

TD Is Engaging in Spiritual Warfare

Frank G. Cookingham, 2000

Transformational Development (TD) will be opposed by evil forces. Webs of lies will lead to bad choices by people. The intended mission of structures will be subverted. There is no room for romantic optimism about the role of evil.

Philip Yancey has described this aspect of Transformational Development well (*Disappointment with God*, chapter 23) as participation in the great reversal. Our lives on earth are affected by the ongoing cosmic struggle between good and evil. The story of Job illustrates how God has freely chosen to be dependent on individual persons in the cosmic process of restoring creation to its original state, even though God's perfect creation was disrupted by individual persons. One sinner's repentance brings great joy to God. Bit by bit the great reversal takes place, act of repentance by act of repentance.

"Belief in an unseen world forms a crucial dividing line of faith today.... According to the Bible, human history is far more than the rising and falling of people and nations; it is a staging ground for the battle of the universe. Hence what seems like an 'ordinary' action in the seen world may have an extraordinary effect on the unseen world." (p.169)

According to Yancey, from the beginning the central question of history has been, Will humans choose for or against God? People in difficult circumstances, experiencing various kinds of tragedy, are the foundation of hope. God is hoping that in their freedom persons will choose to believe that God loves them beyond their imagination. This belief is at the heart of Transformational Development, at the heart of discovering our true identity and our true vocation.

"Why does God let evil and pain so flagrantly exist, even thrive, on this planet? Why does God let us do slowly and blunderingly what God could do in an eyeblink? God holds back for our sakes. Re-creation involves us; we are, in fact, at the center of God's plan. The Wager [portrayed in the book of Job], the motive behind all human history, is to develop us, not God. Our very existence announces to the powers in the universe that restoration is under way. Every act of faith by every one of the people of God is like the tolling of a bell, and a faith like Job's reverberates throughout the universe." (p.174)

The only way to confront sin is through truth telling and the promotion of justice and righteousness. This should be focused on discovering true identity and true vocation. It should be focused on how poverty is created by god-complexes of the non-poor, inadequate worldview, and deception by principalities and powers.