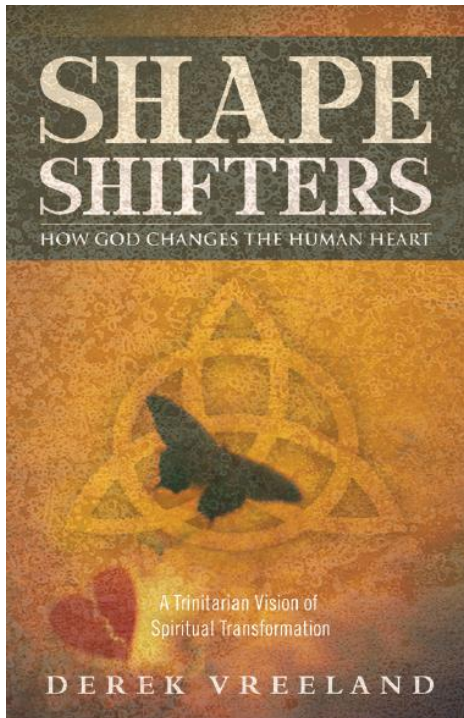




WORD & SPIRIT PRESS



Shape Shifters

How God Changes the Human Heart

By Derek Vreeland

154 Pages

Word and Spirit Press (Tulsa, Oklahoma)

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From the Introduction:

“I have written this book out of my own journey. It has been a spiritual and theological journey to become a shape shifter, to understanding how the Triune God shapes my inner character to reflect the character of Christ. I write as a fellow pilgrim, a fellow sojourner climbing this mountain of Christian experience. I have not attained full-blown shape shifter status, but I continue to press on. I want to shift into the shape of Jesus and help others do the same, because one of the purposes of God’s salvation is transformation—spiritual transformation now and physical transformation when Jesus returns.”

—Derek Vreeland, Author

Copies are available from:

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The author at www.derekvreeland.com

News

For Immediate Release



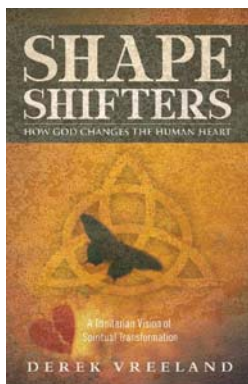
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Becoming a Different Kind of Person

Pastor connects the ancient Trinity with real life heart change in a new book

Derek Vreeland, pastor of Cornerstone Church in Americus, Georgia, has devoted years as a pastor working to discover how God changes the human heart. What he has uncovered is not another self-help program, but a process of spiritual transformation so we can become different kinds of people.



Vreeland's book, *Shape Shifters* (Word & Spirit Press 2008), uses the doctrine of the Trinity as a model to describe how we can experience that elusive change we all desire. In the face of growing consumerism and self-absorbed spirituality, Vreeland describes how we can experience spiritual renewal and authentic transformation.

His vision for inner change is drawn from the historic imagery of the Trinity, the Christian belief that God is one being revealed in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In light of this doctrine, Vreeland explains that heart change is:

- The Spirit's work
- The Son's image
- The Father's joy
- Experienced in the context of Christian community
- Received as we walk along spiritual pathways

Readers have praised *Shape Shifters* for its helpful contribution to Christian living. One reader comments, "Derek joins good doctrine to practical living which makes this book a valuable resource to individual believers and local congregations." Another reader writes, "Peppered with humor and personal illustrations, this is a very helpful book for any Christian who desires more in their walk with God."

Books are available from Amazon.com and from the author at www.derekvreeland.com.

Shape Shifters: How God Changes the Human Heart. Word & Spirit Press, September 2008. ISBN: 0-9785352-9-4. Soft cover, \$12.95.



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Author Bio



Dr. Derek Vreeland is the pastor of Cornerstone Church in Americus, Georgia. A passion for biblical truth and the local church drives his thoughtful, humorous, and authentic teaching style. He and his wife Jenni live in Americus with their two boys Wesley and Taylor.

He is a graduate of Missouri Western State University (B.A. English/Writing), Oral Roberts University (M.Div.), and Asbury Theological Seminary (D.Min).

His first book, *Shape Shifters*, combines his love for the doctrine of the Trinity and spiritual transformation.

