

## Teaching for 5-28-08

Transformation Here!

*Transformed communities do not materialize spontaneously. If they did we might legitimately wonder why an omnipotent and ostensibly loving God did not turn the trick more often. We would also be left to ponder our own value as intercessors. Fortunately such thoughts can be banished immediately. This is because community transformation is not an arbitrary event but rather the product of a cause and effect process.*

These words of George Otis, Jr. from his book *Informed Intercession* (pg. 55) may challenge some of our concepts about transformation. Even though we hear the stories of God's powerful working in other places, we find it hard to believe that God would do that here. We see the stories of transformation in places like Guatemala, Brazil, or Fiji, and we may think that it is so much easier for those who live in less Western cultures.

Pastor Ian Shelton pastors a church in Toowoomba, Australia. He has been a first-hand observer of the revival in Fiji for a number of years. As he has watched the work of God in Fiji and talked with those involved, Pastor Shelton shared ten distinctives he sees in the move of God in that island nation (published in a 2006 Sentinel Group letter by Inger J. Logelin):

1. Key leaders faithfully interceded for their nation for 20 years before the revival started. During that time they saw no church growth, only hardship and poverty. But they never gave up.
2. There is a deep humility and lack of religious pretension that is impacting. There is not talk about "my ministry" or "my success," only a self-effacing humility totally happy with sitting in the back seat and never seeking to draw attention to self.
3. Youth have been used as intercessors and prayer warriors. A team of 40-50 youth intercede and fast for three to four weeks in each village before a community-wide service of repentance is held. The zeal of these youth is awesome.
4. There is total unity of the church in the village. Catholic, SDA, Pentecostal, and Methodist leaders and people repent and humble themselves before each other—even washing each others' feet. This is a huge departure from their recent church history.
5. There is a preparedness of community leaders from village chiefs right up to the Prime Minister and President to humble themselves before God and their people. This too is very much against the flow of Fijian culture.
6. There is a central place given to repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restitution. These meetings, after weeks of prayer, have been the triggers in releasing God's transforming power into villages.

7. There is an understanding that corporate salvation is the key to the blessing of the village. In Fiji (and in the Bible) the corporate is over the individual, whereas in the West it is the other way around. Once the corporate repentance is underway, the individual responds and finds his/her place within that expression
8. The faith “as a little child” expressed by the people is so refreshing and challenging. To hear their testimony of the many miracles that have occurred is indeed a humbling experience.
9. The church and the community see the importance of dealing with historical sins. They have a good oral history and nothing is “swept under the rug.”
10. Spiritual warfare is an integral part of their preparation for the transformation of the village.

Transformation is not an ethereal wishing and hoping for God to do something. As George Otis states, it is *the product of a cause and effect process*. We don't make it happen through our works, but we must do our part to *prepare the way of the Lord*.

Look at this list of ten items. Do you have the faith to believe God to do that in your community? Remember the pattern: faithful intercessors did not give up praying even though they saw very little encouraging movement over 20 years of intercession.

Many have already been praying and crying out to God for revival. You can join today. Transformation can happen here!