

The Global Concept of a Movement for Social Change

The Vision

Transform-UK is the generic term for what we believe will become a national movement for changing the moral and spiritual values of the nation. As we have prayed and consulted with other trusted believers the conviction has grown upon us that God is calling us to a great endeavour - far greater than any of us imagining at the outset. He has given us a vision and a strategy for reaching the nation that is not unlike that given to William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect in the 18th century - a vision to transform the nation; to bring Christian values into the forefront of family and community, and a renewal of the spiritual life of the nation.

The need for such a movement in Britain has never been so great since the 18th century and unless there are radical changes in the very near future all the trends indicate that we are heading for a social disaster of unimaginable proportions. That is not an exaggeration! It is demonstrably true.

The Strategy

In order to effect fundamental changes in the structure and function of society there has to be a deliberate policy of changing the principles underlying the values of society. There are many models of social change that have resulted in a society based upon values that are *contrary* to biblical values. Nazi Germany is one such example where the values of the nation were deliberately manipulated by racist policies that generated hatred of one sector of the population and the exaltation of nationalist principles that led to the Holocaust and the engulfment of Europe in destructive conflict. A British model is the successful campaign run by the homosexual lobby since the beginning of the 1970s when in the Manifesto of the Gay Liberation Front published in 1972 their declared intention was the destruction of traditional marriage-based family life that was described as 'the source of our oppression'.

The Wilberforce Model

A successful movement of social change is long-term. There is no quick fix. It cannot be single issue focused, but must be multi-issue in breadth and scope. It took Wilberforce 40 years to change the mindset of the nation in order to effect the abolition of slavery. His campaign was not single issue focused as is generally supposed but was primarily aimed at changing the moral and spiritual values of the nation as the essential prerequisite for the abolition of slavery. Wilberforce recognised that this was not simply a humanitarian issue based upon the logical propagation of justice. He actually had to change the social values of the nation to bring them in line with biblical values.

Initially Wilberforce's strategy was to work through Parliament. He used the top-down strategy. But he discovered that this did not work. He therefore devised (some historians would say, 'discovered') a bottom-up strategy. The model for this was the missionary clause in the East India

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Company's Charter. When the Charter Act was passed by Parliament in 1793 Wilberforce had mustered all his support in both Houses of Parliament to try to get a clause inserted into the Charter that would allow Christian missionaries to work in India. He lost the vote. Twenty years later when the Act came up for renewal Wilberforce realised that lobbying the great and the good would not be sufficient. He therefore turned to other means to put pressure upon the legislature.

He used the multitude of voluntary associations that he and other members of the Clapham Sect had formed, especially those with a missionary emphasis such as the Church Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. They had local groups throughout the country and when the Charter came before the House in 1813 Wilberforce used their members to sign 837 petitions bearing more than half a million signatures which he presented to the House of Commons with great effect. In a total population of just over 9 million this was an impressive demonstration of people power. It was, in fact, the first mobilisation of grassroots support for a social campaign in British history. It ensured total success.

Two Sides to the Coin

The lesson to be learned from this strategy is that what is needed for a successful campaign to change social values is not either a top-down or a bottom-up strategy, but both. It is not an 'either/or' but a 'both together'. They are two sides of a single coin.

This is the reason why *Transform-UK* has to have two major thrusts - the small task-oriented organisation aimed at key opinion formers and the media as the top-down strategy; and the grassroots mobilisation of Christians in the workplace and in the community as the bottom-up strategy.

The Two Parts of *Transform-UK*

1) A small task-centred organisation

This has been outlined in Clapham Connections literature and publications since its beginnings in 2000. This is the top-down part of the movement for change.

The organisation will have: -

- a research team to produce empirical evidence
- a policy group to weigh the evidence and determine action
- a media group to present issues to the public
- a campaign group to reach key opinion formers and also to mobilise the grassroots support in the country.

This organisation has to be at the heart of a national movement for change. Its Research Team is charged with the responsibility of producing factual evidence of social statistics and trends. Much of this evidence is already available from ongoing research carried out by academic institutions and other established researchers, thus reducing the necessity for original field research. Where this is essential the preferred option will be to encourage established institutions to undertake the investigation. Available empirical evidence has to be collated and presented in context and significance to the Policy Group whose responsibility is to assess its value in terms of achieving winnable goals. It then becomes the responsibility of the Media and the Campaign Groups to determine how best to use the data at their disposal in order to achieve their objectives.

