

Prayer Transformation Ministries Email Newsletter – Teaching for 3/14/07

Presence-Based Transformation

Transformation is in the air! At least, that's what Kohl's Department store claims with their latest advertising campaign. Apparently if you just transform your wardrobe today, you can transform the world tomorrow!

Transformation is becoming one of the latest “catch phrases” to describe anything ranging from a retail clothing store claiming to be in the business of transformation, to the latest church growth strategy that claims to have the potential to change a church or entire city. With these varied claims of transformation, how do we distinguish true transformation that ultimately brings glory to God?

Let's first look to the people and places around the world where supernatural, God-directed transformation is actually happening. There are many dramatic stories in nearly 500 locations around the world where society is being transformed in ways that are beyond any watered-down definition. Almolonga, Guatemala, is a good example, where nearly all the people in a village of 19,000 have become followers of Jesus Christ. The village has been transformed from a lazy, drunken town that worshiped idols, into a vibrant, productive community that experiences biblical proportions and abundance in their agriculture production.

That's dramatic transformation that shouts out God's involvement! If we hold out for this definition and level of transformation, we need to distinguish it from the more common descriptions. That is why *Presence-based transformation* has become the heart cry of Prayer Transformation Ministries and others in the prayer movement.

We need to redefine transformation according to the supernatural presence of God that brings people to their knees in brokenness and repentance simply because the Lord Himself is present! Presence-based transformation doesn't need any preaching or programming. When God shows up in a profound, tangible way, people don't need convincing that He is the Almighty God. Their knees are immediately bowed and their hearts tremble in fear and awe at the presence of a Holy God. Only God can touch and change hearts, families and even entire communities.

That's true transformation! But if we can agree that this is the kind of true transformation we desire, how do we get there? What are the steps that we can take to “achieve transformation”? That's the question most of us in the Western Church will ask.

Transformation Is Not a Goal

Our initial response may be to find a way to organize a strategy, put together short- and long-term goals, and begin planning out our next five years of ministry. However, transformation is not a goal. It is not the result of a strategic plan or visionary thinking. Transformation is the by-product of a fulfilled covenant with a covenant-keeping God.

The covenant promise of 2 Chronicles 7:14 requires a transaction between two parties. God promises that if His people will take seriously how far they have strayed from Him, repent, prayerfully seek His face, and turn from those things that have come between themselves and a holy God, then He will keep His promise to hear, forgive, and heal the land in reviving transformation. This is not a formula; it is a relationship.

We must learn the difference between trying to come up with a strategy to get God to do something for us in response, and just walking in the natural outflow of an open relationship with God. Presence-based transformation is just that—we are seeking God's presence above all else, believing with absolute confidence that if God truly shows up, everything will change!

Let's be careful to not settle for a lower definition of transformation that is dependent upon what we can do through our own resources with our human wisdom and methodologies. Why settle for less when God is waiting to do so much more to reveal His glory and power to us! Are you sincerely seeking the presence of Jesus Christ in your life, your church, and your community—or have you settled for a cheap imitation and called it “successful ministry.”

Let God search your heart to reveal hidden motives, priorities or any unbelief in His transforming Presence. Then ask Him to increase in you a hunger and capacity for the things that truly attract His Presence.