



Newsletter #5

Transform 2020 has perceptively identified the arts as one of the cultural spheres to be emphasized. This is an often neglected area when we consider evangelism and influencing the world for Christ. Below is an historical example that should encourage us to seriously consider this area of impact.

The Punjabi Psalms: An Historical Example

In the 1890s Rev. Dr. Imam-ud-din Shahbaz was responsible for the metrical translation of the Book of Psalms into the Punjabi language. He was a poet, teacher, theologian, pastor, and translator who was ordained by the United Presbyterian Church. His work, which he completed while blind, made the Psalms the most familiar part of Scripture in Pakistan and northern India to this day.

The uniqueness of his Psalter was in its use of traditional Punjabi poetic meter and in using local tunes for the melodies rather than the Victorian verse and church music of the Western Church. He applied the worship hymns and devotional songs so well liked and known by the common people of the Punjab and, thus, produced a local expression of Christianity which lasts to this day.

Shahbaz's efforts made the Psalms the best known part of Scripture and an integral part of Christian worship in Pakistan and northern India. As such this Psalter has created a unity among all Christians since this Psalter is used and sung among all Christian groups. One person has referred to the Punjabi metrical Psalms as "the fullest expression of indigenous Punjabi Christianity." Surely this is an example of strategic Christian transformation employing the arts.

Report on the Poverty Challenge by Hal Jones

We have been greatly encouraged at three recent events for the Poverty Challenge.

The Middle East Poverty Challenge meeting in Amman, Jordan had representatives from seven Arab countries. The enthusiasm was so encouraging that they are conducting Community Development training for village workers from Iraq, Syria, Jordan, West Bank, Lebanon, etc. This will launch out the Poverty Challenge effort and continue to solidify our team for the Middle East.

The South East Asia Poverty Challenge brought together over 30 leaders from six Southeast Asian countries. The unity was fantastic and now we have a solid leadership team with representatives from most of the countries and planned events for micro-business and community development in most of the countries.

In Bihar, the poorest state in India, local leaders came together in great power and committed under their elected leadership to take on all 45,000 villages with a regional assessment going on now and shared collaboration plans coming.

God is good. We must pray for a movement to work in collaboration to reach the 1 million poorest villages in the world with holistic compassion and good news!



Newsletter #6

Here are three more insightful reports to update us in preparation for our forthcoming meetings:

Report on Business Sphere of Cultural Activity by John Warton

John Warton, facilitator of the Business Sphere, and Hal Jones, Poverty Challenge facilitator, are working together closely out of the conviction that any remediation of poverty will come largely through the creation of real jobs. Business development programs are best instigated by business people with hearts for the poor, the unreached, oppressed, and a thorough knowledge of sound business practice.

In November 2013, men and women from every country in the Middle East came to Jordan for celebration and training. The Business Sphere training included best practices for business in a free market environment; the role of entrepreneurship; the integration of faith and business; opportunities presented by globalization; and ideas for maintaining balance amid overwhelming demands. This kind of training can be offered in every region.

A prototype of joint endeavors for the Business Sphere and the Poverty Challenge has taken place in Myanmar with John Warton and Hal Jones meeting in-country to coordinate their efforts. In order for national entrepreneurs to receive training and gain access to capital for business growth, there is a great need for trainers, consultants, researchers, and investors. Myanmar is opening to the world and the national Church is calling for help.

In the United States, the Poverty Challenge and Business Sphere jointly presented the role of "Business as Mission" at the International Wholistic Missions Conference in Phoenix, AZ, April 30-May 2, 2014. Expert practitioners and theoreticians reported on the state of the art in Business as Mission and outlined opportunities for business people to engage the Transform World challenges.

Report on Justice Track Update by Stephen Kopalchick

The dignity of the human being, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), demands the pursuit of justice. Today, four great justice challenges confront our world and plead for the attention and action of the Church worldwide:

1. **International Religious Freedom** - Millions of Christians who are being singled-out and targeted with discrimination, violence, and persecution, simply because of their faith. Secular and Christian journals suggest an intensifying pressure on Christians in parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia.
2. **Human Trafficking** - The rights of millions of people around the world are being violated through the evil of human trafficking. Through manipulation, coercion, exploitation, and violence, these millions are held against their will and forced into bonded slavery, commercial sex industry, and child laborers.
3. **Ethnic Reconciliation** - Across the global, ethnic conflict has ravaged entire societies and communities, leaving millions dead, children without mothers and fathers,
4. **The Defense of the Sanctity of Human Life** - the sanctity of human life is under attack life never before and requires a collective plan, effort and response from the Church worldwide.

In order to respond to these great challenges of our day, participants in the justice track are doing the following:

- *Raising awareness and prayer* regarding these four critical issues.
- *Researching and disseminating studies, reports and information* that highlights these challenges, and identifies tangible action steps that can be taken by the global church to advance the cause the justice.
- *Identifying and establishing a committed and connected network of activists and concerned others* who are ready and able to use their voice and positions of influence to advocate for justice in these critical issues.

Middle East Region Report by Nadya Mansour

Since the Transform World 2020 meeting last year in Bali the Middle East region has accomplished much in terms of the Challenges, Spheres, and Generations.

Over the last eight months numerous conferences have been held for training and prayer with many leaders and youth in places such as Egypt, Lebanon, and Cyprus. The Celebration Challenge was facilitated by concerts of prayer in Turkey and the Gulf region.

In terms of the Poverty Challenge there were many developments in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt such as in the distribution of goats to poor families in poor villages so they can benefit from the milk and newborns. Then the goats are taken to another family and in this way good relationships are established with the families in an ongoing basis. In addition many poor villages are being reached with courses in computer skills, sewing, English, and clinics for health care. Help is also being extended to Iraqi and Syrian refugees.

Regarding the Ideological Challenge practical training has been provided to many leaders in evangelization and in addition over a thousand people heard the message of salvation, over 7,000 New Testaments were distributed, and more than 2,000 copies of the Jesus Film were distributed.

God has blessed us this past year and it was a precious time.