

# 5

## IS YOUR CHURCH AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION?

P. Vijayan, DBA (Aus)

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” ~ Galatians 2:20*

*“The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of his mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” ~ Colossians 1:26-27*

\*\*\*\*\*

*The carnal Christian is the one who has received the Holy Spirit and all the fullness of Christ, yet ignores His presence and struggles to live the Christian life as though Christ were not there. He is the one who constantly begs and pleads for all that God has already given him, but which he will not take. He is the one who will not step out by faith upon the glorious fact that Christ is his life, and therefore his victory. The Christian life is an **exchange life**! ~ Major W. Ian Thomas*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Contrary to some rather foolish notions, God is a considerable number of steps ahead of us, and it is He who is trying to get us into action. We are apt to think that we by our prayers are getting God into action. But He is already in action and is waiting for us to catch up with Him. **“Before they call, I will answer”** – something of a reversal of our sometimes unclear ideas of prayer. ~ John Whittle*

\*\*\*\*\*

*How does the branch bear fruit? Not by incessant effort for sunshine and air, not by vain struggles for those vivifying influences which give beauty to the blossom, and greenness to the leaf; it simply abides in the vine, in silent and undisturbed union, and blossoms and fruit appear as of spontaneous growth.*

*How, then shall a Christian bear fruit? By efforts and struggles to obtain that which is freely given; by meditations on watchfulness, on prayer, on action, on temptation, and on dangers? No! Their hope and trust rest solely on **what He is willing and able to do for them**; on nothing that they suppose themselves able and willing to do for Him. ~ Harriet Beecher Stowe*

\*\*\*\*\*

*I have come to the realization that it was not I who committed myself to Him, but He who committed Himself to me. My spiritual life is dependent upon His total commitment to me. As long as I think that my walk with God depends upon my decision, my dedication, my commitment to Him, then life becomes a never-ending parade of rededication and re-consecration to Him. In reality, however, the Christian life is dependent upon **replacement**. He has become my life, and I rest in Him as He flows forth as rivers of water through me as His vessel. ~ Christopher Bernard*

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a secret which was hidden from ages and from generations (Col. 1:26), which the world was seeking after, and it “is now made manifest to his saints.” Paul travelled far just to tell it to those who were able to receive it. The simple secret is just this, “**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” I’ll not tell you this wonderful secret, I will give it to you if you will take it from Him as I did. Years ago I came to Him filled with guilt and fear, but this simple secret took away all my fear and sin. Years passed on, and I found sin overcoming me again and my temptations were too strong. I came to Him a second time and He whispered, “Christ in you,” and I experienced victory, rest and blessing. ~ A.B. Simpson*

\*\*\*\*\*

*In the first turning, a Christian experiences the transformation from a natural person to a spiritual person. But it is only a first step. The work of the Holy Spirit should not stop here but lead to a second turning in which the spiritual person again becomes natural. It is this second turning which enables Christians to communicate their faith. The second turning makes communication of faith – evangelism – something they are unable not to do. It becomes **natural**. It becomes a way of life. To use a biblical term,*

*it becomes **automatic**. This term is used only once in the Bible. In Mark 4:28 Jesus tells the parable of the self-growing seed. To describe this process he uses the Greek word **automatos**. Communication of faith thus becomes automatic, natural, something which happens even though the communicator—the sower—“knows not how.” ~ Walter Trobisch*

## INTRODUCTION

Does your church just exist or is it a catalyst for transforming you and the marketplace it serves? It is hoped that this paper will generate some discussion amongst the Christian community in reclaiming God’s original intent for the Church.

Christian sociologist and researcher George Barna, in his book on the transforming nature of Christian spirituality entitled *Revolution*,<sup>1</sup> says that although churches draw large crowds, their members are not making any impact on the society. This is mainly because the lives of born-again Christians are not really any different than that of non-Christians. Furthermore, Christian leaders are more worried about numerical growth than the fact that members are not growing spiritually in their daily walk with God. He remarks that the church has failed in its role as the transforming agent, causing a silent faith revolution amongst the faithful followers of Christ who seek to redefine ‘Church’.

For decades Christians have been experiencing and expressing their faith through local churches. However, such reality is rapidly changing into a massive reshaping of Christian communities of the century. Barna claims that there is a new breed of Christ’s followers who are more interested in being the church than in going to church. They are eager to produce fruit for the kingdom of God than to become comfortable with an organization or building.

Barna’s research does not suggest that Christians would leave the church, but they would be free from the demands of church life and intentionally increase their focus on faith and relate to God through various means. Some examples of changes are: the growth of house churches, marketplace ministries, Internet ministries, and the development of alternative networks among those who are committed to pursue God *outside* the local church. These people are less interested in attending church than *being*

the church mainly because they want more of the reality of God in their lives which the local church seems unable to provide.

### **Perils of a seeker sensitive church<sup>2</sup>**

For many years, the Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois, had demonstrated how churches could effectively reach the 'unchurched'. Since 1975, it had taken an unconventional approach to reach the unbelievers/seekers through polished music, multimedia, and sermons referencing to popular culture and other familiar themes. Its leadership believed that it would attract people searching for answers.

In summer 2007, Willow Creek released the findings of a multiple year quality self-study of its ministry. The research was to determine which programmes and activities had helped people mature spiritually. Twenty-two other churches in the United States and two Canadian churches were also included in the survey.<sup>a</sup> The study shows that while Willow Creek had successfully met the spiritual needs of those who described themselves as 'exploring Christianity' or 'growing in Christ,' it had been less successful with those who self-reported as being 'close to Christ' or 'Christ-centred.' Of the latter, 25 per cent said they were spiritually 'stalled' or 'dissatisfied' with the role of the church in their spiritual growth. Even more alarming is that 25 per cent of the 'stalled' segment and 63 per cent of the 'dissatisfied' contemplated leaving the church. Similar problems were found in churches that modelled on Willow Creek's approach.

Bill Hybels had reportedly confessed that the church leadership "made a mistake."<sup>3</sup> Spiritual growth does not happen with elaborate church programs but through the age-old spiritual practices of prayer, bible reading and discipleship. After modelling seeker-sensitive approach to church growth for three decades, Willow Creek Community Church has, since May 2008, planned to gear its weekend services toward mature believers seeking to grow in their faith. The church seems to have discovered that professional entertaining service is not of itself conducive to spiritual growth.<sup>4</sup>

Apparently this is not limited to the American churches; similar problems have been reported among the Australian charismatic churches.<sup>5</sup> What other changes in store are

---

<sup>a</sup> The results were published in *Reveal: Where Are You?* by Greg Hawkins & Cally Parkinson (Willow Creek Association, Aug 2007). *Reveal* is currently surveying five hundred churches, including more than a dozen denominations and English-speaking international churches. It would be interesting to find out the outcome of this survey.

not clear for the moment, but the fact that churches like Willow Creek are willing to self-examine and humble to change is encouraging.

### **Reclaiming God's Original Intent for the Church<sup>6</sup>**

Dr. Larry Crabb<sup>7</sup> once said that he was on the brink of giving up church (not Christianity). The church as an organization has replaced the living body, the true church—the community of Jesus' followers who journey together for God's pleasure and for the sake of others. Too often, a church event is more like a well-orchestrated programme than a life-throbbing community outreach. The raw realism of the Bible is often sugar-coated with cheery optimistic promises of financial security and self-fulfilment, leaving out trials and tribulation as God's way to real blessings.

We see radical changes in the ways of doing church worldwide. Some churches have, over the past decades, been shaped into religious cum social centres. Also, there have been calls for the Asian Church to have her own authentic Asian theology instead of subscribing fully to Western theology. Some see changes as necessary and label the emerging churches as the 'emergent Church', the 'new paradigm Church' or the 'post-denomination Church'. Others opine that it is a 'revolution'—committed believers are foregoing organised Sunday morning church to live a 24/7 faith unfettered by clutter and bureaucracy within the church walls. Still others describe changes as *Second Reformation* as God moves His people from *old wineskin* to *new wineskin*—the old wineskin was *church focused* whereas the new wineskin is *Kingdom-centred*. They hold that while God does not condemn the old wineskin, He will not pour His new wine into it. In other words, *its season has passed*.

