

*You have established a stronghold
from the mouths of children...
to silence the enemy
and the avenger.*

— Psalm 8:2 (HCSB)



Raising Up a
New Generation
from the
4-14 Window
to **Transform**
the **World**



LUIS BUSH

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*You have established a stronghold
From the mouths of children and nursing infants ...
to silence the enemy and the avenger
Psalm 8:2 (HCSB)¹*

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Introduction

At the end of the last century I wrote a pamphlet entitled *The 10/40 Window: Getting to the Core of the Core*.² In the first years of this new century, I am urging a new missional focus: **The 4/14 Window**. Although in a different sense, it too can be called “the core of the core.” The 10/40 Window referenced a geographic frame; the 4/14 Window describes a demographic frame—a life season comprising the ten years between the ages of 4 and 14.

This booklet is an urgent appeal to consider the strategic importance and potential of the 1.2 billion children and youth in the 4/14 Window. It is a plea to open your heart and mind to the idea of reaching and raising up a new generation from within that vast group—a generation that *can* experience personal transformation and *can* be mobilized as agents for transformation throughout the world. Our vision and hope is to maximize their transformational impact while they are young, and to mobilize them for continuing impact for the rest of their lives. I invite you to join with many others who are making a commitment to fulfill this vision and realize this hope.

To maximize the transformational impact of children and youth in the 4/14 Window we must address the spiritual, mental, physical, relational, economic, and social issues they face. We must also confront their “ministerial poverty”—the scarcity of opportunities for them to exercise their gifts and achieve their potential in ways that honor God and advance His Kingdom.

It is crucial that mission efforts be re-prioritized and re-directed toward the 4/14 age group worldwide. This requires that we become acutely aware of what is taking place in their lives. We must also endeavor to understand their nature and the essential means to nurture them. Only with this kind of informed awareness will we be able to reach them, shape them, and raise them up to transform the world.

This booklet presents an overview of the needs, nature and potential of children and youth in the 4/14 Window. It also addresses the very real opposition and obstacles to raising them up as a transformational generation. We must not be defeated by the opposition or deterred by the obstacles; and as we engage in strategic global thinking and answer God’s call to catalytic action, we must do so within a biblical framework.

The meaning and implications of a world-transforming mission is based on the Word of God itself. The term *transformation* comes from the Greek word *metamorphoo*. The word *metamorphoo* is made up of two words: *meta* which means *change*, and *morphoo* which means *form*. In the natural

realm, it describes the process by which a caterpillar completes its miraculous makeover into a beautifully mature adult butterfly. In the Scriptures the term is used to describe Jesus when He was transfigured: His outward appearance changed, He became radiant and His clothes became intensely white (Mark 9:2).

Transformation results in a greater likeness to the nature of God Himself and a greater adherence to His will for the human race. The term *metamorphoo* is used in 2 Corinthians 3:18 to describe this process: “...being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” It is clear that transformation comes from the Lord for it is rooted in His nature, and it is an expression of His character.

Scripture makes it absolutely clear that the transformational mission of God involves bringing together all things under the headship of Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10) through the church, which is His body. The church is the fullness of Christ on earth, who fills all in all (Ephesians 1:22-23), with the result that all things on earth are reconciled and aligned to Him (Colossians 1:20).

The body of Christ worldwide—including children and youth in the 4/14 Window—are God’s agents of transformation under the headship of Jesus Christ. Every Christ follower in every community and nation—even children and youth—are called to involvement in Christ’s transformational mission.

As we approach this bold initiative, engaging and seeking to equip a new generation to transform the world, we do well to adopt the watchword, “*transformed and always transforming*.” This simple phrase reminds us that transformation is a process and is not fully realized until Jesus comes again. We are co-laborers with Christ, under His headship, collaborating with Him in His transformational mission to raise up a new generation from the 4/14 Window to transform the world.

Such global transformation will only take place as God’s people are individually re-made through the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:1-2). Then they will discover the good and perfect will of God, this will be their “spiritual act of worship,” and they will be led to engage in God’s mission.

May God renew our minds through His Word and the vision presented in this booklet. May we be God’s change agents to transform the world for the glory of Christ. By God’s grace, may the world as we know it be transformed.



The 4/14 Window: Ages of Opportunity and Challenge

In human development there is no more critical period than the decade represented by the 4/14 Window. It is a profoundly formative period when perspectives are shaped either positively or negatively and when a view of one's own significance (or lack of significance) is formulated. The needs and potential of this age group should inspire a purposeful response by those charged today with forming the world of tomorrow. It is a call to turn "the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

The Intersection of the 10/40 Window and the 4/14 Window

The 10/40 Window represents the primary geographic challenge entering the 21st Century, in that it is the geographical location in which each of five key challenges are indisputably and significantly more prominent. (See panel on the right)³

In 2008, fifteen years into a worldwide mission emphasis on the 10/40 Window, there are encouraging indicators that this has been a region highly responsive to the presentation of the Gospel. The annual growth rate of Christ followers in the 10/40 Window was almost twice that of those outside the 10/40 Window.⁴ Christ followers in the 10/40 Window nations increased from 2.5% of the population in 1990 to 4.7% in 2005. The general population grew at only 1.5% annually, while the population of Christ followers grew at an amazing 5.4% per year!⁵

If we correlate these statistics with the fact that almost 70% of the world's 4- to 14-year-olds (833,378,750) live in the 10/40 Window, we can begin to see the intersection of the 10/40 Window

10/40 Window Statistics			AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
	IN 1990	IN 2005	
Christ followers as a % of total population	2.5%	4.7%	
Estimated population of Christ followers	87,535,000	205,209,000	5.4%
Estimated total population	3,441,271,000	4,326,363,000	1.5%

Source of Statistics: Patrick Johnstone, data prepared for two upcoming publications

GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGES

By Patrick Johnstone

The Urban Challenge. The people of the twenty-first century will live in an urban world for the first time. Currently 50% of the world lives in an urban setting. By the end of the twenty-first century 80% of the world will be urbanized. The expanding slums and shantytowns of the world's cities are already populated by one billion people. Nearly 40% of the developing world live in these dilapidated dwellings. This century will necessitate pioneer missionaries who will give their lives for the city.

The Social Challenge. Social responsibility has been recognized and affirmed in the last 25 years as an essential component of Christ's Great Commission. An estimated 10 million children suffer forced prostitution. Malnutrition kills 35,000 children under five every day. The number of street children has grown to 100 million. These facts make the world's children an epicenter of Christian social responsibility. Several other great social concerns afflict us as we enter the twenty-first century. AIDS in Africa has grown at alarming proportions with millions of adults becoming infected and millions of children becoming orphaned in the aftermath. The next decade will result in tens of millions of additional AIDS orphans. Drug addiction, along with the illegal, global drug manufacturing and trading industry, strangles the people in cities and countries today. Infectious diseases like tuberculosis and malaria continue to slaughter millions.

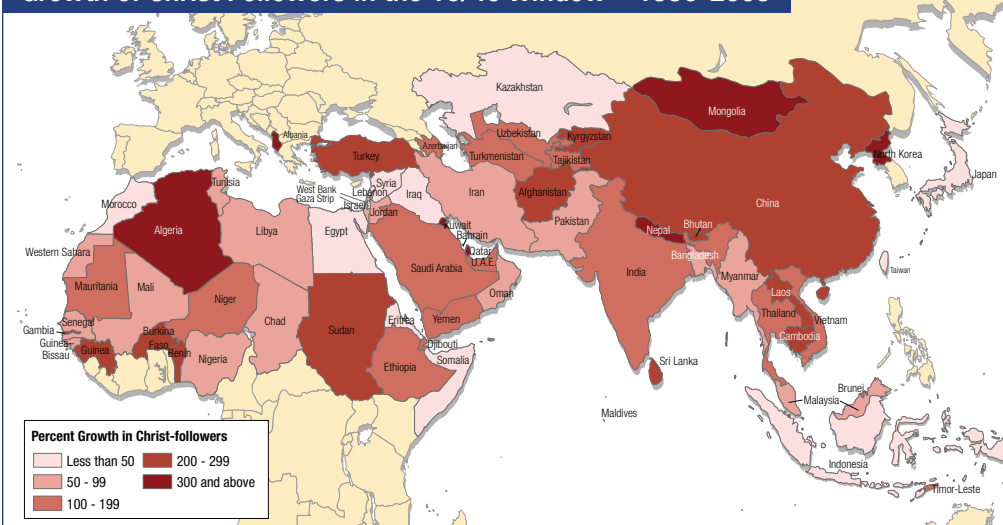
The People Challenge. More than 1000 peoples are still without a viable, indigenous church planting movement in their midst with sufficient strength, resources, and commitment to sustain and ensure the continuous multiplication of churches. Various strategic ministries need to be strengthened for this discipling process to be effective and lasting. More research, church planting efforts, literature production, *Jesus* Film distribution, Scripture translation, and radio ministries are required.

The Ideological Challenge. The Islamic worldview prevents a substantive ideological challenge with social and legal systems that make it nearly impossible for a Muslim to become a Christian. Then there is the growth of "fundamentalist" terrorism. The pluralism of the Hindus and the atheism of Buddhists require innovative approaches. Other ideological challenges are presented by the Baha'i, the Sikhs, the Jains, and the Animists. Worst of all, nominal Christians have settled for a form of godliness with no power.

The Spiritual Challenge. We have been involved in spiritual warfare ever since Satan wrested control of the world. There always remain the dually dangerous challenges of "underemphasis" on the spiritual nature of the conflict and a "preoccupation" with the enemy. Prayer makes a profound difference in world evangelization. Global networks of prayer have been raised up to meet this challenge.

From: *The Church is Bigger than You Think*, by Patrick Johnstone, 1998

Growth of Christ Followers in the 10/40 Window – 1990-2005



NOTE: The dramatic % change in some counties is partially attributed to the low evangelical population in 1990: Mongolia (552), North Korea (104,960), Nepal (131,605), Algeria (5,038), Kuwait (2,452), Qatar (2,336), Afghanistan (2,696), Albania (1,154), Turkey (8,145), Kyrgyzstan (9,288), and Saudi Arabia (87,000)

Sources: Patrick Johnstone – data prepared for two upcoming publications; United Nations Map by Global Mapping International, Jan. 2009

and the 4/14 Window.⁶ The 10/40 Window is the geographical area with the greatest need and opportunity. The 4/14 Window is the demographical grouping that is the most open, receptive, and moldable to every form of spiritual and developmental input.

The most compelling conclusion regarding the relationship between the 10/40 and the 4/14 windows is that efforts be refocused on *the 4/14 within the 10/40* in order to reach the most receptive persons in the area of the greatest need and opportunity. In so doing we are also recognizing the importance of children and youth in God's work of transforming the world.

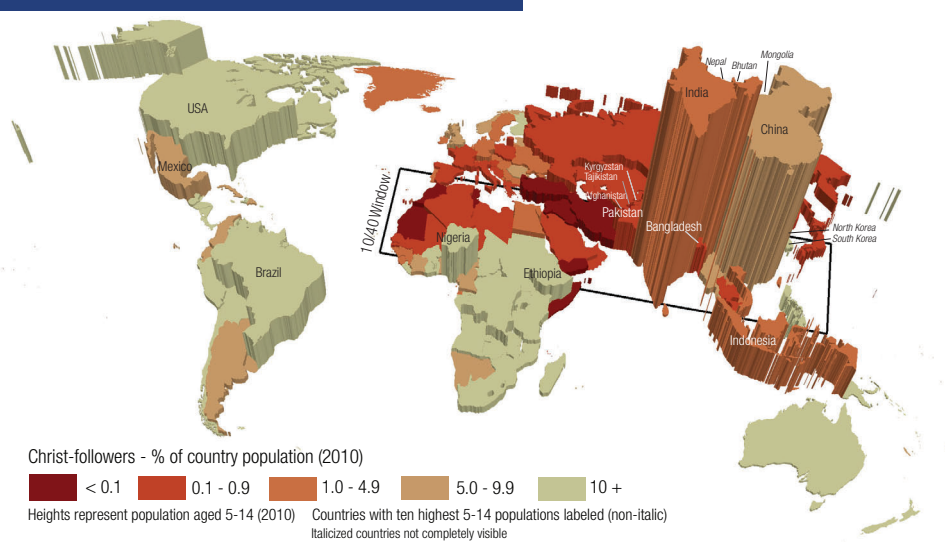
When he was asked by His disciples "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus called a little child, whom he placed among them. And He said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes a humble place—becoming like this child—is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:1-6 TNIV).

Have we really listened to Jesus' teaching about the place of children in the kingdom of God? First, they model the essence of gospel faith and faithful discipleship by showing us how to humbly repent and to trust in the God of salvation. Second, to 'welcome' a child—that is, to accept, love, value and respect a child—is to welcome Christ Himself! Finally, as Jesus made very clear, whoever neglects, abuses, hinders, or turns away a child from faith in Christ will face severe judgment from God Himself.

