

**Send Me: Four Missionary Movements
Go Be Do Global Missions Conference
Park Cities Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas
April 12, 2008**

Introduction

I am so excited about being here today with you and I have been looking forward to this conference for several months. I want you to know that this conference is an outgrowth of what we sense God doing in the world. The Lord of redemptive history has begun a movement that seems like a crescendo in the history of Buckner International. Yet, there is a broader context for this conference ranging from what the Lord has done in my own heart in the last 15 months to what he is doing in the hearts of Christians throughout the country and perhaps around the world.

About two years ago I rediscovered the Jesus Agenda in Jesus' inaugural speech in the synagogue in Luke 4. The Jesus Agenda is the five-fold mission of Jesus that he announced in his inaugural speech that includes bringing good news to the poor, sight to the blind, proclaiming freedom for the prisoner, liberty to the oppressed and telling about the good news and favor of God.

I am also noticing that God is working the Jesus Agenda into the spirit of his people all across the nation and around the world. Rick Warren has announced a PEACE plan that blends both the announcing of the gospel and the doing the gospel in an effort to solve the world's most difficult problems in the neediest places. Christians from all denominational stripes are rushing to the opportunity to touch the lives of people who need the most help. Bono, the Lead singer of U2 and even people who do not profess faith in Christ are answering a call to make a difference in the lives of 150 million orphans around the world.

As a result of this movement of God, Buckner International has become a social service missions agency bringing 129 years of history in social ministry and blending that expertise with a fire red passion to also share the good news of salvation with those who are forgotten, despised, rejected, abandoned, and discarded. I sense that God is calling Buckner and those of us in this room to a movement that He is doing in the world today.

In the moments that we have left I would like for us to explore this call and what God does to prepare us to answer His call to the nations of the earth.

I want to invite you to open your Bible to Isaiah Chapter 6, verses 1-9 Let me read these verses and then I want to invite you to observe the movements in this passage of Scripture as preparation for the call of God on your life.

Read Isaiah 6:1-9

Movement One His Invitation My Response (v.1-4)

The setting is the death of King Uzziah, one of the most promising political leaders in the history of Israel who reigned for 52 years. Uzziah was a skilled politician, a military leader, an inventor, and an agricultural specialist. He started off strong but finished poorly. 2 Chronicles 26 tells the story of his failure as a spiritual leader. He broke the rules of worship in the temple through arrogant actions and was struck with leprosy and lived alone until he died with an epitaph of four words: “He is a leper.” Even if you start out strong, it is how you finish that counts.

Isaiah’s world came crashing down with the moral failure of a leader like Uzziah and at that time the Lord calls Isaiah for a specific mission. So Isaiah says, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord.”

Isaiah sees a vision of the Lord God. He sees the Lord exalted, lifted up high and the train of his robe fills the temple. Then he sees seraphs or angelic beings with six pairs of wings flying about calling to each other: Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. At the sound of voices of worship and singing, Isaiah sees the doorposts of the temple shake and the whole place is filled with smoke.

There is movement in this picture. You have His Invitation and My Response. Isaiah goes from acknowledging the disappointing life of a leader to a vision of the Lord. From one breath to another Isaiah is escorted into the presence of God and is part of an incredible worship experience.

I don’t want you to miss this. The Lord God is prevenient! What I mean is that he comes first. We don’t initiate movement toward God, he always invites movement toward us, and he always calls. He was here before you woke up today. He was here before you thought about coming. He has been

here all week waiting for you for this divine appointment. This morning, the Father calls you, the Savior calls you, and the Spirit calls you. So the first movement is about the Lord waiting for you, calling you, and ushering you into his presence.

What follows is My Response. Our response is first to see him and to worship him. The first movement in the call is His Invitation and My response.

The Lord led you here today for a divine encounter. Will you open your life to everything he has for you today?

This is going to be a very different kind of missions sermon. It is going to be an interactive time. So I need your help as we respond to God's invitation today. Would you close your eyes for a moment?

Hands Open

As a gesture of worship, response, and submission to all that God wants to do in your life this day, will you just open your hands, resting them on your lap, with your palms facing up and let me pray for us?

