somebody has the skin and the nationality of the indigenous people doesn't mean he dances their tune. He dances the tune of the people back home who put up the money. Do you understand that? In the end, his whole program or her whole program has to fit the expectations of the mission board. There won't be an indigenous church in the Third World until

indigenous people have the financial resources to maintain their own work. And that won't happen until they own their own businesses and their own cottage industries, and that won't happen until those of us who can help them to create these things do so.

So both in the Third World and the inner city, we're coming into a whole new style of missionary work. It's just beginning. We have 150 graduate students with us right now at Eastern. And incidentally, in the urban thing, the part that I direct, we're just getting underway in that, and we have 40 students. But it's a great place to come and do graduate work, to study and how to carry on evangelism. You know, here's the process. You evangelize, you disciple, and the people that you are discipling, as part of being disciplined as a Christian, you disciple them into economic productivity, because that is part of your Christian calling, you see. So that you can walk with dignity, so that you can stand erect, so that you can be somebody.

I really believe in the whole concept of missionaries assuming the responsibility of economic development within the city for these reasons. Number one: the government can't do it. Please, I'm not one of those right-wing types. All I'm saying is that the 60s was the era in which we gave the government an opportunity to create jobs for the poor and the oppressed, and the government spent billions of dollars and really tried. In the Great Society years, the government really tried and couldn't do it. The private sector is not going to do it because the private sector is into high technology. They want to do production with the least amount of laborers possible. They want high levels of automation. Job creation, if it's going to take place, has to take place under the auspices of the church.

For these reasons: first of all, the church has the facilities. In every poor community, there is an unused building. It's called a church. Agreed? I mean, we spend all of this money to build these

buildings that get used a couple of hours a week. Lousy stewardship. Agreed? I mean, I think it's a disgrace to put up these buildings and let them sit there all week.

[audience clapping]

The truth of the matter is, if you've got a church building, which I raise questions about building in the first place because I don't think we need them. I mean, you've got to realize that Christianity got along for 300 years without any buildings. In the United States of America, we have spent \$180,000,000,000- did you get that figure?- \$180,000,000,000 to build buildings to honor somebody who says, "I dwell not in temples made with hands."

[audience laughing]

I mean, if you can't see the humor in that...

If you're going to have a church building, then that building ought to be used all week long. Point: the building, it has all kinds of businesses. If I was working, for instance, with Hispanic people in L.A., I think I would set up in a church a moving business, primarily because it costs no money. And I would bring people together and nurture them into a Christian fellowship, pray together. You say, 'Why do you have to have the Christian thing?' Why? Because people, for the most part, who have been pushed down and kicked around and humiliated by the system, have a hard time adapting to a structured reality. So when the guy doesn't show up at work, they usually fire that person. How many people do you know who took a job, lasted two or three weeks, and got fired because they didn't show up? We developed small businesses in which when somebody doesn't show up, the rest of the brothers and sisters do what? Go out and find them. Because we believe in the Bible, if there's a sheep, one of the sheep is missing, what do you do? You go looking for the lost sheep until you find them. Right?

So we don't let people get away from us. We nurture them, we minister to them. We believe that only Christ can facilitate the change of consciousness that will make them into people of dignity and value to themselves. And so in reality, we have to do that. Please understand that most people who have been kicked around by the system have no concept of self-worth or self-value. I mean, it's really terrible.

We were running a youth retreat. We have this youth convention once a year, and we take all the kids out to this rundown, broken down hotel in the suburbs, and they have a swimming pool, and the kids think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread. So we go out to the suburbs, and we were doing this thing, and there was this one girl who the whole weekend never responded to anything. You know what I mean? If you've ever run a youth retreat, there's always some kid sitting there like this. Didn't respond to a thing. Went the whole weekend. The end of the weekend, we were wrapping it up on a Sunday morning, and the guy that was leading retreat- a very, very prominent speaker, by the way, leading a retreat- said, "Does anybody have anything to share? A testimony?"

All of a sudden, this girl looked up, and she stood up. I couldn't believe it. And she turned to the group and she said, "I have something to share. Last night," she said, "I had a dream. And in that dream I was at a dance, and there was a chandelier, and there were people with beautiful clothes and wonderful music. And this really handsome man came over, and he asked me to dance with him. And as I was dancing with him, I realized who he was. It was Jesus. And He bent over, and He whispered in my ear. And do you know what He said to me?" Needless to say, we were all, "What did he say to you?" "He said, 'Catherine, I'm crazy about you.'"

Now, I don't want you to go through neo-Freudian interpretations of what that's all about.

