

The Five Pivotal Paradigms for Transformation

Ed Silvos from [Transformation](#) Ch.3

It finally dawned on me that I was in deep medical trouble when my eye surgeon told me, “Well, you were first in line for brains...but last for eyes”. Several top-notch eye specialists had examined me previously, and one by one they had referred me to “someone more experienced on this matter”. Now I was at the end of the line and about to start a surgical journey down the road to six eye surgeries, hence the reason for my doctor’s dry humor.

By the time I was onto my fifth surgery Ruth and I had come to know everybody at the hospital – doctors, nurses, receptionists, volunteers, even the janitors. But on that particular day I noticed the nurse was prepping my left eye and I knew that the scheduled surgery was for the right one! She had already placed an adhesive plastic arrow on the left side of my forehead pointing to the eye to be operated on. I asked her to check and sure enough my suspicions were confirmed, it was the wrong eye.

I insisted on now having two adhesive arrows placed, one indicating “this eye” and the other “NOT this eye”. I then proceeded to bring up the issue with the nurse, the anesthesiologist and the nurses aid taking me to surgery. When I was about to broach the subject with the operating surgeon he said, “I know, I know. It is the right eye. Everybody within ten miles of this hospital has heard about it. Relax!”

Because the subject was of vital importance to me I insisted in making sure everybody got it right. They not only got it, they also joyfully complied. Unfortunately, God not always gets the same cooperation from us on issues that He considers of great importance. All through the Bible He has placed fluorescent red markers pointing us to the things He wants us to fix on in this world – the cities and nations in desperate need of “surgery”, but somehow we keep focusing on something else.

The army led by Jesus is designed and commissioned to advance decisively, to overcome the evil that is entrenched in the world until God’s glory has been poured on peoples and nations. No matter how clearly this is spelled out in the Scriptures we seem “to prep the wrong eye”. To make this change, we need to embrace new paradigms and gain new vision.

We associate lenses with the eyes, but there are also intellectual “lenses” that, once placed over our mind, can impact our understanding--for better or for worse. Likewise, the Church today is beset by myriad “optical” difficulties when it comes to seeing the fullness of our purpose and potential as change agents in the societies in which we live. If, for example, an optometrist mistakenly prescribes reading glasses for someone who needs glasses for distance, the user would not be able to focus on objects far away. Being unable to see the long view, the patient would eventually give up and miss the big picture entirely.

The issue is that while we have been looking, we have not been seeing all there is to see. Because we have looked through religious lenses, we have not seen the marketplace and much less its great importance to God’s Kingdom. By exclusively discipling individuals, we

have missed the higher prize of bringing transformation to nations. It's time that we put on "Kingdom of God glasses" that will enable us to see the Church operating 24/7 in the marketplace.

The brief stories you have read here so far, and many others you will read in the pages ahead, came about because the principals involved embraced new paradigms that afforded them a clearer and more comprehensive view.

Biblical Paradigms for Transformation

There are five pivotal paradigms essential for sustainable transformation to take place, each of which we will examine in detail in the chapters ahead (see Transformation)

These paradigms are:

1. The Great Commission is about discipling nations, not just people.
2. The marketplace (the heart of the nation) has already been redeemed by Jesus and now needs to be reclaimed by His followers.
3. Labor is the premier expression of worship on earth; and every believer is a minister.
4. Our primary call is not to build the Church but to take the Kingdom of God where the kingdom of darkness is still entrenched in order for Jesus to build His Church.
5. The premier social indicator that transformation has taken place is the elimination of systemic poverty.

These paradigms might seem radical, and are not necessarily what we hear from the pulpit every week, but they are thoroughly biblical and clearly reflect God's perspective. However, to be able to see them, we need to wear the right lenses, because it is our tendency to be shortsighted when processing divine instructions; that is, we tend to focus on what is closer in the present at the expense of capturing the full scope of all that God has in store for us and wants to accomplish through us.

