

“If My People... Pt. 2”

Transformation Stories

November 2, 2014

Almolonga, Guatemala — transformation of a single town

- had been a town that worshiped folk deities; four jails; broken relationships and homes
- a small group began to repent, fast, and pray for spiritual transformation of their community
- God responded to their continuing entreaties
- now town is not only spiritually healthy, but also the land has been healed, and crop yields are enormous

A brief look at where we've been

Defiling the land

- Idolatry — Jeremiah 3:6-10
- Immorality — Leviticus 18
- Bloodshed — Numbers 35:33-34
- Broken Covenants — Isaiah 24:5-6

Four judgments upon a defiled land

Ezekiel 14:12-23; Leviticus 26:21-26; Revelation 6:8

- Famine — Isaiah 14:13
- Ecological devastation — Isaiah 14:15-16
- War — Isaiah 14:17
- Disease — Isaiah 14:19-20

2 Chronicles 7:13-15 — “...if My people who are called by My name...”

Seven blessings on a righteous land

Leviticus 26:4-13

- ecological health (vs. 4)
- economic health (vs. 5)
- personal security (vs. 6a)
- domestic security (vs. 6b)
- international security (vss. 7-8)
- blessing and growth (vs. 9)
- innovation and creativity (vs. 10)
- God's presence (vss. 11-13)

A scriptural transformation story

Ninevah — Jonah 3

- Assyrians brutal people
- God initiated transformation by sending a prophet with message of judgment
- people responded with repentance
- God responded and relented

Transformations today

Fiji

- in their pagan worship, fish left, reefs dried up, brink of disaster
- small group began to humble themselves, repent, fast, pray
- land transformed — from government leadership to ecological restoration

Newark, NJ

- covenant in 1666 to be a “kingdom of God on earth”
- in 1996 ranked “most dangerous city in America” by Money Magazine
- PrayForNewark Adopt-a-Street initiative; individuals praying daily for individual streets
- when launched, Newark experienced 43 homicide-free days

He is a God of both “now” and “then”

- Exodus 3:6
- Genesis 12:2,3
- Matthew 28:18-20
- Acts 2:49
- Revelation 1:8

Generational transformation story — Hawaii

- Henry Opukaha’ia born in Hawaii in 1792; being raised by uncle, local priest
- eventually joined sailing ship, lived with captain in CT
- learned English and religion from student at Yale; lived with president of Yale
- developed passion for Christ and desire to tell his people in Hawaii
- translated parts of Bible into Hawaiian, traveled to urge sending missionaries
- wrote book of personal history, studied in seminary, died in 1818 at age 26
- as a result of his passion, 22 people moved to Hawaii to become missionaries
- God prepared Hawaii for their arrival — King Kamehameha died earlier; kapu system broken
- in 1825 Hawaii declared a Christian nation: state motto “The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness”

- since that time, political incidents have occurred to diminish the standing of Christianity in the islands
- in early 1970's Loren Cunningham relocated Youth With a Mission hub to Hawaii
- resulting in 4 million students, volunteers, staff; 1,500 locations in 187 nations
- in 1993, after 175 years in Cornwall, CT cemetery, Henry's body was brought back to Hawaii

He is a God of “Now and Then”

- God can transform a people through one person's pursuit of and obedience to God
- one person's life can impact others to do the same
- the Kingdom of Hawaii was transformed through their obedience and God's power
- small steps of obeying Jesus can lead to generational nation change
- nothing is too big for God when His people follow His lead!

2 Chronicles 7:13-15 “...if My people who are called by My name...”

Discussion Questions

1. The transformation of the town of Almolonga was in a rural, agrarian area in Central America, where it “seems like many people could take time off from work” to fast and pray for long periods of time.
How can this kind of long-term, focused, intense fasting and prayer occur within our fast-paced city life?
2. Is the gospel strong enough to transform our community? Are we willing to pay the price?
3. Last week we looked at 1) Four ways a land is defiled; 2) Four judgments on a defiled land; and 3) Eight blessings on a righteous land. Which of all of these listed really grabs your attention? Why?
4. As the Vicar of Baghdad said, “the first missionary to Nineveh arrived by submarine”!
How did the people respond to God's message of doom? What was God's response?
5. What did God teach you about His relationship to nature in the video on Fiji?
6. How does the “PrayForNewark Adopt-A-Street initiative” challenge you to think creatively?
7. Read Exodus 3:6; Genesis 12:2,3; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:49; Revelation 1:8.
How is God the God of both “now” and “then”?
8. What did you think/feel about Henry Opukaha'ia dying of typhus at age 26?
What does this say to you about how God works?
9. How can God use you as an individual to impact others – who in turn can impact others?