

Transforming the Inner Man

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Recently I heard Rice Broocks, senior minister of Bethel World Outreach Center in Nashville, Tennessee, say that some people go to the altar so often they must think they are earning “frequent altar miles” to get into heaven. I found that idea funny because I grew up in a church where, if no sinners came forward to be saved, the preacher made all those who were already saved come up again!

Revivalist preaching is a largely American phenomenon that reduces Christianity to its simplest terms: sinners in the hands of an angry God. In the early days of our nation, it allowed ministers to reach large numbers with the gospel in a short amount of time.

Today it is used similarly on Christian television. In a 30- or 60-minute program, the gospel is presented, hearts are touched and an invitation is extended to the audience to make a decision to follow Christ. But as important as that decision is, it is only the beginning of our Christian journey.

Many people naively believe that if they repeat the sinners’ prayer, they’ve secured a place in heaven and their part is done. They never learn that they must deny themselves daily, take up their cross and follow Christ (see Luke 9:23). That’s why, as Broocks observed, the altars of our churches are often full—but there isn’t much personal growth in the body of Christ.

I believe it’s also the reason so many prominent leaders fall

into gross sin. They don't allow the Lord to deal with their inner lives, as the apostle Paul did, before they go into ministry. And they don't perform the daily disciplines necessary to walk in holiness and purity.

But it's not only the prominent who fall; they're simply the ones whose sin becomes public. All of us, as John Loren Sandford points out in his important new book, *Transforming the Inner Man*, need to "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12, NKJV).

Sandford and his wife, Paula, have been pioneers in teaching that ministry to the inner man is more than a tool to heal troubled individuals; it is a vital key to the transformation of the heart of every Christian. Years ago they wrote *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, a 400-page book that sold almost 2 million copies.

Recently the Sandfords rewrote the book in two volumes. Volume 1, *Transforming the Inner Man*, was just released by Charisma House, and I have been devouring it in my quiet times.

The Sandfords write: "The blood of Jesus washes away sins, the cross redeems, justifies, and atones, while His resurrection restores and gives new life. But it is our personal daily taking up of our own cross that continues the necessary slaughter of our old man."

This is an understanding that the body of Christ needs. It's something the Holy Spirit is causing me to evaluate in my own life: Is continual transformation happening? Am I merely saved, or am I becoming more like Jesus every day?

“Transformation is that process of death and rebirth whereby what was our weakness becomes our strength,” the Sandfords explain. “Sanctification overcomes the power of canceled sin, but transformation turns the mess to glory.”

If you have a weakness you’d like God to turn into a strength or a mess for Him to turn to glory, then this book is for you.

It’s available wherever Christian books are sold as well as on our Web site ([http://www.charisma.com](#)). And you can download Chapter 8, “Bitter-Root Judgment and Expectancy,” which is based on Hebrews 12:15, on the same site. To me, that chapter alone is worth the price of the book because it clearly shows that when we judge others, we reap judgment on ourselves (see Matt. 7:1-2 and Gal. 6:7).

Of course, learning to forgive and understanding that the laws of sowing and reaping have not only positive effects but also negative ones are ongoing processes. But reading a book like the Sandfords’ can aid the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out. Why not begin the transformation process today?

Stephen Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. A free copy of the Sandfords’ book will be given to the first 20 who request it online at [http://www.charisma.com](#)