

Minister's Message – March 2010

Human Disorders

The Sydney Morning Herald of 27 February, 2010 carried the headline 'Rape becomes an illness'. The article reported that the *Manual of mental disorders*, put out by an international body of psychologists, now includes a new disorder, 'paraphilic coercive disorder'. Who suffers from this disorder? The definition, as reported by *The Sydney Morning Herald*, refers to 'intensive sexually arousing fantasies or sexual urges focused on sexual coercion'. It goes on to refer to 'forcing sex on three or more non-consenting persons on several occasions'. Rape has become a mental illness, according to these experts. It is possible that a rapist – a person who has raped at least three innocent people – will be able to plead diminished responsibility because of mental illness.

Is there any crime for which the plea of mental illness cannot be made? Murderers often make such a plea to avoid conviction. It helps to have committed multiple murders when making such a plea! We hear the plea of mental incapacity for all manner of law breaking, from embezzling money, to telling lies and perjury. Is the day coming when all crimes will be excused on the basis of some mental disorder? Will all criminals soon be set free when they make this plea?

Whilst adults are busy telling children that there will be consequences for their bad behaviour, they are busy telling themselves there should be no consequences. Children are very good at making excuses for their bad behaviour. Are adults any different? Adults are more sophisticated. They use the law, and nowadays 'science', to get around the consequences of their actions – be that theft, murder or even rape.

In all this law and psychology the word sin is never heard. Yet the word sin is found all through the Creator's manual for life. We read in the Bible that the eldest son of Adam and Eve murdered his own brother. The human race did not get off to a good start! God warned Cain that sin was crouching at the door and told him to rule over it (Genesis 4). He did not tell him he was sick and could do nothing other than murder his brother.

Sin has infected the heart and affected the life of every descendant of Adam and Eve. *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Sin is lawlessness. God gave laws for his people to live by in society, and before him. Our society has laws we must obey. If we continue down the path of excusing ourselves when we break these laws, then the law becomes powerless. The end result will be anarchy. The person who murders your brother or rapes your sister will suffer no consequences.

Thankfully God's law, and the administration of it, is not left in the hand of psychologists or clever lawyers. God's law does not change nor does the judge. Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, died, and rose again, is the judge of all people. He is the righteous judge. He will not accept excuses for wicked acts. All have sinned and are without excuse (Romans 3:20). *The wages of sin is death*, so all will die – well not quite all. We read on *but the gift of God is eternal life* (Romans 6:23).

There is only one plea we can make before the judge of each and every human being, a straightforward plea for mercy. Only a pardon granted by the supreme ruler of the universe will save you. The good news is this ruler promises a pardon when you plead for mercy. If you confess your sins and believe in his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, he will let you live. Why the believing in Jesus? Because he is the one who has taken the penalty for your sin. God does not brush sin under the carpet. He sent Jesus into this world to bear the penalty that was on your head. Stop making excuses for your sin. Acknowledge your sin, confess it to God and ask him, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to forgive you.

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