What God did in the past was good. It is understandable that some may resist the new wine or do not want it at all. However, since God has chosen to pour new wine, we must trust that it is more desirable than the old. God's ultimate purpose is to transform nations and expand His kingdom through His transforming agent, the Church. But how successful have the local churches been in raising authentic Christians who impact and transform communities and nations?

### Success in God's Economy<sup>8</sup>

Who is the 'successful' prophet, Haggai or Jeremiah?

From our human perspective, Haggai's ministry was successful because people listened to him and rebuilt the temple. Tasks were accomplished and goals achieved. As for Jeremiah, Judah collapsed and went into exile during his ministry. When he spoke God's word, people refused to obey. He was threatened and imprisoned. In short, he did not accomplish what he set out to do. In modern terms, his performance indicators (KRA - Key Results Areas) were not met, even though he remained faithful to the Lord.

However, in God's economy, Jeremiah's calling was just as valid as Haggai's and was equally successful. So, what is success to God? If we are in Jeremiah's shoes, consider these:

- *Should success be measured in terms of attendance or membership, budget or financial resource, number of programs or powerful ministries, and size of building?*
- *Whose ministry should be a model of success, Jeremiah's or Haggai's?*

Christianity has to do with authenticity. Whether our ministry is Haggai-like or Jeremiah-like is God's choice—His calling. When people look at the church, they see a model of what it means to live under God's reign. We need to show the world—which often seeks pleasure apart from God—that we are willing to suffer and sacrifice for a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Success in God's economy is doing His will.

### The Kingdom of God<sup>9</sup>

What would happen if churches had stopped thinking only of themselves and started celebrating God's works in the Body of Christ—the Universal Church? What would happen if churches in the neighbourhood, irrespective of denominations, were to hold combined worship service, at least once a year? What would it be like for people to seek and find Christ because of the living testimonies of the authentic Christians? In a place where state land is limited for places of worship, churches leaders should think about putting aside their own building plans to build a community church that serves various Christian groups—regardless of denominational ties! When all pool together their limited resources, the church would serve the 'Kingdom of God' and benefit the

community. Then the people will know and see that Christians love one another and make sacrifices to serve others.

Bob Roberts<sup>10</sup> believes that this can only happen if there are true brokenness and change of perception of what a church should be. As we take a good look at the current state of the church in general,

- we have learned relevance and communication, but not transformation.
- we have learned about purpose and functionality, not essence of the Cross—dying to ‘independent self’ and being totally dependent on God.
- we make people more religious, but not necessarily spiritual.
- we think we are respectable, but we have lost our credibility in society.
- we have become mass media marketers, not a movement that shakes the world.

The emerging churches in China, the Middle East, India, Russia and other developing nations in Africa and Asia give us clues on the future of the Church. Worship takes on different expression in these churches. Without electricity—no sound system, projectors, wireless microphones and lighting systems—believers worship God in stuffy rooms and beneath kerosene lamps. Though small, these indigenous—sometimes called underground house church networks—are transforming lives and impacting society. Their church planting is the result of transformed lives, not of some grand strategy, mass publicity or seminary qualifications.

The Western contemporary church growth model values visible results, which inevitably leads to pragmatism and systems. The market-appeal approach challenges people to give to build bigger buildings with latest audio-visual system in order to attract seekers. In China, India and the Middle East, for instance, results are not the exterior building or the number of attendees, but the courage to follow Christ even under persecution. The movement’s progress is not tied to any programs or processes but the transformed people—individuals trained in the school of suffering by the Master on how to handle faith in difficult circumstances. They have neither mega plans nor big buildings, only mega network of small churches decentralised in every neighbourhood but linked with one purpose—setting up the Kingdom of God in a society that has alienated itself from the one and only true God, Jehovah.

Discerning leaders are calling for doing church differently, to follow the examples of the early Church in the book of Acts and the emerging Eastern churches. They call believers to integrate knowledge illuminated by the Holy Spirit in our daily Bible readings with prayers and apply that knowledge in faith to transform individuals and society. This is in sharp contrast to the Western model of discipleship, namely, the transfer of information through bible study and adult Sunday school. Such approach results in educated converts who may plant churches but not necessarily radically transformed disciples who will change the world.

### **How did We Fall Away from this Truth?<sup>11</sup>**

History shows that there are two ways of doing church: the much older way of the apostolic period and the way of Christendom, by which most churches operate today.

In the first 300 years after the resurrection of Christ, Christians were outlawed, persecuted, hunted down and exiled. It was a crime to be Christian. However, early Christianity was radical and discipleship was a priority. The Church was on the right path during the period of persecution and suffering.

The situation took a dramatic turn in AD 313 when Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity. Persecution ceased and, in 392, Christianity became the official religion. All who lived in the empire were regarded as Christians, whether or not they had a personal relationship with God. Under Christendom, mission was relegated to the heathens in the foreign lands. However, as time went by, as the Roman Empire disintegrated, the concept of Christendom became less defined. The term took on a more informal meaning in the western Europe as a result of Reformation and the decline of the Holy Roman Empire. It signified countries that were predominantly Christians. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the reform movement swept across Europe like wildfire, rocking the foundation of the old medieval concept of Christianity. The basic principles of Protestant Reformation, among others, were the Authority of the Scripture, Justification by Faith and Priesthood of All Believers. However, history tells us that various forces had chipped away at these foundation stones.

Today, modernism defines human beings as free and autonomous individuals, and consumerism is the power of the world. Christians now shop for churches, and the latter become corporate marketers to attract such consumers. By adopting modernism, the church has also adopted a rational approach to theology and apologetics. Postmodernism moves us further away when people no longer accept any overarching



story to explain reality. Individuals have personal right to believe what they choose to believe; that right must be respected and not ridiculed, even by God!

### **What Has Changed?**

Leaders become *pragmatists*. As long as there are visible results, i.e. numerical growth, they believe that there is no need to examine the process and outcome. They have forgotten that the call to kingdom leadership means accomplishing what God has assigned one to do, and that cannot be done by oneself alone and without the power of the Holy Spirit. However, many are still convinced that great charismatic leaders coupled with advanced audio-visual system and good music is sufficient, there is no need to rely on the Holy Spirit.

Congregations become *consumerists*. It is reported that a large number of growing churches appeal to the consumer mindset in terms of services offered, aimed at meeting members' needs and entertaining them well. Touching lives and impacting society have become less important. The sermons preached are merely passing information, no longer delivering encouragement to live out the truth in all circumstances.

There is an obsession with *mega syndrome*. Impressive budgets and large buildings have replaced efforts to transform individuals and the community. The church fails to realise that the true measure of growth is not solely attendance but how much it has impacted the community through its congregation. Churches that focus on performance and production rather than on growing disciples will not find strength to accomplish God's purposes.

The church has *lost its saltiness*. Many churches today practice evangelism without an awakened congregation. We fail to recognise that the surge of evangelism in the past was not due to massive crusades but came through small, rural churches that touched communities. In other words, evangelism was the result of an awakened church. While crusades may have brought notice and awareness to the masses, it is the local church that ensures long-term success of evangelistic efforts. However, many today want to shine the light without first developing salty Christians. Obviously, evangelism is not a number promotion, not an event that calls people to come to church. It is a lifestyle, a life-giving movement. Jesus fed, healed and served the communities whether they followed him or not.

