



Transformation Ministries - www.transmin.org

970 South Village Oaks Drive, Suite 101, Covina, California 91724-0609 626-915-7641 or 800-299-3448

We Can't Change our Worlds for Christ

Dr. Dale V. Salico, Executive Minister (October 2006)

Recently, I received a letter from a Christian leader who expressed discomfort with the purpose statement of Transformation Ministries, “*Strengthening churches to change their worlds for Christ.*” He raised some very good questions:

...Does not social justice flow out of being intimate with Christ, not the other way around? John 15:5 clearly states that as individuals (or churches), we *can do nothing* without Christ being the force behind it. What is it we are to do **for Christ** that He is incapable of doing?

The answer is that **being intimate with Christ**, and **changing our worlds for Christ** are not an “either/or situation.” They are a “both/and” situation. Repeatedly we are urged in Scripture to live in intimacy with Christ.

~ *Remain in me, and I will remain in you.* John 15:4

~ *Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.* Colossians 2:6

~ *And now, dear children, continue in Him. . .* I John 2:28

And repeatedly we are commissioned to change our worlds for Christ.

~ *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them everything I have commanded you....* Matthew 28:19-20

~ *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people....* Galatians 6:10

~ *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.* James 1:27

Every command in the Word of God can be seen as either a command to change our inner worlds or our outer worlds for Christ. Some passages weave the two inseparably together, such as Colossians 3:16-22.

~ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*

~ *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

~ *Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*

~ *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

~ *Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.*

If that is not a changed world, I don't know what is! Dallas Willard writes,

Spiritual formation, good or bad, is always profoundly social. You cannot keep it to yourself. Anyone who thinks of it as purely a private matter has misunderstood it.¹

Likewise, **letting Christ work through us**, and **striving with all our might in the work of Christ** are not an “either/or,” but a “both/and.” Nowhere are these woven together more tightly than in Colossians 1:28-29.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Being intimate with Christ is the irreplaceable foundation for changing one’s world for Christ. And letting Christ’s power work through us is the indispensable prerequisite to laboring for Christ with all one’s might.

If Christ is given absolute Lordship in our lives, we cannot stop our transformed selves from changing our worlds for Christ, as we work in His strength in accordance with His will! This is what Jesus meant when He said, *You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*² The problem is that most Christians prefer a “leashed lord” to a “sovereign Lord.”

A lighthouse transforms the world for sailors from a potentially disastrous rocky coast into a safe harbor. To accomplish this mission the lighthouse must be constructed at the very spot where the sea is most dangerous. It must have a solid foundation, a tall spire and a powerful beam. In the same way individual Christians and congregations are designed by God to lift His light in a dark and dangerous world, revealing the way to safe harbor. They must stand in dangerous places, built on the foundation of God’s Word. They must be constructed by well-designed discipleship and spiritual formation to rise above the irregular shoreline of their culture. And they must beam the light of Christ into the darkness of the world, changing their worlds for Christ.

Lighthouses neither build nor power themselves. Nevertheless, they change their worlds. Their ability to do so depends on the design and purpose of those who build and empower lighthouses. Likewise, Christians can change their worlds. They do so because the One who built, redeemed, restored, and empowers them designed them for that purpose. The joy is ours. The glory is His.

Think about it. . .

1. Do you have an intimate relationship with Christ, so that when He speaks, you hear, and when He leads, you follow? How are you cultivating this relationship?
2. In what specific, measurable ways is your world different because you (or your congregation) are lifting your light there?
3. What is the difference between a “leashed lord” and a sovereign Lord?

¹ *Renovation of the Heart* (Navpress, 2002), 182.

² Matthew 5:14