



Four cornerstones for a wealthy nation

How can Malawi be transformed? What would be one of the most important worldviews to understand in order to be successful? Look at the concepts of transformation from the West.

by Markus Reichenbach March, 2021
Introduction to be successful to build up a wealth nation

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Abstract

Transformation is not impossible. But most people don't know how to do it. Transformation requires looking at the other side of the window to see the world differently. Transformation cannot happen if people just do what they do.

They have to see the way the world should work according to its founder and creator. They have to rethink and renew their minds to see things differently with their inner eyes. They have to start believing what people normally do not. They need to think what people don't normally do, and they need to do what people don't normally do.

This booklet presents four cornerstones to help in this transformation process of renewing people's minds. To learn to see the world from the perspective of the Creator.

It is meant to help people start a transformation process in Malawi and help Malawi to become a stable and prosperous nation.

Not everything has been said and much would need to be added by you. But I hope that this booklet can support the transformation process in your country.

Introduction worldview

Many people want to change the world, but only some of them understand that if they want to change the world, they have to change themselves first. And if they want to change themselves, they must first change their own thinking.

If people want to change something, they must first be convinced in their thinking. They have to see things that people do not see. They have to believe in things that others don't believe and they have to do things that others don't do. Then transformation can begin.

But to do that, they must first see it with their inner eyes. They must first understand with their minds how transformation is possible. They have to see the promised land, but they also have to know the way to get there.

The spy principle

People see the situation with two different eyes. With the physical eyes, but also with the inner eyes. With the physical eyes they all see the same thing, when they are standing in the same place at the same time. But with the inner eyes they see it quite differently. The best example of this are the politicians. They see with their physical eyes the same problem, but they have such different ideas about who should solve it.

Why is that? Because people see the world with their inner eyes, with what they believe and have learned to see. They see with their inner eyes what they are used to seeing. That is why they often cannot see how transformation would be possible.

Moses sent out 12 scouts to discover the promised land. They were all in the same place and saw the same thing with their physical eyes. But when they came back, the report was so different. Some said we can take the Promised Land, others wanted to go back to Egypt.

Why was that? Because some could not see the Promised Land with their inner eyes. They did not have the view of the Creator of this world. They only saw the fortresses and were in fear. They did not see the way to take it in. They only saw what they could do now. With these tools and possibilities, it seems impossible.

But two spies had like the perspective of the creator. They were able to look out the other side of the window and could see what others could not. The spies' perspective had great consequences. Because the majority of them could not see the way, a whole generation died and they wandered through the desert again for 40 years.

Some people see the good land and others see only what prevents them from getting it. It is a question of perspective and how our eyes are trained to see.

The way people see the world will determine what they have.

If people want to change the world, they need the view of the founder and Creator of the world. The one who understood how the world would function in a good and healthy way. That is the task for biblical worldview training. To train the inner eyes.

If these inner eyes do not change, the situation cannot change. It will go on as before. So, to change a nation, first the mind has to be changed.

If people understand this process, then they will be able to figure out why things work in the world and why some do not. They would then no longer be surprised that something does not work. And they would be able to change a nation.

People can only change a nation if they first change their behaviour. But to change their behaviour, they have to know what the right behaviour is. They must have values. Values that tell them what to do and what not to do. When they have values, they are able to control their feelings. Now they have a higher standard to hold on to. But to change values, people first have to change their minds.

First people have to change their minds. If they do, they can change their values. If they set the right values, they are able to change their behaviour. And if they change their behaviour, they can change a nation. This is called the cultural development onion.

The foundation of a wealthy nation

1 The water turbine concept

From a closed system do an open system

Probably the greatest change in people's thinking is when they see who they are in the eyes of the Creator.

The famous socialist Max Weber explored hundreds of years ago why the West became so prosperous in the 16th century. Why were so many businesses created and so many people lifted out of poverty? He concluded that it was due to the preaching of the reformer and pastor John Calvin in Geneva.

What did Calvin preach? He first preached that man is not only made of matter, but also with the spirit of God. The Creator formed man from dust as man and woman. He created them in His image by blowing His Spirit into them.

Therefore, man is not bound by the resources of this world. He is actually free to do anything he can imagine as long as it is within the limits of the Creator. He is living in an open system in which the Creator gives people what they need. As long as they abide by it, the condition that God has given.

They are not bound to the resources of this world. They are bound to the Spirit of God. This thinking made the West strong. People believed it, started new businesses and created new things.

Max Weber therefore claimed that the spirit of capitalism came from Calvin. People believed in it and created new things that no one could have imagined before. Through science they found out new technologies and created a middle class.