Many churches focus on self preservation instead of the Church at large. Some are viewed as irrelevant and are out of touch with their communities. This is mainly because leaders pay attention only to style, format and schedule of service, neglecting the substance—members' spiritual growth and transformed lifestyle. The church has ceased to be the guiding conscience of the culture and society for it has lost its power.<sup>12</sup> We forget that the goal of redemption is holiness and not happiness. Leaders must lead and not succumb to pressure from those who ask for golden calf. This is clearly exemplified in Exodus 32:1-35. Less than five months after being delivered from Egypt, the Israelites backslid and fell into great sin by creating the golden calf—making it their god. Tragically, Aaron believed his job was to reflect public opinion rather than to shape it. We need to discern that God wants spiritual leaders who are thermostats which control temperature and not thermometers that respond to temperature. In a consumerist culture, churches are pressured to act like the marketing firms, out to attract more customers. J. I. Parker<sup>13</sup> calls it 'Hot Tub Religion.' But, true everlasting happiness is only experienced as one is transformed by Christ into His joy.

### **The Key to Success of the Early Churches**

The success of the early church was not due to great insightful sermons, power ministry or personality. The majority of the early church Christians could not read. They did not have Bible. As a result, they did not practice discipleship merely based on information and education. They believed what they were taught, obeyed and followed the examples set by their leaders who had real life personal experience of the ways of God. Today, leaders may face a congregation that hungers for *information* on personal gain, searching for what makes them feel good. The modern church wants to master information and form, whereas the ancient and the suffering Eastern churches desire transformation that changes lives and impacts community. Jesus appealed to the masses because he was someone who identified with them, who lived with them and was like them. His disciples practiced and taught the same principles that we now see among the suffering churches in other corners of the world.

The early church Christians knew God—they had a *personal experience* with the living God. Perhaps we need to revisit the way the gospel is presented. Today, conversion appears to have lost its meaning. Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Hudson Taylor or C.T. Studd would not know what to make of the modern-day church invitation. It is baffling to see that somebody could walk into church, hear a sermon, walk down the aisle, say a sinner's prayer (which they may not even understand) and hence become a

Christian. We fail to realise that a person may claim to be converted but still remain the same.

The journals of John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, Finney and others remind us that they never rushed people to conversion as many try to do today. We need to instil the truth that evangelism is not just an event where someone prays the sinner's prayer and becomes a Christian. It is a transformation process that involves change in lifestyle and thinking, otherwise Christianity is no different from other religions in the world that promise self-improvement and enlightenment.

Most religious people are good-natured and good-hearted individuals. Despite their sincerity, they may live apart from the truth. If Christ is truth and he lives in us, should not there be something qualitatively different about Christians other than the goodness quotient? However, when we examine the quality of our Christian life in general, we see no marked difference. The problem may lie in our consciousness. Many of us are not conscious of what happens at salvation where the complete work of the Cross consummates in killing off the old nature, bringing us into the new and resurrected life of the living Christ (Gal 2:20). Unless we allow the Holy Spirit to bring us into a personal experience of this union in Christ, we will forever be defeated Christians.<sup>14</sup>

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom 12: 1-13).*

### **The Cross in the Life of the Believer<sup>15</sup>**

“Break up your fallow (uncultivated, unproductive) ground” (Jer 4:3a). Jeremiah was commissioned to bring this message to the Israelites. Dark days set upon the nation of Israel who trusted in false security, allowing the enemy to destroy her. The Israelites were not willing to turn to God; they became comfortable with a false sense of godliness and religiosity. Disaster was just around the corner, and the people did not realise it.<sup>16</sup>

The above lesson gives us some spiritual insights. The first that comes to mind is: blessing comes with obedience and harvest begins with ploughing and sowing. Before a

thing can be made, something must be broken. Before a fruitful harvest, the sharp blade of a plough must turn the soil over. Therefore a transformed life must begin with death. “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24). This is the law of life in the natural realm as well as in the spiritual. There can be no real transformation until we present ourselves as living sacrifice to the Lord and to be at His disposal as He pleases. Just as Christ learnt obedience through suffering, so shall we.

Just as Christ learnt obedience through suffering, so shall we. There is perhaps no more universal question than this: “Why does a loving God allow disappointments, suffering, unanswered prayers and tribulation?” It is a question that virtually everyone *does* face at some point in life. And when the question comes—in the midst of a personal crisis—it comes with a sense of urgency and pain that threatens our faith in God and His love.

Job said, “Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards (5:7). King Solomon declared, “For what hath man of all his labour and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows and his travail grief, yea his heart takes no rest in the night.” (Eccl 2:22, 23)

To be a transforming agent, the Church has to recognise what a true Church is. According to Norman Grubb<sup>17</sup>, a missionary himself, committed Christians are the Church, an “invincible body everywhere” and “when a few meet with no structured form or setup—that is the Church—made up of totally committed Christians.” What then is a transformed Christian? Grubb believes that,

*A transformed Christian is one who has ceased to be his own—neither people, possession, nor is life his. All he has is Jesus. And what kind of person is Jesus? Unconditional lover of others! Life’s occupation, life’s absorption, is expressing the love of Jesus in our world, in the community God has placed us—whether in a small village in a rural area, a community within a condominium complex or the workplace. To me to live is Christ (Gal 2:20)—all things counted as refuse that I may win Christ—not by self effort—but by faith that He is what He is in me—and that means the life He will live out in me will be a participation in His power, His vicarious sufferings and His death for sinner and enemies. That is this life—Christ formed in each of us who make up the Church.<sup>18</sup>*

The early stages of a Christian life are often ‘performance based,’ striving to pray more, read the Bible more, witness more, serve more, and etc.—not very different from the world’s rat-race! Only when we get frustrated are we ready to admit our utter

inadequacy to deal with spiritual requirements—love your enemies, have living faith, and believe when external evidence shows otherwise. Often, we feel inadequate for the task ahead and give up, for it is impossible to live the Christian life by our own strength! Only when we come to the end of our road and realise within our spirit the Christian life is a *dependent life* in the Holy Spirit do we experience the exchanged life. Then we will be ready to put aside our finite thinking to accept the mystery of the gospel—the union of our spirit with the Spirit of Christ.

The Bible constantly speaks of a dimension beyond external and appearance. Jesus calls it ‘the kingdom of God.’ In the book of Second Corinthians, Paul calls it the faith dimension, in contrast to the sight dimension as shown in the table below.<sup>19</sup>

<b>SIGHT DIMENSION</b>	<b>FAITH DIMENSION</b>
Letter	Spirit (3:6)
Ministry of death	Ministry of the Spirit (3:7, 8)
Ministry of condemnation	Ministry of righteousness (3:8, 9)
That which fades away	That which remains (3:11)
Darkness	Light (4:6)
Outer man	Inner man (4:16)
Seen	Unseen (4:18)
Temporal	Eternal (4:18)
Mortality	Life (5:4)
Appearance	Heart (5:12)
Man in Flesh	Man in Christ (5:16, 17)

Grubb has recorded testimonies of those who experienced real life transformation by living in the Faith Dimension and allowing God to take them through the way of the Cross, e.g. suffering, adverse circumstances and tribulation. They were liberated by the Holy Spirit and were transformed to serve the community.

Below is an example of a testimony relevant to those whom God places in the marketplace—Grubb's letter to Gilbert, an employee who was experiencing some difficulties in his workplace. Gilbert's hard work and dedication—which could have earned him a promotion—was 'hijacked' by another.

Dear Gilbert

Many thanks for now making the details of your present situation at your work place clearer. I think the first point of main importance is that you make sure that the Cross is in action first of all, according to the II Cor 4: 8-13 passage. We have to keep our eyes on JESUS ONLY living and walking in us and it is sometimes a strange path. We take it as settled that it was God who had taken you through faith to your present executive position and has blessed you by enlarging your position in that company. It was His divine purpose that you are placed there and accept that to mean He has planned for you to stay there.

God so prospers you that you build up the department, have workers put under you and are all set to head the department. Then came this sudden fierce test. Discern that it was God who 'allowed' Satan to operate through the schemes of this unworthy man and he is now given the position you should hold.

