

Changing on the Inside – by John White

A question on the first page grips our attention:

“Can human beings really change, really turn their lives around? My answer... is ‘Yes....Deep and lasting change really is possible. And I don’t mean altered behavior, but a dramatic turnaround at the core of a person’s being. A change so dramatic and decisive we could call it an inner revolution. I have seen it happen.” This is not an external but an internal change: “changing on the inside.”

White is not talking about superficial adjustments, new resolutions, or outward conformity – things we all know will never last. He focuses on a deeper, more profound change that brings us not only peace but also a vital connection with each other and with God.

His premise is insightful and sound: “external lifestyle changes are a response to a fundamental change in a person’s perception of reality.” (p. 10) Fascinating examples of such change abound. Chinese skeptics, stunned by Mao’s principles, begin a whole new way of living. People turn to – and then turn away from – addictions to food and alcohol. A religious revival in Wales spreads throughout the country.

By including such varied examples, White makes his book of interest to a population including and beyond his own Christian faith. Whether church-based or secular, groups dealing with addiction (AA, NA, OA and others) will find his restatement of the 12 Steps both thought-provoking and challenging.

This is a book about “repentance,” but repentance defined in a way that may be unfamiliar to you. White explains that the biblical uses of that word mean “to turn around and go a different direction” and so find deep comfort. His words speak to our hearts.

What does this book have to offer?

- It moves us away from the familiar and futile efforts to change our behaviors to the pleasure of watching new behaviors flow from new perceptions of reality.
- It goes beyond psychology to consider the spiritual component of change.
- It expands and deepens our understanding of repentance.
- It brings hope that we can experience increasing freedom from sin and failure.

Here is an insightful, biblically accurate, and deeply helpful book. I highly recommend it.