A clear example of this is found in Acts 1:4-8 where Jesus is telling the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. to receive the power required to disciple nations all over the world. Undoubtedly Jesus is looking through the distance portion of the lenses.

How did the disciples process this information? I dare say nearsightedly, as revealed by their inquiry: "Are you going to restore the Kingdom to Israel at this time?" Basically they were asking, When the Holy Spirit comes, are we going to be vindicated before our nation, and as a result, Jerusalem become the center of the world with the nations coming to us?

But Jesus had a different focus. He told them not to wait for nations to come to them, but to go to the nations. He specifically instructed them to begin by discipling a city (Jerusalem), and from there to move up to a region (Judea), and once they had acquired some experience in the subject of regional discipleship, to go on and tackle the first nation (Samaria), and after that not to stop until they had reached the ends of the earth—all

nations (Acts 1:8). What a contrast! In essence, Jesus was saying that it is not about you, it's about God and God is about nations!

Clearly, God intends to restore the Kingdom to Israel. He does pour out His Spirit upon people to endow them with supernatural power to overcome personal challenges. The problem is that the disciples focused on the immediate dimension at the expense of the bigger picture. For the Bible to make sense, for its principles to become relevant and for the promised results to materialize, a series of paradigm shifts are necessary to allow us to become disciplers of nations, empowered by the redemptive work of Christ to fully reclaim the marketplace and worship God with our jobs so we can take the Kingdom of God where evil is still entrenched so that nations will have honor and glory restored.

Church On Weekdays

For many, the shifting of paradigms began with a very practical question, Where is God on Mondays? Or for that matter, every other day of the week besides Sunday? God is passionately interested and invested in human affairs all the time. Consequently, He is willing to bring His presence and His power to bear, first in our immediate sphere of influence, and eventually in our cities and even our nation.

Let's take a look at some examples of how this can occur...

Lieutenant Governor Welcomes Jesus into Paradise.

Hawaii, one of the most alluring and hospitable American states, has scored a number of negative "firsts." The first abortion clinic opened in Honolulu in the '70s. A strong liberal lobby in Hawaii is relentlessly pushing for the islands to be at least the second state to approve assisted suicide legislation (Oregon has the discredit of being the first).

Things began to change on December 7, 2004, when Lieutenant Governor James "Duke" Aiona led 6,000 believers in a corporate invocation, inviting Jesus, publicly and officially since on that day he was the acting governor, to come into the state to make it God's Hawaii. This solemn act was the climax of a canopy of prayer raised over the islands that day and the prayer walk of 77 school campuses across the state.

What took place is no different than what we read in II Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, upon whom my Name is invoked, humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear their prayer, I will forgive their sins and I will heal the land." In Hawaii, that prayer exercise reflected the new understanding about the need to disciple nations and the right to reclaim the marketplace (in this case education) for the Kingdom of God.

Anybody familiar with the acidic American constitutional debate on the separation of church and state knows that participating in (and, in the case of Hawaii's Lieutenant Governor, leading) such an overt public religious exercise is tantamount to political suicide. However, this was not about the institutional church and state; it was all about God and the problems of the state. Hence, the dramatic and extraordinary changes that began to take

place shortly after the statewide prayer made believers of many unbelievers, to the point that even the secular media began to report good news.

Following the raising of the canopy of prayer, crime and disciplinary referrals in school campuses decreased dramatically. In some schools, Grade Point Averages and graduation rates reached record highs. In another school, teenage pregnancy dropped significantly. Best of all, in many schools campus drug dealers, who used to operate with impunity due to the complicity of students, were exposed and arrested. All of this constituted clear validation that the Kingdom of God was taking over areas where evil had been systemically entrenched. Churches “adopted” schools and took offerings to purchase much needed equipment or to pay for repairs. Believers volunteered as athletic coaches, spiritual advisors and campus counselors, and prayer became common at track meets, sporting matches and even at faculty meetings.