[audience laughing]

All I am saying is if you knew the kids that we work with, if you knew the situations in which they lived, you would know that there's nothing more in life than they need than this. This is the most important thing that the god of grace and the God of glory should whisper in their ear, what? I'm crazy about you. I mean, only Jesus can help people who don't believe in themselves to believe in themselves again.

I know I came off the streets of Philly. I'm an Italian kid from the Gal. I mean, I remember when I went to college, I went to Eastern College right now, teaching. I can remember coming in there and scared of death. And I remember Dr. Engels had taught English, you know, taking the roster and always open class with prayer. I guess you do that here, don't you know? Open class with prayer?

[imitating Dr. Engels] Mr. Campolo, would you lead in prayer?

So I said, sure. And I started praying. Dear God, I thank you that you love each of us in spite of the fact that each of us is worthless.

He said, [yelling] Wait a minute.

Everybody looked up.

Mr. Campolo, he said, [yelling] you are not worthless. You are of infinite value. Jesus died for you. And if you happen to have been the only person in time in history you ever lived, he would have died for just you. Do you understand that? The word you should have used was unworthy? Not worthless, unworthy.

[audience laughing]

You may continue the prayer.

You know, it kind of- kind of took the spiritual edge off of it for me.

[audience laughing]

We always joke with our kids. I always say these threats, we get them all down, and I say, okay, gang, a lot of you feel like you're losers. People are telling you, you're losers. [yelling] You're not a loser. You wouldn't exist if you were a loser.

And I always explained to them, once upon a time, you were a sperm.

[audience laughing]

You were once one of 5 million sperm. And you all lined up at a starting line.

[audience laughing]

And at the end of a long, long tunnel, there was one egg. And there was a race, and you won.

[audience laughing and cheering]

Amen.

[yelling] What you pulled off makes the Olympics look like nothing, baby. 5 million to one odds and you came through, baby. Hey, that's the good news of the gospel. That you're here by divine appointment, that God will for you for the year, that God has a plan for your life, and that plan is good and wonderful. God's going to do something tremendous through you.

And you got to convince a bunch of inner city kids who feel like they're throwaway children that God thinks they're special and that they have a father who affirms them even when the world puts them down. So inner city ministry involves all of these things.

Let me stop here and ask for just a couple of questions, and then we call it quits. Questions from the floor. This was supposed to be a seminar.

Yeah?

[audience member speaking inaudibly]

The question is, a bunch of white suburbanites who are rich come in. Do the kids have a hard time with us? The answer is absolutely not. We feel uneasy. They don't feel uneasy with us.

They're curious. They're fascinated by us. But this has to be said. We ran a summer program about three years ago and we were teaching the kids this song, Ebony and Ivory. Do you know that song? You got the ivory keys and the ebony keys and you can't make good music with just the white keys and you can't make good music with just the black keys. But together the black keys and the white keys make great music. And then you move from that to talking about how God brings us all together to make us one and together we can do great things.

And then this young woman who blond hair, blue eyes, Scandinavian woman said to the kids- young woman said to the kids, you see I'm white and you're black. And they all started yelling, [yelling] you're not white. You're not white. You're blonde, blue eyes, you know, looking so pale.

She looked like she needed a blood transfusion, you know what I mean. She's standing here saying, I'm not white? If I'm not white, what am I? Wanted to know. How did the kids view her? You can see why they would say she's not white because from when they were knee-high to a grasshopper, white people were what? The enemy? The oppressor? The mean ones? The ones you don't have anything to do with? And this woman didn't qualify. They loved her. She couldn't be white. They loved her. So she asked him, if I'm not white, what am I? The answer was, you're not white. You just have light skin.

That's a very profound statement, isn't it? That the kids were able to see beyond the racial differentiation. They're not so much concerned with whether you're rich. They're not so concerned whether you're poor. They're concerned with whether or not you are there to love them in the name of Jesus, number one. Number two is: you can't stay but it is important for those of us who are committed to inner city ministry that we stay. We are just now beginning to

initiate some major projects in those communities that I've been mentioning. But we've been there for years.

You just can't arrive and do all of this stuff. You're there and they're so sure that within six months you're going to be out of there. Because they've seen the government's social workers come set up programs that disappear. Come set up programs that disappear. And it's always the same line. What is it? Well, the program wasn't funded this year.

Whenever somebody puts down the church and they usually get me on this. When I was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, there were always snots. They would always come to me. I mean, when I was on the faculty there in the SOC department they would- always some guy from Harvard- come over and say look [imitating posh voice] Dr. Campolo.

