

Are the Ten Commandments Relevant in American Society Today?

Rob Rohrbough – November 1, 2012

Sometimes my friends and others ask, “How can you be a Christian and believe in capitalism? Isn't it based on selfishness and greed? How can you be against wonderful, humanitarian programs that our government supports?” I then ask them, “How can you be a Christian and support government programs of redistribution that take away our unalienable rights – the rights that come from God, himself?” The answers to these questions are profound. They have a great deal to do with the cosmic struggle of good versus evil. While there is not enough space to address such a large issue, perhaps we can examine several assertions.

I spent an evening several months ago learning about the Christians who were our founding fathers. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence most were devout Christians, many in the clergy. Whether practicing clergymen or not, over half, 29, had seminary or Bible school degreesⁱ. I knew our founders were not secular in their orientation before this, but when I saw clearly what has been lost in the past eighty years, I could not keep my eyes dry. For nearly two hundred years our country was based on Judeo-Christian principles, and freedom of Christian religious expression was practiced copiously.

Beginning at least as early as an un-footnoted book rewriting history in 1926ⁱⁱ, to the lies taught in our public schools today, to the perversion of the First Amendment that removes freedom of Christian expression from the public square, we have lost our true history. Why? Why remove religion from the public square? Perhaps the answer lies with how despots have controlled people from Communist Russia, to Nazi Germany, to Castro's Cuba. They have made sure that the highest authority is the state and its master minds in power.

Our founding would have been just another rebellion except for these words, found in the Declaration of Independence: “That [all men] are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”. Our founders recognized that rights do not come from another man, a government, or even a document. What made our founding documents so powerful is God as their source of power. That government derives its rights from people and not vice versa. Without God as the source of all rights, any person or group, government, may wield power without limit. In the United States, we delegate power to the several States, and then to the Federal Government, not the “National” Government.

The progressive left has been chipping away at these principles in our country since before the turn of the Twentieth Century when Bibles were removed from public schools. Today the case can be made that the left's policies break all Ten Commandments. How? Let's begin with the first:

I. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

Rabbi Daniel Lapinⁱⁱⁱ asserts that the god this nation under the influence of the left is essentially Baal, one of the gods in The Old Testament of the Bible to which the First Commandment was specifically directed. Baal was the god of war, economy, nature, the environment – a pantheistic god^{iv}. Rabbi Lapin asserts that a religion must answer three questions:

1. Where do we come from?

2. Where are we going?
3. What do we do in between?

Secular Fundamentalism (essentially the worship of Baal) says we came randomly from a big bang – evolving from protoplasm via evolution through monkeys. Judeo Christianity asserts that God created us in his image, making us fundamentally different from animals. Leftist groups like PETA^v insist we really are not better than animals and should consider the earth before we consider human beings. These views are not open for negotiation or modification.

Judeo-Christianity asserts that we are on our way to eternal existence. Secular Fundamentalism asserts that we will return to nothing – the end is hopeless, not just for us but a disaster for humanity, whether by nuclear Armageddon, global cooling, global warming or global climate change.

In-between, Christians try to make the world better than they found it – whether it is in their personal circles by trying to make their families', friends', or neighbors' lives a little brighter when they see them or in their public lives by their donations or volunteer service. Secular Fundamentalists advocate doing what feels good except for their calls for your sacrifices, whether they be recycling or doing whatever it takes to stop global warming – including supporting a government that will force economic disaster. Strange for the religion of the economy! Nevertheless, the left puts other gods, any god, before the Christian God, the God of Freedom^{vi}. Now, let's continue on with the rest:

- II. Thou shall make no graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

Worship of Baal involved excrement as an offering.^{vii} How many incidents in the Occupy movement have involved such demonstrations? How about the symbols of success in our society? Are we more concerned with our values when we vote or the economy and all the status symbols that go with it? Did you know there are polls that show that nearly half of Christians put the economy before their values (principles) when they vote? What does it say when our government funds the display of a crucifix in a bucket of the artist's urine?

- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Profanity is defended by the left as “free speech” as it has destroyed almost all our obscenity laws, while at the same time removing any expression of Christian values from schools or any other public square.

- IV. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it...

When I was a little boy, the only businesses that were open were the gas station and the drug store, and they had limited hours. Now the only restrictions on Sunday sales are liquor on Sunday mornings – by state law. I guess we still have some token homage to the sabbath. By the way, for those who declare that the U.S. Constitution was completely secular, I might refer to this passage in Article I, Section 7, “If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law...”

