

Great

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Commission News

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Recently, a friend of mine asked me what I thought to be "the most important challenge facing evangelicals in missions over the next 50 years." His inquiry got me to thinking. I would nominate "religious pluralism" as most important. It is the ideology that affirms the independent validity of all religions. Carried to its logical conclusion, it means Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hare Krishnaism are all equally true.

In the Hindu concept, various religions are the incarnations of one god (Brahma). A dragon in a pond sticking its head above the surface is considered as Buddha and at another time as Christ.

As a child, living in Japan, I was often told that there were many roads to climb Mt. Fuji. Some people, following one road, would take longer to reach the top of the mountain than others who chose another road. But, I was told, they would all reach the same summit nonetheless.

"The main thing is to practice your religion," some people will say. Others will say:

"All roads lead to God. A man's religion is his own private business. Any attempt to persuade another person to a particular religious point of view constitutes an invasion of his privacy and an abrogation of his liberty."

What factors have contributed to the fermentation of this way of thinking?

First of all, we must consider the sociological factors. Take, for example, an increase of contacts between Christians and adherents of other religions. Since the turn of the 20th century, there has been an increase of contacts between Christians and adherents of other religions. Non-Christian religions were discovered as possessing many good qualities, profound insights, and suggestions for decent living. Therefore, non-Christian religions began to

be appraised as wonderful and true.

What about the emergence of the pluralistic society? America is certainly a pluralistic society per excellence. In such a society, people of various religious persuasions live on terms of equality and enjoy religious liberty. Your neighbors may adhere to religions other than your own, but they are good and decent people. They practice their religion and you practice your own. You come to believe that the important thing is to be faithful to your own religion.

Secondly, we must consider the political factor. For years, the old cold war syndrome prevailed. America had to assure the nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America of the rightness of their religions. No religious offense was allowed in this delicate political context. After decades of living in such a sensitive religio-political environment, people's

minds became sensitized to the notion that all religions were indeed equally valid.

In such a pluralistic climate, the evangelical church must vigorously defend the uniqueness of Christ. Without it, our evangelistic efforts will become nullified. No other challenge is more devastating than this.

The Lausanne Covenant (Section 3) declares:

"We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth by their unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and people. There is no other name

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Jetsunao Yamamori

Transform USA Action Plan

Editor's Notes: Transform World Movement held a Transform USA Conference in Washington, D. C. in July 3-5, 2007. (For report on this Conference, please see summer, 2007 issue of Great Commission News.) The following is an Action Plan issued by the Transform USA office after the Conference.

Introduction:

For two centuries America sent out many of her best and bravest to every corner of the world to sow the Gospel in all lands. Now it is the privilege of the rising church in the nations to restore faith and vigor to the American church, that we all may be one, united in a common call to Transformation.

Challenge:

The challenges facing the U.S. were shared in various ways as we gathered together in Washington D.C. in July 2007.

We recognized the need for a balanced emphasis on both the spiritual and the tangible needs of our country. We identified the major evils of Pornography, Homosexuality, Abortion, Racism, Addictions, Occultism, and the special challenge of HIV/AIDS in our beloved nation.

The following list identifies some of the evils/sins we as a people are committing.

- * We have disobeyed God's clear commands in Scripture;
- * We have built our own egos rather than advancing the Kingdom of Christ;
- * We have all too often fallen short of the integrity, faithfulness, and total honesty with each other;
- * We have failed to confront falsehood and unrighteousness in the Church and the world because of our fear of man and of losing prestige or security;
- * We have been content to reduce the power of the gospel to mere creedal form;
- * We have neglected our God-ordained duties to be the world's salt and light.

There is a need for prophetic voices to be heard.

Vision:

To connect, as God's servant catalysts, those called to fostering repentance, reconciliation and the restoration of biblical worldview principles to America.

Mission:

We dedicate ourselves together to serve as catalysts on God's mission of transformation in our ethnic communities and in the nation.