What should you we do? We continue to believe God and declare our faith. But you must be very careful to walk the present path in self-emptiness and that means that while God takes you through the tunnel of testing, you accept the situation with meekness and praise. That means that you must take this man as sent of God to steal your place from you and you must serve under him in loyalty, until God shows His victorious way out. I think it is essential to underline that point. If you resist the man God sends to usurp your position, although we may see him as Satan's agent, you resist God. That was the pathway Joseph had walked successfully with his brethren when they sold him and subsequently with Potiphar. Jesus had also walked successfully in His crucifixion. Although Job walked less successfully, but he did come through in the end.

God will triumph and bring forth your righteousness as light. Presumably He will either stop the man ever taking

over, or show up the fraud later; but meanwhile your victory is to walk the thorny path in the rest of faith. That means that you see JESUS ONLY in these circumstances and in the coming of this man and therefore die to inner resistance, confusion, etc. You demonstrate this victory within by letting this usurper see that you accept him in his legal appointment, while he is allowed to hold the position. Practice what Joseph did when he was wrongfully sold as a slave by his brothers and later imprisoned and yet 'found favour' with Potiphar in his household and with the keeper of the prison. Your day of deliverance will also come.

Affectionately your brother in Christ,  
Norman<sup>20</sup>

Gilbert's case is not unique. Below are two local cases to illustrate God's transformation process in the lives of individuals who are willing to forsake all to expand the Kingdom of God. (Note: Names have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals and churches involved).

#### *Case 1: Pastor Rama*

Rama gave up his professional career and became to become a full-time pastor of a church. His teaching style and giftings made him popular among the congregation. Despite his dedication to both church and senior pastor, he was not given the opportunities to preach in the church services. It had become apparent the senior pastor was threatened by Rama's popularity and thus prevented him from further interaction with the congregation. Yet, Rama took this as the path God had allowed for His purposes. He understood that the secret to a transformed life was to allow the inner working of the Cross in his life until the redeemed self became the vessel and agent of the Spirit. He saw the way forward was to completely trust God and surrender to Him. Rees Howells says that, "When you have given up your life entirely to the Holy Spirit you have no right to take it back or to resent what He does with it. You have no more claims on your life. And you accept everything from Him, whether it seems to be for you or against you. You must learn to be quite before the Lord to trust Him to show you His plan."<sup>21</sup>

Eventually, the Lord opened the door for Rama to plant a new church. Yet, there were those who opposed the birth of Rama's new church. The church leadership objected for fear that members might leave and join him. Some were even warned against visiting the new church. However, with God, nothing is impossible. Today, Pastor Rama operates a dynamic and thriving church. His transformed life has become a blessing to the community he serves with the Holy Spirit's leading and guiding.

### *Case 2: Cell Leaders Lim and Carol*

Lim and Carol worshiped in two different churches. After marriage, the leadership of Carol's church requested the newlyweds to take over a dying cell-group named Zedek which was left with only four members. Lim got permission from his church leadership and went over to help Carol. With the new team, the Lord commenced His work of transformation. In the following three years, by God's grace, Zedek grew with more than 30 active members who were dynamic and hunger for spiritual food. Dissatisfied with the quality of the church's study guides, Zedek members requested for some other more interesting materials. Both Lim and Carol discerned that it was the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and continued to provide members with the teaching materials as guided by the Holy Spirit.

In obedience to his church leaders, Lim made sure the church's study guide completed before commencing with the new materials. Transformation was taking place, the group became alive and dynamic; members excelled in different areas, e.g. community service, event management, out-door activities and games, publication and writing. The Lord multiplied the cell.

Soon, Lim realised that the church leadership was not in favour of these changes. They felt threatened by what was taking place in the Zedek. Eventually, Lim and Carol were summoned to discuss the matter. At the meeting, all sorts of enquiries were made. To prevent the situation from turning ugly, Lim and Carol left it to the leadership to decide on the course of action. They understood the principle of the 'grace of yielding',<sup>22</sup> i.e. never to fight for position but gracefully surrender it to God. They knew well that God would complete His work His way and not by man's effort. The leadership decided that Lim and Carol should resign as Zedek leaders. The members were disappointed and eventually scattered, bringing an end to the cell group.

But that was not the end. God eventually blessed Lim and Carol beyond their expectations. Today, in retrospect, Lim and Carol thank God daily for what had happened—even taking away Zedek which they had nurtured and loved so dearly. When the church closed its door on Lim and Carol, new dawn arose as the Lord poured streams of blessing upon them. God had used this dark episode to teach them the secret of the transformed life in Christ.

The mystery all Christians must understand is the principle that life can only come from death. The corn of wheat must die before new life springs forth. The Cross is the path to a transformed life.<sup>23</sup>



### **From Fear to Faith<sup>24</sup>**

The Bible makes it plain that Christians regardless of locality and socio-political situations are not exempted from unpleasantness. Since the Fall, all of life is surely pressure. God permits His saints to go through difficulties and tribulations for redemptive opportunity and purpose. We learn about the means God uses to redeem the world and touch the lives of those who suffer. Every adverse circumstance, stressful situation, need, catastrophe and frustration (including difficult people within and outside the church, enemies, family problems, office politics etc.) may be the very place where light shines out of darkness. God can use circumstances to transform us so that we may bless others in return. Our faith is refined in the crucible of difficulties. In the process, we learn to see the provision of God through and beyond negative circumstances.

Diligent students of the Bible will discern that God in His sovereignty foreordain events. God does not consult us and everything takes place according to 'the counsel of His own will'. His will and its outworking in the lives of the individual are not permissive but determined. **We need to see difficult people, negative circumstances and even Satan as God's 'convenient agent' to accomplish His divine purposes.** When Jeremiah spoke of God's coming judgment on rebellious Israel with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, he said that God had called the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar who would destroy them "*My servant*" (43:10)! God called the Assyrians, "the rod of My anger" (Isa 10:5). All the destructive plagues of insects that destroyed harvest after harvest in the days of Joel the prophet, "the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, the caterpillar," God spoke of as "My great army which I sent among you" (see Joel 1:4 and 2:25).

The prophet Isaiah said plainly, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil [Hebrew *ra* - adversity, calamity]; I, the Lord, do all these things" (45:6-7). To Moses, God said, "Who hath made... the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord?" (Ex 4:11) In Genesis, Joseph went even further. He left no room for us to say that God 'permits' evil things to happen and not direct them. Even though he suffered thirteen years as slave in Egypt (sold by his own brothers) and was thrown into prison because of the false accusation of Potiphar's wife, still he told his brothers, "You thought evil against me, but God *meant* it unto good" (50:20, *emphasis mine*). To 'mean' is not to 'permit.' It is direct purpose and planning. Peter, in a startling statement in his speech on the day of Pentecost, when referring to the greatest crime in history, told the crowd: "Jesus of Nazareth... Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken

and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:22-23). *Determinate counsel* - there is no possible permissiveness there! <sup>25</sup> Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones urges Christians to mature and accept the unpleasant situations and daily pressures as events ordained by God rather than to resist them, even as Jesus accepted Calvary. Paul calls this "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" and being "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." Faith is the key, it sees Jesus resolving problems and providing for needs beyond man.

