

A New Day for Africa: TW2020 Global Leadership Summit VII

By Luis Bush

A total of three hundred registered delegates from fifty-one countries came together from November 6 to 9, 2018 for our annual Transform World 2020 Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia embracing the theme: “Harnessing the resources of the seven spheres of cultural influence in Africa and beyond to transform Africa and beyond to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and in so doing, fulfill his Great Commission.” Our hosts made us all feel welcome at the comfortable facilities of the International Evangelical Church.



A TIME TO WORSHIP THE LIVING GOD

stones where she communed with him of all that was in her heart” (see 1 Kings 10). Ethiopia was mentioned many times in the Bible, so it must be important. The long faith history in the Old Testament extends from the era of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba to the New Testament account of Dr. Luke about the Treasury Secretary of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians who had gone to Jerusalem to worship. According to the Word of God, on his way back home, he was reading from the book of Isaiah. Dr. Luke reports in the Book of Acts chapter 8 that Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. At that very instant he was reading from Isaiah 53 which tells about the Messiah who

“I enjoin you, brothers and sisters, young and old to rise up and express praises, jubilation and shouts of joy in the language that suits you best for His surpassing greatness in full compliance with Psalm 150. Let everything praise the Lord. You are very much welcome because you have come to us with an initiative, whose inner most part of its inner most is reaching the world with the love of God, His releasing, sanctifying and most of all transforming Gospel!” With these words Shiferaw Michael welcomed all of us who had come together to pursue the vision and mission of a transformed world, God’s way. We

met at an historical place from which the Queen of Sheba set off to visit King Solomon, “bringing very much gold, and precious



God prophesied came to die for our sins. The Ethiopian treasurer saw some water and said, “Look, water, what prevents me from being baptized?” He returned to Queen Candace of Ethiopia as a committed believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As they came together in that day in the will of God, so we came together in this day, at another historic moment to make an appeal to the Church of Ethiopia and Africa to consider the seven pressing issues of our time through the lens of seven spheres of cultural influence and three generations including the 4/14ers and youth. We joined our hearts in worship to the living God the African way and God moved in our hearts together for such a time as this.

“With the recent ascension of Dr. Abiye Ahmed to the position of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Africa’s most ancient functional palace, the Palace of Emperor Menelik and Queen Zewditu that is here in Addis Ababa, has now been given a new “tong” that enables it to communicate with the young and old, men and women, literate, illiterate, rich and poor, rural and urban, peasant and factory worker! That new tong, that new language is **love**. That new tong is **forgiveness!** **Unity** is the new tong. That new tong is **dignity** of the human person and **upholding human rights**. It is about **democracy** and **justice for all**.”¹

The presence of participants from neighboring Eritrea was celebratory of the recent cessation of fighting in the longest war of Africa. After the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea finally reopened only a few weeks before the Summit we were able to joyfully receive Pastor Okbamichael Tekle haimanot Tesafatsion from Moakono Eritrea. Despite being imprisoned for his faith he walked amongst us as one of us. A peace agreement has been signed between Ethiopia and Eritrea. All neighboring states are engulfed into the new spirit of love, good neighborliness, and pursuit of economic development and peace for their citizens.

Now blessed to be a blessing, we gathered as servant leaders to engage in a Christ honoring response to the great remaining challenges confronting Ethiopia, Africa and beyond. We came together to seek God for a united, strategic action that would bring glory to Him in every nation via every major



sphere of cultural influence in every region of the world. We recognized that transformation is a journey in which three generations must respond with prayer and faith in action. We recognized that informed cohesive prayerful action with qualified global representation leads to a sustained global movement resulting in transformation. We sought the answers to three basic questions regarding transformation ... what, how and wherefore?

1. What a transformed Ethiopia, Africa and beyond means.

We recognized that it is characterized by pervasive awareness of the reality of God, a radical correction of social ills, a commensurate decrease in crime rates, supernatural blessing on local commerce, healing of the brokenhearted (the alienated and disenfranchised), and regenerative acts of restoring the productivity of the land. The wherefore emphasized the means of implementation in our lands. We concluded that the expected outcome of this transformation would be that the entire society in Africa and beyond be won over by the gospel and in so doing, fulfilling Christ's Great Commission of making disciples of the nations to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were encouraged by the report of Ethiopia's Progress Towards Eradicating Poverty made this year in Addis Ababa on April 6 in relation to the event on the "Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty." It was reported that... "There has been tremendous expansion in access to social services such as education, health, water and sanitation as well as infrastructure including roads, railways, telecom and power generation among others." According to the report: "Access to universal primary education reached 100 percent, health coverage 98 percent, access to potable water 65 percent, life expectancy reached 64.6 years and others. This robust economic and social performance helped to reduce the level of poverty. According to this report delivered at the event: "As a result, the incidence of poverty markedly declined from 45.5 percent in 2000 to 23.5 percent in 2016."²