Derek was born in Mobile, Alabama and grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri. On March 31, 1990 Jesus came crashing into his life. From this point forward, everything changed. Sensing a call to ministry, he threw himself into the life of the church and Bible study. His passion for biblical truth and the local church continued through high school and into college.

After a year of marriage, he began seminary at Oral Roberts University, graduating in 1999. In September that year, Derek moved his family to Americus, Georgia where he served as the Youth Pastor at Cornerstone Church until 2004, when he became the Pastor.

He completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in 2007.

Derek fulfills his call to teach and lead within a healthy and vibrant church in rural South Georgia. In addition to writing and local church ministry, he also travels to India, teaching in pastors' seminars supporting the church planting efforts of the Indian Evangelical Team (IET) founded by P.G. Vargis.

*To interview the author or invite him to speak to your organization contact
Derek Vreeland by phone at 229-924-7409 or by email derekvreeland@gmail.com*



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Endorsements

Spiritual formation and the doctrine of the Trinity--for most Christians they have little to do with each other. That's why Shape Shifters is such an important book. What Derek Vreeland has done here is to connect the dots, showing us how vitally and inextricably bound together they are. The Trinitarian vision of spiritual transformation he sets forth is biblical, balanced, and beautiful. It will resonate with Christians from various traditions and will surely benefit the whole Church. Read it and be informed, inspired, and transformed.

—Dr. Stephen Seamands
Professor of Christian Doctrine, Asbury Theological Seminary,
Wilmore, Kentucky

Derek Vreeland has done a great job in Shape Shifters by giving the church a sound biblical and theological view of spiritual transformation in the lives of Jesus followers. This book is not just lofty thinking. Derek joins good doctrine to practical living which makes this book a valuable resource to individual believers and local congregations. I was highly encouraged in my own reading to submit myself to the work of the Holy Spirit's work to conform me to the image of Christ for the joy of God the Father. I cannot wait to use this book in my local church! Read this book with others in your church—it will bring great benefit and blessing.

—Rev. Rodney A. Bradford
Pastor, Arabi Baptist Church, Arabi, Georgia

With his book Shape Shifters, Derek Vreeland makes an excellent contribution to the important subject of spiritual transformation—a subject which has been largely ignored within in the Charismatic and Pentecostal community. Instead of parodying the self-help methods that characterize the pseudo-spiritual culture of contemporary America, Shape Shifters gives us a well-written exploration of spiritual transformation founded in solid, historic, Trinitarian theology. We live in a time when there is a tendency to dismiss theology as unimportant and irrelevant. The truth is everyone does theology. We either do it well or we do it poorly. Derek Vreeland is a pastor who does theology well and does it with relevance. If you have a hunger for genuine spiritual transformation that the shallow self-help gimmicks fail to satisfy, I enthusiastically recommend Derek Vreeland's substantive and compelling book.

—Pastor Brian Zahnd
Senior Pastor, Word of Life Church, St. Joseph, Missouri

Most everyone has something he or she would like to change about their self. We know we need to change but most don't know how. In this book, Derek Vreeland puts forth sound, concise truth from Scripture that will help any serious follower of Jesus to embrace the transformations God wants to bring to his or her life. I am delighted see this timeless message coming from the pen of a rising young leader in the 21st century church. For all who are committed to grow in the ways of the Lord, this is the book for you.

—Pastor Darrell Chatraw

Church Planter, Bay Area Vineyard Church, Milton, Florida

What does the Trinity have to do with our own spiritual transformation? Read this book and find out. Derek has done a masterful job showing how the community, found in the Trinity, is an expression of God's desire for community with us. His insights will inspire you, and challenge you to think about the nature of transformation. I highly recommend that you read this book and discover how God is already at work in your life.

—Dr. Stephen Gray

Director of National Missions, General Association of General Baptists,
Poplar Bluff, Missouri

A superb book! It enables us to understand and follow God's central purpose for every Christian, to be transformed into His image. Derek Vreeland provides a broad and simple understanding of the Spirit-led transformative process. He invites us to undertake this multi-path spiritual journey. This book has emerged from his life-long hunger for God and intelligent understanding of spiritual formation. His perspective is biblical, historical, and shaped by the writings of sages and scholars. This book will compel and equip every believer and Christian leader to experience meaningful and joyful Spirit-led spiritual transformation.