The concept of a water turbine

A good illustration could be the water turbine. People put a wheel into the water and can produce electricity. The water is still there after production. So, people have used it to create new resources.

Capitalism comes from the Latin word caput. Caput means head or thinking. Calvin probably preached that God blew his spirit into each of us. Therefore, human beings have the same ability to think as the Creator thinks. God could form the world out of a chaos; therefore, men can create more out of what God gave him.

The reformer thought the spirit of capitalism that Max Weber discovered in his book. But this spirit does not come from John Calvin; it comes from the Creator Himself.

Living in an open system

If people do not have the view of the Creator, they are bound to the resources of this world. They can develop new things and build a great nation. But without the view of the Creator, they live in a closed system. Their resources are limited. The resources of this world have to be divided among the amount of people it has. Now if someone takes more than others will lose. That is the view of socialism. So, if someone produces more, others will have less.

Anyone who produces more becomes a thief. For people without this view, they see the problem in the world with overpopulation. They see the only way to survive is to reduce the population or conquer others, because in their view there is not enough for everyone. The stronger will survive. With this view, nations can never find peace and stability. It will always be a struggle for the world's resources. Corruption and injustice would be the consequences.

To bring prosperity to a nation, people have to see with their inner eyes that they live in an open system. Where the Creator will give us more through the caput that he gave to everyone. There are now limits as long as we stand within His boundaries.

2 The Abrahamic concept

Form consumer to a producer

Abraham could see more than Lot. Abraham's shepherd and Lot's shepherd were arguing and having stress. So, Abraham called Lot and said we have to do something before they kill each other. We have to separate, he said. If you go to the right, I will go to the left. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. Lot was very surprised that he could be the one to choose. He looked up and saw on one side this beautiful fertile land and the Jordan River where Sodom and Gomora were. He saw this fresh land and access to the cities where jobs and goods are. Of course, he knew he wanted to go there and not to the other side where there was little growth and no water.

But which of the two made the better choice? Later, Sodom and Gomora are destroyed and Abraham's household becomes a rich family. Lot only saw the world with his physical eyes. He wanted all the goods what the world can offer. But Abraham could see with his inner eyes and knew that if God sends him into the wilderness, He will provide. Instead of suffering, he dug wells and made the desert a good place.

The Jews who came back after World War 2 understood this principle. They came to the terrain of Israel and turned the desert into a beautiful land.

The world is constantly telling us about all the goods it has. It tells people that they can have all these goods if they only want them. The average person behaves like Lot. They are blinded by the world and live like consumers. They consume and hold their open hand for money. They consume and consume until there is nothing left. They consume until the city is destroyed.

Remember that everything we enjoy, someone had to pay for it. Is it we, who pay for what we consume? Or are we the ones who just consume and want to have everything.

If people only consume, they need not wonder why they never have a wealthy nation. To have a transformation and become a wealthy nation, the mind has to change from a consumer to a producer. Man must first produce before he consumes. Duty first, then rights. Transformers are those who are willing to pay for a nation to become prosperous.

3 To onion concepts, the concept of values

The cultural development onion

People can only change a nation if they first change their behaviour. But to change their behaviour, they have to know what the right behaviour is. They must have values. Values that tell them what to do and what not to do. But how can a nation get values? If they first change their view to see what is really good and perfect. When they see it correctly, they are able to have an absolute standard.

First people have to change their world view. When they do that, they can set absolute values. If they set the right values, they are able to change their behaviour. And if they change their behaviour, they can change a nation. It is like an onion that people peel. The first layer is the nation, the innermost is the behaviour. The third is the values and the commitment in faith.

A farmer and a butcher were sitting in a church. The preacher called out in a loud voice and with a severe look he told the people not to steal or cheat. The farmer turned to the butcher and said, "Did you hear the pastor? You are not to cheat or steal from me. The next time I bring you a calf, give me all the meat and do not take any of it for yourself. If you do that, you will be in trouble with God." The butcher looked at the farmer and thought the same thing. "When you bring me the calf, give me a good one and not an old one. Otherwise, you will have

a problem with the Almighty." This shows that the fear of God put people in charge. This system worked and people could rely on it to tell the truth.

But if the fear of God disappears, people will need another form of control: laws, regulations, administration, and that will cost a lot of money. People will no longer be free and they will be crushed by a heap of laws and regulations. In the end, only lawyers who know about the complicated laws will control the world. The farmer and the butcher, who do the actual work, will no longer have a say. They would live in a controlled world where good, honest work is hindered.