[audience laughing]

Where it is around the university that you use transcendental categories for legitimating social order and that you have mystical categorical imperatives that orient us to the social order. Is that true?

And I would always say [yelling] yeah.

And then I'd yell very loud, [yelling] yeah, I believe in God.

And I would say that really loud because that would be the signal my eight graduate assistants would gather around because they knew that the old man was about to do in another Harvard boy.

[audience laughter and cheering]

It was always the same. It was always the same. You see, what they would always say is, we don't find that religion is necessary. We find that it is possible to carry on all these humanistic social programs without any religion whatsoever. My answer is always the same. I've been

working in the inner city low-cost housing developments for years. For years. During the 60s, the place was crawling with social workers and do-gooders. When Reagan came in, all the funds were cut. When Reagan cut the funds, guess what happened? All of these liberal social workers disappeared. They were all gone. I kid you not. There's nobody left except the Christians. We're still there because we're not paid to be there. We're there not because we're funded, but because we're called. And that's the difference.

And let me just tell you, this country cannot make it unless you begin to address the needs of the inner city. I don't know whether you're aware of this emerging underclass that's getting larger and larger and larger and larger. This country is not going to make it. Not going to make it. We really need you to go into the inner city.

You know, I really have to say this. You people bother me only in one respect, that you were the ones that were so disinterested that they took the original Star Trek off the air. I mean, this new one's okay, but it doesn't have the pizzazz of Kurt and Spock.

[scattered cheers]

And the reason why that's so important is because I always liked the missionary message of Star Trek. You say missionary message? Of course. Every Star Trek episode began with an opening line. What was it? Challenge to boldly go where-

Audience:

No one has gone before.

Tony Campolo:

That's what Missions is about. Why would you want to go where everybody's gone to do what everybody's done, to be what everybody's been when you could go where no one's ever gone before, to do what nobody has ever done before. And the cities are just waiting to be taken over.

Oh, the fields are so white and to harvest it is incredible. And the thing that intrigues me is how easy it is. I can put you into almost any low-cost housing development in Philadelphia and say, go out and round up kids for your program. The only thing that limits us in the number of kids we reach for Christ is the number of workers we have. We go on a one to ten ratio. So we have 100 kids.

There are 100 workers. We reach 1,000 kids. We have 200 workers, we reach 2,000 kids. It's as simple as that. They're out there. They're waiting. They're willing. They'll come they'll listen, they'll be converted. We just don't go. See, I can't understand why anybody would want to live out here in suburbia land. Oh, it's so dull out here. You got to be driven by car to every place.

Kids play Little League with little uniforms and umpires and parents and the whole catastrophe.

Why would you want to do that when you could play stick ball on the streets? Ah, the excitement of the city. I grew up on the city streets. We used to play stick ball, played with any number of kids from two to 10. We'd block traffic. The cops would come and they would take away our sticks and chase us. I didn't mind them chasing us, but they should not have taken our sticks. One by one, every stick. My house had been raptured. There were none. Ye, none. And I was sitting with my friends on the steps of our house one day and I said, you know, somebody ought to get into that police station on 55th and Pine, get in that back room where they store all that stuff and steal back some of those sticks.

And my best friend, Mush, said, I dare you. Now, if you're like me from the city, that's all you need is dare. I said okay, I'll do it. I'll do it. You don't think I'll do it? I'll do it. You don't think I got the guts? I got the guts. You go in there, you pretend you have to do a term paper, ask them a lot of questions. I mean, get the cops occupied, take notes, really get them into it. And while you

got them occupied, I will get in that back room and I will come out with five sticks or I won't come out at all.

And they did what they promised to do, and I did what I promised to do. And I got in that back room and I got those sticks. And ladies and gentlemen, on the streets of Philadelphia, even to this day, the name Tony Campolo is legend. [yelling] The kid who robbed the police station is here before you today.

[audience cheering]

Cities are wonderful places. You can't imagine how wonderful they are.

I was just in Philadelphia about a week ago, walking down- here's a great story, great. I can tell you great city stories. First time I got robbed in Philadelphia, um, I-

[Campolo and audience laughing]

I was telling my friend at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Hershkowitz about it, and he's an expatriate from the Soviet Union, and I told him, he said, oh, I'll tell you about the time I got robbed. He says, I've come down Broad Street two hoods put a gun on my ribs, relieved me of my wallet as they were walking away- this is only Philadelphia- said, hey, man, you talk funny. You're from around here?

Hershkowitz says, [impersonating Russian accent] Oh, I am from the Soviet Union.