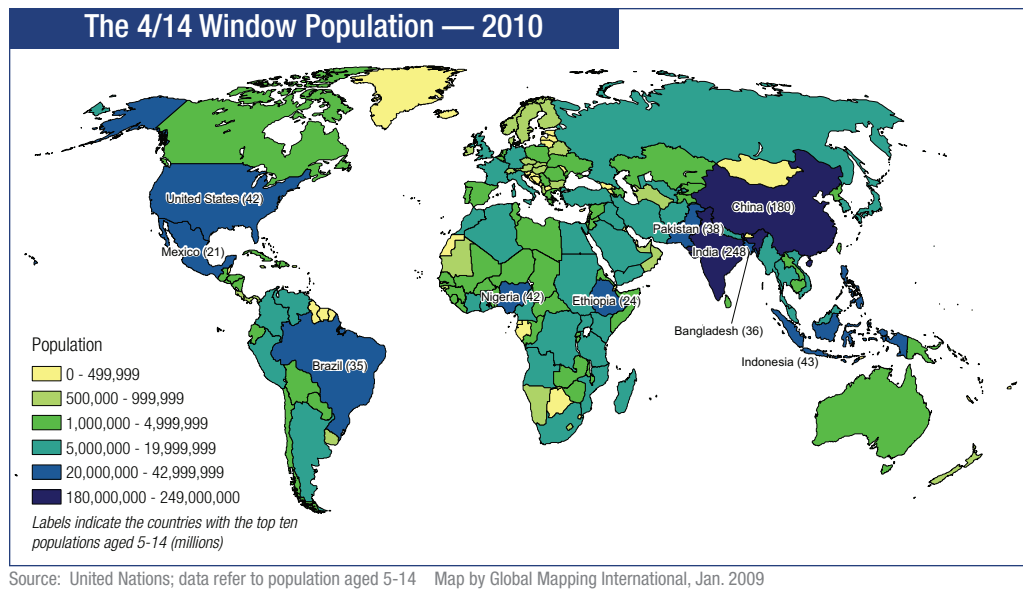
The 4/14 Age Group Around the World

A country-by-country comparison of the nations with the most 4-to-14ers is revealing. India, with almost 20% fewer people than China, has over 30% more children and youth. This is largely due to China's infamous "one child" policy. Nigeria and Indonesia, with half the population of the U.S., actually have more children and young teens in absolute numbers. In the U.S., 25% of the nearly 42 million school-age children are Hispanic—though Hispanics comprise only 15% of the general population. And, as the chart indicates, in Africa and in places such as Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan and most Middle Eastern countries, 40 to 50% of the population is under 15 years of age.⁷

Christ Followers & The 4/14 Window



Sources: Patrick Johnstone – data prepared for two upcoming publications; United Nations Map by Global Mapping International, Jan. 2009



5/14 POPULATION (2010)

Top 10 Countries:

India	248,253,120
China	180,084,594
Indonesia	42,716,276
Nigeria	42,716,276
USA	41,819,347
Pakistan	38,118,459
Bangladesh	36,068,928
Brazil	35,263,734
Ethiopia	23,990,943
Mexico	20,855,453
Total (Top 10)	709,595,962
Total (Others)	508,921,404
Global Total	1,218,517,366

Contrast this with the countries with the lowest percentage of persons under age 15—Italy (13.8%), Japan (14.3%), Germany (14.4%),⁸ etc. It can be readily seen that by far the greatest population growth is taking place in the least developed and often most conflicted countries of the world.

According to *Global Trends 2025: A World Transformed*, by the year 2025 we can expect more cultural and religious clashes, more trouble spots around the world, and the enduring consequences of a “global financial tsunami.” The purpose of this November 2008 report, prepared by hundreds of renowned international social scientists, is “to stimulate strategic thinking about the future by identifying key trends, the factors that drive them, where they seem to be headed, and how they might interact.”⁹

This report demonstrates that all we’ve said up to this point about the plight of children throughout the world will only get worse in the next 15 years. One objective of this booklet is to “stimulate strategic thinking,” but beyond that, the hope is that this presentation will call us to action. We must think strategically, of course; but it is imperative that we act decisively, inspired to raise up a new generation from the 4/14 Window to transform the world. If we don’t, an entire generation of young people will be lost.

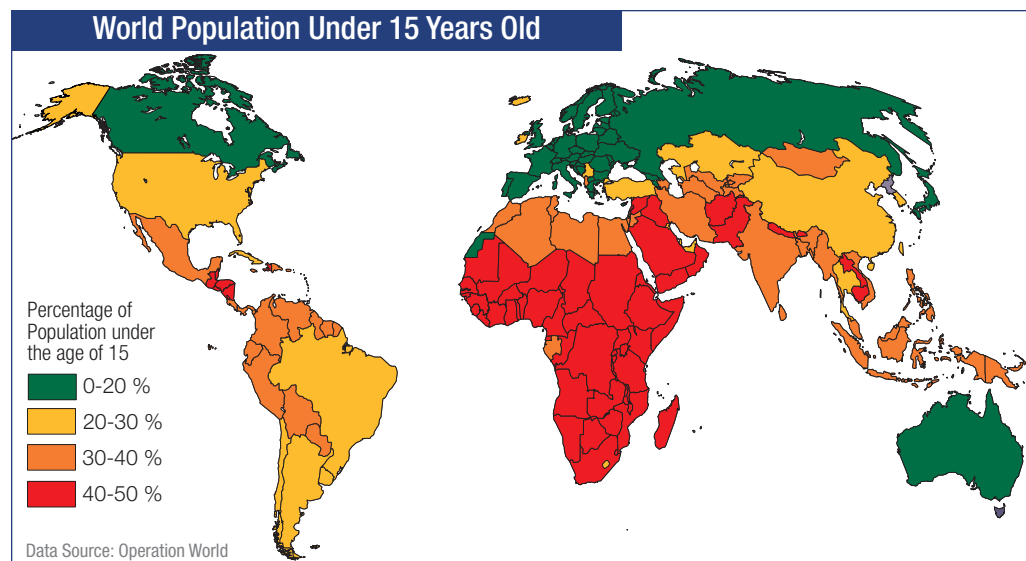
Characteristics of the 4/14 Window

The world’s 4- to 14-year-olds present us with

several pressing realities. The 4/14 years represent a “season of awakening” in which a person’s understanding of life emerges and one’s conscience is awakened to judge right from wrong. But the life circumstances of today’s typical 4/14er is a cross between a minefield and an obstacle course.

A disturbing number of 4/14ers in the 10/40 Window are condemned to a life of serfdom, brutal labor, sexual exploitation, spiritual oppression and emotional abuse. Most of those exiting the 4/14 Window quickly leave behind their parents’ supervision. When formal schooling ends they either enter the work force to make ends meet or further their education in an environment fraught with the dangers of secular ideology and materialism.

Parents and older siblings serve as the most potent and positive influence for many 4/14ers. But sadly, for many others, parents are negligent and siblings are morally damaging. This is especially true when those older brothers and sisters are themselves adversely influenced by today’s toxic youth cultures.



While challenges and pitfalls abound, and the pessimism of many adults is amply warranted, the possibilities and potential of 4/14ers is astonishing. For many, the tendency has been to ignore or dismiss their potential or to view those in the 4 to 14 age group as a nagging problem to be endured. We have often failed to grasp the inestimable value of these young lives, made in the image of God. Most significantly, we have failed to recognize that most people who will ever make a decision to follow Christ, will do so during the critical years between the ages of 4 and 14.

From a missions standpoint, our interest in the 4 to 14 age group is not only because they are the most *receptive*, but also because as we will see, they are often the most *effective* agents for mission. Of course, Jesus understood their worth: “I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth,” He said, “because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure” (Matthew 11:25-26).

In a three-year project called *The Child in Law, Religion and Society*, researchers examined the so-called mystery of the child. Their final report urges readers to reject the prevalent view that a child is a problem to be controlled. Instead, the authors contend, adults ought to nurture wonder in children while seeking their own “childlikeness,” or “child-ness.” They warn against the fallacy of reductionism, the philosophy that attempts to reduce a complex system to the sum of its parts. In this case, reductionism endeavors to categorize a child through various problematic elements; for example, the incidence of delinquency, abuse or autism. Some reductionists have gone so far as to define a child as “the sum of neuron firings in the brain” or “nothing but a victim of original sin.”¹⁰ Such thinking demeans the wondrous, mysterious nature of childhood—a mystery that is rooted in the Scriptures, particularly in the words of Jesus.

Christ is the King of the Kingdom and the faith of the child is the model for all who would enter and live out their lives in the Kingdom with King Jesus. The Gospel elevates children to a very high place of honor in the Kingdom and gives them moral agency. Children are addressed as responsible members of the family of God, as those who are ‘in the Lord’ (Ephesians 6:1).

It is imperative that we see children and young people as a crucial, strategic force that can transform a generation and change the world. Speaking of children, Jesus said, “to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16). Clearly, from the time of the first disciples (Mark 10:13-16) to the present day, we have often underestimated the value and

potential of children. Time and again, we have failed to effectively and strategically reach them. The challenge before us is to raise up today’s 4- to 14-year-olds to experience the abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10b), to free them from spiritual, mental, physical, relational, economic, social, and ministerial poverty, to harness their immense potential, and to deploy them to change the world.

4/14ers in the Bible

Utilizing 4/14ers is not a new concept. In both the Old and the New Testaments we frequently see God using children and young people to transform their world. The cast of 4/14ers used by God in the Bible includes some fascinating individuals:

Samuel was the child through whom God delivered a needful but difficult message to the high priest, Eli. Samuel’s sensitivity to God’s leading and his ready obedience were exemplary. (1 Samuel 3)

David was only a boy when God began speaking to him. As the youngest of eight brothers, David’s own father didn’t even consider him when Samuel came seeking the one whom God had chosen to be the next king. And while he was still a teenager, David slew the giant Goliath and inspired his nation to rout their enemies, the dreaded Philistines. (1 Samuel 17)



Josiah was a boy-king through whom God reformed the religious and social state of his country (2 Kings 22). When the dramatic reforms began, he was a mere eight years old (2 Chronicles 34).

Esther, an orphan girl who was likely in her early teens, became a queen whom God used to save the Jewish people from annihilation. (Esther 2)

Jeremiah was chosen by God, though he was “only a child” (Jeremiah 1).

“It is not just that these people happened to be children,” writes Keith White, founder and director of the Child Theology Movement, “but that some of the most significant acts and revelations of God were through these children. Their faith and actions are critically important in the unfolding and outworking of God’s purposes.”¹¹

Throughout Scripture, we see God entrusting special truths to children or using them as His special messengers or instruments. Wess Stafford,

President of Compassion International, often says that when God had something REALLY important to do, something that He couldn't entrust to adults, He uses children. Stafford continues, "God seems to pause, rub his hands together, smile warmly, and say, 'I need someone really powerful for this task. I know...I'll use a child.'"¹² This is illustrated for us numerous times in the Bible. One example is the Old Testament story of Naaman, an army commander who suffered from leprosy, then an incurable disease. A young Israelite girl who served Naaman's wife told her mistress about Elisha, a prophet of God who could help in a seemingly helpless situation (2 Kings 5:2). The wife told her husband, and—following the young girl's suggestion—Naaman went to Elisha and was miraculously cured. But beyond his physical healing, Naaman experienced a spiritual revelation: "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel" (2 Kings 5:15). The intervention of a child had resulted in that all-important "now I know" realization.¹³ Today, as in ages past, children and young people are vessels in God's hands, pointing the way to faith when adults have become corrupt, distracted or deaf to His calling.



The New Testament provides only brief accounts of Jesus' own childhood; but the examples given are significant. Soon after she learned she was pregnant with the holy child, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth to share the amazing news. Elizabeth was also expecting her first child—a son who would become the

great prophet, John the Baptist. "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy

Spirit" (Luke 1:41). Some months later, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a Bethlehem stable; and a short time after that, Jesus was carried by his parents to Egypt in order to escape Herod's murderous rampage.

When Jesus and His parents returned from Egypt they settled in the village of Nazareth. In that obscure place, Jesus "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him" (Luke 2:39). At age 12, Jesus accompanied his family on a journey to Jerusalem for the Passover festivities. He went to the temple, where Mary and Joseph found him "...sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (Luke 2:42-47). Upon the family's return to Nazareth, Jesus "was

obedient to them and...grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:51-52).

During His three years of public ministry, Jesus observed the characteristics of children and referred to them as examples to adult believers. Noting the value of child-like humility, He said, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). Contrary to the preconceived notions of many adults, children everywhere—just like Jesus when He was a child—can grasp spiritual truths easily, they can sense the guilt of sin,¹⁴ understand their need for a Savior, and grasp the significance of faith. Wess Stafford observes, "A child of five, if properly instructed, can truly believe and be regenerated as much as any adult."¹⁵

"But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, 'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great'" (Luke 9:47-8)

Questions to Think About¹⁶

The Bible provides some clear, compelling answers to these important questions...

Want to enter God's kingdom?
Become like little children.

Want to be great in God's eyes?
Then become like little children.

Want to let Jesus know you welcome and receive Him?
Then welcome little children.

Want to avoid judgment at God's hand?
Then don't lead little children astray.

Want to identify with God's plans?
Then don't belittle or despise little children.

Want to follow Jesus' example?
Then love, pray for, accept, be with, and bless little children.

The New Testament confirms the high regard Jesus had for children. The Lord's own words about children set the stage for this set of verses.

There were many incidents involving children in the life of Jesus—the boy who offered Jesus the loaves and fish (John 6), the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the daughter of the Canaanite woman (Matthew 1:5), just to list a few examples. Although we may not know the names of these children, their very presence in the biblical record confirms that they were significant to Jesus. Though it is often overlooked, we cannot deny the prominent role of children in the life and ministry of Jesus.¹⁷

Indeed, throughout the Bible, we see that God has a very high regard for their ability to understand the faith and to participate in His redemptive activities. Young people, for example, are encouraged to influence their communities by maintaining personal purity, by obeying God's Word (Psalms 119:9), by being exemplary in their speech, love, and faith (1 Timothy 4:12), and by pursuing godly virtues (2 Timothy 2:22). In fact, the conduct and moral standards of the Bible as described for children differ very little from those described for adults.¹⁸

To Jesus, children were living examples of what the Kingdom was all about. "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mark 10:15). It was Jesus who over and over commended children as meaning-makers, spiritual pilgrims, and active agents with a God-given ministry on earth.

Keith White has asked us, "What if we miss the whole idea of doing theology, missions and church simply because we, as adults, have misheard or neglected God's revealed teaching about children and childhood?"¹⁹

Why did God use children to teach Kingdom truths? What was Jesus' audience, if not adults?

The Modern Context of the 4/14ers

The 4/14ers (and their older siblings) are called the "Internet Generation" because the Net is their primary influencer. While their parents are digital immigrants, the world's children and young people are digitally native. They are less defined by geography than by technology.

It is true that there are still parts of the world where the Internet does not yet have a major culture-shaping role, due to lack of accessibility. However, with the shrinking of the "global village," more and more young people in remote areas will become connected and correspondingly influenced by the culture of western materialism and hedonism.

