

From the Pastor's Pen

When my children were growing up they loved to watch Saturday morning cartoons. Because I enjoyed spending time with my children, I would join them on the sofa where we would watch cartoons until late in the afternoon. I recall them particularly liking a cartoon series called "Transformers." "Transformers" was a cartoon where cars and trucks would reassemble (transform) themselves into robot-like personalities that were in a conflict of good versus evil, and the whole human race was threatened to be wiped out by the bad guys.

This past year I found myself at the theater watching a movie that was based on this cartoon series. Again, not as much because I particularly like this cartoon as much as I enjoy spending time with my wife at the movies. The movie was pretty cool, though, and thanks to my children I was able to understand it because of our time spent together on those Saturday mornings watching "Transformers."

I couldn't help but notice that this cartoon had many of the fundamental concepts found in Christianity. To name a few comparisons, there is of course the battle between good and evil that mirrors the battle between sin and righteousness. There is the "good guy" leader, "Optimus Prime," who leads the army of good guys. This army fights against the "bad guys" and their leader, "Megatron." This can be related to God and His army who battle against Satan and his army of fallen angels.

Then there is the whole human race, which seems to be oblivious to the fact that there is an evil force out there with the primary mission to wipe out all of humanity and the power to do so. Because the human race is ignorant of their plight and the fact that they need saved from Megatron and his forces of evil, they scorn the thought of having anything to do with Optimus Prime and his willingness to save them. In fact, they want nothing to do with him. To me, if that doesn't sound like the events that took place when the Incarnate Christ came from the heavens to earth, I don't know what does. Keep in mind that the crowds wanted rid of the offer of Christ's hope so much that humanity was willing to crucify Him—and we did. Even so, He gave Himself to save us.

Another parallel I picked up on was the issue of transformation. In the cartoon and movie, in order for the villain or hero to be at their best, they had to transform from what they were into something better and stronger. In other words—no transformation, no power! This concept is also true for the Christian.

About a year ago our church leaders began to ask the question, "Just what is it that God wants our church to accomplish when ministry is being done?" or "What is the end result to be when we do ministry as a church?" After much prayer, research, dialogue and reflection, our leaders concluded that what God wants is for us to do everything we can to assist Him in the processes that will result in lives being transformed. We also realized that if there is no transformation, then people will never have the power to reach their full potential in the pursuit of Holiness and Godliness! We understand that transformation comes from the work and grace of Jesus Christ, but we also understand that God is counting on us to help lead others to that end. We are "getting it"—that God sent His Son to rescue the whole human race from destruction, and had it not been for the loving mercy of Jesus, mankind would be doomed. We also understand that God wants us to experience transformation from darkness to light, from death to life, from sinfulness to holiness! It is, in short, The Transformed Life!

Have you experienced it?

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

(2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV)

See you in church!

Pastor Tenney