How does one obtain a transformed life? When we examine men of God in the Bible, we find that they have the conscious attitude of the Cross and authoritative faith. Faced with impending threat from powerful enemies, King Hezekiah, though a man of prayer, bemoaned weakness: "This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy; for the children are come to the birth, and there is *not strength* to bring forth" (Isa 37:3). In contrast, Isaiah declared: "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will sent a blast upon him, and he shall . . . return to his own land" (vv 6, 7). While Hezekiah prayed in weakness, Isaiah spoke in authority—the former was fully conscious of need and separation from the supply of power, the latter knew the union with God and spoke as His mouthpiece. What did Jesus do in the storm? Row a boat across the stormy lake, walk on the water or sink beneath them? He spoke the Word of faith and walked on water! So trust God.<sup>26</sup>

Now a final word of warning! Norman Grubb says,

*I have observed the real danger arises when we think we must do something to be transformed. No! Do not give a thought about how you should become a transformed Christian and serve your community. Walk with God, not ahead or behind but beside Him! Just run your own life, accept yourself, be yourself, love yourself! He has mapped out His plan for you even before you were born. So start by appreciating that you are a special person and specially gifted by God. For what purpose? That is not your business. That is God's business. Do not try to run His business! Get on with your daily occupations and putting all your heart into them. He knows exactly how He will reach others through you in your special life's situation and with your special giftings, of which you may not even be conscious and probably good that you are not! 'Be still and know that I am God.' So be still; have faith in God and enjoy Him until He opens the door where you are to serve Him.* <sup>27</sup>

R.T. Kendall<sup>28</sup> warns of the dangers of drifting from ‘a work of grace’ to a work of ‘human efforts’ which entrenches many churches today. While we must never presume that God’s approval of leadership yesterday ensures His blessing for today, this is the very presumption that has allowed some churches to become worldly and indifferent to the need for fresh anointing from God. Sadly, even when God raises new leaders and ministries, the present leadership desires to destroy them out of fear and perhaps even jealousy. We continue to pray for the church’s spiritual renewal and transformed leadership so that the Church of Malaysia will truly live out her destiny as a transforming agent, sent by God. Ω

## **APPENDIX**

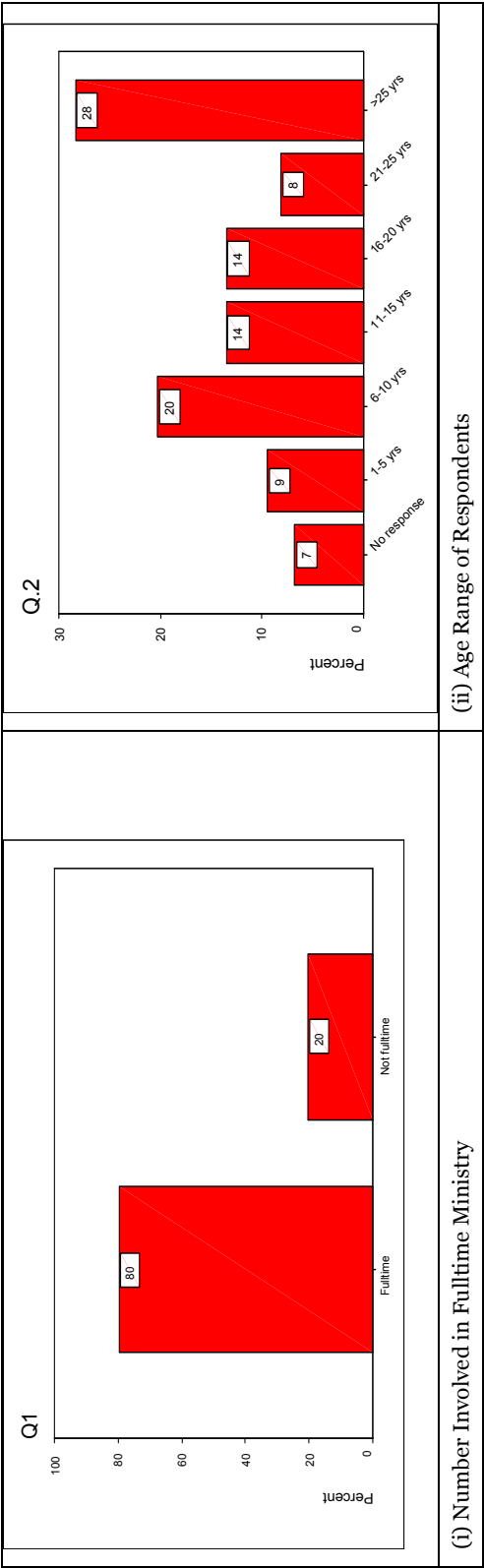
### **Pastors & Leaders Consultation Survey Result**

The following are the results of a survey conducted at the NECF Malaysia National Pastors & Leaders Consultation held on 31 July 2007. Questions 1 to 7 provide the profile of the 120 pastors and leaders who responded to the survey. The rest of the results to questions 01 to 27 are discussed below.

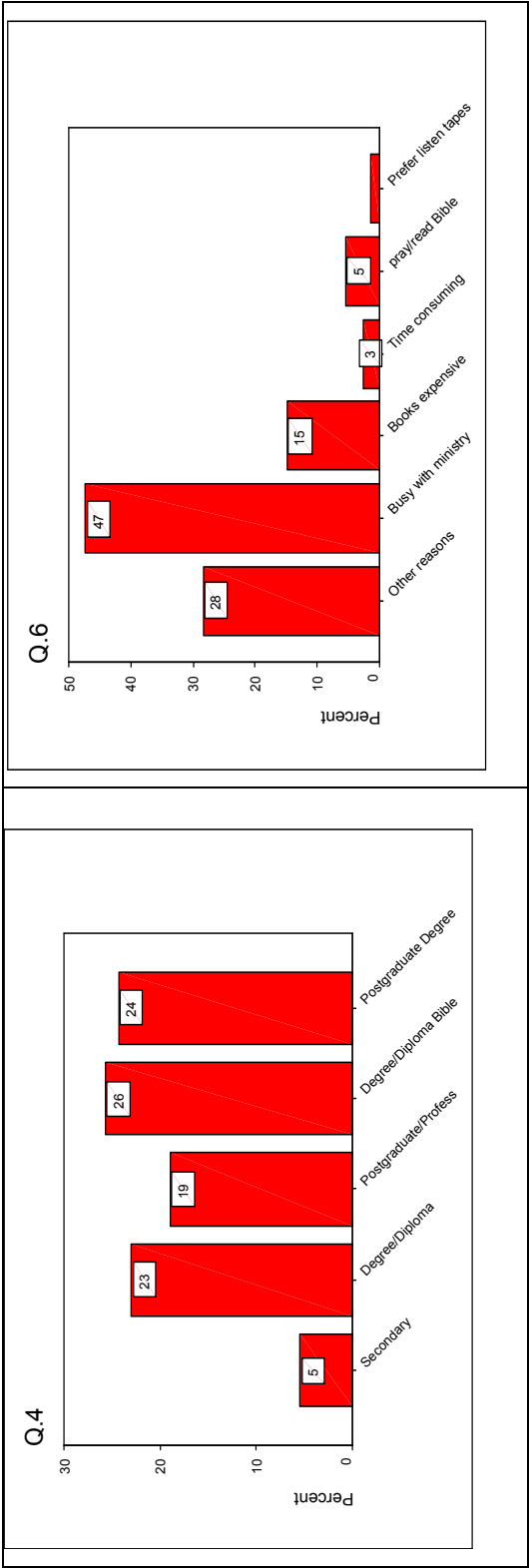
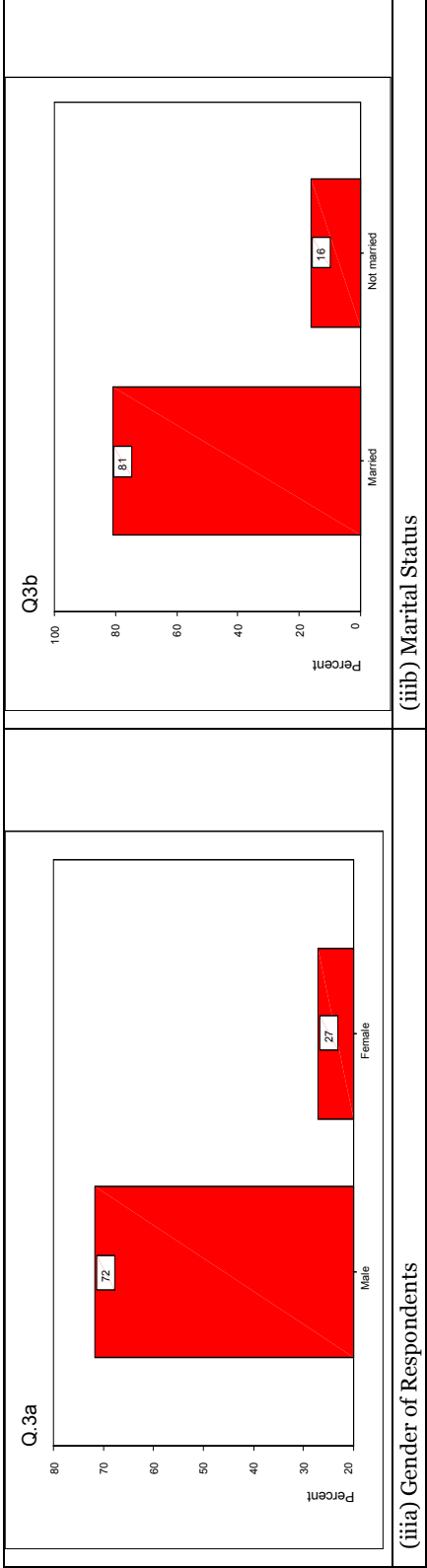
- Responses to questions 01 & 16 show that the respondents are aware of the need to be vigilant of political and social development in the country. Response to question 17 seems to indicate Christians are divided on what is our role and God's role in current and future events. This is understandable as our response is partly dependent on our theological inclination on God's sovereignty over providence.
- Responses to questions 02, 03, 06, 09, 18, 21 & 28 indicate that the respondents are aware of the need for the local church to be an authentic and dynamic witness in the community. In addition, the local church model is not necessarily similar to the Western church model in structure and form.
- Responses to questions 04, 08, 11 & 15 provide evidence that the leaders are aware of the role of laypeople in touching lives in communities and marketplace.
- Responses to questions 05, 07, 10 & 12 indicate the necessity to focus on the marketplace ministry.
- Responses to questions 13, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27 indicate the agreement that there is a genuine need to reappraise the authenticity of Christians' lifestyles and current discipleship programmes—whether or not they are producing desired results.
- Responses to questions 19 & 20 indicate that respondents are divided as to (i) whether the local church is the only place for spiritual development and ministry of transformed Christians and (ii) whether it can replace seminaries in developing Christian leaders.