The *Transform-UK* presentation outlines the basic principles, purpose and activity of this organisation. But there is a second strand to a long-term movement to change the moral and spiritual values of the nation.

2) A grass-roots movement

The movement will mobilise support and gather momentum over a number of years. It will have (at least) two specific thrusts:-

(i) Christians in the Workplace

The CWF Core Group, chaired by Dr Peter Carruthers, was formed in October 2003. It grew out of a number of meetings organised by Clapham Connections in the House of Commons through the good offices of Mr Alistair Burt MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship. The Core Group has devoted time and expertise to the consideration of the structure and function of a national movement for change. Some of its members have linked with Clapham Connections staff to form a Steering Group for *Transform-UK* chaired by Michael Hodges.

The basic work of CWF is -

- to ensure that all members of Christian associations in the professions, commerce and industry are able to share their faith with clients and colleagues in the workplace; and
- to consider ways of helping and encouraging members of the associations to use their influence to effect creative institutional change by bringing Christian principles and biblical values into the workplace.

There is a lot of work to be done on both of these and the Core Group and Clapham Connections staff are giving time and creative energy to this. There are some good materials available for 'faith sharing' but there is a dearth of in-depth research on bringing creative biblical change into institutions in the economy. A number of Christian papers have been written on strategies of creative change but as far as we are aware these have yet to be tested in the arena of hard economic reality. Additionally there is documentation of strategies for turning around failing businesses which demonstrate the principles of institutional change but we are looking for a different model of strategic change. We are looking for a model that does not rely upon the principles of 'Babylon' but the 'Kingdom' principles of Jesus.

Clearly this is an area for an initial library search followed by some experimental research.

(ii) Christians in the Churches

There has for some time been a growing emphasis among Christian writers upon a 'missional church' - that is, upon a church in which all its members are involved in outreach. Many church leaders are sensing that the Lord is calling for a new endeavour to get his word out into the nation through the personal discipleship of believers. The enthusiastic reception given to the preview of *Transform-UK* at Moggerhanger on 2nd October was an indication that the time is right for a movement of change at a grassroots level among ordinary Christians in the churches. There is a growing awareness among ordinary church members that the moral and spiritual health of the nation is rapidly deteriorating due to the increasing pressures of secular humanism and the growing influence of other religions. There is also an increasing frustration that church leaders are not sufficiently active in giving a lead to the nation or in voicing the concerns of the 72 percent of the population who claim to be Christians.

(a) National Tour

In order to mobilise support and the active involvement of church members in their local communities it is proposed to undertake a tour of churches in major towns and

cities across the UK. Its purpose will be to present the vision for a movement to change the moral and spiritual values of the nation and to outline ways in which Christians throughout the country can get involved. Those who are not already members of associations in the professions, commerce and industry will be encouraged to become actively involved with other Christians in the workplace.

There will be four elements in this tour:-

- a presentation of the facts about what is happening in our nation
- a declaration of God's purposes for our nation at such a time as this
- a presentation of the vision for *Transform-UK*
- a presentation of what Christians can do to get involved in the movement for change

(b) Follow-up

The national tour, if properly promoted, should result in a number of large meetings in key centres around the country. This initial presentation of the vision for a movement of change needs to have well-planned follow-up. Key leaders in each centre need to be identified and inspired with the challenge to take the concept to many more meetings around their areas. Carefully controlled good positive publicity should ensure that the movement sets off with a clearly defined objective. This has to be seen in a positive rather than a negative light, e.g. we are not against abortion, we are pro life; we are not anti divorce, we are pro marriage; we are not against single mothers, we are pro healthy families.

The production of good positive literature for handouts is essential right from the start of the movement and this needs to be overseen by the *Transform-UK* media team.

The key leaders in each area need to appoint one of their number to be constantly in touch with the *Transform-UK* media and campaign teams.

The objective of the central body of *Transform-UK* will not be to exercise control but to give clear direction and trustworthy empirical data that can be used locally or adapted according to local circumstances.

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