

Transformational Ministry: The Contribution of Mothers to Society

by SC and KF

Introduction

At the 2007 Arabian Peninsula conference for company personnel, I, as the TM Coordinator, encouraged them to think of ways that they can minister to the people around them. I defined the subject as follows:

Transformational Ministry is a process by which God's people minister to communities and societies around them in every aspect of human existence: socially, economically, spiritually and environmentally. As transformational workers they are to be stimulators and contributors to positive changes in their recipient societies through the power of God.

Several reasons for the need for this Transformational Ministry in the AP are the prevalence of wealth without well-being, materialism and consumerism, and social issues. Such a ministry is also needed in relation to planting the future church.

The workers then divided up into small groups according to their various roles as tentmakers. Not only were there groups for teachers, medical personnel, engineers and businessmen, but also one for mothers who are at home.

The following article suggests ways that mothers can have an effect on the society around them. KF gives a summary of her thoughts from that group discussion and from other comments during the conference.

As a mother who home schools, I sometimes wonder what impact I can have on our host culture. At our recent regional conference, several speakers addressed this issue. In the session on Transformational Ministries, we learned how a holistic approach can stimulate and contribute to change. One area of concern is that even if people have wealth, they may not have well being. We see materialism and consumerism leading

to a 'disposable' society. This can even be seen in attitudes towards wives, children, maids, etc.

How can a mother at home have an impact on her host culture? As she interacts with or is observed and perceived by nationals, she can be a godly example. This can happen in a variety of settings, both formal and informal.

A mother can contribute to society in several ways. By nurturing her family with loving and consistent discipline, she makes an impression on members of the host culture as they observe this phenomenon.

Healthy family relationships also result in fewer divorces and incidences of abuse. All of these practices lead to hope for the future. Lord willing, we will have opportunities to model godly relationships. As we go about our routine tasks, have guests in our homes, or are in public places together, others will take notice. We can model love for and training of our children in stores and parks. We can show respect for our husband in restaurants and with friends. Some truths in these areas can be 'caught' rather than taught.

In more formal settings, we can teach about biblical (not necessarily western) marriage. For example, the principle to 'leave and cleave' after marriage may help develop stronger bonds between husband and wife. Of course, the newlyweds can still live near family, but the mother-son relationship usually needs to decrease in importance. However, even if a man does not cherish his wife, we can explain that God values her because she is created in His image. We can also encourage her to respect him, although to trust him may be more difficult. Our group of

wives asked ourselves to imagine how it would feel knowing that at any time one could become a co-wife. Knowing that polygamy is permitted in Islam, we can contrast this with Paul's teaching on Christ and the Church.

Although God's word is our authority, we do not always need to read or quote it directly. A number of Christian books about marriage and parenting have been translated into other languages. These can be given as gifts or shared on other appropriate occasions. Seminars on relevant topics can also convey biblical truths in a group setting. Programmes for women and/or children can be effective venues for discussions as well. Some women have held English language conversation groups. Others mentioned the possibility of offering classes in cake decorating or women's health issues. Another existing option in some areas is the *diwaniya*, or *majlis* (gatherings for discussion).

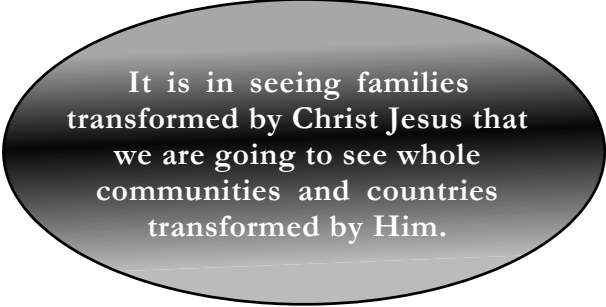
One Australian programme that has opened doors already is called *Mainly Music*. Children are invited, along with their mother or older sister. No maids are allowed. There is a two-minute 'think spot' when certain topics are presented. In the past, this has included *The Five Love Languages for Children* (words of affirmation, physical touch, quality time,

acts of service, and gifts [presents]). Another idea is to talk about parenting as seen in the book of Proverbs. As the women drink tea together, they can discuss the material in a friendly environment.

In the Arab world, mothers have a great influence on their society as they bring up the next generation. Thus, women workers can definitely have an impact as they integrate family and

ministry. One of the speakers summed this up quite well. She said,

Our host cultures' structural foundation is the family. It is in seeing families transformed by Christ Jesus that we are going to see whole communities and countries transformed by Him.



It is in seeing families
transformed by Christ Jesus that
we are going to see whole
communities and countries
transformed by Him.