FORUM VI: TRANSFORM NATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)

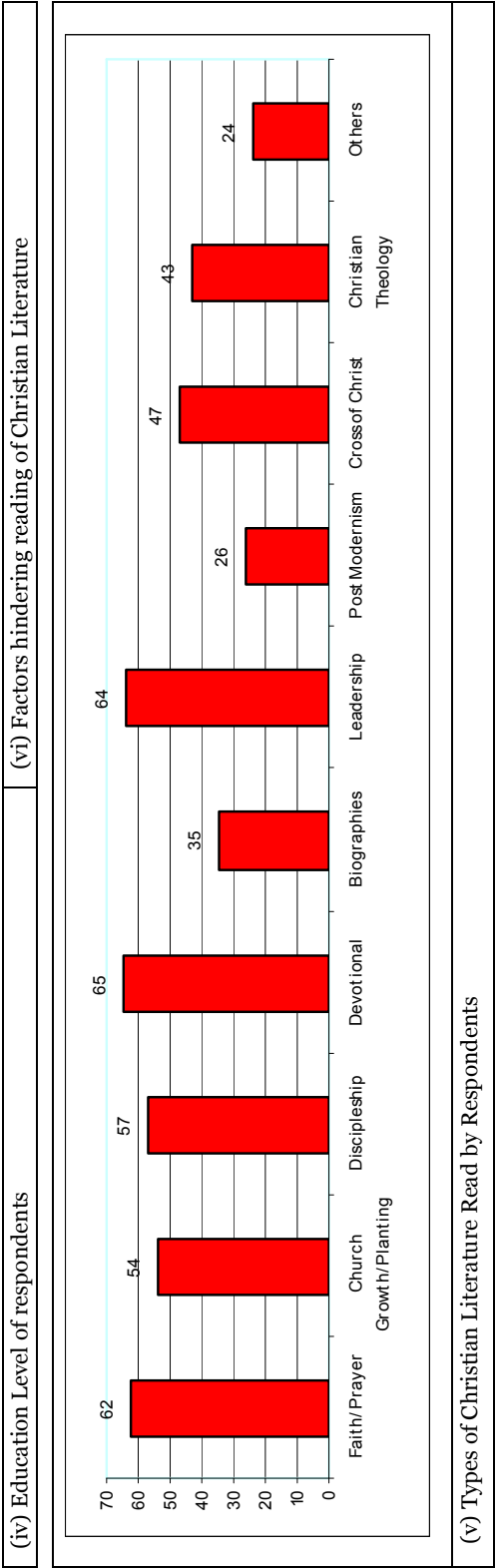
SURVEY RESULTS: NATIONAL PASTORS & LEADERS CONSULTATION



Is Your Church an Agent of Transformation?



FORUM VI: TRANSFORMATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)



## Is Your Church an Agent of Transformation?

<p>Q01.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>85</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	85	Moderately Agree	10	Not sure	5	Moderately Disagree	0	Totally Disagree	0	<p>Q02.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>20</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	5	Moderately Agree	25	Not sure	25	Moderately Disagree	25	Totally Disagree	20	<p>Q03.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>50</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	10	Moderately Agree	50	Not sure	15	Moderately Disagree	15	Totally Disagree	10	<p>O1) When Nazism was gaining momentum in Germany, the Christians kept silent, until it was too late and Hitler came to power. As citizens, we too must learn from history, discern the time and season, and act accordingly.</p>
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	85																																						
Moderately Agree	10																																						
Not sure	5																																						
Moderately Disagree	0																																						
Totally Disagree	0																																						
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	5																																						
Moderately Agree	25																																						
Not sure	25																																						
Moderately Disagree	25																																						
Totally Disagree	20																																						
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	10																																						
Moderately Agree	50																																						
Not sure	15																																						
Moderately Disagree	15																																						
Totally Disagree	10																																						
<p>Q04.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>55</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	55	Moderately Agree	30	Not sure	10	Moderately Disagree	5	Totally Disagree	0	<p>Q05.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>60</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	60	Moderately Agree	25	Not sure	10	Moderately Disagree	5	Totally Disagree	0	<p>Q06.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>70</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Disagree</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally Agree	70	Moderately Agree	20	Not sure	10	Moderately Disagree	0	Totally Disagree	0	<p>O4 When the world is transformed for Christ, it would be because we have more <i>laypeople who have been transformed</i> and are now transforming their workplaces and society.</p>
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	55																																						
Moderately Agree	30																																						
Not sure	10																																						
Moderately Disagree	5																																						
Totally Disagree	0																																						
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	60																																						
Moderately Agree	25																																						
Not sure	10																																						
Moderately Disagree	5																																						
Totally Disagree	0																																						
Response	Percent																																						
Totally Agree	70																																						
Moderately Agree	20																																						
Not sure	10																																						
Moderately Disagree	0																																						
Totally Disagree	0																																						
<p>O2) In terms of services, programmes, buildings, and ceremonies, the local church is <i>neither biblical nor unbiblical</i>, because the Bible does not describe or promote such.</p>	<p>O3 There is a growing breed of Christians focussing on the 'Church' at large. They are not interested in a local church that is not aggressively advancing God's Kingdom.</p>	<p>O5 The church worship and programmes are primarily designed for SUNDAYS. It is time to make every day a worship service – whether in the marketplace or at home. Both the <i>secular and the ministry</i> are worship to</p>	<p>O6 Today, churches measure success by the <i>number of people</i> within the four walls. The Kingdom of God measures success through the <i>transformation</i> happening at home, at work, at play and in the society.</p>																																				