Today's children and young people have been given a host of labels such as, "Digital kids," "Millennials" or "Mosaics." These labels suggest that today's kids are vastly different in culture and worldview from the Baby Boomer era. They are living in a postmodern age where the spirit of deconstructionism is pecking away at their values, affecting their self-identity and changing their view of the home, school, and society at large.²⁰

Today's young people are "Facebookers" and "YouTubers" who do not think twice about sharing their opinions online with strangers whom they call

"friends." Technology provides them a powerful weapon to bring change, but it is also a powerful poison that can bring destruction. This generation wants their opinions to be heard and they want to make a difference. They are creative and speak openly of their feelings.²¹

The 4/14ers are riding a technological wave into the future. More than any previous generation, they are plugged in—all the time—with a world of communication and information at their fingertips. "The youth of today, due to the strong influence of technology in their everyday lives, are constantly confronted with the problem of self-definition. To most adolescents, technologies such as mobile phones are implicated in the production of individuality and personhood."²²



Traditional values face unprecedented challenges in the digital world. The Internet provides youth the world over with instant access to a wide variety of cultural styles, and "McWorld" values and the technological culture reaches around the world, replacing even long-held values. India, for example, is a nation where communication technology has produced dramatic changes in youth culture resulting in a drastic decline in traditional values. India exemplifies the global youth culture phenomenon. The revolutionary information age is widening social distances, weakening family ties and changing the child-parent relationship.

The World Values Survey²³ findings accentuate the conclusion that intergenerational changes are taking place in basic values related to politics, applied economics, religion, gender roles, family and sexual norms. The values of younger generations differ consistently from those prevailing among older generations, and are transforming social, economic, and political life; in some cases displacing thousands of years of traditional cultures in the span of a single generation.

There is much that is frightening and disheartening in the exposure and "flatness" in this "brave new world." As uncomfortable as we in the older generations might be in the Internet culture, it is undeniable that the 4/14ers are very much at home there, and will be ever more so as it continues to unfold at unprecedented pace. However, we must understand and accept that this very connectedness and instant information access and sharing is part of the great potential of the 4/14ers to transform their world.

The Challenge: Maximizing Transformational Impact in the 4/14 Age Group

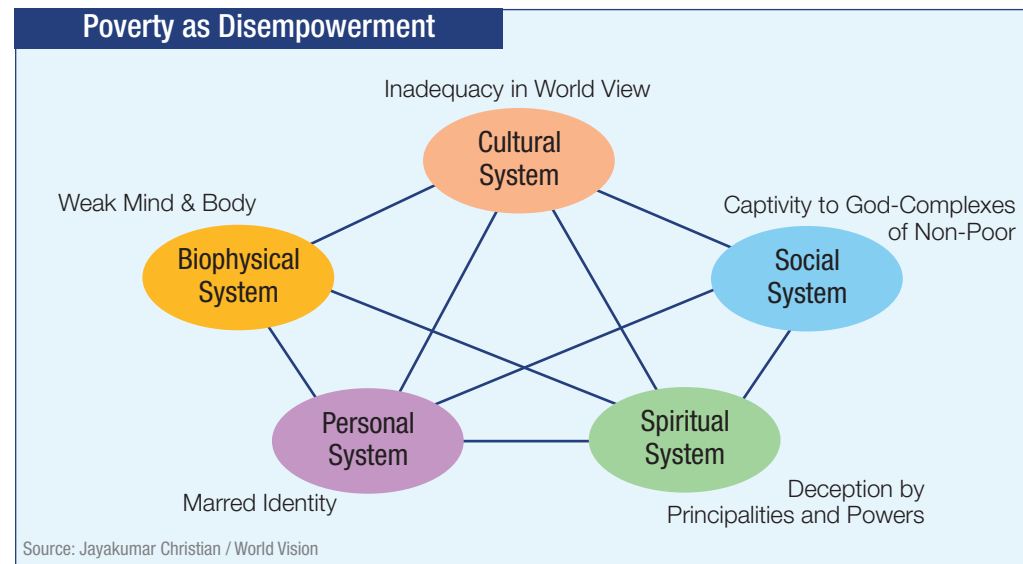
Any sensible parent knows the childhood years are formative. Anyone who has been a child knows it too! Our brains are 90% formed before we reach the age of three²⁴ and 85% of our adult personality is formed by the time we reach six years of age. There is substantial truth in the Jesuits' refrain, "Show me a child when he is seven and I'll show you the man." A biblical proverb attributed to King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, instructs us, "train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). In light of that truth, our task is to "train up" the 4/14 generation in the way they should go, so that as they grow older they will be used by God to transform the world.

This is a multi-faceted challenge we face, and it can be met only with a holistic approach. In raising up the 4/14 generation for transformational impact, we must address their physical needs (especially the physical needs of those in poverty), their intellectual needs, and all the relational, social and spiritual dimensions of their lives. We must embrace the whole person, endeavoring to see 4/14ers as God sees them. In relating to those who live in impoverished conditions we must look beyond the lack of assets and advantages and see the complete individual. We must also recognize the cyclical, negative forces at work. Jayakumar Christian, a leader with World Vision in India, describes poverty as a set of disempowering systems that result in ongoing or even intensified poverty.²⁵

As the illustration shows, these exploitative systems interact with each other to supplant the role of God in the lives of the poor. This results in the development of god-like structures that oppress people and produce a distorted view of God. Cultural systems legitimize these god-complexes and reinforce the distortions. All of these systems are based on deception and lies about who people really are and who God really is. They systematically victimize people who are made in the image of God, exchanging the truth for a lie and causing people to

worship and serve created things rather than the Creator. (See Romans 1:25).

As a result of their marred identities and vocational insecurities, the poor believe that they were born to be oppressed. They also conclude that they have nothing to offer, and the negative self identity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The non-poor, on the other hand, often believe that they have the right to exploit and enjoy the fruits of the poor's labor. As long as these core perspectives remain in effect, a fatalistic mindset will lock the poor into their poverty. What is true of the entire world's poor is especially true of the children and youth whose lives are molded and futures cast during the 4/14 years.



The 4/14 Window is the first point of access to reverse the systematic lies of culture and remake a generation through holistic development. Let's examine each of seven basic challenges we encounter in the 4/14 Window.

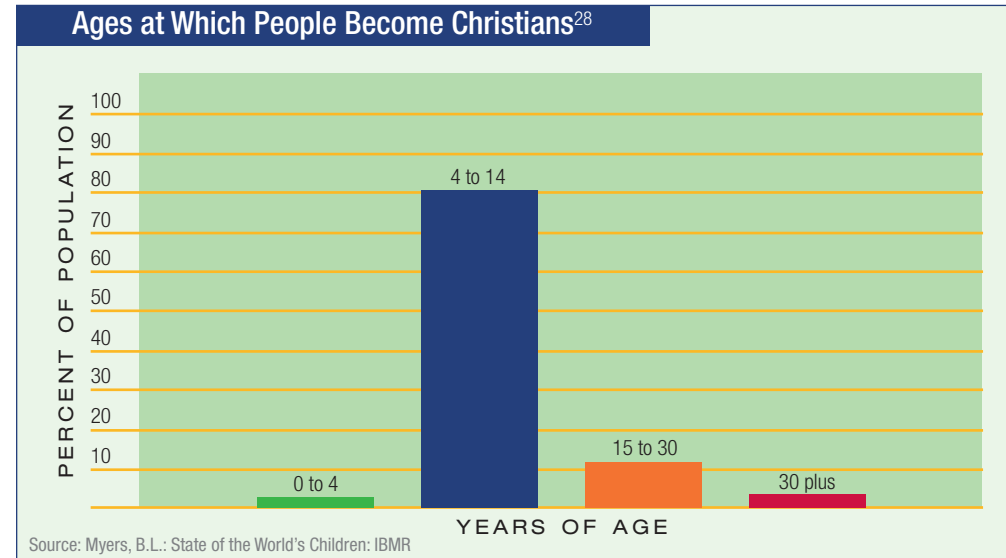
1. The Spiritual Challenge

As noted previously, most people who will ever make a decision to follow Christ will do so before their 15th birthday. In the USA, nearly 85% of people who make a decision for Christ, do so between the ages of 4 and 14.²⁶ During the 20th Century, that age group was the single largest source of new believers for the American church.

In his book *Transforming Your Children into Spiritual Champions*,²⁷ George Barna presents the results of three years of research that confirm that timeless principle from the wisdom literature: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6 ESV).

Barna's research verifies that a person's life-long behaviors and beliefs are generally developed

during childhood and early adolescence. In the overwhelming majority, most of the moral and spiritual foundations are in place by age nine. Fundamental perspectives on truth, integrity, meaning, justice, morality, and ethics are formed at this early stage of life.



In the 4/14 age group we also see the natural confluence of evangelism and discipleship. Barna observes, "By the age of 13, one's spiritual identity is largely set in place."²⁹ If we can reach children and youth and disciple them when their life perspectives and worldviews are being shaped, we will set them on a rock that cannot be easily moved.

These statistics reveal a vast spiritual harvest waiting to be reaped. For too long, the ministries of most churches, Christian organizations and mission agencies have focused primarily on adults, with fewer personnel, minimal funds, and limited creativity devoted to young people and to children. In no way should we abandon the outreach to any age group, but the call of the 4/14 initiative is clear: We must prioritize our efforts to reach the world's largest, most receptive and most moldable group—the 4- to 14-year-olds.

Admittedly, focusing on the 4/14ers is a challenge more easily met in some nations than in others. However, just because children tend to be receptive to the Gospel does not mean that we can be carefree in how we approach them or their parents. Indeed, that heightened receptivity should cause us to be even more cautious and discerning, for the possibility of exploitation or abuse is also heightened.

Cross-cultural missionaries must study the cultures and the contexts of the adult peoples to whom they minister. The same applies to those who would do inter-faith "mission" among children. When ministering to children, the servant of Christ must be wise, sensitive, cautious, discerning and

holistic in reaching out to those from non-Christian contexts.

In 2008, the Global Children's Forum (GCF) was formed. The GCF is a partnership of children's ministry agencies that operate on a global or regional basis. Its focus is on the strategic need for evangelism and discipleship among the world's two billion children. Its goal is to ensure that every child is given the opportunity to know who Jesus is, what He offers and how to know Him personally.

The map on the following page provides a vivid picture of the spiritual challenge among the nations. The spiritually neediest places in the world (shown in red) are the places where the 4/14ers have the least opportunity of hearing the Gospel.

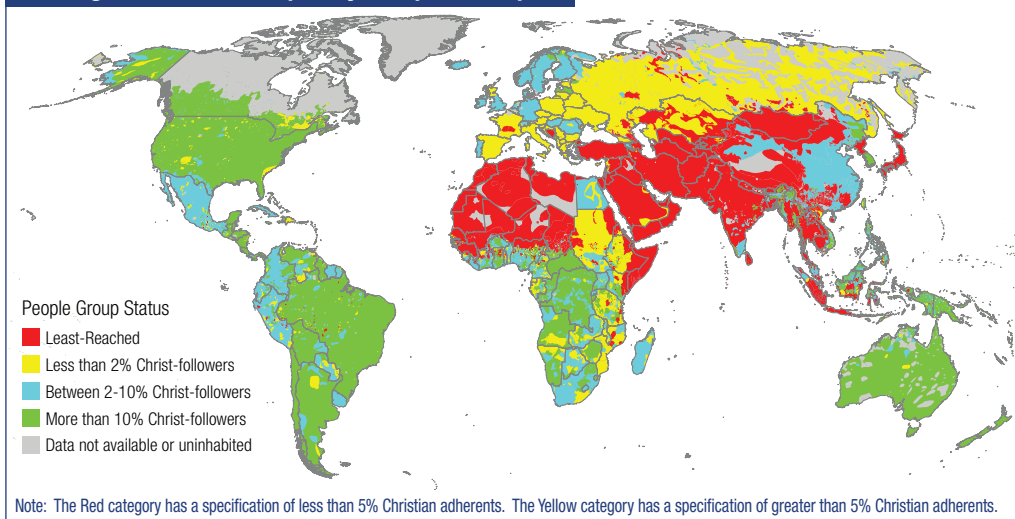
The Outcome of Spiritual Transformation Brings Community Transformation through the Presence of God at Work in and through His People

The heart of transformation is the transformation of the heart. The central need is spiritual in nature. This is clear from God's Word where He reveals His perfect plan to reverse the effects of the fall on His creation. Spiritual transformation does not only mean the forgiveness of sins; it encompasses all of life, recreated by God. The spiritual transformation of the individual through the power of the Gospel therefore provides the platform upon which all the spheres of society can be transformed.

By transformation we do not mean behavior modification or a striving to "make the world a better place." Transformation entails a passionate seeking after God, submitting to His transforming power and allowing Him to realign every facet of our lives according to His design and plan.

Although God desires to transform each individual, there is also a communal component to transformation—the Body of Christ, a community comprising individuals who have been transformed by the Gospel. The Body of Christ is the place where societal transformation begins and from which individuals emerge as agents of transformation in their various spheres of influence. This was

Progress of the Gospel by People Group



Source: Based on the Joshua Project Progress Scale: Joshua Project (Feb. 2008)
Map prepared for 4/14 Window publication and produced by Joshua Project and Global Mapping International

Every evening, a team of boys and girls from children's homes run by the ministry went to the relief camp to sing, pray, and minister to the hurting community. Their songs and testimonies brought comfort and hope to both adults and hurting children. Their presence brought joy and hope as they sang of the love of Jesus the Savior and prayed for Him to heal the hurting community.

Later on in December 2008, a team of 20 pastors

and children visited Bihar's flood-affected Madhepura district and discovered houses, shops, and business establishments that were devastated by the September deluge. One resident, Mr. Kumar, said, "We have lost all that we earned; when we returned our house was still in about 3 feet of water. We have to start from scratch...." The team arrived with the *Jesus* video, set up a portable screen, and shared that the "The Man of Nazareth" had come to Madhepura this cold Christmas season and that he offered them His love and hope.

A crowd of about 3500 turned up to see the film and meet the members of the team. Hearts were touched, many wept when they saw Jesus heal the sick. Heads nodded as Jesus taught the crowds. They were amazed. Most poignantly, they looked in awe as Jesus calmed the raging waters. This Jesus was one who brought hope and who could even calm the churning seas!