However, we observed that the continent of Africa has been a place of inexplicable contradictions for centuries. While on the one hand Africa is rich and beautiful on the other had one can say that it is the showcase of abject poverty, disease and misery and manmade and natural upheavals. While on the one hand Africa is a continent where corruption has infested all the social fabric and reigns deep and wide in which human rights violations are so common that they are or seem to be taken as the norm of our everyday life. On the other hand, signs of positive change can be seen. The Church of Jesus Christ is big and growing, alive with the aim of winning the continent for the Savior. At the same time ministry does not seem to positively impact the daily lives of the people of the continent.

2. How we transform Ethiopia, Africa and our world.

We concluded that it was by harnessing the resources of the seven spheres or mountains of cultural influence – that is the church, the arts, media, business, education, family and government. We recognized that these spheres can be spheres of influence for good or for evil. They can and are called to be receptive to the ideas, words, thoughts and actions of the Kingdom of God.

Harnessing the resources of the Church sphere we are keenly aware of the favor of God on this nation as we witnessed how the Ethiopian Church responded to the Marxist takeover in 1974 with all the major denominations coming together in unity and persevering in that unity for more than forty years since and now representing around 20% of the population. We were encouraged that even a world distinguished professor of History and Christian futurist gave testimony to the favor of God on His people in all of Africa today. In his article titled: How Africa Is Changing Faith Around the World, Philip Jenkins highlights both the size and the nature of the church in Africa. Drawing from the Pew Trust Foundation findings by the year 2050 four out of every ten Christians in the world will live in sub-Saharan Africa.³

By the conclusion of the Summit we recognized that Ethiopia and Africa are being transformed to become an agent of transformation to the other regions of the world. To borrow the phrase attributed to Augustine of Hippo from North Africa, *Ecclesia semper transformanda est*. The church in a city or nation is always to be transformed though a balance between respect for its heritage and openness to the Holy Spirit and so becomes a catalyst of ongoing transformation toward *shalom*. This revelation can be found in Paul's exhortation to be transformed through the renewing of our minds that we may be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom. 12:2). For Paul the Apostle and for us who are Christ followers the church *semper transformanda est*. We see the Transform World Movement worldwide learning from Ethiopia and Africa in the church sphere and in the way **to harness the resources** of the church, business and education spheres in Ethiopia.

3. Wherefore, what is the expected outcome of transformation: that the entire society / nation in Africa and beyond can be influenced with the gospel and in so doing, fulfill Christ's Great Commission of making disciples of the nations to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ who entrusted this mandate to His followers. Indeed, Ethiopia and Africa have reached out their arms to God first and foremost, by means of the sphere of the church.

In his way forward, appeal to Africa in particular, Shiferaw spoke about the ripeness of time for the transformation of the continent as virtually all preconditions for transformation, as we in TW 2020 Movement see it, are in place:

1. We have the encouraging "external word" and resources of the TW 2020 Movement initiative
2. Africa is blessed with children and youth and women who are significant forces for transformation
3. The church of Jesus Christ is growing and dots virtually all countries in the Continent
4. Africa has witnessed, more than any time in its history, an external and internal environment that is conducive for transformation.



Based on the above Shiferaw appealed to the Bride of Christ in Africa, as His chosen instrument, to spearhead the transformation process of Africa fully believing that this will be greatly helped by aggressively working on its own transformation as a matter of priority.

Conclusion: It's about seizing the moment

We see the favor of God on His people in all of Africa today and rejoice. For was it not the oft quoted African go far proverb that says to us "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Let's go forward together to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and in so doing, fulfill his Great Commission. Our hope and dream as we met in Addis by sphere of cultural influence and with those seeking a sustained and measured response to the seven challenges in this Transform World 2020 Summit is that together we can learn from one another to harness the resources of the seven spheres of cultural influence to transform Africa and beyond to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and in so doing, fulfill his Great Commission.

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**JAMIE PRYOR RECEIVES THE CHARGE FOR
TW2020 SUMMIT 2019 IN MELBOURNE FROM TSADIKU**

¹ Shiferaw Michael

² Ethiopia's Progress Towards Eradicating Poverty, UNDP Ethiopia, April 6, 2018
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/04/Ethiopia%E2%80%99s-Progress-Towards-Eradicating-Poverty.pdf>

³ July 05, 2016, by Philip Jenkins. How Africa Is Changing Faith Around the World,
<https://trend.pewtrusts.org/en/archive/trend-summer-2016/how-africa-is-changing-faith-around-the-world>