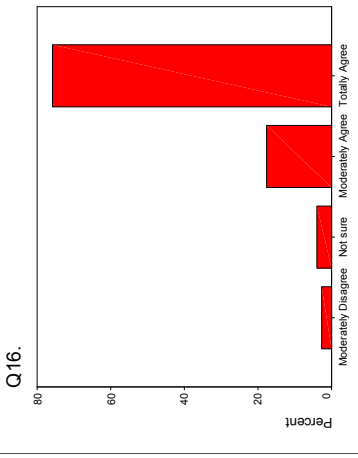
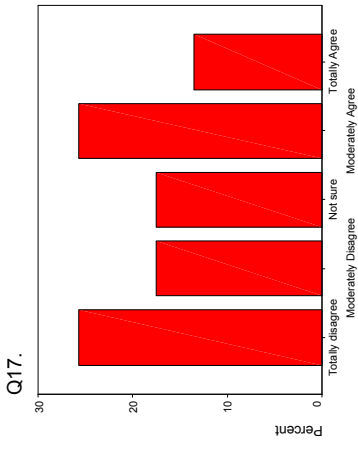
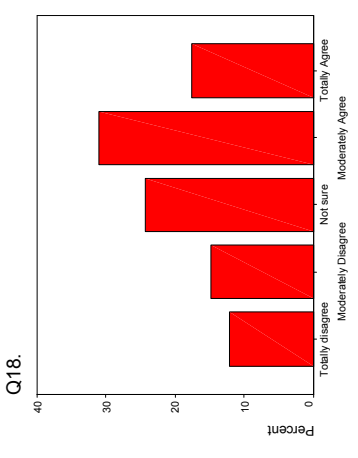
FORUM VI: TRANSFORM NATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)

the Lord.																																		
<p>Q07.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>63</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately Disagree	2	Not sure	5	Moderately Agree	30	Totally Agree	63	<p>Q08.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>89</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately Disagree	2	Not sure	2	Moderately Agree	5	Totally Agree	89	<p>Q09.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>23</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>48</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	1	Moderately Disagree	5	Not sure	23	Moderately Agree	23	Totally Agree	48
Response	Percent																																	
Moderately Disagree	2																																	
Not sure	5																																	
Moderately Agree	30																																	
Totally Agree	63																																	
Response	Percent																																	
Moderately Disagree	2																																	
Not sure	2																																	
Moderately Agree	5																																	
Totally Agree	89																																	
Response	Percent																																	
Totally disagree	1																																	
Moderately Disagree	5																																	
Not sure	23																																	
Moderately Agree	23																																	
Totally Agree	48																																	
<p>o7 It is time for the local church to rethink its strategy in expanding God's Kingdom, i.e. touching the society by providing vocational schools, orphanages, legal aid, clinic/hospitals or employment opportunities.</p>	<p>o8 It is the transformed life of the Christian disciples that changes society.</p>	<p>o9 The pursuit for an <i>authentic Asian theology</i> is essential if we want to transform Asian society.</p>																																

## Is Your Church an Agent of Transformation?

<p>Q10.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>40</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>55</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	2	Moderately disagree	1	Not sure	1	Moderately agree	40	Totally agree	55	<p>Q11.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>83</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Not sure	2	Moderately agree	15	Totally agree	83	<p>Q12.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>35</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>40</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	2	Moderately disagree	5	Not sure	18	Moderately agree	35	Totally agree	40	<p>10 Evangelism should <u>first</u> flow out of the Christians' lifestyle in the marketplace.</p>	<p>11 It is time for the church to influence and penetrate every level of the society through its laypeople.</p>	<p>12 God is transforming lives outside the church's structure, e.g. home-schooling, house-churches, marketplace ministries and Christian creative arts activities.</p>
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	2																																				
Moderately disagree	1																																				
Not sure	1																																				
Moderately agree	40																																				
Totally agree	55																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Not sure	2																																				
Moderately agree	15																																				
Totally agree	83																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	2																																				
Moderately disagree	5																																				
Not sure	18																																				
Moderately agree	35																																				
Totally agree	40																																				
<p>Q13.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>45</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately disagree	10	Not sure	15	Moderately agree	30	Totally agree	45	<p>Q14.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>47</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	2	Moderately disagree	1	Not sure	18	Moderately agree	32	Totally agree	47	<p>Q15.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>35</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>55</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Not sure	10	Moderately agree	35	Totally agree	55	<p>13 Although professing to believe in Christian principles, many Christians today live in a way that is not much different from their non-Christian peers in the marketplace.</p>	<p>14 We should determine whether the rapid growth of a seeker-friendly church is primarily due to conversion of the unbelievers or migration of members from other churches.</p>	<p>15 We must be careful how we critique another person's spiritual journey, although his path may be different from church traditions, cultural expectations or our personal comfort zone.</p>		
Response	Percent																																				
Moderately disagree	10																																				
Not sure	15																																				
Moderately agree	30																																				
Totally agree	45																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	2																																				
Moderately disagree	1																																				
Not sure	18																																				
Moderately agree	32																																				
Totally agree	47																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Not sure	10																																				
Moderately agree	35																																				
Totally agree	55																																				

FORUM VI: TRANSFORM NATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)

<p>Q16.</p>  <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>68</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately Disagree	2	Not sure	2	Moderately Agree	25	Totally Agree	68	<p>16 Preaching and living out the Kingdom of God include social and political transformation.</p>		
Response	Percent												
Moderately Disagree	2												
Not sure	2												
Moderately Agree	25												
Totally Agree	68												
<p>Q17.</p>  <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>15</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	25	Moderately Disagree	15	Not sure	15	Moderately Agree	25	Totally Agree	15	<p>17 God has intentionally left many things up to our decision. What we do determines the future. If we fail, God's plans are thwarted.</p>
Response	Percent												
Totally disagree	25												
Moderately Disagree	15												
Not sure	15												
Moderately Agree	25												
Totally Agree	15												
<p>Q18.</p>  <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>30</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>15</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	12	Moderately Disagree	15	Not sure	25	Moderately Agree	30	Totally Agree	15	<p>18 A church reformed by Scripture alone is a church that ensures the right preaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments.</p>
Response	Percent												
Totally disagree	12												
Moderately Disagree	15												
Not sure	25												
Moderately Agree	30												
Totally Agree	15												

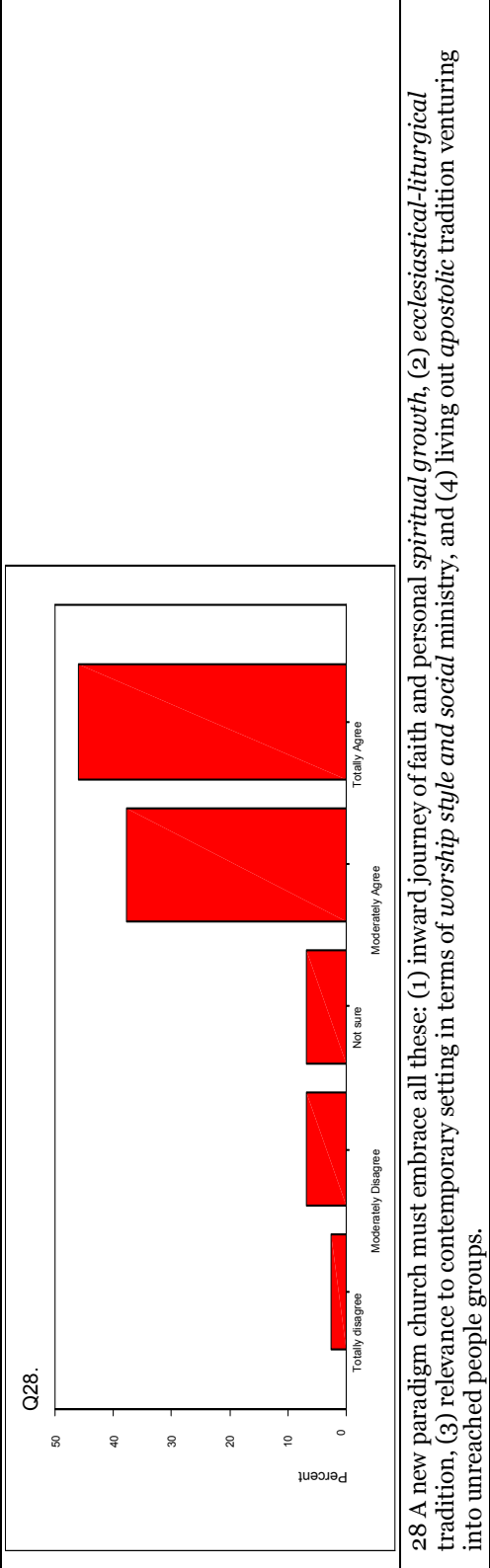
## Is Your Church an Agent of Transformation?

