

Reform or Transform?

We live in a world full of problems and the crime, drug, and alcohol epidemics are out of control and, to make things even worse, political corruption knows no limits. The evil influence of Hollywood has saturated just about every moral fiber of life. Sexual promiscuity continues to destroy the lives of people of all ages, even those of pre-teen years. There are people who see the problem and honestly want to do something about it. They want to try to stop this by reforming those involved. To "reform" simply means {1} "to put or change into an improved form or condition;" {2} "to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuses"; {3} "to put an end to (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action." On the surface, all of this seems noble, but there is just one problem with it - it only treats the symptom and not the cause. A person who has been "reformed" is like one who changes his smelly clothes but does not take a bath. To reform a person only changes the external {outside} but what he really needs is a change from within, a "heart change."

The "heart change" is where a transformation takes place, so to speak. **Renovation** means, "restore to a good state of repair." In other words, dilapidated buildings or poorly maintained houses are sometimes considered to be in a state of disrepair. To renovate a house or building means to resurrect that structure from a state of disrepair. Renovations can often be subtle, improving on the existing building or house. Or, they can be drastic, much like a remodel. Remember construction involving renovation often refers to "restoring" or "repairing" an existing structure" {--copied from a building contractor entry}

What people in this world **NEED** is not to be "reformed" but to be "transformed" and that comes from being spiritually "renovated." It is difficult to explain in such a small pamphlet but I shall try to be brief.

Everything we do in this life originates in the heart. The Bible, that is God's Word, tells us that, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" {Jeremiah 17:9} "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:" {Mark 7:21-22} "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:" Even that so-called "little white lie" God calls sin and it's all a matter of the heart {2 Peter 2:14}. The Bible has a lot more to say about this but these verses are enough to convey the point.

ALL of us were and are born with a sinful heart that we inherited from Adam, the first person created by God and who disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden {Genesis 2:16,17; Romans 5:12}. God warned Adam that he would die if he disobeyed Him; this meant physical death and spiritual death. The moment Adam disobeyed God, he died spiritually, and eventually he died physically and so it has been this way since. The wages of being a sinner are death, **BUT** God in His love for us has made a way of escape. And just what might that be? Please consider a few verses from God's Word.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." {Romans 5:8} Jesus Christ is **THE** Messiah promised by God; He is the Son of God. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." {John 20:31} "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." {John 3:16} God loves us so much that He sent His Son from the glory of Heaven to die on the Cross of Calvary and, by doing so He fully paid our sin debt. It was with the innocent blood of Jesus as He suffered and died. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" {1 Peter 1:18-19} At this very moment Jesus Christ is back in Heaven at God the Father's right hand. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" {Hebrews 10:12}

So, where does the transformation/renovation come in? Right here my friend! "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." {2 Chronicles

5:17} The "new creature" literally means "new creation," a spiritual creation. Being a spiritual "new creation {we call it being born again} means that we now have a new spiritual heart, a heart that wants to please the Lord as we live for Him. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." {1 Corinthians 6:19-20}

Friend, no matter who you are, where you are, or what you may have done; if you will repent of your sin and by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you trust Him as your personal Saviour, He will not only forgive you but will also save you for all eternity. How do I know? Because He said so, that is how! "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." {John 3:36} "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." {1 John 5:11-13} For the sake of your eternal soul, will you do this TODAY!?

~Richard A. Ciarrocca/2017