**Freedom to Love and Hate**

Hiroshi Ishiguro is a distinguished professor at Osaka University in Osaka Japan. For the past 15 years, he has overseen the creation of robots with ever-increasing realism in appearance and motion. As amazing as are his latest versions, the nuances of facial expressions and gestures that humans exhibit are so difficult to recreate, the “interactions” between a human and an android are still unsettling. Some believe that these teams of scientists will one day create robots that mimic human behavior so convincingly that people will have androids as friends and, perhaps, even spouses.

Without getting into the disturbing moral implications of such a viewpoint, the work of men like Ishiguro raises an important and fundamental question. What is the significance of the words “I love you” coming from a programmed computer? The very idea of buying a robot to constantly mouth the words is as pathetic as a lonely person sending themselves flowers and pretending that they came from someone who cares about them. You see, love is absolutely meaningless unless it comes from a being with the capacity to feel emotion and the will to freely offer it. A robot has neither.

There is so much hatred and evil in the world that any person with a shred of common decency cannot help but be disturbed by it. In fact, some struggle to accept that an all-loving and all-powerful God could have created a world that contains so much evil among the good. But a world of both good and evil is reasonable understanding the nature of love and the nature of God.

**God is Love.** The apostle John tells us as much in 1 John 4:8. In fact we can see His immense love for His Son when He created everything through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). He created us in His image and loves us enough to make great sacrifice on our behalf (John 3:16).

**God wants us to love Him in return.** He created us with His capacity to love and has provided us with overwhelming motivation through His boundless grace and kindness (1 John 4:19). He has told us to love Him completely and to love one another as we love ourselves, but without the ability to refuse, any prospect of demonstrating love toward Him would be empty. *For my love for God to have meaning, I must have the free will to say no.*

**Evil results when some men choose to reject God’s love.** A person with no love for God will have no regard for His commandment to love others. Men who have rejected the selfless nature of God and live their lives pursuing their own gratification cause untold grief and suffering for those around them. But the presence of such men only stands in stark contrast to those who, by their own free will, have chosen to love their Creator and who demonstrate that devotion in the love and kindness they continually show their fellow man.

The presence of evil in the world is evidence of only one thing: God created beings with the capacity to love and hate and with the ability to choose love. He wants each of us to live with Him eternally, but it is up to me and you to choose to devote our lives to Him. We are not robots after all and the choices we make have consequences.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**