

Dear friends,

We might say that the word “transformation” is in vogue. It certainly is on my mind these days.

In its strategic plan the Christian Reformed Church speaks of “transforming individuals and communities worldwide” as its ultimate purpose.

The full name of the Nehemiah Center in Managua, Nicaragua, is the “Nehemiah Center for Transformational Development.”

In October, I will have opportunity to attend a regional summit in Guatemala for the “strategy of transformation.” The “strategy of transformation” is led by CRWM missionary Joel Van Dyke and is equipping churches to reach youth at risk in Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic.

From Guatemala, I will be travelling to Miami for the first meeting of a Latin American regional team of Christian school educators. Our theme could well be described as “Educating for Transformation.”

Still later in October Jeannie and I will have the opportunity to visit Nigeria and Liberia in Africa. In Nigeria the Daniel Center is a “transformation center” with similarities to the Nehemiah Center. In Liberia there is growing interest for the formation of a “transformation center.”

So what in the world is a “transformation center” or a “transformation strategy”? Or, even more basically, what do we mean by “transformation”? And what does all this have to do with the Gospel?

Let’s put it this way. The very possibility of “transformation” rests on the historical foundation of Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension:

Through the death of Jesus the power of death and sin has been broken and the door has been opened for our authentic reconciliation with God and neighbor.  
Through the resurrection of Jesus God’s transforming and renewing power has decisively entered our physical world of time and space as a guarantee of the eventual restoration of all of creation.  
Through his ascension Jesus has been given the keys to all of human history and the authority to unleash his Spirit to empower the life and witness of the church as she both models and announces his reign.

But here is the rub. The church can only practice and announce the reign of Christ if she herself is “transformed” by the renewing of her mind, as Paul puts it in Romans 12:2. And this demands that the church grasp the full significance of the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ:

Not only for the life after death but also for her life here and now,  
Not only for individual salvation but also for the renewal of marriage, family, education,  
business and government;  
Not only for life within the four walls of the church building but also for life in the world  
from Monday through Saturday.

So what is a transformation strategy? It is a strategy for the renewal of the practice and  
proclamation of the Lordship of Christ in some area of the church's life in the world,  
whether that might be marriage and family, education, business, government, or  
community development.

What is a transformation center? It is the intentional synergy between various strategies  
of transformation so that a renewed church can make a sustained impact on a particular  
people group or nation.

Would you pray for Jeannie and me as we encourage and advise transformation strategies  
and transformation centers over the next two months? Would you pray for the Spirit-led  
transformation of the worldwide church of Christ - - so that she can be more and more the  
agent God intends for the transforming of lives and communities in the world he loves?

In Christ,

Joel for the Huyser family

P.S. As of the end of July we have raised \$1,600 of the \$25,000 we estimate we will need  
for a new mission vehicle. We need to raise 100% of the funds before the vehicle can be  
purchased under the guidelines of CRWM. Contributions can be sent to Christian  
Reformed World Missions, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49560  
and designated for "Nicaragua Mission Vehicle."