



CHANGING FROM THE CENTER

Deeper Waters

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Do you like change?

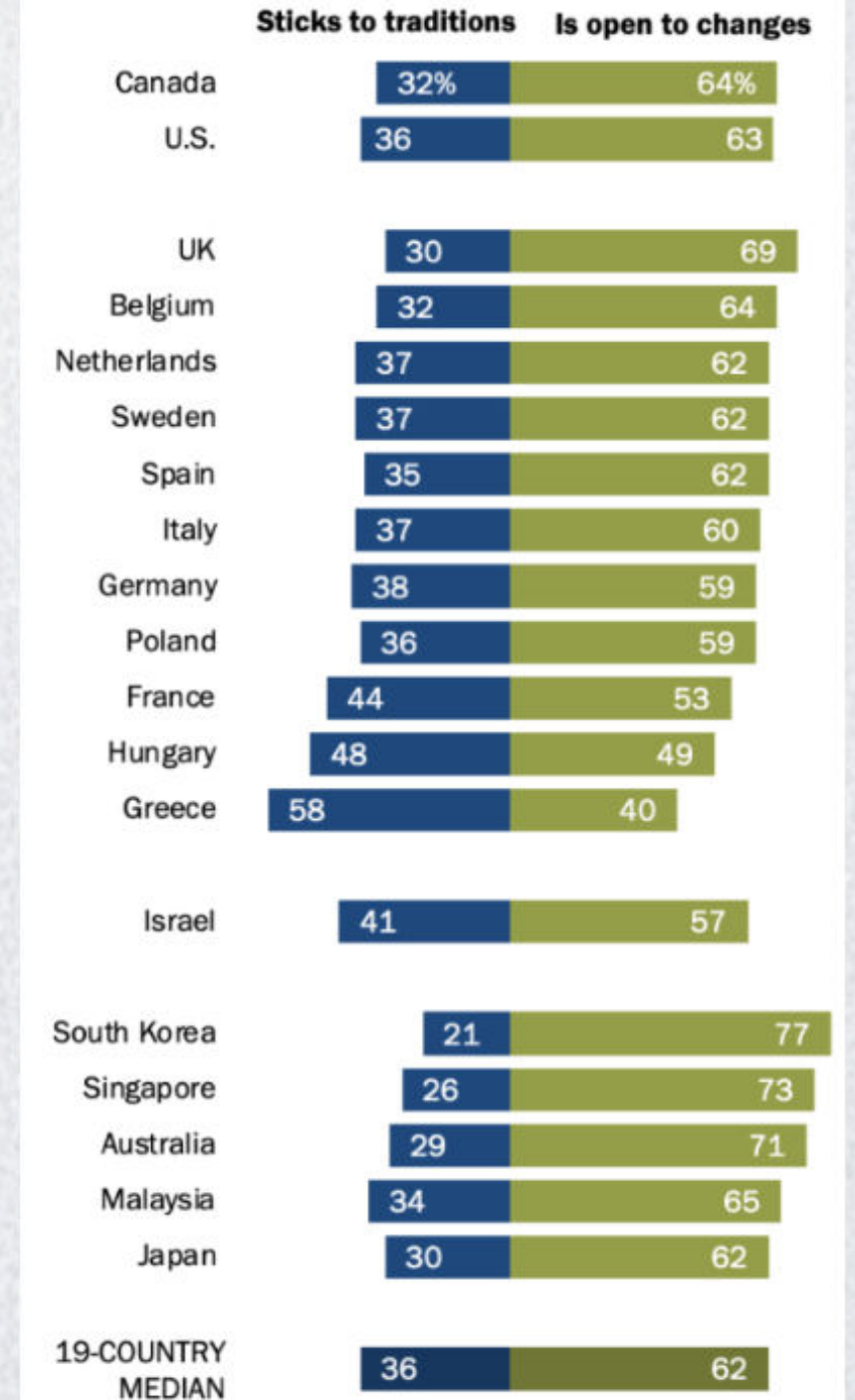


A study by Pew Research in 2023 (in 19 different countries) found that most people thought an openness to change would be good for the future of their country.

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Most say their country will be better off if it is open to changes

% of adults who say their country will be better off in the future if it ____ and/in its way of life



Note: Those who did not answer not shown.
Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey, Q4.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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Change based on God's mercy and wisdom is worshipful and fruitful.

“Offering our whole selves is a worship-centric way to live and bears the fruit of reorienting us away from the life-draining patterns of this world and transforming us into the pattern of God’s good, pleasing, and perfect intentions for us.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

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“Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continually return.”

(Thomas Kelly)

“But too often, in the whirlwind of our thoughts and the rush of our activities, we skim along the surface of life and never experience these rich and life-giving depths.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

One goal of this series is to train us to attend to both our “surface level” life and the “depths of the soul” at the same time.

“There is a way of ordering our mental life on more than one level at once. On one level we may be thinking, discussing, seeing, calculating, meeting all the demands of external affairs. But deep within, behind the scenes, at a profounder level, we may also be in prayer and adoration, song and worship and a gentle receptiveness to divine breathings...

The deep level of prayer and of divine attendance is the most important thing in the world. It is at this deep level that the real business of life is determined... Between the two levels is fruitful interplay, but ever the accent must be upon the deeper level, where the soul ever dwells in the presence of the Holy One."

(Thomas Kelly)

Start with, and continually return to, your beloved status as God's child.

“It will be very difficult to embark—and remain—on a journey of transformation if we do not have confidence that we are already loved as we currently are. We don’t change so that we’ll be loved more by God. We are measurelessly loved by God, so we are free and enabled to change in all the ways we long for.”

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

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A focus on transforming your exterior behaviors will be frustrating and short-lived.

²⁵ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

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The goal of transformation is not perfectionism.

You will not be transformed by your own power or initiative, but by cooperation with the power of the Holy Spirit.

"We are not the prime movers in this transformation. Rather than being initiators of the action, we are responders to the action of another. We are being transformed rather than transforming ourselves. There is a divine work with which we cooperate. The work of cooperating is critical, but not primary. The transforming work of God through the potent action of God's Spirit is what is primary."

(from *What Does Your Soul Love?*)

Closing Reflections

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Do you find yourself simply skimming upon the surface waters of life? Are you attending to the depth of life found in the interior of your soul?

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If you're ready, invite the Spirit to change and transform you over the next several weeks. If you're not ready, what's holding you back?

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Which warning about transformation do you need to pay most attention to? Changing for the sake of Divine approval? A focus on exterior behaviors? The impossibility of perfectionism? Relying on your will-power alone?

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