

# Cyprus – A Transforming Church

*"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2*

Last year the church in Cyprus was blessed to receive not just one, but three mini-revivals..

These in particular covered the topics of **good communication, personal mission statements, and the pursuit of excellence.**

The important thing is that after each revival, practical and permanent changes were made.

This is in contrast to those feelings of inspiration which merely disappear a few days or weeks later, something I am sure we have all experienced.

You see, transformation is a change which is **total and complete.**

For example, with the pursuit of excellence, where we considered the difference between just being a good church and an excellent church, we specifically pledged and then changed the following:-

1) The men changing from smart casual wear, to wearing suits and ties to church. If you look good, you feel good, and you give a professional, serious image to others. Transformation on the outside can give us transformation on the inside.

2) Redecorating the church. Actually, we are not talking redecoration, but re-fitting! From re-smoothing and repainting the walls, laying a wooden floor, new chairs, installation of plasma screen and surround sound system, new air conditioning units, new kitchen equipment, new classroom furniture and whiteboards, many return visitors have not even recognized us!

Even our neighbors who share our office floor have seriously upgraded our common entrance hall. Transformation attracts other people to transform!

3) Revamping of worship and use of media. The old hymn books were tossed out, new songs chosen, the use of background music introduced, our own lyric videos produced, and services interlaced with inspiring videos, as well as introductory videos on arrival. This has transformed the church atmosphere, as well as heightening message impact.

**Transformation is attractive.** The number of visitors now regularly exceeds the number of members, from receiving just one or two visitors a week a year ago, to regular visitors now as diverse as Olympic silver medalists, bank managers, IT security specialists, business owners and hip-hop dance teachers!

As another example, three weeks ago we received our first visitors, a honeymoon couple, who had heard our loud worship out of our (*third-floor*) windows, become inspired, and decided to enter to worship with us. Our quiet hymn singing a few months ago would never have achieved this result. Quite simply, **transformed worship attracts transforming people.**

A week later we then received our first visitor, a British birdwatcher, who entered after a sign we had only just put up in our building foyer caught his attention whilst he was out looking for another church. Even **a transformed building attracts transforming people!**

You see, **transforming people** desire change, action, vision, purpose, meaning, and are attracted to places where they see it.

What is more, as a transforming, mission-minded church, the very people we desire to attract to us are those who are transforming!

*"Go, make disciples of all nations" Matt 28:18*

Jesus last words were clearly important.

It is easy to remember only our own cities and countries, and to forget the other nations.

Certainly a challenge in the field can be that of language. We ourselves have translations into Greek in most services, as well as occasional Russian, and even three weeks ago we commenced our first weekly Bible study through French! It is easy to take the use of a single language in church for granted..... trust me, it raises challenges!

To others we may therefore seem to be far-flung missionaries out on the edge of the world (*or a small, remote island anyway*)

But to us, we still think of ourselves as merely disciples, trying to humbly live out our faith in the place we now call home.

We were therefore recently blessed by a visit from Horacio and Nancy Piccinnino from the Central Jersey Church of Christ, who encouraged us to re-visualize ourselves as missionaries.

You see, they were right. We are missionaries! Just as Paul and Barnabas came to Cyprus first (45AD), on the first ever missionary journey, we too seek to win converts. We too seek to bring the "fragrance of Christ" to those around us. Most of us are actually foreigners in a foreign land too.

This concept required us to actively transform our minds. To seek **total and complete** renewal.

But just as we therefore seem in an exotic and foreign land to you, you too seem in an exotic and foreign land to us.....

Does that mean you are therefore a missionary too?

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Further information on the Limassol Church of Christ can be found on their website, [www.limassolchurchofchrist.org](http://www.limassolchurchofchrist.org). Their fourth annual retreat is also being held on 1-4 October, to which all are cordially invited, with this year's theme being "Pursue Your Passion". See website for further details.