Objectives:

- * To establish personal transformation initiatives that result in Transformation Christians, families, churches and civic groups by spheres of society.
- * To develop bridges between our ethnic churches and the indigenous churches within the U.S. and from their respective countries and regions.
- * To encourage sphere-connections as for example, Transform Education, Transform Arts, Transform Business, and Transform Government.
- * To identify Biblical models of leaders who reflect transformational relationships which demonstrate humility, brokenness, transparency, teachability, courage to speak the truth in love and accountability in their marriages, families, peer and close working relationships.
- * To foster a biblical understanding of authority, consisting of obedience to the law comple-

(Continued from front page)

by which we must be saved."

Furthermore, "Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:5-6 NIV).

(The author is a Senior Advisor of LCWE.)

mented by the love of liberty. God delegates His authority to each individual, who as children are trained to become guardians of liberty and stewards of the corporate authority invested in the three covenant institutions among which God has divided his authority: the family, the Church and the civil government. Each of these three institutions administers a portion of God's authority and each is given sovereignty within its own jurisdictional sphere. God has established different levels of "authorities" in each sphere, to which He gives "authority" (the right to act lawfully) to serve Him by serving the individuals assigned to their jurisdiction. Each individual is a steward of the authority entrusted by God to him as a member of the family, the church and the civil government.

Some Suggested Action Steps:

- * To pursue transforming relationships in our own marriages, families, neighborhoods and leadership circles.
- * To set up, with the support of our Korean brethren, a "Transform USA" office which will orchestrate a monthly conference call and support other local, ethnic and sector initiatives related to Transform USA.
- * To catalyze prayer, repentance, reconciliation and solemn assembly-type events and initiatives such as:

Transform USA-Hispanic-San Antonio 07,
August 17-18, 2007 with others to follow
Transform World Houston 2008, Fall

Transform World New York City 2009: Global
Cities Initiative, Fall
Transform USA Los Angeles 2010

Invitation:

We invite those people and churches who share the vision to join hands together on this journey of repentance, reconciliation and restoration of biblical values to various spheres of society.

- * Ethnic church groups in America working in unity for effective transformation.
- * Mainstream churches humbly serving the ethnic churches.
- * Exercising humility as we network together.
- * Remembering God's hand is key to revival and transformation.
- * Recognizing the internationalization of the Global Church with its strength and inspiration from around the world.
- * Intentionally transferring the vision and purpose of God to the next generation

Conclusion:

Now is the time. Now is the opportunity. We pledge to dedicate our lives to the sacred task of rebuilding the United States of America on Biblical principles.

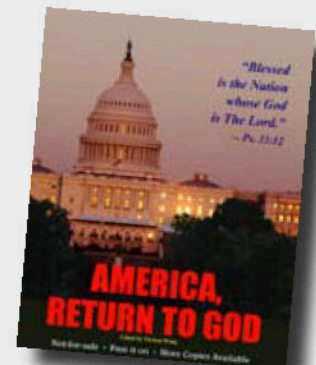


America, Return To God Reprint Plan

The first printing (500,000 copies) of the book *America, Return To God* have almost all gone. We now only have a few dozens left. And people are still asking for it.

We are now in need of a second printing.

May we ask you to kindly pray and help for the second printing of this much needed book. With your support this book can go into the hands of more leaders in our government, courts, schools, media and homes. Please kindly consider a gift for this second printing.



America, Return To God Prayer Rally

September 30, 2007, San Francisco Bay Area

Theme: America, Return To God - Beginning From Me

The Chinese churches in the San Francisco Bay area organized a Joint Prayer Rally for America on September 30 in the Sheraton Gateway Hotel near San Francisco International Airport. Over 400 pastors and lay leaders from churches throughout San Francisco Bay Area came and prayed in one heart for the repentance of America: the government, the courts, the schools, the churches, the families, and the participants themselves.

Rally speaker Rev. Paul Shen lamented the spiritual and moral decline of America in the past 50

years. He challenged the participants to live out the Biblical principles in their homes and marketplace so as to impact the America society and transform the secular culture.