He said, hey, man, take back your wallet. We don't want you to have a bad impression of Philadelphia.

[Campolo and audience laughing]

I got a better one than that. See, I'm on the subway train the first time I got robbed. And the guy took my wallet, looked at the wallet, there were only \$3 there. He says, [yelling] \$3? Lousy \$3!

The guy's yelling at me because I didn't bring more money for this occasion, you know. [yelling]

There's only 3 dollars. He said, what do you do for a living?

So I figured I'd try to appeal with guilt. I said, I'm a Baptist minister. And the guy said, no kidding, you know I'm a Baptist too.

[audience laughing]

You don't know how to unpackage a thing like that.

But I was talking about being on the streets of the city a couple of weeks ago, and a lady came up to me. She was a street lady, terribly messed up, terribly filthy. I was walking down the street with this cup of coffee from McDonald's and she approached me. She said hi. And I said hi. She said, Would you like some of my coffee? I mean, you should have seen her. I said, no, thanks.

She said, oh, okay. And she started on the street and I thought to myself, you jerk. You were such a jerk. So I turned around and ran back. I said, hey, lady. And, [impersonating woman] Yeah?

I said, I would like some of your coffee. So she handed me the coffee and I drank the coffee and I gave it back to her. And I said, that's nice that you gave me some of your coffee. I said, Why did you give the coffee to me? Why did you pick me? Oh, it wasn't you. She said, you know, I was drinking the coffee and I thought to myself, the coffee is particularly good today. I ought to share it with somebody.

Jeez. You walk away and you say, how many times do you have the privilege of living like that, of encountering people like that? Street people, wonderful people. Who slip- I could tell you 101 beautiful stories of people who have touched my life and have made a difference to me.

So I really want to encourage you to be urban missionaries. And this has to be said. Don't wait for some organization to place you. Everybody says, hey, I need to be placed. I graduated from

Biola and I had all these qualifications and nobody would hire me. Don't do that. Here's what you do. Listen to me carefully. Four or five of you could get together and move into a place like Philadelphia, New York. You can move into the worst slums. Just rent a place. You can rent it for next to nothing. Take jobs in the community and just work within the community. Be a presence in the community. You don't have to be under a mission board to be a missionary. Do you understand what I'm saying?

One of the neatest things that we got in Philadelphia is a house that has like eight of my graduate students in the house. I put the down payment on the house because they don't have a down payment they- I put the down payment on and they chip in and pay the mortgage. I don't want to hear from them. It's your house. You pay the mortgage. You take care of everything. And they do.

And they're in a community surrounded by Cambodians. They're 50 Cambodians, right within 100 yards of where they are. And they have developed a whole ministry to Cambodians. What's even more is the Cambodian kids are now getting into drugs. And as they get arrested, these young men and women who are in our graduate program are going down to the police station and having these Cambodian kids released in their custody rather than having them put into jail. And they've moved these Cambodian kids into their own homes to love them and minister to them in the name of Jesus.

We need a presence. And you don't have to join a missionary society necessarily to be a presence where you're needed. Do you follow me? We need a whole new, innovative thing. A whole new, innovative thing.

Let me tell you something, gang. You excite me. And the reason why you excite me is because you are part of a generation that's about to explode. I mean, I know it. I have been there and

back. I am old enough to have watched it happen twice. I lived through the here. I am always in the watched the 60s come into being. I watched this go through the 50s with all of their materialism. I have watched this country have a youth generation that went through. The whole thing was so stupid and the whole thing was so absurd. Kids had any dreams, any hopes and aspirations, all they wanted to do was get BMWs and Jacuzzis. And this has been no more evident than in Southern California. This is where it's manifested itself the worst.

I don't want to pick on you people. You're too wonderful to pick one. But having said that, there's a wind blowing across this country. Can't you feel it? There's something happening. Don't you know it? I mean, did you see the headline? They're not going to Fort Lauderdale anymore. They're building houses for poor people. They're not so interested in yuppie-ism anymore. They're looking for an alternative.

And the question is, are you going to create that alternative? Are you going to be a new generation of Christian youth who become the leading vanguard that draws to you hundreds, yeah, thousands of young men and women who share your vision. And the vision is this: it's anti-institutional. We're tired of organizations. We're tired of fundraising.

Aren't we not? We're tired of the whole PR trip. We're tired of having to go around doing deputation work. We just want to get up and go where there's need and set ourselves down and make a few bucks to keep ourselves fed and do the work of Jesus in the places where no one's ever gone before. The reason why I want you to come and spend the summer with us is by the end of the summer, we will have convinced you that you don't have to be part of an organization. You need to build yourself together with four or five brothers and sisters to become a little fellowship willing to set itself down in a difficult place. There's a minister in the name of Jesus.