Once prayer became a “normal” activity on campus, students regularly made it a practice to hold hands in small circles to publicly pray for the principal, the teachers and fellow students. Soon afterwards, reports of miraculous answers to those prayers fueled greater interest in God’s presence on school grounds and many students and administrators experienced life changing encounters with Jesus.

In the context of the prayer exercise in December of 2004, a group of 25 players from across the Islands issued an invitation, and a month later 134 Kingdom minded persons came to hear and share reports, hopes and dreams for the future. This led to a spontaneous gathering of 900 transformation-hungry Christians in February 2005, which in turn resulted in an Anointed for Business seminar the following May for 2,500 believers.

During the closing session of this seminar, 200 pastors commissioned 2,300 church members as marketplace ministers in an inspiring ceremony that set the stage for the newly commissioned to turn their jobs into their ministry. The following week, scores of transformation groups were launched (most of them around lunch breaks) in hospitals, ranches, the waterfront, stores, banks, car dealerships, attorney’s offices, schools and hotels. Prayers began to be offered all over the marketplace for Hawaii to become God’s Hawaii, just as the Lieutenant Governor had prayed the previous December.

Democrats and Republicans Praying Together in Chambers

The results became evident right away. The ancient bitter animosity between Republicans and Democrats took a direct hit when the Republican Lieutenant Governor and a leading Democratic state senator publicly asked forgiveness on behalf of their respective parties. Subsequently, spirituality in politics became prevalent among legislators and government workers. At least 50 people have joined a newly established prayer meeting in the state building. The political climate improved so much that both parties rated the 2006 legislative session as “the best ever,” and closed it by singing “Amazing Grace” in chambers!

At the city level, shortly after a fiercely fought election, the Mayor of Honolulu (a Mormon and a Democrat) opened his term in office with prayer convocation to seek God’s favor for the city and afterwards prayed regularly with pastors in his office seeking God’s guidance

and favor. A year later, at what was billed as the Mayor's "annual prayer service," he gave eloquent testimony that intercession and God's favor were the reason for the remarkable municipal breakthroughs of the previous twelve months. At this prayer service, government and community leaders representing the most diverse social and political streams held hands asking for God's blessing on the city and the state.

Breakthroughs also started to show up in the business community. The management of the leading car dealership introduced prayer for their employees and customers. Crime decreased and the murder rate was cut in half.

The booming economy is now the best in the history of the state; and Hawaii now has the lowest unemployment in the nation. Median income rose from \$53,554 to \$58,112 in one year, while the poverty rate descended from 10.6% to 9.8%. And on April 20, 2007, the local newspapers covered a friendly dialogue between Democrat and Republican legislators to refund to the taxpayers the fiscal surplus of the previous two years as the state constitution mandated.

Across Hawaii, voluntary worship services are being held in school campuses, and pastors are being asked to serve as spiritual advisors. Furthermore, in the tough docks of Honolulu it has become "typical" to see sturdy stevedores lifting heavily tattooed arms in prayer; while in a growing number of boardrooms divine guidance is sought by CEOs and senior management as part of the regular corporate agenda.

In the town of Nanakuli, historically one of the poorest and most hopeless places in the state, believers had adopted every square inch of the city and prayer walked the entire community, inviting Jesus to set up residence in it, and especially in its school campuses. Shortly afterwards, the National Football League donated one million dollars to build youth centers in the area, most of which will operate in conjunction with the schools where Jesus was invited in. At about the same time, a nearby prison began to experience radical transformation when the newly appointed warden invited Jesus to make it "Jesus' prison." In less than six months, half of the inmates became believers, were baptized, transformed, and are now actively involved in building a Christian ward that is setting the bar for the rest of the prison.

On the island of Maui, businessman Myles Kawakami gave God control over his company. The business began to prosper and Myles has been faithfully writing checks from God's 51% portion of the profits to bless poor people and social undertakings, while watching his income increase. Myles and his wife Joyce feed thousands of needy people in addition to funding a significant number of projects.