Rev. Tong Liu led the congregation in sing-spiration. He used the song "This is my land, this is your land" sung by his daughter years ago, to remind the American Chinese that since they have chosen America as their home, then America is their land. The entire congregation applauded with thanksgiving.

Rev. Thomas Wang concluded the two and a half hour Rally by leading the entire congregation in a closing prayer in unison, as follows:

OUR PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, we come before you to pray for our beloved nation America. O Father, America was built by you through Puritan Christians. You are the Lord of America. You have, in over 200 years, made America strong, prosperous, and have sent out the highest number of missionaries to evangelize the world.

But O heavenly Father, during the past decades, America has been steadily and rebelliously drifting away from you. America today does not allow prayer and Bible reading in her public schools; the Ten Commandments are forbidden to be shown in the court; and the manger scene is not allowed to be displayed during Christmas. Yet at the same time, American schools tolerate binge drinking, abuse of drugs, mixed co-ed dorms and homosexualities. Some schools offer courses on the Koran and Buddhist studies. Furthermore, ever since the U.S. Supreme court legalized abortion on demand in 1973, about 1,500,000 unborn babies were killed each year legally and purposely.

O God, America has woefully sinned against you! With your boundless love would you please send down the spirit of repentance that America, like Nineveh of old, will repent of her grievous sins and return to you, and that you will forgive her and wash her clean with your precious blood. May America receive again the joy of salvation and continue to serve as your instrument for world evangelization.

Hear our prayer O Father, that we may regain our strength and follow you all the way to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His Name we pray, Amen!



Rev. Paul Shen challenged the participants to live out Biblical principles.



Rev. Tong Liu led singspiration.



World Mission News

The top factor that influenced **Muslims** to follow Christ was the lifestyle of Christians, according to a recent survey of 750 Muslims from 30 countries and 50 ethnic groups who converted between 1991 and 2007. They cited no gap between moral profession and practice, love in the group, treatment of women, simple and conforming to the local lifestyle, etc. as examples. Next factor was the power of God in answering prayers and healing closely related to deliverance from demonic power. The third was dissatisfaction with the type of Islam they have experienced and with the Qur'an that emphasizing God's punishment more than his love. Other factors were visions and dreams, gospel message of assurance of salvation and forgiveness, spiritual truth in the Bible, about the love of God and the love expressed through the life and teaching of Jesus, etc.

<Christianity Today, October/07>

Since the 1990's FEBC(HK) have been broadcasting aimed at some of the 125 million **Chinese minority people** in 55 groups. Due to lack of workers with language proficiency and resources, they are able to do only half-hour programs from 3 days a week to daily for seven languages, including Zhuang, Tibetan, Uyghur, and Yunnan. So far, they have received very few audience responses. Lately they took responsibility for Minangkabau language broadcast to an Indonesian people group of 7.5 million.

<Far East Broadcasting, www.liangyou.net, 8/07>

In 1800 just 3% of world population lived in cities. Today, 50%+ of 6.6 billion are **city-dwellers**. UN forecasts at least 23 cities mostly in developing nations will have 10 million plus by 2015. The largest, Tokyo now at 35 million, will have 40 million.

<Parade, 8/5/2007>

According to some survey, 6 out of 10 boomers in their 50's wish to switch careers someday with a higher, social purpose. Many set sights on education, healthcare, the ministry and social services. These so-called "**encore careers**" are expected to last 10 to 20 years. Though some may need jobs for economic reasons, many others change from hearing "an inner voice." Some go back to school for retraining, and some corporations support these decisions financially.

