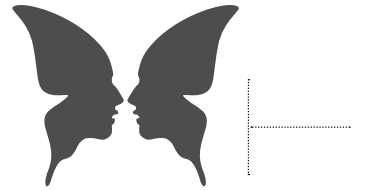


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SPRING SUMMER



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# Welcomin the Stranger



SPRING SUMMER

volume 101





A VISION OF THE REDEEMED  
LIFE: TRANSFORMATION  
TRUMPS INFORMATION  
IN WELCOMING THE  
STRANGER BACK HOME

JOHN ORTBERG

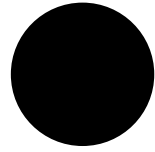
In his article on a vision for the redeemed life, John Ortberg invites us to think about transformation in the context of how modernity is influencing spiritual formation. He cites the REVEAL study, as well as other recent research on why church attendance and religious affiliation have plummeted in the last decade. Even folks that are still attending church, aren't "getting" much out of it evidenced by the findings in these studies. Many, including UnChristian authors Kinnaman and Lyons, and the "New Atheists" believe the church needs to come up with a new way to 'measure' spiritual growth. Ortberg references what Dallas Willard calls "schools of life"—where people are regularly learning to interact with a present spiritual reality that nourishes the soul, as an approach that the church should take to aid in the

spiritual formation of Believers.

Ortberg discusses his training as a clinical psychologist, and how the field of Psychology has shifted from focusing on pathology, to flourishing—with the emergence of "Positive Psychology." As this branch of psychology is asking questions like "what does the well-lived life look like?" and exploring virtues and ethics—the church has an excellent entry point to join the discussion.

In their conversation, Moon and Ortberg talk about transformation within the context of 'welcoming the stranger.' "From what we've learned from the REVEAL study and others, the church is now at a pivotal point to welcome [back] some folks that left the fold

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sex offenders), wrong-doers, people outside their own territory (political refugees), or anyone who is different from us politically, ethnically or theologically. Anyone we are tempted to exclude or ignore (even the elderly) we must be watchful to welcome as Jesus himself. Empathy is key, as is practicing the presence of God, to overcome our own shyness and think not only about our own interests, but also the interest of others. As we practice this, and invite God into our interactions with others, things begin to flow more easily and we become unselfconscious and more centered on others.

1. What resonates most with you about the story of the Good Samaritan?
2. Who are the strangers in your life?
3. How might you welcome strangers in a way that is personal?
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