

Report of the Transform World Conference Call, 13th May, 2008

Participants:

Ram Gidoomal - South Asian Concern, London
Alex Philip - Bihar, India
Sonam Lhendrup – Thimpu, Bhutan
Elgin Saha – Heed, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Robin Thomson – South Asian Concern, London

Godfrey Yogarajah – Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka, had planned to join the call but could not be connected.

Background to Transform World

Ram attended the Transform World Conference in Jakarta in May 2005, where Luis Bush invited him to host a new initiative to plan a conference for South Asia in 2009.

Alex Philip also attended the Jakarta conference. He organised the Transform World Bihar conference in January 2006, which had led to new developments in the state. In October 2006 he was part of the planning of Transform World India in Hyderabad. This had provided a platform for many to think about transformation in entirely new ways. It was followed by state conferences in Kerala and Karnataka during 2007 and requests for similar conferences in Maharashtra and Orissa. These had led to new initiatives in prayer, mission, family and other areas, working towards the goal of cultures increasingly reflecting the values of the Kingdom of God. He felt that a South Asia conference would be able to bring leaders together to identify issues for South Asia and set objectives to take the movement forward in the different countries.

Elgin Saha had been stimulated and given new vision by the Jakarta conference, leading to plans for a Transform World Bangladesh conference in October 2009. There is political uncertainty in Bangladesh, with a state of emergency for the last 18 months. Elections are planned for December 2008, which could lead to freer democracy or a return to more authoritarian, military rule. He requested prayer for the country. As a result of the political situation, there are restrictions on any gatherings over 200 people. Zonal meetings have been held in different parts of the country. They are still planning a national conference in the second half of October 2009, either as a large gathering of 5,000 people for one day, or a smaller gathering of 2,000 people for 3 days. They do not want to do anything that would attract undue publicity and harm the work that is already going on in the country.

Sonam shared that Bhutan's situation is somewhat different, as it has just become a more democratic country. It is closely linked to India in everyway, including mission.

Godfrey Yogarajah could not be with us in the conference call, but Ram shared that he had met him two weeks ago, and he had offered to provide secretarial and logistics support for a conference, including possible location in Sri Lanka.

Participants from other South Asian countries

Alex had made close contact with 3 **Afghan** leaders recently and had invited them to take part in the network. However, they were not able to join us for the call.

Nepal: He is waiting to hear from Pastor Thapa in Kathmandu. There is an enquiry from Nepal to the Singapore office of Transform World about holding a conference in Nepal, so he

will follow up that person. Cindy Perry, who works with the Nepali Diaspora, had been invited to join the network but felt that she was unable to take on this responsibility.

Pakistan: Alex has been in touch with two people. Ayub had agreed to join the conference call but recently there had not been any contact.

Maldives: Enquiries with various organisations have not resulted in information about any known believers in the country. We may need to have somebody who lives outside but has close contact with the Maldives. Ram is on the Board of a business concern in the Maldives and will endeavour to find out more information.

Transform World South Asia Conference 2009

Dates

First week of November 2009.

Location

Still open. Current possibilities include Sri Lanka, India or Nepal. Bangladesh has offered to host but political situation currently not amenable.

Action Items:

Numbers of participants suggested

Bangladesh – 10, Pakistan – 10 , Nepal – 10 , Bhutan – 10 , Afghanistan – 10 , India – 1 to 2 from each state, so 30 to 50, Diaspora – 2 to 3 representing links with each of the South Asian countries.

The above is a starting point for prayer and consideration regarding the proposed numbers. While India would have a much larger number, it could be seen as representing either the individual states or 4 to 5 major regions within India, so this would not be completely out of proportion.

Selection

Criteria will be drawn up for selecting people remembering the importance of strategic representation.

Finance

There is currently no budget or any provision for covering the cost of this conference. Those participating will do so voluntarily. However, we need to think and pray about appropriate ways to meet this financial challenge.

Secretarial help

Conference venue will be fixed next time and that location will serve as Secretariat for conference.

Date of next conference call

17th June 2008 – 06.30 gmt/07.30 British Summer Time.

Alex closed the conference call with prayer, particularly for Luis Bush's health and the situation in Burma.

(Robin Thompson & Alex Philip)