

TransformWorld Leadership Summit - 2017

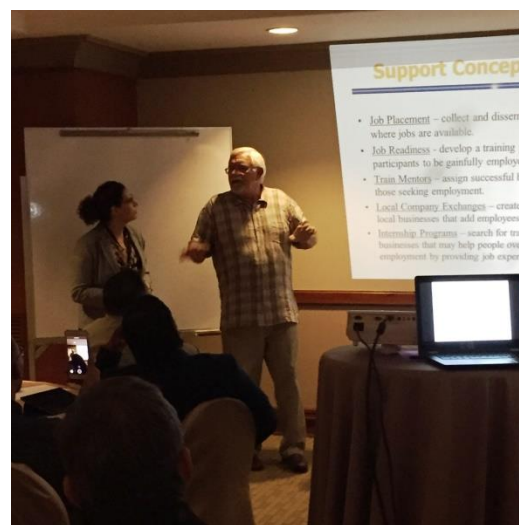


Guayaquil, Ecuador was the site of the 2017 TransformWorld Leadership Summit, attended by 234 leaders from all sectors of society in 34 nations. The majority came from the countries of Latin America and reported on the vibrancy of Christianity across the Continent. As facilitator of the Business Sphere, I spoke to the entire conference on how Christians in business can affect the Kingdom of God in every one of the Challenges TransformWorld has taken on. One entire afternoon was devoted to delegates registered in the Business Sphere sharing their experiences of linking business and the Kingdom, as well as their dreams and plans for the future.

Stimulating local economies and creating jobs are two of the primary functions of those in the Business Sphere. To address this mission in a very practical way, Dr. David Befus was invited to participate as a expert resource. David is past president of Latin America Mission, an agency long committed to stimulating business as part of their approach to missions. Over the years David has set up business development programs in 30 countries and written a book, Kingdom Business, on the subject. He presented a workshop on “10 Ways to Help People Get Jobs”.

- Job Placement:
- Job Readiness:
- Train Mentors:
- Local Company Exchange:
- Entrepreneurship Training:
- Create Business Incubators:
- Locate Small Business Funding
- Create Venture Capital Fund
- Set up Internship Program
- Build off Community Assets

Each of the 10 ways has been proven effective and remains applicable in every national setting.



Jeff Latsa of GHNI illustrated several of those from his own experience creating livelihood for rural people in Afghanistan – lending goats to families who breed and raise them, returning 4 for each one they receive, and using the other newborns to sell for cash or expand their herds.

Helman Ocampo of Colombia heads a ministry, CRISALINCO, dedicated to taking the Gospel to unreached indigenous tribes in the mountains of Colombia. Of 79 distinct ethnic groups in Colombia, missionaries he has trained have established a presence in 40 tribes. But he not only trains missionaries in theology and church planting, they receive training in micro-businesses like fish farming, bakeries, animal husbandry, and farming, so they can be self-supporting and teach villagers how to escape poverty. This is the same methodology used by the early Nestorian Christians, who were the first to take the Gospel into China in the 7th Century. God has blessed Helman – at age 18 he owned no shoes and could not read or write. Now, in addition to the work of CRISALINCO sending out 100 missionaries after a 2-year training course, he has also written a book to bring Christ's healing to former guerillas in Colombia who had been active in FARC.



Mauricio Valencia, also of Colombia, presented a creative new program he is introducing for business people all across Latin America to help them maintain spiritual health while successfully pursuing their business goals. Called CREAR (an acronym for his program built on the Spanish word for 'create'), this on-line discipleship and mentoring program enables subscribers to experience the wholeness God intends for His children. With internet accessibility and a nominal cost, he is believing the Lord to bring 10 million souls to be blessed by this resource. CREAR will join together the legitimacy of engaging wholeheartedly in business while simultaneously remaining uncompromising in spiritual commitment.

In April of 2016, an earthquake in the northern part of Ecuador devastated several communities. 800 died in the city of Pedernale alone. The smaller town of Chamanga was literally in ruins. God called on an indigenous Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor, Pedro Salazar Villamar, to respond. Just getting food to the survivors was first. Because their source of potable water had been destroyed, he organized the re-digging of a long abandoned well which soon provided all the water they needed. Sports activities and reading classes were organized to keep the children busy while the rubble was cleared and tents were set up for housing. But Pastor Villamar quickly began looking for business opportunities they could use to generate funds locally. A natural supply of rich coconut allowed them to make coconut candies first, and then pure coconut oil they could sell in the cities of Ecuador, and eventually export. With the Gospel and a church, wholistic redevelopment is happening. So appreciative were the townspeople, they have asked Pastor Villamar to become their mayor!

And then, everyone was touched when Gisela S., a single mom from Ecuador, got up the courage to ask the question she came for: "How can my friends and I start businesses as single moms to support ourselves?"

TransformWorld has adopted the 7 Spheres of society identified by Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper, such as Church, Education, Government, and Business. The identity of those active in the Business Sphere is further refined by this statement:

***The Business Sphere is comprised of Christian men and women
who engage in business and use their business activities to advance
the Kingdom of God. They may also be active in other spheres apart
from their direct engagement in business.***

This identity is important in several respects: First, it clarifies the reality that Christians in the business world have (much) more to contribute than money for other people to do missions. They can do missions within the context of their business, often with more reach and acceptance than pastors, evangelists, or missionaries can. Second, it recognizes that business people may be very effective in taking on other challenges, but not through their business activities and so properly in another sphere. For example, a business woman working to affect adoption of orphans may be operating more in the Church or Government or Media Spheres. The 2017 Summit in Guayaquil was notable for the active participation of senior church leaders from several major denominations and churches in Ecuador. These church leaders saw the distinctions in the spheres clearly and recognized the legitimacy of business as a means to advance the Gospel. Mr. Stann Leff, a member of the BPN Board of Directors, was invited by the host pastor to return to Guayaquil in 2018 to present a conference on Business as Mission.

The role of the Business Sphere in addressing the 7 Challenges of TransformWorld was clarified during the 2017 Summit and the Facilitators' Retreat that preceded the Summit in Guayaquil. Here are the primary ways we will seek to mobilize the Christian business community by each challenge:

- Ideological Challenge
 - Model true Christian values in the marketplace
 - Share the Gospel with Muslims in the context of work relationships
 - Provide legal resources for prejudicial challenges in Muslim countries
 - Offer training materials on both Islam and Christianity
- Justice Challenge
 - Maintain fair pricing and wages
 - Advocacy with government officials and senior management
 - Create a manual and a coaching resource on facing corruption

- Family Challenge
 - Providing income for families through job creation and business development
 - Developing a manual on preparing children for work and careers
 - Creating a manual on managing business – family tensions
 - Creating resources for business managers on how to nurture strong families among their employees
- Missional Challenge
 - Practice workplace Discipleship
 - Provide active ‘tentmakers’ with accumulated wisdom for witnessing
 - Create a manual on business-based church start-ups
- Orphan Challenge
 - Create employment options specifically for orphans
 - Develop a training manual to prepare children for the workplace
 - Advocate for orphans in the Marketplace and Government
- Poverty Challenge
 - Support job creation and business startups in developing nations
 - Advocate for job creation within the Million Village Challenge
 - Provide training on entrepreneurship with funds where possible
- Celebration Challenge
 - Provide guidelines on How to Pray for your Business
 - Provide guidelines on how Christians in business can encourage their home churches to become the Houses of Prayer Jesus intends His Church to be

For information on joining the Business Sphere, contact John Warton (john@bpn.org).