—Dr. Aby Vargis Kallimel

Missionary & Church Planting Trainer, Indian Evangelical Team,
New Delhi, India

Derek Vreeland's vision for spiritual transformation is God-breathed, Christ-centered, and Spirit-filled. Using contemporary illustrations and personal insights he takes the reader on a journey through the Scriptures, the church tradition, and Christian experience that will lead you to a surprising destination. Who are you? Who is God? Know that the answers you will discover come from a man who has not only thought about the life of faith, but seeks to understand it while being changed by it.

—Rev. Allan L. Purtill, Jr.

Minister of Word and Sacrament, First Presbyterian Church, Americus, Georgia

Shape Shifters is a very accessible book on the role of the Trinity in bringing about spiritual transformation in the life of the believer (and by extension, the local church). Derek Vreeland has done an admirable job of navigating heady theological concepts, and bringing them to a point of access available to a wide group. Starting with the need and desire for change, Vreeland leads us through the writings of Paul, the role of the Holy Spirit, a full understanding of the character of God and the example of Jesus in presenting a balanced understanding of spiritual transformation. Peppered with humor and personal illustrations, this is a very helpful book for any Christian who desires more in their walk with God.

—Pastor Santosh Ninan

Lead Pastor, Heritage Mountain Community Church, Port Moody,
British Columbia



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Quotables

On the meaning of the title *Shape Shifters*

Various cultures throughout the centuries have told stories of shape shifters as a part of their folklore. Shape shifters have been depicted as people, animals, or some kind mythic creature.... Fairy tales and folklore have a way of shaping the way we look at reality. As an adult, they create in me the belief that we can become shape shifters. In the face of the growing cynicism which says, "People never change," I believe we can change and become different people. (page 13)

The master craftsman of our transformation

The Holy Spirit works like the hands of God shaping our hearts like a potter who shapes a cold lump clay into a beautiful piece of pottery. Jesus the Son of God is the model, the perfect example of a man fully human and fully alive, living in perfect obedience. The Spirit is the master craftsman, transforming us from the deformed image left by sin into the blemishless image of Jesus. (page 24)

The kingdom of self as the obstacle to change

A preoccupation with the self is the essence of the kingdom of self. It robs us of our true identities, preventing us from becoming the people God created us and designed us to be. God's plan to transform us into the image of his Son by the Holy Spirit makes us more ourselves, more human, the kind of persons he desires for us to be. (page 55)

A Trinitarian Christian

Rediscovering God as the Trinity—as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—has catapulted my spiritual walk forward. It has connected me with fellow God-seekers in my generation and those who have lived long ago. My exploration of the triune God has given me a perspective on life, ministry, and spiritual formation that is overtly Trinitarian. It has shaped my identity. I have become intentionally a Trinitarian Christian. (page 61)

Transformation as the work of the Holy Spirit

We are not the agent of our change, and neither are we the purpose and focus of our change. Spiritual transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit in changing us. We have a part to play in this process, and certainly our inner life is the stage on which the Spirit goes to work, but spiritual transformation has much more to do with God than it does with us. God is the engineer, the agent, and the model of our transformation. It is his plan, his work, and his example. (page 76)

Self-help is no help

I deeply desire to open myself to his work and partner with the Holy Spirit. I have given up on self-help methodologies, whether Christian or secular. Personal willpower has failed. I am relying solely on the Spirit's work to change me to look more like Jesus. My actions are only a response to his work in order that I may participate with the Spirit. (page 101)

Spirit-power not willpower

The Christian life is not a matter of willpower, but a willingness to open up to the Spirit's power. Willpower will always cause us to crash, just like the energy crash from a high-sugar diet. We have to quit trying to be a Christian in our own power and open up and allow God's power to shape us to look like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. (page 104)

The role of the local church

We are allowing the doctrine of the Trinity to guide us in understanding spiritual transformation. The Holy Spirit is changing us to look like Jesus, and this process does bring joy to the heart of God the Father. Yet this Trinitarian vision does not end with the distinct persons, but continues with the unified community. God, who is a holy community, is changing us in the context of a holy community, the local church. (page 116)

Spiritual pathways

The primary way we cooperate with the Spirit is by walking along spiritual pathways. For centuries, Christians have walked down certain paths on the shape-shifting journey. As we walk along these ancient pathways, we join those who have experienced the transformation we seek. (page 127)