



## Getting Up Front and Personal With the Ten Commandments

Should those who believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the fundamental values of the Judeo-Christian ethic be free, like everyone else is free, to defend that outlook, and promote it, and attempt to inject it, in the public debate; whether it be in regards to the law, or public policy, or public employment, or in the local school district where their children attend, because they believe that that is their moral responsibility before God, but this too: that it is in fact the very foundation of free government and its hopes for enduring success? Or are such beliefs unAmerican, and in particular: too “personal,” and thus too “invasive,” an assault into the rights of others to be allowed?



In regards to this question, a number of years ago I read a legal piece from a self-proclaimed Christian lawyer who declared that the hanging of the Ten Commandments in a public place is unconstitutional.

Essentially, her rationale was as follows: “Those who believe the commandments are the foundation of our laws are misguided,” and by way of proof, “a number of the commandments are purely personal.”

The believing side of her conceded, “To be sure, the principles expressed in the last six commandments — honor thy mother and father, don’t steal, don’t kill, don’t covet, don’t commit adultery, and don’t lie — can be found in many laws in the United States.”

Yet, she continues, “The first four commandments ... contain directives that no government official in this land of religious liberty may say or endorse on behalf of the government.”

The first four commandments - which are by her decree, “taboo,” are the “personal” ones. With the exception of her brief concession to the last six commandments —though not much of a concession, since her plan still publicly bans ALL of the Ten Commandments — none of this washes. Here’s what she failed to say:

1. The Bill of Rights prohibits the government from making ANY law that abridges freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Yet such a court imposed prohibition on expressing our “personal” beliefs, whenever and wherever we please, in public and in private, is just that, a law that abridges religion and speech. No mention.
2. By banning Judeo-Christian morality from the public sphere, we give preference — by default — to lawmakers, judges, and executives (with powers over life and death, prosperity and poverty, freedom and servitude) to act without conscience; and to educators (with powers over the hearts and minds of our children) to mold the rising generation without any rock solid guiding principles — a frightening prospect. No mention.



Written by on May 6, 2011

3. A “say” and “endorse” ban against public discussion of religious and moral speech — which is bad enough — is but the tip of a judicial iceberg that hides beneath its surface a far more pervasive prohibition that has struck, and is still striking a deadly blow at ALL religious speech, at ALL levels of society. How so? The state in our day is everywhere, its money and its agents involved in almost everything, and thus its judges caught nearly everyday legislating elastic definitions of “public” and “endorsement” (such as “implied” endorsement) so as to extend a supposedly narrow abridgement of religious speech to nearly every person and every activity in the country. No mention.
4. On the other hand, were we to reverse field and again fully protect freedom of speech and freedom of religion rights for public employees, and all others directly or loosely affiliated with the state — as our forefathers did — here’s the question: How is it that freedom to speak one’s conscience equates to the state “forcing” faith on others — since speech is but a form of persuasion? No mention.
5. Besides, a double standard applies to this “off limits” approach to “private” morality. Here is the reality: If the moral standard under consideration supports the Judeo-Christian ethic, it is “private,” and MUST BE BANNED. Yet, if the moral standard under consideration supports the moral paradigm of humanism, socialism, communism, or any other revolutionary “ism,” it too is “private,” yet because IT IS “private” IT MUST BE PROTECTED, FAVORED, CHAMPIONED, AND SUBSIDIZED. Think about it. It’s happening. No mention.
6. Last of all, The Ten Commandments, put in proper context, is a liberty document — perhaps the greatest liberty document of all — a point I will discuss in the next several columns. No mention ... until now.

For the Ten Commandments are about liberty, true liberty. The first of the Ten Commandments — the preface to all that follows — begins thus: “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

A revealing introduction. A reminder from the Lord, who declares in essence, “I delivered you from political, economic, and religious bondage, ergo; I am the Author of your Liberty. If you expect to stay free, listen up, here are the rules.”

A farm boy, unschooled in the law, can see it — the “believing” lawyer, schooled as she was in a study of words and phrases, of clear and implied meanings, couldn’t — or wouldn’t.

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