We got too many missionaries who live in life posh suburban communities. I live in such a community. I'm always on a road. My wife's scared.

You say, well, why are you set up this way? Because it was before the present time. If we had gotten an earlier start, I know we would be living in Christian community in the context of the inner city where there's need, and we would pick out the worst neighborhood. Let me say this about the city of Philadelphia. Are you ready? I mean, it's tough out here because real estate's so high. Are you ready for this? In the city of Philadelphia, there are 400 vacant homes. Got that? 400 deserted homes. The real estate value is going down so low that the people just move out without even selling them.

Are you ready for this? We have a homestead law in the city of Philadelphia. If you will move into the house and live there for a year, it's yours. Is that mind boggling? You say, but they're terrible neighborhoods. You bet they're terrible neighborhoods. That's why they're so strategically located. So let's do good things for Jesus. If you're interested in our graduate program, put on a slip of paper graduate program.

If you want to come work in a city with us, put work in the city. If you're interested in both, write both.

I guess I got to say goodbye. But I never know how to end these things. One story, OK, closing story. And on that story, we'll go out of here shouting, okay. In our church every year they have student recognition day. Students come in and give their testimonies to the black Church. So the old folks like it because they had to scrub floors and run elevators because they could never get into colleges.

America was so, so racist. It's not over it yet, but it's not what it used to be. And these young men and women are going to Harvard and Yale and MIT, and they love Student Recognition Day

because they all get up and they give their testimonies. I'm studying engineering at MIT. I'm studying medicine at Harvard. I'm studying law at Yale. And the old folks just sit there. You got to be in my church. They just sit there and go, My, my. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Oh, Lord. And you get about 500 people yelling, my mind. Oh, wow. It's just wonderful. It's grown one by one. They gave their testimonies. When they were finished, they all sat down. Pastor got up and looked at them.

And said [impersonating the pastor, yelling] children! Because that's the way he talks, [yelling] children! He said, [yelling] you're going to die. You're going to die.

[speaking normally] That's a good thing to tell kids.

He said, [yelling] you don't think you're going to die, but you're going to die. They're going to drop you in a hole, they're going to throw dirt in your face, and they're going to go back to the church and eat potato salad.

[audience laughing]

[speaking normally] Is that good? Is that good? See, they can't teach you how to preach like that. Got to go. That's beautiful.

He said [yelling] when you were born, you were the only one that cried. Everybody else was happy. But that's not important. What's important is this when you die, will you be the only one that's happy and everybody else will cry?

[speaking normally] Whoa. Isn't that depends on what you live for? Do you live for titles or testimonies? Oh, that's good. Doesn't that rhymes. Titles, testimonies. And then he did what only my preacher can do. He went through the entire Bible in five minutes.

[impersonating the pastor] There was Moses and there was Pharaoh. Pharaoh was ruler of Egypt. That's a good title. Ruler of Egypt. Ruler of Egypt. But when he died, that's all he had was the

title. Pharaoh had the title, but Moses had testimony. Is that good? Is it good? He said there was Elijah and Jesse. Elijah was the prophet of God, and Jezebel was going to kill him. Jezebel was queen. Queen, queen. Now, that's a good title, queen. Good title, queen. Everyone wants to be queen. But when it was all over, that's all she had was a title. She had the title, but Elijah had- [speaking normally] You're getting into it. You're getting into it.

He said [yelling] there was Nebuchadnezzar, and there was Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. Good title, king. Good title, king. But when he died, that's all he had was the title. He had the title. But Daniel had-

Audience:

Testimonies.

Tony Campolo:

Ah, can you just feel it? He went on like that for an hour and a half. None of these sermonites by preacherates man, we do it. He came to the end of that thing, and he ended it with, [yelling] Pilate may have had the title, but my Jesus had the testimonies.

Then he looked at the kids and- he said this: when it's all over. I mean, when you're out of school, when you've lived your life, when they drop you in a hole, when they put up the tombstone, what will you leave behind? A tombstone with titles. Listing your degrees, listing your positions, listing all the things you've accomplished. Is that what you want? An obituary that's two columns long? Do you want titles?

Or do you want people standing around your grave given testimonies about what you did for them in the name of Jesus. Now, if you can get both, that's fine. But if you have to make a choice between titles and testimonies. You can take your stupid titles. I want-

Audience:

Testimonies.

Tony Campolo:

On that note. Go out and get them.

[audience clapping and cheering]

[silence in recording]