At the close of the meeting about 90% of the crowd indicated that they wanted to give their lives to Jesus, and over 800 remained for prayer. The children and missionaries prayed for this new community of Christ followers who welcomed Jesus into their hearts! In the weeks immediately following, five churches were established in the community and children have continued to address the spiritual needs of the area by ministering at church services and open air meetings. In the future, the ministry will focus on the rehabilitation of flood-affected children through the establishment of children development programs and orphan homes for needy and displaced children."

The team shared that "The Man from Nazareth" had come to Madhepura this cold Christmas season and that He offered them His love and hope.

2. The Mental/Cognitive Challenge

By the time the typical child reaches age nine, the mental gears are shifted and the child begins to use internal cues to either confirm or challenge an existing perspective. As the child grows into adolescence, change becomes more and more difficult. By adulthood, only with great effort or under great influence will a person replace existing views and understandings. George Barna notes that "adults essentially carry out the beliefs they embraced when they were young."³⁰ This view challenges the stages of intellectual development³¹ formulated by Jean Piaget, et. al., contending that one must reach

the age of 15 to be capable of reasoning as an adult.

Every mature society recognizes childhood and adolescence as a time to prepare the young for the remainder of life. Most often this is done through the establishment of primary and secondary schools. Educators

"Our chief ambition is for the education of our children ... we take most pains of all with the instruction of children, and esteem the observation of the laws, and the piety corresponding with them, the most important affair of our whole life."

— Josephus
1st Century Historian

worldwide understand the critical importance of the 4/14 Window in the correct formation of children; however, despite the efforts of many governments, untold millions of children receive little or no education. This problem of substandard education is exacerbated by other factors—the disintegration of the family unit, poverty, ill health, poor nutrition, to name but a few. This then results in masses of unmotivated, poorly educated men and women, barely capable of earning a meager income. And the situation is further complicated for children whose own parents deprive them of an education by forcing them to work in order to help support the family.

The Need for a Transformational Approach to Education

While universal primary and secondary education may be considered a worthy goal, its ultimate effect is often negative. Unless the teachers and those who run the schools are Christ followers, the worldview that is taught will not transform the minds of the 4/14ers to be able to test and approve what God's will is for them (Romans 12:1-2). A further complication is that childhood education in many countries has been taken away from the jurisdiction of the parents and the church.

Secular education does not enlighten; rather, it dims one's grasp of the "real reality" acknowledged in the truth of Scripture. It seeks to remove the notion that God exists or that we owe allegiance to a Creator.³² Naturalistic worldviews and rationalism in secular education have conspired to predispose against the supernatural, even to despise it. By forcing children to be taught a curriculum that robs God of his rightful preeminence, such educational systems are sabotaging the blessing of Jesus who "came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Godless, secular indoctrination is an age-old problem, one that we see described in the Bible. Consider the experience of Daniel and his three friends (Daniel 1). They were only boys, 11-14 years old, taken from their parents and shipped off to pagan Babylon. Their captors even gave them new names—a practice that continues in Christless authoritarian systems to this day. What happened to Daniel and his friends was like the name changes given to local residents on the Korean peninsula at the beginning of the 20th Century and just a few years later in the Soviet Union after the Communist Revolution. The four boys in Babylon were given heathen names in replacement for their covenantal names associated with the one only true God.



The plan was to subtly win them for Babylon, to transform their minds until they were completely captivated by the Babylonian thought forms, worldview, culture, religion and way of life. The Babylonian system of public education with its goal of a pervasive secularism reminds of us of government-run public educational systems in our world today. But all of the attempts at mind control and behavior modification failed miserably. Daniel and his friends did not forget their early God-centered education; they did not lose their faith; they would not be robbed of trust in the one true God.

As we consider the public education systems in our nations at the beginning of the 21st Century, we must find encouragement from the Book of Daniel that God is supreme, that He is in control, that He can be trusted. More than once, the worldly king of Babylon, the feared Nebuchadnezzar, was moved to declare about God, "His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation" (Dan 4:3, 34). Through his own trial as

clearly demonstrated through the work of the Body of Christ in the Bihar State of India after a devastating flood.

Model of an Effective Approach to the Spiritual Challenge

Northern India represents one of the world's greatest spiritual challenges. It has been said that India is at the core of the 10/40 Window, northern India is at the core of the core, and the state of Bihar is at the core of that core.



In August 2008, Bihar suffered one of the worst floods in its history. A breached dam on the River Kosi in Nepal unleashed a vicious flood that overran fifteen districts and swept away all that stood in its path. The gushing waters from

the dam were a full 15 kilometers in width. Initial estimates were that 3.1 million people were affected. Tens of thousands died within hours.

NIEA (New India Evangelistic Association) linked with other regional ministries in a two-month project to meet the acute needs of over 20,000 people who were left homeless, without shelter, and paralyzed with fear. In addition to relief packets and medical treatment given to tens of thousands, the Agape Relief camp was established to minister to hundreds of children displaced and damaged by the disaster. Over 500 victims stayed in the Agape Relief camp for about two months.

a result of denying the God of the universe, King Nebuchadnezzar ultimately delivered this edict: “I issue a decree requiring that in every part of the kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end” (Daniel 6:26).

We can learn today from those who have gone before us—from Daniel and his friends, from educators like Augustine, and from others who stayed faithful in pursuit of God’s purposes. A transformational approach to education begins with the premise that all truth is God’s truth. The legacy of St. Augustine is that it is the duty of the Christian to learn as much as possible about as many things as possible including scientific inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge and of beauty, recognizing that God is the ultimate source of all truth and all beauty. Therefore we encourage parents and their children

to be discerning in what they learn in whatever educational context to reject what is anti-Christian, to accept and use what is true, and through the Gospel to transform ‘secular’ knowledge and culture into serviceable ‘Egyptian gold’ to serve and worship God (Exodus 35:20-29).

The Outcome of the Transformation of the Mind is the Transformation of the Culture and Nation

Like Daniel, the renewing or metamorphosis of the mind (Rom 12:1-2) can result in the transformation of the culture. The manifesto of a new influential school of thought on human progress and nation building is called *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, by Samuel P. Huntington

Two Sister Nations, Two Distinct Cultures

To reduce invidious comparisons, one needs to use an objective measurement scale. Two such country transformation indicators³⁵ are the economic prosperity and the religious freedom of nations.

In 1953 South Korea was the poorest nation in all of Asia. It is now the third most prosperous country in Asia, ranking tenth in the world. Its citizens live with an incomparably greater freedom of religion than the people of North Korea. In dramatic contrast, after 55 years of dictatorial rule, North Korea remains among the poorest nations in the world. One of the starkest differences between North and South Korea is seen in the education received by each nation’s children. In great measure, South Korea’s educational system has grown out of a worldview fostered by its churches, Christian families and influential believers. North Korea, however, has shaped its children and youth under an atheistic philosophy of education.

Rev. Kim Nam Soo, the Korean founder of Promise Ministries in New York City, began visiting North Korea in 1993 with the intention of traveling throughout the nation to look for ways to meet the needs of the people. Moved by his firsthand experience in that restrictive place, his highest priority in mission became the training of children with the goal of instilling within them a biblical worldview and commitment to the creator God. His experience was a transformational moment in his life that resulted in a strong personal commitment.

In North Korea, Rev. Kim Nam Soo observed the deep-seated effects of raising a child with an atheistic mindset. He saw what happens when children are removed from their parents in early infancy and

trained in a tightly controlled environment. It was clear that this education tactic was designed to imbed the agenda of the Communist state, and it has proven to be very effective. It has produced a hard-set foundation, rarely shaken by outer influences such as persecution, famine, and changes within neighboring countries. Kim observed that soon after birth, a child is sent to a state-sponsored nursery and dedicated to the communist regime and the “Great Leader.” The child also learns about and celebrates the “Juche Idea” until fully accepting it as everything of importance in life.

“Juche,” originally the North Korean version of Marxist Communism, has become a recognized world religion with more adherents than Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism, or Zoroastrianism. It has been studied, experimented with, and revised continually during last 50 years. In North Korea it has become the “Dear Leader (Kim Il Sung)”-centric religious nationalism, displacing and replacing all other religions. The North Korean child spends all of infancy and childhood in this environment, absorbing a prescribed worldview, historical view, and creation view. Without any choice, the child’s life goals and life path will be determined by outside forces.

Through all that he discovered in North Korea, Rev. Kim has re-prioritized his global missions focus toward raising up children and youth from the 4/14 Window to know God and serve Him. A decade ago he began writing on the compelling need for a shift in mission strategies and resources toward this purpose. Although he is unable to intercede in the plight of children in North Korea, Kim is leading efforts on behalf of thousands of children in other nations such as El Salvador and India. His example is inspiring others to do likewise for the 4/14 generation worldwide.

and Lawrence E. Harrison.³³ These scholars ponder the question of why, at the beginning of the 21st Century, the world is more divided than ever between the rich and the poor, between those living in freedom and those under oppression. The concluding thought summarizes their findings: Cultural values shape the development of nations. It offers an important insight into why some countries and ethnic/religious groups have done better than others, not just in economic terms, but also with respect to consolidation of democratic institutions and social justice. Former Singaporean Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew said, “More than economics, more than politics, a nation’s culture will determine its fate.”³⁴ In our world there is no greater example of two nations which share the same family roots yet have found two totally different cultures and fates than North and South Korea. (See story on page 16)

3. The Physical/Health Challenge

A primary measure of human well-being is the Under-5 Mortality Rate—an indispensable gauge of children’s health for NGOs around the world. (See *State of the World’s Children Report for 2008* by UNICEF.)

One of the motivations for focusing on children is that more so than any other segment of society, the world’s children are suffering, often as a result of the sins of adults. Key statistics reveal the critical nature of this problem:

- More than 91 million children under 5 suffer from debilitating hunger³⁶
- 15 million children are orphaned as a result of AIDS³⁷
- 265 million children have not been immunized against any disease³⁸

Health interventions during childhood can prevent damage that is virtually impossible to repair later in life. Addressing the physical and emotional health issues of the young can result in significant advances in lifelong well-being and personal development. Working to improve the health of children not only provides them a more promising future, it is also an invaluable opportunity to minister to their families and communities. In fact, strategic efforts to improve children’s health can lead to the stability of an entire nation.

Where do we begin to address this problem? One of the principal solutions is through the establishment of a biblical worldview.

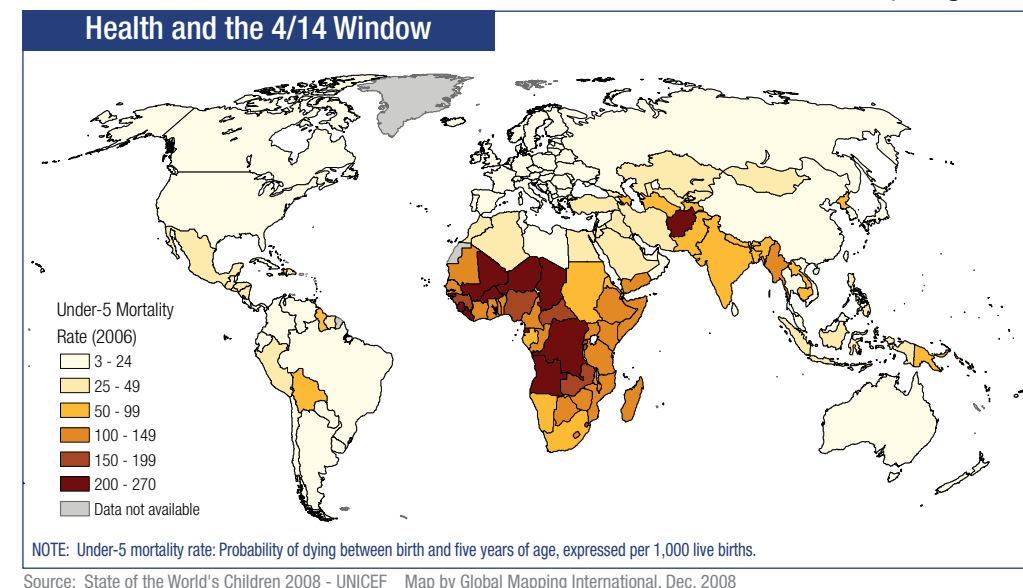
The Outcome of a Biblical Worldview is the Transformation of the Health of a Nation

In Swaziland, a new initiative aims to teach every child a biblical perspective on HIV and AIDS. As of this writing, over 47,000 children have received this vital instruction—teaching that can literally save their lives. Each child is guided through an innovative program called “iMatter”, with a series of 10 class sessions aimed at instilling a healthy self-esteem, a sense of individual value and a biblical understanding.³⁹

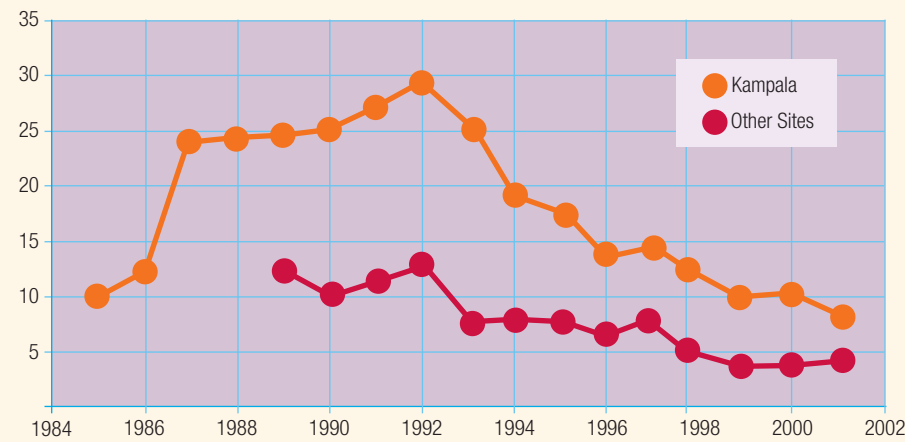
The HIV/AIDS epidemic has been a well-publicized health crisis for many years, and many of its victims have been innocent children. U.N. officials estimated in 2008 that about 33 million people worldwide are HIV-positive, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. For years, the news about this crisis grew worse and worse; but now things are changing in some hard-hit areas. In fact, the full-scale reversal of AIDS is underway in the country where the crisis began—Uganda. Dr. Edward Green, a medical anthropologist at Harvard University, acknowl-

edges that this turnaround is due primarily to a change in values.