<Dallas Morning News, 8/18/07>

The **Mexican** city of Juarez, on the border with USA, is very corrupt and under siege by drug trade and murders. A pastor there of a large church grieved for the city and felt God's call to resign to begin a public fast of 21 days in a tent in the City Park. A journalist came to report daily what he heard from God. It drew attention of 4,000 to the tent where he ministered to them. Later the newly elected mayor called on him to take charge in clean-

ing up a notorious prison of 3,000 inmates and 80% corrupted guards. With army help, they locked down the prison, cleaned up the corruption, and put inmates through drug withdrawal assisted by doctors, nurses and pastors in 30 days. UN is sending teams to analyze this remarkable cleansing operation.

<Silvoso News,

www.harvestevan.org, June/07>

Started in 2004 in Dallas, The Fusion conference ministry is trying to reach the **20-40 generation** that are missing in US churches today, struggling with how their faith intersects their lives. Speakers and ministries of various causes (poverty, schools in Africa, etc) show them how their skills can be used. Responses have been encouraging so far.

<Dallas Morning News, 9/22/07>

The **Cuban** church is situated in a society of abject poverty and under intense opposition from a totalitarian regime. Yet the church is experiencing a revival. The number of churches and house churches has grown from 1,100 in 1990 to nearly 17,000 today. Large number of Bibles is needed.

<Mission Network News/ www.joelnews.org, 8/1/07>

In Saigon, **Vietnam** a factory owner sensed the loneliness and uneasiness of hundreds of his young workers. He invited a pastor to come and talk to them resulting in many accepting Christ. This not only helped the young workers spiritually, it also kept them from drifting off to other jobs. This owner inspired some fellow businessmen to do the same. Last year churches showed an increase of some 3,500 new baptized members.

<Mission Network News/ www.joelnews.org, 8/29/07>

God has worked mightily in the **Middle East**. In one city, 1,400+ Chinese workers came to the 2nd night of the mid-autumn festival event with a program of video message, hymns, dances, Chinese rap, etc. At the end of the sharing, 688 responded to the call to give their lives to Christ. Over the two nights 900+ have done so. Efforts are underway to nurture the new believers.

<JAL Newsletter, 9/25/07>

Lack of **clean water**, a major crisis of the world, causes 50%+ of world's health problems. A Christian agency has introduced a new, lightweight filter using combined proven biological & mechanical processes. It gives 47 liters/hour of potable water and cost ~\$50 to get it to the field. It is believed this will help greatly build rapport with the community before sharing the gospel message with them.

<Mission Network News/ www.joelnews.org, 9/28/07>

GCCI 2008 Ministry Plan and Budget

1. Mission Mobilization

- (1) Back to Jerusalem Movement
International Consultation III
Date: March 2008
Place: Asia
Participants: by invitation only
- (2) Chinese Mission Mobilization '08
Date: December 26-30, 2008
Place: San Francisco Bay Area
Theme: Come, Change the World Together
Participants: 400-500
(Co-sponsor with several mission Organizations.)



2. Mission Strategy Summit

- Date: June 18—20, 2008
Host: GCCCI
Purpose: brainstorming for mission strategies in this rapid changing world
Participants: by invitation only

3. Mission to the West

- (1) America
Work with Transform USA and other ethnic churches to call America to return to God.
- (2) Great Britain – in cooperation with churches in UK
- (3) Continental Europe – in cooperation with churches and mission agencies in Europe

4. China Mission

- (1) Continue our support to private seminaries in China.
- (2) Continue to publish the simplified version of the Great Commission magazine (semi-annual) in China
- (3) Publish simplified Chinese characters version of the Perspectives on World Christian Movement.

5. Mission Education

- (1) Develop and publish Chinese World Mission courses
- (2) Conduct world mission Sunday school teachers' training classes
- (3) GCCCI staff as mission adjunct lecturers in Chinese seminaries, and mission Sunday school teachers in Chinese churches

6. Mission To the Jews Seminar

Chinese churches are in need of deeper involvement in mission to the Jews. The first seminar will be held in the San Francisco Bay Area on March 28 and 29, 2008.

7. Mission Publications

- (1) Great Commission Bi-monthly (Chinese magazine)
- (2) Great Commission News (English quarterly)
- (3) Chinese version of Twilight of a Great Civilization
- (4) Chinese version of the Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions, to be published in 2010.