But how do we actually define a lie? People often do not have the same understanding of it. When people have different world views, they also have different ideas of what a lie is.

I used to work with young people from the Balkans. When I asked them if they had stolen the money, they said no, even if they had actually taken it. But for them it was not theft: it was the fault of the person who had left their wallet on the chair. From their point of view, it was okay to take it if they had the opportunity. Saying they didn't steal would be considered a lie in Western understanding, but not for them.

People need an absolute value to focus on. Otherwise, they just do what their feeling or instinct tells them. Transformation requires absolute standards, otherwise only the strongest in a community makes the game. This is called corruption or injustice. People's rights are only those who have rights, who use their power to achieve their rights.

Therefore, the norms presented in the 10 Commandments of the Bible will lay the foundation of human rights and a prosperous society.

Possibly the most important law in the 10 Commandments is the idea that thou shalt not steal.

The fear of God

The most important element of this rapid development was the fear of God. Max Weber believed the spirit of capitalism made this great change possible. But what was behind it, was the fear of God.

This story shows very well how the fear of God worked. A farmer and a butcher went to the same church. The preacher shouted in a loud voice and with a serious facial expression that people should not steal or cheat. The farmer looked up at the butcher and made him understand. Did you hear the pastor? You shall not cheat or steal from me. Next time you bring me a calf, give me all the meat and don't put any of it in your pocket. If you do that, you'll have problems with God. The butcher looked at the farmer and thought the same. If you bring me the calf, give me the right one and not an old one. Otherwise, you will have a problem with the Almighty. Because the fear of God was there and nobody wanted to have a problem with God, the system worked. People could live in a regulated world.

But when the fear of God is gone, people need a controller. Laws, regulations, administration, and that will cost a lot of money. They are not free anymore and have to fight against an infinite number of laws and regulations. In the end it will not be the laws that will regulate them, but a lawyer who still understands the complicated laws. The farmer and the butcher who do the work have nothing more to say and have to fight their way in a complicated regulated world. In a world where good and honest work is almost no longer possible.

The fear of God kept people together and they could live in freedom and order. The farmer and the butcher could be sure that the other would not betray them because they did not want to have any trouble with God. This deep fear of God kept evil within limits. People generally behaved better as a result. People could trust each other. The reformers were able to bring in a deep trust in Western society through their preaching. They could do it more than any other religion or belief could ever do.

You shalt not steal

A missionary told once a story about Mozambique: he said that in that country many fields lie unused because private property is not protected. Those who plant a tree will hardly be able to eat its fruit. Everyone else will steal the fruit, because in Mozambique everything belongs to everyone. Therefore, no one plants a tree because it is not worth it for him or her. Why should people struggle when everyone else will just steal their fruit? In this worldview, stealing is neither illegal nor considered a moral offence. People are simply allowed to take whatever they want.

The God principle was not applied in Mozambique and that is why civilisation could not develop. Mozambique is dependent on foreign aid from the West. It is not able to feed its own inhabitants, although its soil is much more fertile than that of many Western countries. As in all of Africa, billions of people have no political right to private property. Africa has more wealth and natural resources than the rest of the world. But the people cannot derive any added value from them. There is hardly any multiplication of these resources because people are afraid of losing the products. Hardly anyone does anything with them. God protects private property.

Nations influenced by Christianity put God's law into practice and made their land private property. This way, people could be sure that no one would take away their income. Prosperity grew rapidly in these nations. Stealing was an offence against God and a threat to humanity. This moral imperative found its way into almost every constitution in the world: a person has the right to own property.

Socialism did not work

But this principle was challenged by socialism. Socialists believed that private property was immoral and led to injustice. For the socialist, every owner was a thief who stole the goods of the community. If there were no God, the socialists might be right. Without God, there is no giver of goods and therefore there is no private property. But there is a God. Abolishing God was the socialists' biggest mistake.

In the socialist worldview, the root of evil was the fact that some people owned more than others. Therefore, the socialists abolished the law of God: if no one owns private property any more, stealing becomes impossible. But that was only a theory. It never worked in practice. People did not become better without private property. The opposite was the case. People became envious, compared themselves with others and did not allow others to own more than they did.

Instead of learning from those who had more, they blamed them. This ended in oppression and control.

The socialists no longer cared about the land because the land was not theirs. Why should they work for the community when others did not? The people were frustrated. They had to work for others. Socialism destroyed responsibility. They were in the same situation as in Mozambique. There was no motivation to work. That's why every socialist country deteriorated and became poor.