By 1983, AIDS in Uganda was commonly called “the slim disease” due to its physically wasting characteristics. By 1992 the life expectancy of Ugandans had dropped to 42 years, and by 1993 nearly one in every three persons in Uganda’s capital, Kampala, carried the AIDS virus. No country in the world needed social transformation more than this nation.



HIV Prevalence Among Pregnant Women in Uganda, 1985-2001



Data Source: Ministry of Health, Kampala

Yet, in only 10 years, significant transformation did begin to occur in Uganda. By 2004 only 6% of the population was reported to be HIV-positive—a remarkable reduction from the cases recorded in 1993.

The story of this dramatic reversal can be attributed to various people who recognized the crisis and were moved by the need to respond. One of those individuals was Stephen Langa, a businessman in Uganda who now serves as the director of Family Life Network. Langa's approach was based upon a biblical worldview and a respect for and obedience to the Word.

Langa founded an NGO in partnership with Uganda's First Lady, Janet Museveni. Looking back to those critical days, she says, "This was more than a disease, it was a national disaster. Our only hope was to sound an alarm." So, sound an alarm they did—through the institution of a nationwide *True Love Waits* campaign that introduced abstinence education into Uganda's schools.

Says Langa, "Schools would close down for four hours at a time to allow us to bring *True Love Waits* in to teach the students."⁴⁰ Based unapologetically on a biblical worldview, *True Love Waits* made an impact, changing attitudes and transforming behavior. The simple acronym A-B-C was the basis of the curriculum: Abstinence from Premarital Sex, Being Faithful, and Christ instead of Condoms. Researchers credit the success of the program in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS by causing a manifold increase in abstinence and fidelity.

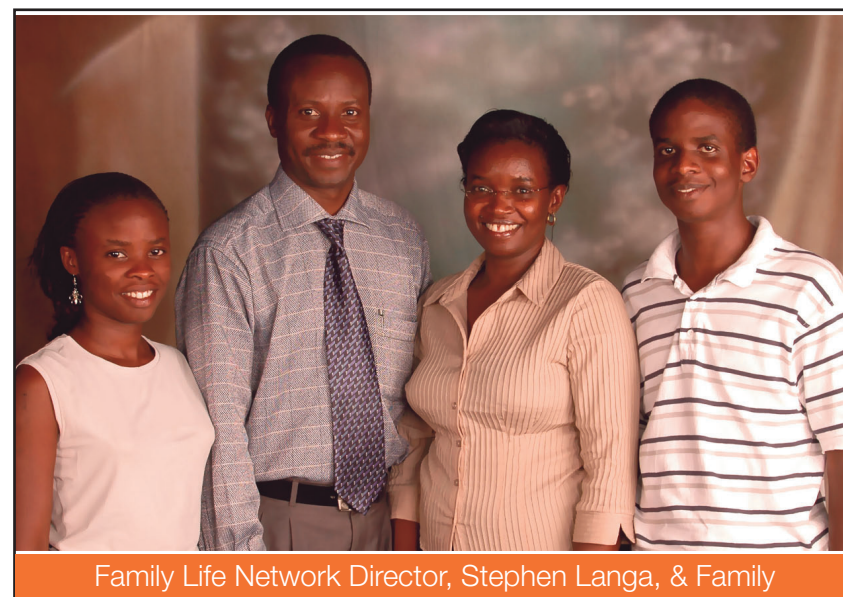
Langa says that behavioral change with a biblical worldview has three primary foundations: 1) The identity of a human being as a person made in the

image of God; 2) The nature of the present reality, with an appreciation of both the spiritual and physical world; and 3) The future focus, with an understanding where history is going (biblically toward a glorious ending, in contrast to the traditional African cultural perspective which defines life as an indefinite and often vicious cycle). Langa articulated these positions with several other authors who drafted a policy on abstinence and faithfulness en-

titled, *Uganda National Abstinence and Being Faithful Policy and Strategy on Prevention of Transmission of HIV*.

On July 2, 2007, a debate raged at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C. over an amendment that would have reinstated funding for abstinence education programs to fight AIDS in Africa. Dr. Edward Green, one of the world's foremost experts on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, was called as a witness at the hearings. Dr. Green stated that, at first, he was opposed to the ABC model, particularly with its emphasis on abstinence. However, he changed his opinion on the matter after he saw the success of the program in Uganda.

Dr. Green's testimony before Congress attested to the transformational impact of Uganda's model comparable to other nations. This approach also brought positive social change to six other African nations in their battle against AIDS: Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia.



Family Life Network Director, Stephen Langa, & Family

4. The Economic Challenge — the Physically Poor

The physical health needs of children and youth are closely related to the broader problems of poverty. The staggering reality is that more than one billion of the world's children—56%—are living in poverty or severe deprivation!⁴¹ A stunning 37% of the world's children—more than 674 million⁴²—live in absolute poverty. Additionally, children living in what is defined as "severe deprivation" struggle with a "lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods." They are also victims of "hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited access or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, social discrimination and exclusion."⁴³

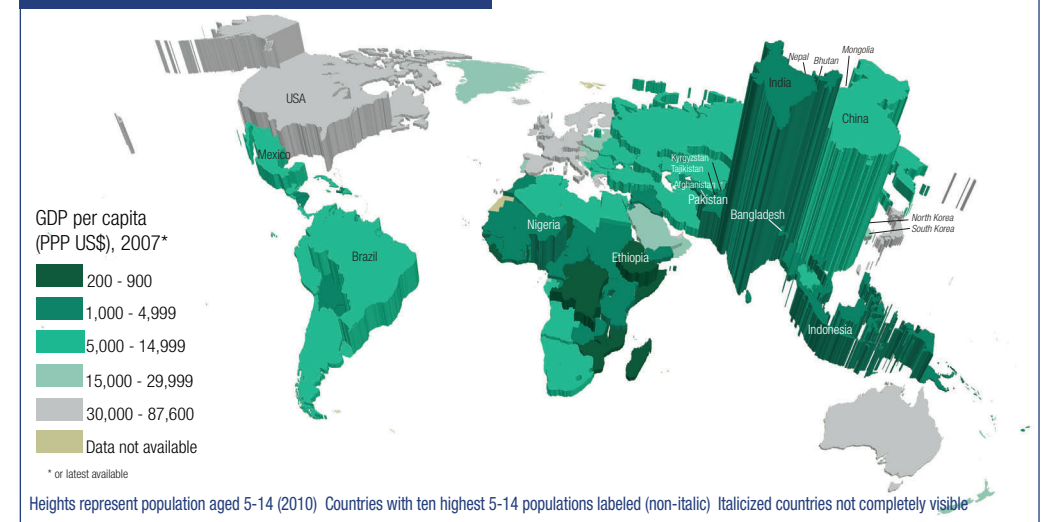
Raising up a new generation from the 4/14 Window to transform the world demands that we address the physically poor among the 4/14ers.

The map to the right indicates degrees of poverty in various shades of green. It also demonstrates higher youth populations through increasingly tall columns. As one can readily see, India, China, Nigeria, Congo, Zaire, and Ethiopia represent a strategic opportunity for focused transformational action among the poor in the 4/14 age group.

- Over one-third of children have to live in dwellings with more than five people per room
- 134 million children have no access to any school whatsoever
- Over half a billion children have no toilet facilities whatsoever
- Almost half a billion children lack access to published information of any kind
- 376 million children have more than a 15-minute walk to water and/or are using unsafe water sources⁴⁴

Of special concern amongst the poor in the 4/14 window are the millions of orphans. Indeed, God makes them His own special concern throughout Scripture, so His concern must be ours as well. The overwhelming lack of one-on-one holistic care for orphans makes them one of the most neglected groups in the 4/14 Window.

The Poor and the 4/14 Window

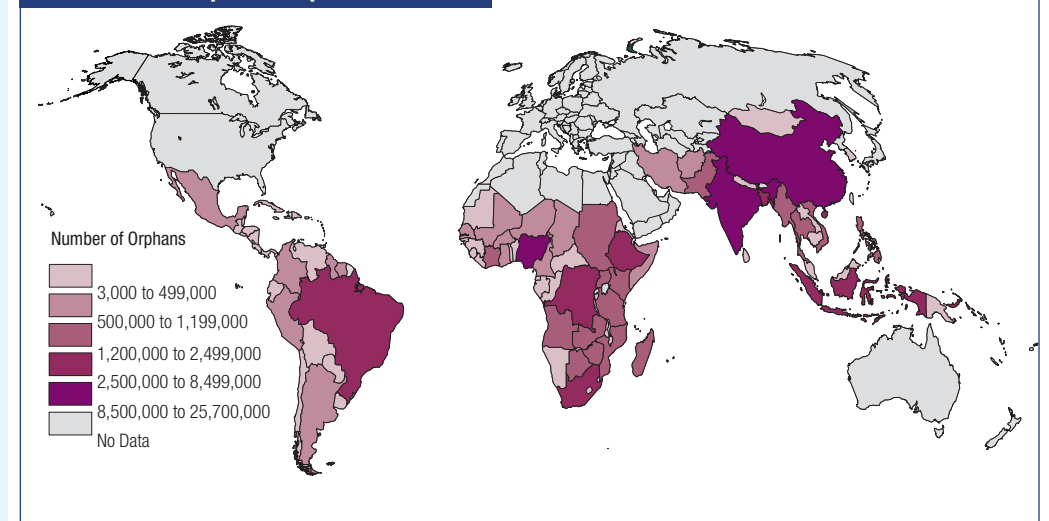


Sources: World Factbook; United Nations Map by Global Mapping International, Jan. 2009

World Orphan Population

COUNTRY	ORPHANS
India	25,700,000
China	20,600,000
Nigeria	8,600,000
Indonesia	5,300,000
Ethiopia	4,800,000
Bangladesh	4,400,000
Pakistan	4,400,000
Congo	4,200,000
Brazil	3,700,000
South Africa	2,500,000

World Orphan Population



Source: State of the World's Children 2008, UNICEF

According to the World Health Organization, 85 percent of the world's orphans are between the ages of 4 and 14. Orphaned girls are "easy targets" for sexual exploitation, due in part to a lowered self-image, loss of family structure, and psychological distress. Orphaned boys within the 4/14 Window often turn to crime,



drugs, and are prone to become abusive in adult relationships. This is largely the result of an absence of male leadership, mentorship or protection. In many nations they are easy prey for evil men who bully them into forced labor or recruit them for participation in rebel armies (groups that find abandoned children to be easy fodder to fuel their separatist agendas). According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, at least 300,000 children, many as young as 10 years of age, are currently participating as "child soldiers" in armed conflicts around the world.

The Village of Hope Model: World Help, a U.S.-based relief and development organization, is engaged in a long-term strategy to provide aid and encouragement to children whose extended families simply cannot care for them. By establishing "Villages of Hope" throughout sub-Saharan Africa, World Help is caring for orphans and unwanted children in small, family-like "Homes of Hope." The organization's "Villages of Hope" are not "compounds" to which children are removed; rather, they are located in or near existing villages. The strategy keeps children within their culture and community, utilizing local schools and clinics to provide education and healthcare for the children. Many of the older children receive vocational skills and training. The typical Village of Hope is tightly integrated with its local neighbors, helping not only the 48 children in the home but also many others in the broader community.

The children who live in the Homes of Hope are enveloped within a godly environment that fosters strong communal relationships. They see God's love in action every day, and are growing up within their culture, rather than being removed from it. The vision is to see hundreds of these hope-filled villages and homes, caring for thousands of children whose lives have been turned upside-down by HIV/AIDS and other calamities.

OXFORD STATEMENT ON CHILDREN AT RISK Asserts God's Passionate Concern for Needy Children

"Scripture clearly shows that God is outraged about what is happening to children. Over and over again God's warning throughout the Bible is 'Don't touch my precious children!' (Exodus 22:22-24; Psalm 68:5, Ezekiel 16:4-14, Deuteronomy 24:17, etc.). God indicates terrible consequences for anyone harming His children: "...it would be better that a millstone be hung around his neck and [he] be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

"As Christians then, we gladly acknowledge that our profound concern for children at risk flows from God Himself and our commitment to Jesus Christ. Most fundamentally, we affirm that children, born and unborn, along with the rest of humanity, are created in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic worth (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13-14). Any actions that demean, devalue or otherwise diminish children are sinful. Unfortunately, we live in a world where an attitude of cynicism towards the dignity of human life has resulted in a tragic loss of respect for humankind. Increasingly, children are the undeserving victims of human and demonic forces. The criminal waste of children's lives is an indictment upon all societies and cries out to God for vengeance."

The Outcome of the Transformation of the Poverty of a Nation

The outcome of God's transforming power in a nation occurs as God's people are reconciled and raised up to fulfill His purposes in building a nation. For the term *transformation* to be properly applied to a community, change must be evident not only in the lives of its inhabitants, but also in the fabric of its institutions. Its people must have sufficient health to work productively; they must have sufficient resources to meet basic needs and live above the level of deprivation and poverty. "A transformed community emerges when both the people and institutions have been overrun by the Kingdom of God."⁴⁵ The river of life begins to flow in the communities where death has reigned and the result is the healing of the nation (Revelation 22).

The story of the transformation of Rwanda is one of reconciliation and instruction, with a particular emphasis on educating the nation's future leaders through a biblical worldview.

The Rwandan genocide was fraught with senseless horror. Already among the poorest countries of Africa, Rwanda was harboring some of the worst communal and ethnic tensions in the modern world.