8. Media Production

- (1) A Life of Vision — Rev. Thomas Wang's Biography DVD. To be shown on Rev. Wang's Retirement celebration.
- (2) DVD for World Mission Course

GCCI 2008 Budget

	Budget	%
Global Mission	\$173,591	18.27%
Return To God Movement	\$150,000	15.79%
Mission Publications & Mass Media	\$326,069	34.33%
Mission Education	\$74,214	7.81%
Office Administration	\$180,000	18.95%
Donation	\$24,000	2.53%
Contingency	\$22,126	2.32%
Total	\$950,000	100.00%



A Response To "Christianity's Image Problem"

Thomas Wang

Humanism has done its work!

In roughly 400 years of time, Humanism (the ideology that puts man, instead of God, as the center of all things) with the help of movements like the Renaissance, the Enlightenment etc., has steadily gained ascendancy in the intellectual, social and political worlds, beginning from the West.

Indeed, Christianity's "image problem" goes way back to the early church when the Apostle Paul painfully said, "Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world!" (I Cor. 4:13)

David Van Beima's report on Christianity's Image Problem ably described the devastating effect of Humanism among Christians and non-Christians alike in America and especially to the younger generation. The report quoted David Kinnaman: "...resentment as focused on perceived Christian attitudes. Nine out of ten outsiders found Christians too 'anti-homosexual' and nearly as many perceived it as 'hypocritical' and 'judgmental'". Van Beima's concluding remark is note-worthy: "there really is no option but to address the crisis."

I am sure there are many ways in addressing this crisis. May I venture a few suggestions as follow:

1. See Crisis as Crisis

There is a Chinese idiom which says, "Looking without seeing, hearing without listening." (視而無睹, 聽而不聞) There are too many "head-in-sand" Christians who are not troubled by all the degradations around them—until it is too late.

I guess this is why the Transform World movement and the America, Return To God movement have been raised up by God among His people in this age. Let us recognize and identify the crisis and determine to do something about it.

2. Accept Valid Criticisms with Humility

We have to admit that some of the criticisms are true. Christians (including the leaders) are not perfect. We need to bow our heads and accept valid criticisms. We need to ask the Lord for forgiveness and by His grace not to repeat the mistakes. In other words, we should be grateful to

true indictments and benefit from it.

3. Continue to be God's "Watchman". (Ez. 3:16-21)

- (1) Be God's spokesman to an ungodly world.
- (2) Speak what is right with God instead of what is popular with man.
- (3) Sound warnings to both the world and the church.

4. Refuse to be Intimidated into Silence:

"The way for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing."—Edmund Burke

- (1) Satan uses cultural, social and peer pressures to intimidate us into silence and non-action.
 - a. William Wilberforce, inspite of pressures from the British Parliament, refused to give up his efforts against slave trade. After 27 years of effort, the Parliament finally outlawed slave trade in 1807.
 - b. William Carey, inspite of the rebuke and pressure from his church leaders, refused to back down on his advocacy for foreign missions. He became the father of modern missions.

- (2) Satan sometimes uses popular opinion and statistics to "shame" us into silence.

The statistics reported in Van Beima's article are more than enough to "shame" ordinary Christians into silence or even feel ashamed to identify himself or herself as a Christian, or worse an evangelical. As stated by Kinnaman "The view of 85% non-Christians aged 16-29 that present day Christianity is "hypocritical—saying one thing doing another", was in fact, shared by 52% of Christians of the same age."

But again we refuse to be silenced much like Martin Luther who threw the ink bottle at the devil when the latter try to shame Luther (by showing him of his past sins) into giving up on the Reformation venture.

Christianity's image problem? Yes, it will always be there, that is, if we remain faithful in our proclamation of God's Word and our seeking of Christlikeness in our daily lives. Let us steadfastly address this crisis by holding hands together and at the same time holding unto our Lord Jesus Christ.