V. Honor thy father and thy mother

“It takes a village to raise a child.” This famous quote adopted by a First Lady for her 1996 book^{viii}, has been taken to a disturbing level with the indoctrination of our children in public schools and the coincident erosion of parental rights. Why is it that parents must sign their rights away or get a prescription for a school to give a child an aspirin or Tylenol, but will not even be notified if their daughter is given a contraceptive?

VI. Thou shalt not murder.

Most translations erroneously translate this commandment using the word, “kill”. The Hebrew word stands for murder, not all killing^{ix}. This is why self defense normally is not prosecuted. This is why in the old west you had to be fast enough in a gun fight to let the other guy draw first but shoot him first. This also allows the possibility of just war. Another legitimate purpose of killing is to fight evil – for instance, execution for some murders^x. That is why many conservatives view execution as a proper punishment for the most heinous, clear cut murders. How does that square with the left's position of “pro choice” when it comes to abortion? While the author knows good people that differ on this, we cannot let a discussion of the Sixth Commandment go without it.

Since Roe v Wade, a court decision pressed vigorously by the left, more than fifty six million innocent unborn babies (and counting) have died at the hands of abortionists – known in pro-life circles as American Genocide. But, according to leftist groups, they're only fetuses. They are not human. They have no rights. I never heard the term, “fetus” until the early 1970's, when Roe v Wade was entering the national scene. Before then, the “fetus” was a technical term, used only in the medical profession. Expectant mothers I knew always talked about the “child I'm carrying” or “my baby”. Have you ever seen a sonogram of one of those lumps of flesh? You can even see their tiny hearts beating 6 weeks from conception. It has been shown that these babies feel pain after twenty weeks. Who knows about before? Yet the left insist on dehumanizing them. What other society has killed millions of people legally by defining them as non-human? Try Nazi Germany: Killing Jews – and others who did not agree with the politics of Nazism – was perfectly legal. We have a leftist president that apparently believes in killing, i.e., leaving alone to die, born babies that survived a “botched” abortion^{xi}. There are many more examples – in the twentieth century, more innocent people were killed, by statist^{xii} regimes, than in all the wars preceding^{xiii}.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Baal is a generic universe of idolatrous forces around us – especially in the direction of sexual depravity. Isaiah speaks of flies^{xiv} – now brought before us as the 1954 novel, *The Lord of the Flies*. We celebrate sex within or without of wedlock as a right – whether it is with the opposite sex or the same. The left has done everything it could – from “no fault” divorce, to the tearing down of anti-sodomy laws, to the fight for “gay marriage rights” – to encourage anyone they could persuade to break this commandment.

VIII. Neither shalt thou steal.

Many on the left, or even good people I know who are liberal, insist that government has a role in

helping the “less fortunate”. One good question is, “How less fortunate?” However, a better question is, “How does welfare differ in principle from charity?” Think about this: Is taxation nothing more than legalized theft? We allow our government the necessary evil of taxing us for the services that we deem necessary within our constitution. When the government goes beyond the limited powers delegated to it from the people via the Constitution, specifically “redistributive change”, we have authorized the government to be a fence for those who would take unearned wealth from those who have earned it.

Such redistribution is immoral on the face of it when the Eighth Commandment is considered. Furthermore, no nation who has tried, “From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs” has ever succeeded. We can see in the past four years (2009 through 2012) how America, with redistributive change has taken a bad economic situation and made it much worse – from the growth of the unemployed, to the record number of people on welfare, to the \$16 Trillion national debt, to the decline of average household income of over \$4,000.

We are not only stealing from producers to give to non-producers, but we are stealing from future generations. Jefferson said, “But with respect to future debt; would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming that neither the legislature, nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt, than they may pay within their own age...” It has been said that liberty cannot exist without the free market (capitalism)^{xv}. This goes hand in hand with this commandment.

So, how does welfare differ from charity? The explanation really is simple: Charity is freely given of one's own earned wealth; welfare is funded by the government's forced taking (stealing) of the wealth of others.

IX. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Whether it is Joseph Stalin or Saul Alinsky, leftists have embraced the Machiavellian idea that the end justifies the means. Often that means lying to the people. How did Hitler kill six million Jews without a fight? He lied to get them onto the cattle cars that eventually carried them to the ovens. Why have leftist candidates in this country attacked their opposition rather than discuss issues? It is because their true beliefs, up to this point, would never be accepted by voters. One leftist presidential candidate came as close to telling the truth about his policies when he ran on “Hope and change” with his assertion that he would “fundamentally transform America”. We all thought he was talking about eliminating the divisiveness in politics. By the way, totalitarian religious/political systems practice deceit as a virtue. An example is the practice of “taquia” by radical Islamists. “Taquia” is the practice, based in the Quran, of lying for the glory or defense of Allah.

X. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house...

Just what is “class warfare” but the encouragement of one group of people to covet the blessings of others – especially material blessings. Whether it is the poor coveting the rich, or gays coveting the acceptance and elevation of the virtue of marriage, or blacks or Hispanics envying whites – the left encourages and nurtures envy for its own ends. Keep in mind that the criticism here is not directed at these groups. Most or all on the right recognize the rights of people in these groups, but most of us, including the author, do not believe in treating individuals in these groups as having special rights. Why? Because conferring or advocating these special rights incite of covetousness and divide our

nation, standing our national motto, “e pluribus unum” on its head - “e unum pluribus.” The left in America is not the first society to use class warfare. Nazis used it in Germany to get the common man to envy the wealth and power of the Jewry – triggering the holocaust.

The point is this: God did not shower this country with blessings because he was on our side. He showered this country with blessings because our Founders were on his side. They were far from perfect, but they understood where their rights and blessing came from. They did everything in their power to honor the Christian (sometimes referred to as the Judeo-Christian) God in order to show not just their belief (even the devil himself believes in God) but their love for Him. America will continue to be blessed as long as we continue that love and honor. We are dangerously close to losing those blessings. And for that, people all over the world are in danger of losing the great stabilizer of peace and prosperity. Our prosperity does not bless United States citizens only. However, that is for another discussion. By the way, when any people embrace the principles and the religion of freedom, God's blessings will come their way.

Less than five percent of the people in all history have been free. Many or most of those have been in the United States of America. No other people have embraced Judeo-Christian principles for public policy like our country's Founders. Truly, America, following the Ten Commandments, and many other laws from the Judeo-Christian God, is a blessing to the entire world. Let's not lose it.

- i Frequently Asked Questions page, <http://www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=100766#America%E2%80%99s%20Founding%20Fathers>.
- ii This remark is from a Wallbuilders Live podcast I no longer have. The book likely is W. E. Woodward's, *George Washington, The Image and The Man*, as cited at: <http://www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=85>, eighth footnote.
- iii Popular public speaker and President of the American Alliance of Jews and Christians, see <http://www.rabbidaniellapin.com/aboutrabbidaniel.php>.
- iv Pantheism is a doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe, worship of all gods. See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pantheism>.
- v People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.
- vi "The God of Freedom" as stated in the Marty Haugen Lutheran liturgy. Several reference in our founders' writings refer to Christianity as the religion of freedom.
- vii The worship of Baal is understood by many scholars to involve the worship of one's own excrement as illustrated here: http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2980/jewish/The-Evolution-of-Pleasure.htm. Other references may be found with the Internet search term, "baal worship excrement".
- viii Experts disagree on the actual source of this statement or agree that the source probably cannot be known. Some recognize it as an African proverb. See http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Who_said_it_takes_a_village_to_raise_a_child.
- ix Dennis Prager, radio talk show host and Jewish Bible Scholar, has pointed out the proper translation of the Sixth Commandment on his radio show. His book, *Still the Best Hope*, talks about it in a footnote on page 349. <http://www.dennisprager.com>.
- x Interesting point made with one of my reviewers: Biblically, convictions for murder should be witnessed by two or more people. The only place I am aware of American law citing this principle is in the constitution for treason, Article III, Section 3.
- xi This president's votes, as a state senator, against the Illinois Born-Alive Protection Act are well documented. Nevertheless, there are arguments as to his motives. You may find a spirited exchange at a Breitbart.com response and link to a Washington Post criticism of allegations that he was pro-infanticide, with which the author agrees: <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Journalism/2012/09/10/WaPost-Fact-Check-on-Obama-s-Abortion-Stance-Contradicts-Itself>.
- xii Leftist, i.e., centralized government control: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statism>.
- xiii Experts differ on the exact numbers, but a quick Google search reveals sever web pages supporting the claim: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/20th_century#Wars_and_politics, http://followingjesus.org/journey/nonviolent_resistance.html, <http://www.hamzatzortzis.com/essays-articles/philosophy-theology/a-response-to-the-god-delusion/>.
- xiv Isaiah 7:18, <http://bible.cc/isaiah/7-18.htm>.
- xv Arthur C. Brooks has written a whole book on this issue, *The Road to Freedom*. Mark Levin, in his books such as *Liberty and Tyranny*, also discusses this issue.