<p>Q19.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>13</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	12	Moderately disagree	15	Not sure	32	Moderately agree	28	Totally agree	13	<p>Q20.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>12</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	10	Moderately disagree	18	Not sure	32	Moderately agree	28	Totally agree	12	<p>Q21.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>52</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>28</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately disagree	12	Not sure	8	Moderately agree	52	Totally agree	28	<p>21 A church should survey the local community, discover its 'felt needs,' and shape the church and message to meet its needs.</p>
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	12																																				
Moderately disagree	15																																				
Not sure	32																																				
Moderately agree	28																																				
Totally agree	13																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	10																																				
Moderately disagree	18																																				
Not sure	32																																				
Moderately agree	28																																				
Totally agree	12																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Moderately disagree	12																																				
Not sure	8																																				
Moderately agree	52																																				
Totally agree	28																																				
<p>Q22.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>32</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>53</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	2	Moderately disagree	3	Not sure	10	Moderately agree	32	Totally agree	53	<p>Q23.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>12</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>28</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>50</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately disagree	10	Not sure	12	Moderately agree	28	Totally agree	50	<p>Q24.</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately agree</td><td>52</td></tr><tr><td>Totally agree</td><td>15</td></tr></tbody></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	5	Moderately disagree	10	Not sure	18	Moderately agree	52	Totally agree	15	<p>22 Transformed Christians would rather give to a worthy cause (e.g. helping the widows, the orphans and the poor) than to donate to man-made monument that marks the <i>leaders' own achievements</i>.</p> <p>23 Any presentation of the gospel that does not challenge the unbeliever for radical change in thinking and attitude towards God and salvation is not the Gospel of the New Testament.</p> <p>24 We are not producing worshippers; rather, we are producing a generation of spectators and religious onlookers lacking memory of a divine encounter with God.</p>
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	2																																				
Moderately disagree	3																																				
Not sure	10																																				
Moderately agree	32																																				
Totally agree	53																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Moderately disagree	10																																				
Not sure	12																																				
Moderately agree	28																																				
Totally agree	50																																				
Response	Percent																																				
Totally disagree	5																																				
Moderately disagree	10																																				
Not sure	18																																				
Moderately agree	52																																				
Totally agree	15																																				

FORUM VI: TRANSFORMATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)

<p>Q25.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Totally disagree</td><td>35</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>5</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Totally disagree	35	Moderately disagree	20	Not sure	15	Moderately Agree	25	Totally Agree	5	<p>Q26.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Moderately disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>68</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately disagree	2	Not sure	5	Moderately Agree	25	Totally Agree	68	<p>Q27.</p> <table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percent</th></tr><tr><td>Moderately Disagree</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Not sure</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>Moderately Agree</td><td>45</td></tr><tr><td>Totally Agree</td><td>43</td></tr></table>	Response	Percent	Moderately Disagree	2	Not sure	10	Moderately Agree	45	Totally Agree	43
Response	Percent																																	
Totally disagree	35																																	
Moderately disagree	20																																	
Not sure	15																																	
Moderately Agree	25																																	
Totally Agree	5																																	
Response	Percent																																	
Moderately disagree	2																																	
Not sure	5																																	
Moderately Agree	25																																	
Totally Agree	68																																	
Response	Percent																																	
Moderately Disagree	2																																	
Not sure	10																																	
Moderately Agree	45																																	
Totally Agree	43																																	
<p>25 Times have changed. What 'worked' in the previous generations cannot work today. The experience of the act of the Holy Spirit is insufficient and we need new methodology to touch men's heart.</p>	<p>26 We need to return to biblical preaching rather than allowing the <i>whims of the crowd with itching ears</i> (2Tim.4: 3-4) to dictate the content of a sermon.</p>	<p>27 Regardless of the techniques used to draw crowd to church (e.g. interesting &amp; practical preaching, seeker-sensitive, entertainment worship, etc); what matters is the <i>response of the crowd to the full Gospel &amp; salvation</i>.</p>																																

Is Your Church an Agent of Transformation?



**Notes:**

---

- <sup>1</sup> George Barna, *Revolution* (Tyndale House, 2005).
- <sup>2</sup> Editorial, “What Reveal Reveals”, *Christianity Today* (March 28, 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Editorial, “Willow Creek Repents? – Why the most influential church in America now says ‘We made a mistake’”, *Christianity Today* (October 18, 2007).
- <sup>4</sup> Matt Branaugh, “Willow Creek’s Huge Shift”, *Christianity Today* (May 28, 2008).
- <sup>5</sup> Tanya Levin, *People in Glass House* (Australia: Schwartz Pub., 2007)
- <sup>6</sup> Ed Silvano, *Transformation - Change the Marketplace & You change the World*, Regal, 2007.
- <sup>7</sup> Dr Crabb is a well-known psychologist, conference and seminar speaker, Bible teacher, popular author, and founder/director of New Way Ministries.
- <sup>8</sup> Wes Roberts & Glenn Marshall, *Reclaiming God’s Original Intent for the Church* (Navpress, 2004).
- <sup>9</sup> Eddie Gibbs & Ian Coffey, *Church Next* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005)
- <sup>10</sup> Bob Roberts, *Glocalization* (Zondervan, 2007)
- <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Transformation* (Zondervan, 2006)
- <sup>12</sup> Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism* (University of California press, 1997).
- <sup>13</sup> J. I. Parker, *Hot Tub Religion* (Tyndale House Publication, 1987).
- <sup>14</sup> Lyle Schaller, *21 Bridges to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Abingdon Press, 1994).
- <sup>15</sup> L.E. Maxmell, *Born Crucified – the Cross in the Life of a Believer* (Moody Press, 1945).
- <sup>16</sup> M.R. DeHaan, *Broken Things – Why we suffer* (Zondervan, 1948).

---

<sup>17</sup> Norman Grubb, *The Law of Faith* (Lutterworth Press, 1947). 'The Ministry of Missions,' <http://www.normangrubb.com/Articles/CM-The%20Ministry%20of%20Missions.htm>, accessed 7 Nov 2008.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Bill Volkman, *The Wink of Faith* (Union Life Ministry, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Dee Dee Winter (Editor), *The Knight of Faith, The Letters of Norman Grubb, Volumes 1 and 2*, Author House, 2006. (Letter printed with permission from Dee Dee Winter).

<sup>21</sup> Norman Grubb, *Rees Howells, Intercessor*, The Lutterworth Press, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Derek Prince, *The Grace of Yielding*, Derek Prince Ministry, Fort Lauderdale, 1986

<sup>23</sup> Doris Ruscoe, *The Intercession of Rees Howells* (The Lutterworth Press, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *From Fear to Faith* (Inter-Varsity Press, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> Norman Grubb, *Yes I Am*, Christian Literature Crusade, 1984.

<sup>26</sup> Martyn Lloyd Jones, *The Christian Warfare* (Baker House Books, 1989)

<sup>27</sup> Norman Grubb, *Who I Am* (Christian Literature Crusade, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> R.T. Kendall, *Believing God: Studies on Faith in Hebrews 11*, Morning Star Publication, 1999.

## Acknowledgement



**FORUM VI: TRANSFORM NATION AGENDA  
(NECF MALAYSIA RESEARCH COMMISSION)**

---

---

---

I would like to thank Dee Dee Winter ([www.normangrubb.com](http://www.normangrubb.com)), Linda Bunting ([www.christasus.com](http://www.christasus.com)) and Bill Volkman for the permission to use extracts from their websites and books. I would also like to thank my wife, Vivien Chan, for preparing the statistics presented in the Appendix.