Tahiti: President gets baptized

Breakthroughs have also gone beyond Hawaii. Francis Oda, chairman and CEO of Group 70, arguably the leading architectural firm in the state, was in Tahiti to participate in an architectural contest for the renewal of the capital's city, Papeete, and its waterfront. Francis saw himself as a channel for God's Kingdom to become manifested in Tahiti, even though the stated reason for his trip was an architectural assignment. Francis understood

that he was called to disciple nations and to reclaim the marketplace, and that his job was a vehicle to take God's kingdom where evil was still entrenched.

During an official meeting, the President asked for Francis' opinion on what to do on the location of a project he had just stopped. Francis asked specific questions to get the best possible grasp on the subject, and after pondering the information he suggested a museum. The president stated that it might be better to consider an alternative placement and proceeded to give him the reasons for it. Acknowledging the President's reasoning, Francis said, "If you put it there, the project may turn out to be good, but if you place it on the waterfront, it will become world famous". As soon as his words were uttered, a sepulchral silence fell on the meeting. The President abruptly changed the subject and Francis became aware of a cultural tenet that Tahitians never violate: one does not contradict the President's opinion, especially in public.

However, soon afterwards the President returned with a wink and a twinkle in his eyes and told him, "I like your idea, but can I say that it was my idea? And can you make a presentation in two days' time?" Francis, vividly relieved, agreed to the presentation while wondering how he would find the time to do it on such a tight schedule.

The next morning, while he was "prayer swimming" – interceding for his host nation, the Lord instructed Francis to record the details of what He was about to download to him. This proved to be a challenge because Francis was in the water with no clothes but his swimming trunks and no writing material handy. But, like the prophets of old, he began "to make notes" in the sand, while his assistant (unlike the biblical scribes) ran to the hotel to fetch a digital camera to photograph God's revelation before it was erased by the tide!

For the next two days, Francis and his associate found themselves feverishly drawing to have the document ready on time. To compound matters further, just a few hours before the dinner where Francis was expected to present his work before the President and invited VIPs, he received a phone call from an assistant to the President requesting Francis' opinion on how to solve an engineering challenge affecting the docks, the beaches, and the highways in the downtown area. "The President would appreciate if you can have a solution on this subject also," intoned the assistant in the most natural manner.

Both requests represented challenges beyond anything humanly possible. But Francis, as a marketplace minister deputized by God, had a direct line to the Creator, and he put it to good use. After he prayed, God gave him a most inspired insight on how to resolve the challenge and the time and the energy to make all necessary drafts!

What emerged for both projects was so extraordinary and riveting that the President was elated and inquired again how Francis had come up with such a brilliant concept in such a short time. Very straightforward, Francis stated, "It was God. As surprising as that sounds, it did make sense, even though at first it startled the President, because thirteen French engineers had been working on the second project for six months and had not been able to come up with anything remotely close to what Francis had designed.

One thing led to another, and eventually both the President, his wife, Francis' collaborating Tahitian architect, Teiva Raffin, this architect's partners and his Iranian wife received the

Lord. Francis baptized them and, after laying hands on them, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Not long afterwards, the President asked Teiva Raffin, now fellow believer, to offer a prayer for Tahiti during an official gathering--a definite first!

Biblical Results for Modern Times

Stories like this eloquently testify that these pivotal paradigms, when embraced with childlike faith and Spirit-led persistency and dependency, produce the same results that we read in the Scriptures.

Yes, the Bible is a reliable record of God's intervention in human affairs, and these stories are proof that God is very involved in transformation of nations. The Bible narratives are not meant to be mere memorials to ancient times, but to serve as launching pads for contemporary emulations. It is about time to stop seeing the Bible as an echo of the past and to let it be what it is meant to be: the guiding voice for the future. To see what we have never seen we must do what we have never done, or else we will continue to see what we always see. Embracing these five paradigms is the first step of a long and glorious journey.

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