During the heat of the genocide, the sound of a whistle would signal the start and end of the killing. Afterwards, organizers would take a body count. The murderers used machetes, clubs, guns, and any blunt instrument they could find to inflict as much pain on their victims as possible. No Tutsi was spared, and it wasn't enough to kill them; the intent was for them to suffer as severely as possible. As a direct result, over 15% of the children in Rwanda are orphans of genocide; another 2% are HIV/AIDS orphans due to genocide.

Between April and June 1994, in a span of only 100 days, an estimated 800,000 to 900,000 Rwandans were slaughtered. Every minute of the day, someone, somewhere was being murdered, screaming for mercy but receiving none—10,000 every day, 400 every hour, seven every minute.

Fearing Rwanda could lose an entire generation, Bishop John Rucyahana has founded orphanages and schools with a special focus on those orphaned by the genocide and by AIDS. "One of the projects in which we have invested in a significant way is Sunrise School. We have over a thousand students to-date, and more than half of the students are orphans. Some of them saw their parents hacked to death, but today are young men and women beaming with hope. Not that their past is forgotten, but it is forgiven. They know that they need to exchange the disparity for hope. We do prepare them for future servant leadership and challenge them to make a better nation of Rwanda. This is reflected, therefore, in the transformation of their character and their academic performance, but we don't forget that all of this springs from the fact that they know the source of their healing and the source of their transformation is love from the Lord Jesus Christ empowering us to love them and serve them."

Bishop Rucyahana adds, "I am happy to share with you that this year (2009) all our students have passed the national exam, both in the elementary school and high school. One of our students was the second-best in the whole nation, and the first in mathematics and languages. The school is ranked among the top ten in the country. That's how good the school is academically. From the time we opened our doors at Sunrise, we have never had a student experience a post-traumatic panic attack. This does not mean that we have a supernatural school, but we seriously work hard in counseling our students and challenge them with the responsibility they have in the future for the nation. This

makes them able to not only study but to know and conceive that they have a duty for themselves and for the nation. That processes their healing very quickly. We have also been able to protect them from the stigmatic experience, because we mix them with students who have families."⁴⁶

5. The Relational Challenge

Most of us are aware of these and other telling statistics about the needs of poor children around the world. But the fact is that it is not just poor children who are at risk. Actually, all children are at risk. Millions are at risk from poverty, but millions are also at risk from prosperity! Many children and young people today have everything to live with, but nothing to live for.⁴⁷ At the deepest level, poverty is what happens to people whose relationships do not work for their well being. A person's well-being is rooted in wholesome relationships.

The Outcome of a Biblical Worldview is the Transformation of the Relationships in a Nation, Resulting in Shalom Communities

Transformation involves seeking positive change in the whole of human life materially, socially and spiritually, by recovering our true identity as human beings created in the image of God and discovering our true vocation as productive stewards, faithfully caring for our world and people.⁴⁹ This description of transformation addresses the core issues of identity and vocation.

Restoration of human relationships is rooted in one's spiritual relationship with God. This will result in shalom communities which are the visible fruit of a transformed world. They begin in the home, for at the heart of our earthly existence are family relationships. OneHope has observed a dominant global trend of decaying family relationships, specifically associated with the problem of absentee fathers. There has never been a more glaring need for turning the hearts of the fathers toward their children.⁵⁰

In Latin America the problem lies in the abandonment of children by their fathers. In South Asia, the issue is estrangement. In Russia it is an issue of



A Transforming Moment for One Person Helps Many in the 4/14 Window Who Have Had Serious Relational Problems in El Salvador

In El Salvador recently, a meeting took place with half a dozen former gang members incarcerated for serious crimes.⁴⁸ Each one told stories of absent, violent, neglectful fathers, most of them lured by promise of a better income in “the North”—at a terrible cost to their wives and children. As children, these men now in prison found themselves duped into joining notorious gangs. Years of warfare in the 1970s and 1980s were followed by years of rampant crime, turning El Salvador into the most violent country in the world, based upon the rate of homicides per 1,000 people.

This was the deplorable condition in her nation when Martha Aurelia Martinez experienced a transforming moment—a moment that shifted her life focus to the 4/14 Window. Martha had a heart for children even as a teenager, and that compassion led her to become a medical doctor with a specialty in pediatrics. She began committing her time to national initiatives that would benefit thousands of Salvadoran children. That commitment to children continued to grow, prompting her to accept a call to serve on the International Board of Directors of World Vision International (WVI). Meanwhile, she watched the situation of El Salvador’s children become more and more desperate. In June 2004, at a gathering of the WVI international board in Bangkok, Martha had a dream of giving herself full time in ministry to the children of El Salvador. On her knees, in tears, she answered God’s call, dedicating her life to raising up the girls and boys of her country to become agents of change for future generations.

Dr. Martinez now serves as World Vision’s Director for El Salvador. She is living out the dream that God put in her heart that summer of 2004. During a recent Transform Latin America Summit, Martha facilitated the track for children and youth with the vision of seeking the transformation of children, adolescents and young people in conformity with the principles and values of God throughout Latin America. The world is sitting in darkness waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, who alone can turn “the heart of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers!” Martha Aurelia is one whose heart was turned to raise up the next generation and she encourages us to do the same.

commitment when three-quarters of 1,500 secondary school aged girls surveyed said they would not stay with their husbands if they were not happy in their marriage. A survey of 14,000 youth in Latin America showed a clear gap between beliefs and behaviors related to God. The influence of parents is high even though parents have invested smaller amounts of time into the lives of their children.

Interestingly, youth in Latin America and Spain express a desire to spend more time with their parents. Against popular opinion, many children actually wish for their parents to invest more time in their lives. It should not surprise us that in most of the countries surveyed parents spend on average less than one hour a week with their children. Parents in much of the world have influence but invest little time. The world’s children are calling out for the hearts of their fathers to be turned back to their sons and daughters.

6. The Social Challenge

Children and young adolescents can contribute much to positive social change. What often prevents this from occurring is an absence of adults who believe in them; as a consequence, many 4/14ers do not believe in themselves. Nevertheless, most children and young people respond well to challenges and can participate in opportunities to better their surroundings and their societies.

It is unfortunate that today’s 4/14ers are too often sheltered from such challenges and not given opportunities to use and develop their gifts. Many adults have a mistaken idea that children are stressed out, and so should not be “burdened” with additional responsibilities. But, as William Damon, author of the book *Greater Expectations*, reminds us, “contrary to what some adults think, they really do not need to come home after their six-hour day and ‘cool out’ in front of the TV. They do need to have their energies fully and joyfully engaged in worthwhile pursuits. Stress for a child is not a function of keeping busy; rather, it is a function of receiving conflicting messages about the self and experiencing troublesome life events beyond one’s control. Activities that children gain satisfaction from, and accomplishments that children are proud of, relieve rather than induce stress. Activities that provide genuine services to others are ideal in this regard.”⁵¹

The fact is that where children and young people are given a significant challenge, intentionally by wise adults or “accidentally” through necessity or disaster or obligation, children usually readily adapt to such demands. Given such challenges, Damon notes that children have always “pitched in with en-

ergy and pride, with all the natural vigor of childhood. Such experiences gave these children invaluable opportunities to learn personal and social responsibility. In an old-fashioned phrase, they were character-building experiences.”⁵²

William Damon continues, “In systematically underestimating the child’s capabilities, we are limiting the child’s potential for growth. In withholding from children the expectation to serve others...we are preventing them from acquiring a sense of social and personal responsibility. We are leaving the child to dwell on nothing more noble than gratifying the self’s moment-by-moment inclinations. In the end, this orientation is a particularly unsatisfying form of self-centeredness, because it creates a focus on a personal self that has no special skills or valued services to offer anyone else. Paradoxically, by giving the child purposes that go beyond the self, an orientation to service results in a more secure belief in oneself.”⁵³

The Outcome of God’s Supernatural Presence and Power in Response to the Social Challenge is Freedom and Uplift for the People

In 2006, according to United Nations records, Norway ranked as the number one nation in the world in terms of human development. The concept of Human Development, according to the United Nations, incorporates several elements: wealth, life expectancy, education, human freedom, dignity, and human agency (the role of people in development). It is notable that Norway is ranked as the second country in the world in per capita giving. Norway has emerged in each of the first six years of the 21st Century as a model of a developed human community of people. How can this be? What is the explanation of this?

In a Dagbladet article written on June 11, 1998 by Arild Stubhaug, an author and expert on the formation of Norway, he attributes the success of contemporary Norway to a young man who was the simple son of a farmer. He writes the account of Hans Nielsen Hauges’ encounter with God on April 5, 1796. The life and work of Hauge led to new democratic movements among both the farmers and the people living in the cities and towns.

The following example is another demonstration of how God has worked in an urban setting through his body. The work of a single church in São Paulo, Brazil brought new life to one of the most dangerous and impoverished parts of the city. The second example comes from the contemporary struggle for freedom for India’s hundreds of millions of “un-

touchables.” In it, you will learn how God working through his people is bringing a reformation that may prove to be akin to the Protestant reformation. In the first example that follows, God’s working through His Body in the urban setting of the city of São Paulo, Brazil brought uplift to the east side of the city, transforming the society. In the second example, God is working in the hearts of individuals to bring freedom to hundreds of millions of the so-called “untouchables” of India with the potential of the reformation of the society of that nation similar to the Protestant Reformation in Europe.

The challenge of raising up the 4/14ers in the persecuted places is an important and difficult one. The restrictive systems and structures that strangle religious freedom and govern the spread of the gospel in these nations makes access to its chil-

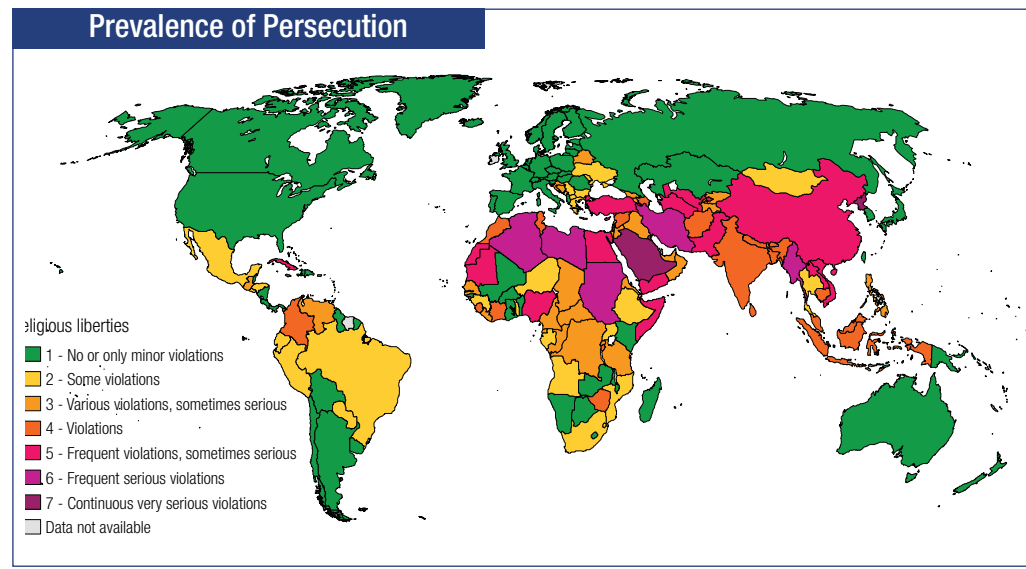
Every Church a Transformational Community like One Local Church, Comunidade da Graça

In São Paulo, Brazil, the East Side of the city experienced uplift from lower to middle class because of the ministry of a local church. Comunidade da Graça (Community of Grace) Church is pastored by Carlos Becerra. The church has adopted 900 “at-risk families.”

In the 1990s, a former, decaying public school in the area east of São Paulo was overrun by 150 homeless families. The place became a distribution point for drugs. Armed thugs guarded the front doors.

Yet, only a few blocks away, a Christian community urgently interceded for these people. In addition to their prayers, they began visiting the families and demonstrating the love of Christ in practical ways.

Ten years later, the area which had suffered abject poverty, poor housing, crime, and floods witnessed a dramatic transformation. In 2002, with the help of the church, the families were referred to the Municipal Housing programs and 360 children are still cared for and are being prepared to go on God’s mission of transformation. All of this took place in the same building that was once a haven for drugs, and the homeless. Today, the Foundation established by the church is one of the main non-governmental organizations in Brazil serving the poor and seeking to raise them up through social development, health and the practice of holistic mission.



total population, estimated by the U.N. to reach 1,395 million by 2025.

The Scriptures tell us that when God created man He did so after His own likeness: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). There is no distinction or ranking of gender or caste in God’s creation. No one should be

treated as though they were never born. For thousands of years the Dalits have been directly and indirectly and cruelly oppressed.

After 25 years on God’s mission, Joseph D’Souza describes the transformative moment that caused him to turn his attention to India’s Dalit children. He saw the answer through education focusing on the development of a biblical worldview and a mastery of the English language.

Says D’Souza, “It was in the year 2000 that we ended up in a major meeting with the Dalit leadership. They encouraged us to do Jesus’ mission among them and not to be on the defensive in the light of the attacks on the Christians by the extremist Hindu forces. The two Dalit leaders were Udit Raj⁵⁵ and Professor Kancha Ilaiah.”⁵⁶

“When I asked them what mission of Jesus would they like us to do among the Dalits, they said, ‘Free our children. Free them by giving them quality English-medium school education with a biblical worldview that teaches about the equality of human beings, their value as humans, and the fact Jesus loves them.’”

“When probed further they asked whether we were aware that there were more than 40 million child laborers in India, whether we knew that of the 15 million children who were in some form of bondage the vast majority were either scheduled caste or scheduled tribe children, whether we were aware again that the vast number of children trafficked in the sex trade were again from the Dalit and ‘backward caste’ backgrounds.”

“Finally they pointed out that to break the cycle of slavery among the Dalits we had to break it before the children began to think of themselves as slaves, as untouchables, as criminal tribes, as forsaken and punished by God in this life and as being worthless.”

dren a complicated and sometimes dangerous prospect. Yet, this is a challenge worth accepting.