Lord, you are in your temple and we see you high and lifted up. Your robe fills this place and the angels sing out to you that you are three times Holy. We desperately need to see you today. Lord, who in heaven do we have but you? And besides you, who else do we desire? We are here at your invitation to behold your beauty, to enjoy your presence, and to experience you in a new and fresh way today. Some of us come with heavy burdens, some of us come with major disappointment, some of us come out of crises, and frankly some of us are here for the wrong reasons. Some of us did not come to see you and some of us came here desperate for a new vision of who you are in our lives. Our hands are open as a symbol of openness to you. We yield our thoughts, our sight, and our hearts to you and it is in your Holy name we pray, Amen!

Movement Two

His Holiness

My Sinfulness (v.5)

The Second Movement is His Holiness and My sinfulness. In verse 5 Isaiah says "Woe to me!...I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

After Isaiah is overwhelmed by the awesome, holy, righteous presence of God and is caught up in the songs of praise and the moment of worship almost to a heavenly ecstasy, he realizes the contrast between a Holy God and a sinful person.

He realizes he is dead where he stands. He is busted because he knows that he is sinful. He knows that his words are unclean. He realizes that he lives with a whole culture of people whose lips are unclean. And he realizes that he is unclean because he has just seen the Lord who is Holy.

This second movement is a reality check. It teaches me that I am not good in and of myself. This 2nd movement reminds me that I have a sin nature. His Holiness and My Sinfulness help me remember who I really am: A Sinner in need of His Grace.

So when was the last time you were busted by the reality of God's Holiness? I am not sure we are really ready to answer God's call if we fail to see who he is and who we are in light of his holiness and our sinfulness. Isaiah looked to his unclean lips because what we harbor in our hearts eventually comes out in our words and words tend to do the most damage.

Ok, I need your help again. Would you close your eyes again?

Clean Lips

With your eyes closed and nobody looking around. Would you place the fingers of one of your hands on your lips for a few moments and let me ask you a few questions:

Ephesians 4:29 says: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Have your words been wholesome or unwholesome?

Have your words been helpful or unhelpful?

Do your words build others up or do they tear others down?

Do your words benefit your listeners or do they discourage those who hear?

Lord, we are people of unclean lips and we live among people who say the most hurtful and ugly things. Sometimes our words are not wholesome, sometimes they are not helpful, and sometimes they are not beneficial. We are ruined where we stand. We touch our lips today as a gesture of acknowledgement. We recognize that we are sinners, we are guilty, and our words prove that our hearts need cleansing. Your holiness shines a bright light on our sinfulness. Give us the presence of mind and the integrity of heart to be honest with you today. We ask you to pin point the reality of our sin in light of the reality of your Holiness. Point out our attitudes, our actions, our words, our thoughts, our unresolved conflict, our pride, jealousy, envy, anger, and anything that does not please you. Do not let us get away with thinking we are good. We need your help Lord, we need your Grace, and it is in the name of above all names, the name that will require every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that you are Lord, in the resurrected and powerful name of Jesus, we pray, Amen!

The first movement in the call is His Invitation and My Response.

The Second movement in the call is His Holiness and My Sinfulness. And...

Movement Three His Grace My Gratitude (v.6-7)

The third movement in the call is His Grace and My Gratitude. About the time that Isaiah realizes he is trouble, the Lord graciously sends one of the seraphs with a live coal from the altar of incense. With the tongs and the coal the seraph touched Isaiah's lips. In that moment Isaiah's guilt was removed and his sins were atoned for. He was forgiven.

God did for Isaiah what he could not do for himself. He forgave him. He removed his guilt and he paid for his sin. The steadfast love of the Lord never fails, it is new every morning. God's Grace is amazing! It is greater than all our sin. He removes my sin as far as east is from the west. He creates a new heart in me and cleanses me from all my sin. This is what happens to Isaiah from one moment to the next.

So what else can I do but be thankful? What else can I have but gratitude for what he has done for me. We don't go on mission trips to feel good or to earn points with God. We go sacrificially because we are thankful. We serve because he first loved us. We obey out of thankfulness not out of obligation. We forgive just as Christ has forgiven us. We don't deserve or earn God's

grace, we just receive it. We spend our lives in a spirit of gratitude to God and thanksgiving in our hearts.

Ok, close your eyes with me again.

Clean Hearts

With no one looking around, place one or both of your hands on your heart and listen as I pray. Maybe you will want to make your prayer right there where you are.