In the West, people buy things with their credit cards or they do business on the stock exchange. The state protects its property, even if it is only an intangible trade. Because of this protection, the economy improved and this benefited everyone. This would not be possible in a socialist state. God wants his kingdom to grow. He wants a society where people are encouraged to work and reap the fruits of their labour.

Stealing reduces the gross domestic product

What happens when people take goods that do not belong to them? The owners get angry. They have lost something. When this happens again and again, people get frustrated. They stop working. If people plant a tree and can never harvest its fruit, they will never plant another tree. Production decreases because of theft. A country that cannot protect the property of its citizens decreases its productivity more and more.

If the state does not protect private property, the owners will have to protect their goods in an expensive way instead of investing in production. The owners will leave the country or stop production and the nation becomes poor.

Moreover, theft reduces the value of goods. If thieves steal a mobile phone, they cannot use it in the same way as the original owner. They cannot use the original owner's data. Instead, the thief has to reconfigure the phone. The knowledge is lost and the value of the stolen mobile phone decreases.

The thief has to sell it on the black market at a lower price than the retail price. The economy of a nation declines. The thief wins, but the gross domestic product falls. There is a loss of value and gradually the country ends up in poverty.

The thieves have to hide, lie and can no longer be honest. The thieves who cheat and steal are afraid of others doing the same to them. A lot of energy and money is spent to protect their own goods and not to increase their value. People can no longer trust each other. This destroys the foundation of the economic system. People trade with each other because they trust each other. Stealing destroys this foundation and a free, fair market is no longer possible. Trade can only take place in a controlled environment where private property is protected.

Corruption makes trade much more difficult. If people have to bribe to get their rights, they are discouraged from investing that money in their businesses. The nation will not produce new resources or more goods. The money goes into corruption instead of invention. Those who want to produce goods are hindered and the corrupt win. Corruption hampers the economy and makes the people rich who do not work for it. The money is not invested in goods but in evil. The economy will decline and gradually the country will face poverty.

Today, thieves no longer need to rob banks. They can rob people with clever computer programmes and special financial products. They cheat and seduce people and the laws of the West can no longer protect the owner. The West is in danger of losing more and more of its value.

The state is becoming more and more expensive because it raises taxes to pay for all the social spending. The people who work are frustrated. It is often no longer worthwhile to work or to start a business. And because taxes and administrative costs are too high, many businesses leave the country and move to a tax haven.

People always wish they had money. They might win it in the lottery. But what happens to these people years later? They don't become rich. They only have money. But money has no value in and of itself. Why do people always want to have something that has no value? Statistics show that these people lose everything 10 years after winning the lottery. Their character has not developed and they could not handle it.

People cannot give generously when they have nothing. It is necessary for people to make profit to support others. Without profit there is no new business and no growth. Socialism wants to distribute goods, but without the production of goods there is nothing to distribute.

Often Christians think like socialists: rich people are seen as thieves and should therefore give their money to the poor. This is the Robin Hood strategy. But God does not protect the poor from the rich: He protects people's labour and goods.

Property and private ownership require responsibility and stewardship. People are involved in creating value and they invest in multiplying it. In the parable of the talents, Jesus made it clear that this is the idea of God, the first step in discipleship. People have to learn to take responsibility and then God will give them more. The Israelites were exhorted to increase their goods and values and pass them on to the next generation.

Today, God gives Christians something to develop and increase. They take care of the little they have and then more will be given to them.⁵⁷ John Calvin had this understanding and he became the founder of the Western work ethic.

Stealing from the next generation

In the 49th year, the Israelites had to return their land to the original owners⁵⁸. A house or other property can be replaced. But land cannot be replaced. The land was not meant to belong to just a few people: It was meant for the next generations. That is why God made a distinction between goods and land. People were not to misuse the land through agricultural mismanagement or even pollution. He decreed that the land should rest every seventh year⁵⁹. This law has found its way into today's society: We should not produce too much or use bad fertiliser. We should not destroy the land because it is for the next generation.

People should take care of the environment by cleaning the land and rivers from pollution and rubbish. Today, many lands and many rivers are polluted. Piles of rubbish are piling up in many places. The land is being polluted and it is being stolen from the next generations and from God. It is the duty of a Christian to clean the streets and rivers and put an end to the pollution of our environment.

The Bible is still the best basis for a healthy economy, namely when people own private property and no one is allowed to take it away from them. This law found its way into all modern constitutions and laid the foundation for the growing Western economy.

Consequences of stealing

- It reduces the value of an economy. (Worldview Bernard Mandeville, Shareholder value)
- It is not just a loss of material things (loss of information, data and relationships)
- The stronger survive. We can take when we have to opportunity to take it.
- People get angry and become furious (they steal because they start to steal)
- People lose trust in one another
- People have to hide and are in danger
- The cost of protection rises extremely instead to invest or create something new (walls around the property)
- It reduces productivity, creativity and self-responsibility. (socialism never worked)
- Too much taxes reduce productivity (the black-market rise)
- People think they can only have more when they steal.
- Corruption decreases the GDP (hinder business and investment)
- People want quick income. (But stewardship and character are not growing).
- They do things that harm people only because they want to win. (do not take care of your labour and customer)
- When private property is not protected it reduce the DGP of a nation. (software, films, music)
- People have nothing to give or invest any more. (People cannot help others to grow)
- People try to be right according to the law but they are corrupt.
- A Well-fare state brings the danger to reduce self-responsibility. (people become dependent)
- People explode labours and nation. (still their time, strength and resources)
- Bondage in cultures is very dangerous. (it reduces production)
- Not pay what its cost (the worker has right of a justice reward)
- To buy only the cheapest thing. It reduces the GDP (bad unhealthy things which destroy the honest business)
- Take another woman and receive babies, that not belong to you. Too many kids that nobody takes care of (Polygamy)
- Stealing from the next generation destroys the future of a nation (environment care)
- People think there are not made for consuming instead serve and create something
- Privat property is coming from labour. Built often people see that as for the lower people.
- God want us to have. Not to steal means not that we should not have.

4 The cathedral concept

Have a long-term perspective

Many of the great cathedrals in Europe are more than 700 years old, and they are still standing. They stand firmly on their foundations, towering over the cities and still being used for their original purpose. Much has changed in the last fifty years and churches are now restaurants, museums and concert halls. It seems that in the last generation the vision of the past has been lost.

The construction of a cathedral took several centuries. The architects will never see the finished work themselves. Nevertheless, the builders had hope for their descendants, for future generations who would complete the work they had begun. Builders from the past could look far into the future. Generations later, people would use what they had begun.

How could these people in the past have such a belief? How could they be so sure that building the cathedral was not for nothing. To invest so much money and energy when they themselves will never see the result?

Antony Gaudi is the architect of the cathedral of Barcelona, Sagrada Família. This huge building is still under construction. Gaudi was not able to finish it. In the last years he built alone on this magnificent monument. What difference could he make in all these years on this great monument? Why did he not give up, even though he was left alone.

All these builders believed in the resurrection. Nothing is in vain what they do, because it has eternal value. Luther said: "If I knew that tomorrow was the last day, I would still plant my apple tree". What is the point of planting a tree if tomorrow everything is gone? The Reformers knew that it would have a purpose because of the resurrection of all his creation. They believed that everything they did today would have eternal value. One day Jesus will come back and everything will be brought back to life. Then Antoni Gaudi and the builders of the past can see it. People invested in the future, in the next generation and in eternity. They believe that after their resurrection they will see the finished cathedral. This has given them the strength not to give up.

The West developed long-term thinking because it believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other cultures, people only see the today. Historians claim that the lack of long-term thinking keeps Africa in poverty. No other religion or worldview could develop such thinking as Christianity. A civilisation will die out when people have no hope for the future when there will be no sustainable thinking.

The reformers were able to look to the future and build a long-term thinking. This thinking took precedence over all the others, who were concerned only with the present.

Conclusion

A nation can be transformed. People can be sure of this because it has happened in history. One of the greatest examples was Geneva in the 16th century. Geneva was in such a bad state that no one wanted to come there. But in just one generation, Geneva was transformed from a poor, ugly and smelly city into a prosperous city. It was called the New Jerusalem and people from all over the world wanted to come to see and learn. It was possible because people changed their perspective. They replaced the power of men with the Word of God.

If it was possible, it will be possible now. But people have to change their thinking and look at the situation with the eyes of the Founder and Creator of this world. They must believe that God is the giver of all goods. They will receive it if they are able to gain his perspective. The four cornerstones presented in this booklet are meant to help begin this process.

I hope that this little booklet will encourage you and help you not to give up on changing a nation. Change is possible, but many people do not know how. Let us learn, then now is the time to change Malawi. Even though many things are not good and are going in the wrong direction. People who trust in God are always on the winning side, even if they lose. They may

lose a battle, but not the war. People who change their minds and see the Creator's view are able to change Malawi. To change it long-term into a stable, prosperous nation.