The map above demonstrates where violations of freedom create uniquely difficult conditions. This is no truer than in the incidences related to the *Dalit* people of India. God’s transformational acts in history have always included freedom from oppression, a concern for human rights and justice, and a clear stand against all forms of racism. From the times of the Exodus of the people of Israel, to the time of William Wilberforce’s struggle against the slave trade, to the present day, God continues to call His people to engage in transformational work in the arenas of justice, mercy and reconciliation. The Dalits are history’s longest-standing oppressed people and today constitute the largest number of people who are victims of slavery.



According to Joseph D’Souza, more than 250 million Dalits in India are denied their basic human rights and dignity.⁵⁴

The caste system is rooted in an ancient myth that out of the body of God was birthed the four major castes. The lowest caste was said to come out of the feet of God. Yet, because the Dalits were not believed to have come from the body of God at all, they were, and still are, considered out-castes and untouchables; and, according to the myth, they are to be treated as if they were never born. Each Dalit endures painful shame and rejection, and a sense of hopelessness that is so culturally engrained in their personhood that only the transformative work of the Lord Jesus can remake their worldview. The word “dalit” actually means “broken” or “crushed.” The Dalits represent 334 million (24%) of India’s

“I was already in mission work for 25 years when this encounter happened in my life and in the organizations I lead. I clearly saw that the key to Dalit transformation, the key to transformation of India, and the key to Kingdom impact in India was to free Dalit and other low caste children.”

“Thus by 2010 we will have the first 100 schools. This has resulted in my involvement in the justice issue for the Dalit people. The Dalit leaders in the nation of India believe us because we responded to their cry for freedom, which began in their cry for the freedom of their children.”

“Thus the vision of 1000 schools was born—seeking to provide access to education for every Dalit. The English language would allow them access to all jobs, not just the most menial jobs. The biblical worldview would help all Dalits to discover their true identity as children of God made in His own image. It would enhance the likelihood that religious freedom would be practiced in every place throughout India.”⁵⁷

7. The Ministry Challenge

The ministry challenge is about encouraging and equipping the children and youth of the 4/14 Window to use their gifts and potential as agents in transforming the world. They represent an enormous untapped pool of influencers with sensitivity to the voice of God and willingness to do His bidding. We need to understand again that God can and does use children and young people—their prayers, their insights, their hands and their feet—in changing the hearts of mankind.

The 4/14ers have great capacity to understand the faith, and great courage and effectiveness as they share their faith. Adults will fail the 4/14ers if they fail to equip them with the vision and opportunity to do something beyond themselves. Indeed, many churches discourage children and young people from finding and developing their natural gifts and aptitudes for character and competence in areas like missions awareness.

Much (most?) of what goes on for children in our churches today is geared to entertaining them rather than equipping or challenging them. It is OK for children and youth to have fun. But there are missed opportunities in making that the focus. We must ask, what are our children not doing and learning while they are being entertained?

Alex and Brett Harris, two 19-year-olds, have written a book called *Do Hard Things*. The Harris boys note that “Being considered a good teen only requires that we don’t do bad stuff like taking drugs, drinking and partying. But is it enough to know of the negative things we don’t do?”⁵⁸

The 4/14ers thrive on challenges. Children and young teens love opportunities to gain skills and to prove themselves. Generally they respond with energy and enthusiasm when provided opportunities to test their abilities. When denied such challenges, they can become insecure and apathetic.⁵⁹ And could there be a more exciting and life-changing challenge than learning about the world, sharing God’s love for the peoples of the world and transforming a generation?



Let us not forget that 4/14ers are capable of engaging in spiritual warfare. They have great capacity for fighting spiritual battles through their child-like faith. Certainly, God is no respecter of persons! He can anoint children with the Holy Spirit just as He empowered the apostle Paul and the disciples. Children are sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading because they have not yet developed the spiritual barriers that many adults have erected over the course of their lives.

The Outcome of Ministering Children is Increased Faith in God, Answered Prayer and Shalom Communities

One illustration of how God is using children as agents of transformation today comes from one of the most conflict-ridden communities in the world, representing one of the most challenging cultural clashes of the 21st Century.

From 1998 to 2006, the central Sulawesi region of Indonesia was torn by communal violence between the Muslim and the Christian communities. Terrorism, bombings, beheadings, and rapes plagued the villages of Sulawesi. Hundreds died and thousands more were forced from their homes. In the year 2000 alone, 500 homes were burned down. Today, that state of chaos is changing because of a spiritual revival that is taking place. An eyewitness reports, “people are hearing a message of reconciliation from an unusual source: an eight-year-old boy. Because of this, the villages in that area once being consumed by bloodshed are now being transformed.”

Today, Muslim residents of the city of Poso, who were previously unable to cross into Kawua, are able to do so. Christians can also interact with their Muslim neighbors. The central

market, formerly a Muslim stronghold, is now not only a place for Muslims but a place where members of the two previously warring communities shop together.

“The miracle is so real and right in front of us. Why is it that we don’t believe it?” Adlan Moko Molewe, the boy preacher, said as the crowd listened to him intently.

While the crowds worship, Moko’s eight-year-old friend, Selfin, prays for a touch from God. When interviewed by CBN News, Moko, who is himself a refugee whose family home was destroyed, said, “I think the Lord wants us to have peace in Poso...the Lord wants us to have one heart. We should love one another.”

When Pastor Rinaldy Daminik of the Sulawesi Christian Church was interviewed about what is happening in Poso he answered, “I believe the Lord is using the children to call for repentance and great transformation in Poso. We can say this is the seed of the martyrs’ blood in Poso. Their blood poured out in

this land is now bearing fruit through Moko and Selfin.” The result is a more peaceful province.

Baharuddin, a Muslim who experienced miraculous healing said, “I like it when everybody with different beliefs

is praising God. I saw how the Christian people treat us nicely, even if we are Muslim. I told my friend: You see it is possible that Christians and Muslims live harmoniously.”⁶⁰

Yus Mangun, a Poso community figure who is now a member of the Central Sulawesi Legislative Council, reported that communal riots, which escalated into sectarian conflict, no longer exist. Gone are the days when people, concentrated in large mobs, attacked and burned down villages.⁶¹

All of this is through the work of an eight-year-old preacher. Yes, as adults we so often don’t get it. We think children could not be ministering in this way and with this kind of impact.

Others have stopped to consider the spiritual life and capacity to minister that is within a child. One of these is Robert Coles, who writes about it in *The Spiritual Life of Children*. He provides over-

whelming anecdotal evidence that children connect with God on many levels.⁶² Coles notes that the discovery of what may lie within a child’s spiritual being is rewarding for the adult who listens carefully. The way a child talks about God and the world has an innocence and purity to it that is often lost by adults in this age of multi-tasking.

The potential for children engaged in the ministry of prayer cannot be underestimated. John Robb, chairman of the International Prayer Council and the Children’s Prayer Network, believes that some of the praying children of today will become rulers of nations. Many more will be influential for Christ in their generation, bringing His transformation to our world. There is a window of spiritual receptivity in children between the ages of 4-14. Like Samuel, they have a greater openness to hearing God’s voice and this is the time to nurture them and invest in their future. After age 14, it can be much harder for them to come to Christ and to give their lives to Him for His purposes on earth.

In 2002, John Robb experienced a transforming moment which led to his prioritizing the role of children in prayer ministry. He was reading Luke 10:17-21 and realized that Jesus was teaching that the spiritual authority He was offering to tread on serpents and scorpions was revealed to little children.

“It was that year that I decided with a couple of colleagues to begin assessing the impact of children’s prayers on transformational development efforts.” He was amazed by the results in the seven countries that were part of the pilot project. The Children in Prayer (CiP) movement began to spread within the organization until about 20 offices got involved. John eventually devoted his full efforts to the international prayer movement.

Research across different locations where prayer programs were led by children demonstrates astonishing results of transformation and answered prayers, such as:

- Relatives being healed from sickness
- Community splits being healed
- Parents and community leaders coming to faith in Christ
- Clean water and clinics becoming available, even with the government choosing at the very time of prayer to provide a borehole or clinic in their specific location
- Students achieving better grades and performing at high academic levels

It is the clear testimony of Scripture that God has chosen to work in human history through the intercessory prayers of His people—including children. In fact, children may be the most powerful source of prayer for community and national transformation.

Psalms 8:2 says that there is power in the prayers and praise of children, “From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.”

Robb comments, “Our work with children is all about introducing them to a life of intimacy with the Lord through prayer. Prayer is the way we relate directly to God so this work is fulfilling Jesus’ command to enable children to come into relationship with Him, a relationship that will change their lives and transform the world around them.”

Jesus loved to have children around Him. Roy Zuck notes that “While few of the world’s religious leaders have had regard for children, Jesus was different. Not only did He welcome them; He even used them to teach adults some essential spiritual lessons!”⁶³

Those who angered Jesus were not just the Pharisees and the vendors in the temple, but also the disciples. On one occasion Jesus became “indignant” when they considered children too unimportant to warrant his attention.⁶⁴ Might He also be indignant with those who are negligent and indifferent to the world’s children today?

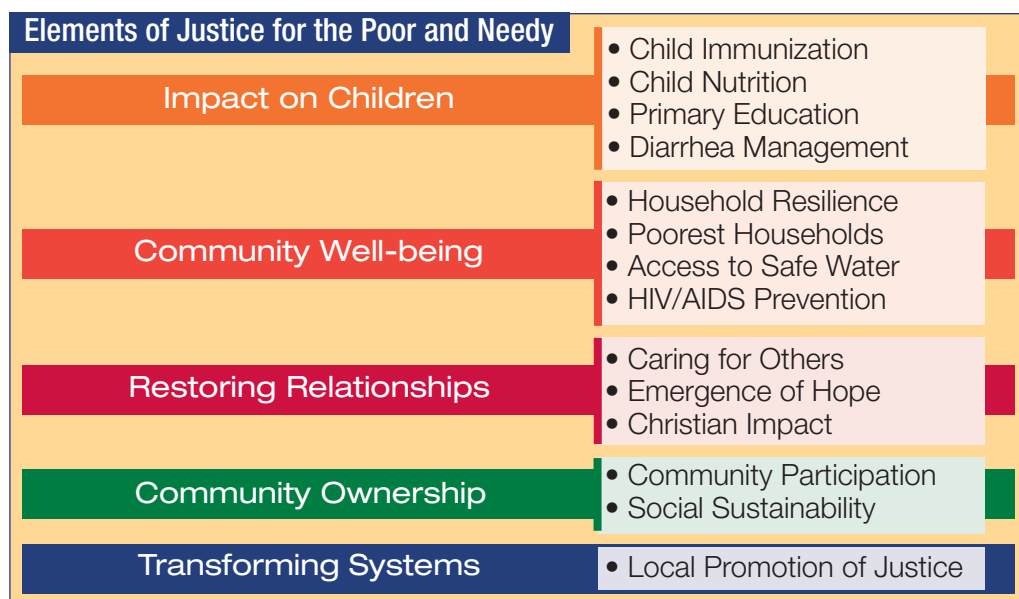


Models of Holistic Approaches for Transformational Development

Transformational Development is a process by which people become whole. It is characterized by growth, change and learning. It is a process of becoming. The direction of development is always toward completeness. As Dan Brewster notes, “It is not enough to improve only one dimension of a person’s life and leave other dimensions in inadequacy. To treat parasitic infection is noble. But if a treated child is left in an unsanitary environment with contaminated water, the intervention is incomplete. If a child receives an education, but social structures

One example of a holistic approach is that of World Vision International, as described by Jaisankar Sarma, International Director of Transformation Development.⁶⁶ The ministry focus is on bringing justice to the poor and the needy; and of the poor and the needy, none is more poor and needy than the child.

World Vision International has prioritized transformational impact in order to affect the whole child, producing well being in each of the child’s developmental areas. For instance, again using Luke 2:52 as the starting point, a child might grow in stature but if the child doesn’t grow in wisdom, then he or she will be incapable of living a productive and meaningful life. A child who grows in wisdom, stature, and favor with man will be spiritually bankrupt if not led to favor with God. Holism is the process by which one experiences the “fullness of life” that Jesus described in John 10:10.



Sarma’s definition of “transformational development” involves a process through which children, families, and communities move toward wholeness of life which brings dignity, justice, peace, and hope.⁶⁷ The scope of transformational development is wide, including economic, political, environmental, social, and spiritual aspects of life at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Human transformation, according to Sarma, is a continuous process of profound and holistic

change brought about, ultimately, by the work of God. The process and the impact of transformational development are never being divorced from the principles and values of the Kingdom of God. Transformational development is evidenced by:

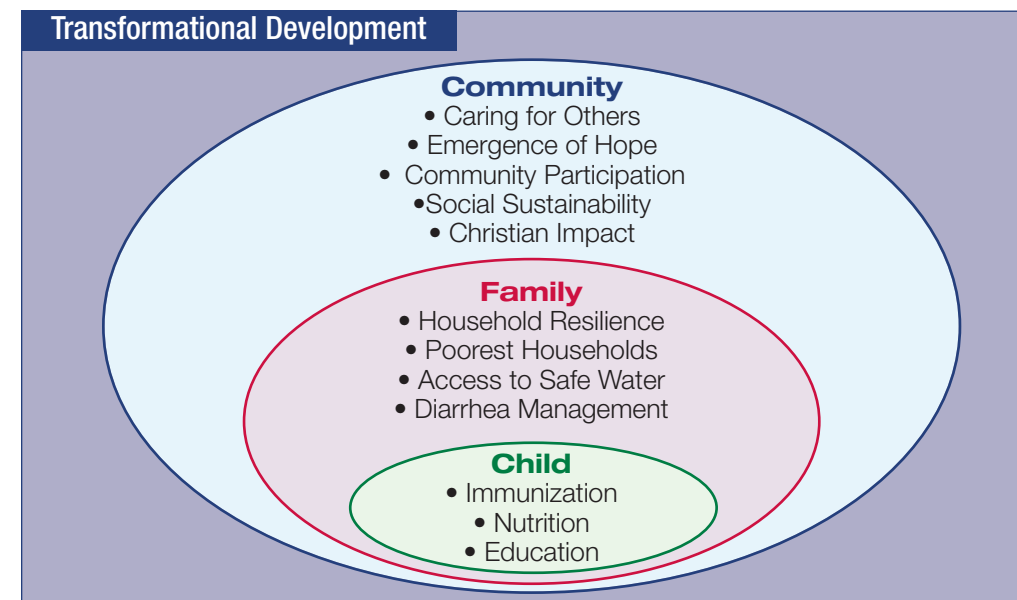
- The well-being of girls, boys, families, and communities.
- The empowerment of all girls and boys as agents of transformation themselves.
- The restoration of relationships.
- Communities that are interdependent and empowered.
- Transformed social systems and structures that will empower another generation to begin within the transformed culture.

prevent him from getting a job, the intervention is incomplete. If a person is introduced to faith in Christ and enjoys spiritual freedom but is left in poverty and oppression, the intervention is incomplete. The scope of development is toward completeness.”⁶⁵

Luke 2:52 provides a model for the kind of development involved in the 4/14 vision. This verse simply says, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.” It cites four pivotal components (wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with man) and it neatly encompasses all aspects of the whole person and provides a useful model around which one can create meaningful programs that produce holistic development. Our objective through holistic, Christian development is for every child to have the opportunity to grow and develop in each of these areas: in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man.