Lord Jesus, words cannot express the depth of our gratitude for the forgiveness of our sins. Your grace is amazing. It is refreshing. We praise you Lord. We praise you with our inmost being, from the depths of our hearts. We praise you and we do not forget all your benefits because you are the one who forgives our sins and heals all our diseases, you redeem our lives from the pit and you crown us with love and compassion, you satisfy our desires with good things, and you renew our youthfulness, like that of eagles. So we hold our hands over our hearts to symbolize our gratitude and thanksgiving. Lord, teach us to number our days and to spend our lives for your kingdom. We know that if we seek you first, you will add to our lives everything we need. We are poised to listen to your word and Lord; we are ready to **Go Somewhere** in the world. We are ready to **Be a Voice** for those who have no voice, no hope, and no future. We are willing to share our resources for those in need. We are ready to **Do Something** that pleases you for children at risk and orphans near and far. We are your servants, ready to obey, so in these moments speak to us in a still small voice. Just say the word and we will obey. We know that if we trust you with all our hearts and if we resist trying to figure everything out, and if we acknowledge your authority over our lives that you will show us the path we should go. It is in your guiding and providing name that we pray, Amen!

Movement Four His Commission My Mission (v.8-9)

The final movement comes after Isaiah has seen the Lord, after he has seen the Holiness of God, and after he has been Forgiven. The next thing that happens is that Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord in the form of a question. The Lord asks “Whom Shall I send? And who will go for us? Isaiah is ready to say, “Here Am I. Send Me!” The Lord answers and says Go!”

Listen, you can't go with God and stay where you are. You can't respond to God's movement on the earth and be at a stand still. To follow Christ

implies movement. To bring good news to the poor, the blind, the prisoner, and the oppressed implies movement. To care for orphans and widows in their distress means you are going to them to serve them. To care for the least of these implies moving out from where you are and going to them to serve them.

Embedded in your call to salvation is your call to vocation. As believers we are all called to a ministry of some kind. Jesus called the twelve, he commissioned the 70 and he sends all of us. In John 20:21 he says “As the father has sent me, I am sending you.” In the Latin Vulgate the word for send is “missio.” Denton Lotz translates it this way: “As the Father has made me a missionary, I am making you a missionary.” That means every believer is a missionary sent on mission somewhere.

The going might be in your city, your community, your county, across the country or across the seas. You might be a student, a business professional, a carpenter, a medical professional, a teacher, or in some other vocation. I came here today to encourage you to hear the call of God on your life to children and families who are in distress. The Lord of redemptive history is here today asking the same question he asked Isaiah: Whom shall I send? Who will go for us? Will you be like Isaiah and say, Here am I, Send me?

When can send you to ministry points all over Texas, Washington, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico, Ethiopia, Kenya, Latvia, Romania, Russia, Guatemala, Peru, Mexico, and the US-Mexico Borderlands. There are orphans, children at risk, and families in all of these places that are waiting for a tangible expression of God’s love.

So the last movement in the call is His Commission and My Mission. Your mission is your specific Kingdom assignment. There is no mistake in your design, your gifts, abilities, passion, resources, relationships, and influence. And there is a Kingdom assignment that God is depending on you to fulfill.

God invited you here today to call you to Go Somewhere, to Be a Voice, and to Do Something.

Ok, for our last movement, would you close your eyes one last time. With your eyes closed and no one looking around. Would you slip your hand up in the stillness of this moment to say, Here am I Lord, Send me!

Ready Feet

If you slipped your hand up and are ready to respond, Would you stand to your feet and let me pray with you?

Right there where you are, just stand on your feet. I am not going to ask you to say anything, sign anything, or walk down the Isle. This is only about you and the Lord.

Lord, you have seen past a hand that is raised. You can see beyond the feet we stand on and peer into our hearts. Your word says how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. Remind us of the first words you said in the synagogue and help us imitate and act on your Kingdom agenda. Take us to places where people are poor to bring good news to them. Lead us to the sick and help us care for them. Give us ways to serve prisoners and proclaim freedom for them and their families. Make us aware of places and systems, and situations where we find people who are oppressed and give us the courage to do something about it. Open our hearts and our hands to be of service to you. Give us a generous spirit to share out of our abundance with those who live on less than a few dollars a day.

Whether we give our expertise, a pair of shoes, write a check or board a plane to serve. We want to do our mission and say to you...Here Am I, Send Me!

In the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen!