

Liberty Commentary April 29, 2008

Charles Laurence wrote an article in 2005 entitled, Psychiatrists devise “depravity rating” to help courts decide on death sentences.

Laurence writes, “for years doctors shunned the use of the word “evil” on the grounds that it crossed the lines between clinical and moral judgment”.

Dr. Michael Stone, professor of psychiatry at Columbia University concluded after a study of more than 500 vicious criminals, “After years of study we have learned to recognize the traits of these people: what they do and why they do it. It is time to give them the proper appellation-evil.”

What Dr. Stone failed to mention is the root cause for this “evil”. Genesis chapter two tells us, “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”. God created man in His image, with a moral conscience. Our moral conscience became corrupted when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. The animal kingdom, the earth and mankind all came under the curse of sin. Therefore, we have a depraved, “evil” nature that has the propensity, when left to its natural instincts, to commit acts of ill will and in some instances violent crimes against humanity.

We do not just have a soul but rather every person is a soul. It is who we are. It is eternal and will never die. The body dies but the soul lives on throughout eternity. That is why it is imperative that every person (soul) accepts the forgiveness for sin that is available through receiving Jesus Christ as Savior so that our eternal soul will spend eternity in heaven.

The soul is made up of four aspects. Intellect, sensibility, will, and conscience. Intellect is that which tells me if a given issue, once I

have the facts, I should do it or not do it. My intellect tells me if it is right or wrong to do. My sensibility tells me what I would like to do about the facts. My conscience tells me what I should do about the facts. My will tells me what I shall do about the facts. All four of these aspects have become corrupted to some degree because of the sin nature we all inherited from Adam and Eve.

The bible lists several different kinds of conscience. Hebrews 10:22 speaks of an evil conscience. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Titus 1:15, "unto the pure all things are pure but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled". This is speaking of unbelievers who in their sinful lives, thoughts and motives defile their conscience so that their decisions based on their defiled conscience are no longer reliable guides. Our conscience should not be our Guide, it is corrupted. God should be our guide and as we submit to his guidance through the Holy Spirit we will make right choices, moral choices, choices that will bring love, joy, peace, longsuffering and gentleness to our lives as well as the lives of those around us.

The Bible talks about a good conscience. That which every believer is to possess. In Acts 23:1 Paul says, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day". Then the Apostle Paul gives us the bottom line in I Timothy 1:5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a good conscience".

It is interesting that the Apostle Paul would talk about a good conscience because he previously had an evil and defiled conscience. When Paul was a younger man he persecuted Christians and even voted and consented to have Christians put to death. One day when Paul was on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians he met the Savior. He received Jesus as his Savior by

faith and Jesus changed his life and gave him a “good conscience” and a “faith unfeigned”.

Paul would later write in II Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man (or woman) be in Christ, he (she) is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”.

No matter how hard we try, no matter how much money we spend and no matter how many studies are conducted, the sin nature of man cannot be reformed. It is evil and depraved. We need a new nature. We must be transformed, not reformed and that can only take place through a relationship with Jesus Christ who will produce in us His nature.

Pastor, Randy Mason www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com