In the second domain of change, girls and boys participate in the development process in an age-appropriate manner, preparing them to be agents of transformation in their families and communities both in the present and in the future.

These community-based transformational indicators serve as key measures, derived from the transformational framework in the illustration to the right. They provide a helpful, quantifiable basis for assessing impact in programs that seek transformational development—as shown in the chart. This rubric tells us whether our programs and processes are successfully meeting their goals.



The ConneXions Model for Healthy Leadership Development

Within the greater holistic approach a particular emphasis is needed toward holistic spiritual transformation and the development of healthy leaders from an early age. The ConneXions model of healthy leader development provides a Christ-centered set of working principles.⁶⁸ It is a framework for life transformation that is widely applicable to the spiritual aspect of the transformation required to reach the 4/14 age group. (See Appendix)

Our goal should be nothing less than the entire transformation of the lives of children as they are nurtured in five specific areas of life: Christ, Community, Character, Calling and Competencies. Children first, by faith, come to know God (Christ) because union with Christ is the first and foremost aspect of life transformation. Their union with Christ is encouraged and strengthened through living and growing in a supportive and accountable family, surrogate family and/or church (Community). Within the context of life in community, they grow in integrity (Character), and they are prepared to discover God’s purpose for their life (Calling). Finally, they are nurtured to grow in their biblical knowledge, overall education and life skills so that they might fulfill their calling with excellence (Competencies).

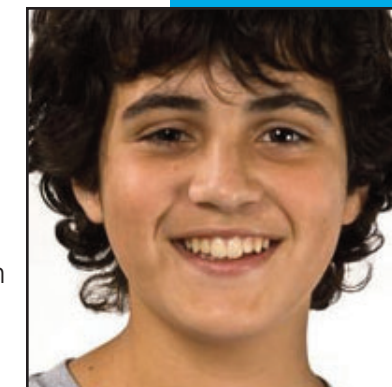
All of this needs to happen for the 4/14ers in an effective, holistic transformational context. Jesus carefully created a transformational context to serve

as a laboratory to prepare His emerging leaders. It was...

- A spiritual environment that was conducive towards growth in one’s relationship with God (with Himself, as well as the Father through prayer).
- A relational web that involved a relationship with a mature leader/mentor (Himself) as well as relationships with other likeminded followers (the community of disciples).
- An experiential context involving challenging and diverse assignments that forced his followers to have cohesion between their “action” and their “confession.”

From this transformational context Jesus instructed them and this produced nothing less than a total change of their lives and circumstances! The same careful approach will serve as an incubator for a generation of changed lives within the 4/14 window. Not only will they be more apt to live a meaningful life, they will also have found fulfillment in their relationship with God, garnered the knowledge and skills to impact tomorrow’s world, and have a mission and purpose to live by.

These principles serve as a framework through which we can design programs that will transform the lives of children in the 4/14 Window. This framework can be applied in any context, and in any culture resulting in transformational impact. It is a paradigm, not a program.



Transformation through Application of the ConneXions Framework

When Mya was only 14 years old and was about to graduate from middle school, she went to church but did not have a passion for God. Over a period of several months she felt God's calling, sought the approval of her parents, and entered a local training community run by her church—a community based on a holistic model of healthy leader development. When she arrived, Mya found that it was quite different from what she expected, with challenging assignments, true relationship building, practical daily responsibilities, ministry opportunities, and challenges to deepen spiritual growth. She didn't understand why the school was like this, but she found herself growing and changing. Her life was being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, through her leaders and carefully designed assignments incorporating spiritual, relational, experiential, and instructional dynamics.

Soon after Mya graduated, her leader gave her a stretching cross-cultural assignment, working in harsh and difficult circumstances ministering to children not much younger than she in a remote minority region of the country. She had been prepared well, through holistic, transformational experiences, and her ministry was fruitful. Because of the changes in the lives of these children, many of their parents started to search for a meaningful relationship with the Lord. She returned home after four years, and has continued to grow in her leadership capabilities in her home church network. At the age of only 22, she is now the leader of the church's holistic learning community. She designs and leads the students through holistic learning experiences that build their spiritual life, relationships, character, calling and ministry skills. As a young girl Mya's life was transformed through holistic training, and she is now actively involved in transforming the lives of others.

The ConneXions model to transformation, and its practical application, is more fully explained in the Appendix.

Raising Up a New Generation To Transform Our World

I began this booklet with a call for a new missional focus. I said that just as the 10/40 Window focused our attention on 'the core of the core,' so the 4/14 Window was a focus on the core of the core. My purpose was to turn the spotlight on those in the 4/14 Window—the Ages of Opportunity. We have seen that this group is an enormous "people group"—one that is suffering, neglected and exploited. At the same time, those precious ones in the 4/14 Window are also without question the most receptive people group on the planet.

Both their receptivity as subjects for holistic mission, and their transformational potential as agents for transformational mission have been largely overlooked by the mission community. I said that this booklet was an urgent appeal to consider this potential, and the strategic importance of those 1.2 billion children and youth in the 4/14 Window. And it was a plea to open your heart and mind to the challenge of reaching and raising up a new generation that would be transformed and mobilized as agents to change the world.

In this document I have presented the tremendous needs and opportunities for the 4 to 14 age group to be raised up in every nation. We have seen the importance of having a holistic ministry approach to those children. And we have called the Body of Christ to give priority to reaching this age group and to mobilizing them to carry out the church's mission.

I close with another invitation to join with many others around the globe who are seeing the tremendous needs of this remarkable group. They are reading Scripture again with the 'child in the midst' and are finding that not only are 4/14ers present, but indeed everywhere throughout the Bible—very often in transformational roles. They are seeing that we are to care for and nurture children because they are so close to the heart of God. They see that we must take the 4/14ers seriously, because God surely does!

Realizing the need to reprioritize my own missional focus on the 4/14 Window was a transforming moment for me, as it was for those in the case studies. "Moments of transforming significance radically reopen the question of reality."⁶⁹ I am praying that in reading this booklet you will experience your transforming moment—the instant you realize the need for change and say "yes" to intentional engagement in raising up a new generation from the 4/14 Window to change the world.

For more information on this booklet, please contact:

Dr. Eun Moo Lee
Transform World New Generation
PO Box 541151 • Flushing, NY 11354

tw.newgeneration@gmail.com • <http://4to14Window.com>

Tel. (718) 321-7800 ext. 223

Appendix

The ConneXions Model⁷⁰ — A New Paradigm for the Transformation of 4/14ers

This booklet presents the need of those in the 4/14 Window and the spiritual, mental/cognitive, physical/health, economic, relational, social, and ministry challenges we face in seeing their lives transformed.

To raise up a new generation from the 4/14 Window—to transform the lives of children—we nurture them. We build them holistically, in ways that address their needs, and that are in concert with the nature of God's transforming power. What should be the goal for transformational nurture in the lives of children?

A Holistic Goal

Our goal should be for every child to develop holistically in five focal areas: Christ, Community, Character, Calling and Competencies. Children can know God (Christ); live and grow in a supportive and accountable family and/or church (Community); grow in integrity (Character); discover God's purpose for their life (Calling); and develop knowledge, gifts and skills to fulfill their calling (Competencies). We seek to build all five of these elements (the 5Cs) in the life of each child:

Christ – the child's spiritual life—his/her union with Christ

Community – the child's relational life

Character – the child's integrity



Calling – the child's God-given purpose.

Competencies – the child's biblical knowledge, and practical life and ministry skills.

This holistic goal for transforming the lives of children calls for holistic processes to encourage the transformation to occur.

A Holistic Process

Look to Jesus and examine the process he used to build his disciples. It provides a paradigm for holistic and transformational impact in individual lives to raise up people who transform the world – and one that can inform and guide every call from God that we undertake to transform the 4/14 window.

In Mark 3, Jesus summed up His method of building Christian leaders. "He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3:14-15). In this simple but profound statement, we have a distillation of how Jesus built leaders. In short, Jesus created a transformational context around His emerging leaders:

A spiritual environment, involving relationship with God (with Himself, as well as the Father through prayer).

A relational web, involving relationship with a mature leader (Himself), and relationship with others (the community of disciples).

An experiential context, involving challenging assignments, pressure and a diversity of learning opportunities.

In this transformational context, he instructed them. This was how He changed their lives! These are the four dynamics of transformation (the 4Ds.)

Biblically, the most appropriate context – the most appropriate transformational environment for children – is the family. Parents have primary responsibility for building their children. The church's role is to nurture, encourage and resource their capacity to do so.

Certainly, this is the "perfect world" scenario, and, sadly, much of the 4/14 window does not have the privilege of being in a family setting, or having parents who are Christ-followers (or parents at all). But we can and should apply God's commands to parents in whatever "non-perfect-world" contexts we find ourselves with respect to reaching the 4/14 Window. God's guidance for parents can apply equally to caregivers, extended family, church

community, and ministry workers in situations where parents or family are absent or dysfunctional.

Through proper training in a family, children come to know Christ, inward character and external behaviors are formed, life-skills and relational abilities are developed, and principles of mercy, righteousness, holiness and love are learned (Ephesians 6:4). We need to return the major role to the family – this is a key paradigm shift. The family is the very best place to grow in Christ. In the family, spiritual life is nurtured, life skills are acquired, and ministry occurs within the context of loving and accountable family relationships. In order for children to spiritually mature, the parents or caregivers take seriously their responsibility to grow in Christ before their children.

We can see this in the example of Timothy. According to 2 Timothy 3:10-17, Timothy's life was built at home, in the church, and in his ministry and personal relationship with Paul, in a transformational collage of all four dynamics – spiritual, relational, experiential, and instructional.

God has called parents, extended family, caregivers, the church community, and ministry workers to present Himself to the children in their care. They can do this in many ways. For example: they present God to their children through teaching them the Word of God.

They present God to their children through times of family worship. As well as fellowshiping with God in the normal course of daily life, families also have special times of seeking God together. Family worship can involve singing, studying the Bible, prayer, and other spiritual activities.

SPIRITUAL	Children can fellowship with God and enjoy Him.	EXPERIENTIAL	Families should teach their children through example, nurture and correction.
	Prayer for and with children is essential.		Building children takes place spontaneously and naturally in the course of life.
RELATIONAL	Children are impacted by all the spiritual disciplines.	INSTRUCTIONAL	God has wired children to respond positively to encouragement, affirmation, and fun.
	Children can reflect on their own lives.		The Word of God is the basis for growing godly children. God's Word has the power to transform their lives.
	Parents and families have the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth of their children		Parents and families have the responsibility to teach their children.
RELATIONAL	Men should be the primary spiritual leaders of the family.	INSTRUCTIONAL	Teaching children can occur at pre-defined times as well as spontaneously and naturally in daily life.
	Relational abilities are developed in the home.		
RELATIONAL	Healthy families are built and sustained in the church community.		

They present God to their children through leading them through the experiences of life. It is their responsibility to interpret the world to their children so that the children will learn how to perceive and correctly understand the hand and presence of God in all that happens. They lead their children to God by giving them appropriate responsibilities that build their faith as well as practical life skills.

Process: The 4 Ds

We seek a holistic goal for the transformation of children in the 4/14 window. We need holistic processes based on the clear examples of Jesus and Paul. These transformational goals and processes can be a lens – a framework – a guiding paradigm – that informs the design of all specific programs, that we undertake to actually carry out the vision to transform the lives the 4/14 window.

There is great power in designing learning experiences for children that give strong attention to all four dynamics of transformation – the 4Ds. These dynamics can be applied as a framework for the design of family ministry programs, formal schools, Bible schools and seminaries, non-formal training programs, and mentoring/discipleship/lifestyle leadership programs – indeed any program we design to transform the lives of children.

When all 4Ds are strongly present in a design, children grow in the 5Cs. Spiritual life is nurtured, relational capacities are strengthened, character is developed, calling is clarified and deep leadership capacities are built. This is how lives are changed; this is how leaders in the next generation will be built!

Summary

The ConneXions model introduces a new holistic paradigm into our efforts to transform the lives of children in the 4/14 window. We seek to build the 5Cs through the 4Ds in children to transform their lives. The 5C's and the 4D's are lenses through which we can view the design and development of any transformational program to impact the lives of children in the 4/14 Window. Parents, families, churches, schools, seminaries, child advocates, and relief ministries can implement these principles in culturally appropriate and context-sensitive ways toward holistic transformation in the 4/14 Window.

We intentionally build all 5Cs (Christ, Community, Character, Calling and Competencies) in a child's life, and we use all four dynamics of transformation (Spiritual, Relational, Experiential and Instructional).

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Transformational Momentum



Building a Community of Servant-Catalysts

Spiritual

- Christ-centered
- Spirit-led
- Word-responsive
- Love-motivated

Personal

- Prayerful—listening mode
- Openhearted—wholehearted
- Faithful in small things
- Learning posture
- Peace-maker

Organizational

- Contact — networking
- Communication
- Mobility of resources
- Persevering leadership

Social

- Decentralization
- Knowledge management
- Storytelling