

## **THE NEW COMMANDMENTS FOR THE 21st CENTURY**

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In a Channel Four documentary screened in February 2005 a survey of some 40,000 people was conducted as to the relevance of the ten commandments and what should be the new ten commandments for the twentieth-first century.

The programme was seriously flawed because the conclusions produced by the survey contradicted themselves and the replacement commandments, which were put forward, already exist in the Bible as miscellaneous commandments and statutes from God and, in fact, are inherent in the ten commandments themselves which are but a summary of God's laws. On tables of stone one could not write a major thesis of each of the ten commandments.

The general consensus of opinion from the programme was that the existing ten commandments cannot be relevant otherwise people would obey them. But it was pointed out that the major religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity share their principles. It was also said that if people today knew the commandments they would ignore them since they want to enjoy life and not be subject to any edict that prevented or questioned their enjoyment and personal choices.

Consequently the conclusion was drawn that the commandments had to be rewritten since they were out of date.

There were several commandments rejected. 'Thou shalt not covet' was dismissed. We live in a world of designer clothes, flash cars and covetable goods. It is human nature to covet. Advertising tells us to covet. The media does. It tempts us whether it be a competition to win a grand prize or to buy unnecessary items. Our standards have changed. We look. We want. We covet

The next commandment that was rejected was 'Remember the Sabbath' or to put it in simple terms 'Keep Sunday holy'. It is no longer a day of rest. We now have shopping 24-7. We do not have holy days now. People complain that when shops were closed on Sundays it was the dreariest day of the week. Imagine a Sunday now with all shops closed, all public houses closed and no sport. People would not allow it.

'Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain' was also thrown out. People do blaspheme with Oh my God, Christ, Jesus Christ and the such. People say that we have to blow off steam. If we drop a hammer on our toe we do not say, "Oh dear" but usually some profanity or blasphemy. It is hard to stop swearing, and people actually enjoy it. But language matters and such swearing can cause strong feeling such as hatred which sometimes leads to violence and crime. Swearing shows a poor understanding and appreciation of language. But it is argued that surely God is not so finicky as to worry about someone blaspheming or using profanity when the problems of the world are far more serious.

The next commandment to go was 'Thou shalt no make graven image' and it was pointed that Catholic and some Anglican churches have been doing this for two thousand years with crucifixes, statues and the like. And this comment is valid. But the programme suggests that all art and photographs were graven images which shows how off the beaten track the programmers were. The graven images that were forbidden were those to be used as objects of worship. The Hindu faith admits that they do worship their graven images.

But worship is not confined to deities. There are new moral codes where glamorous women are adored and worshipped. Nudity is a regular image for worship in some cults and in some places there are temples to worship non-religious figures. In one disused church in London there are enormous pictures of nude celebrities, and people, both men and women, light candles before these images and actually bow down to them.

'Thou shalt have no other God but Me' was ridiculed. The gods of this age are celebrities since we live in the days of the cult of celebrities. We make our own gods and have pictures and memorabilia of them. We even have trashy television programmes such as Pop Idol, the X Factor and ghastly reality shows. David Beckham and Wayne Rooney are footballers but are idols to many as is the team of Manchester United. Pop stars are

idolised and worshipped. The power of fame is greater than the love of God. We would rather adore a famous person than the greatest Person of all time.

There were objections to the commandment 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. We now have licensed sex shops thanks to the Labour government, porn is available freely and there are hotels especially designed for adulterous liaisons with see-through walls and other surprising features. Practising homosexuals are committing adultery and it was the Labour government in the mid 1960s that legalised homosexuality. It is now said that if a married couple allows their partner to sleep around then that is not adultery since permission and approval has been given. Such people are called swingers and the promiscuity of the 1960s shows that respect for sexual fidelity and good morals has gone. The miniskirt was not so much fashion but the means of advertising sex (whether intentionally or not), coveting and resultant adultery. There are more people living in sin than in faithful marriages. Two in five couples are divorced usually because of adultery and this breaks up family life and children suffer, and so, when this programme advocates a new commandment 'Protect the family' it contradicts the general acquiescence that adultery should not be a commandment. It is a blatant contradiction. Children suffer as a result of adultery and divorce.

Of the new commandments as suggested by the survey one of the new ones was 'Look after your health'. But it is not new. Chapters in Leviticus deal with health matters and there are references in the New Testament to maintaining good health and when you consider the healing miracles of Christ it shows that the Lord wants us to have and maintain good health. It is His will. Many Americans are very fat and it is feared that obesity will be a major problem in the UK soon.

Another new commandment was 'Live within your means' but, again, that is not new. It is a principle taught in the Bible. We now live in a day of plastic money rather than cash and eschew the concept that the best things in life are free. Many of the things we buy are desires not needs. And the Bible warns against such materialism.

One of the many alarming things is that little girls are lavished with material things so that by the time they are five they are wearing make-up, have designer clothes and handbags and other accessories. Many dress like tarts or pop stars around the age of nine and ten and show their knickers. No wonder crimes against little girls are on the increase. It is how they dress. While not everyone will attack a girl for the way she dresses, some will, simply because the girls are advertising themselves and coveting is human nature. The same principle applies to a lady who is overweight but sees a cream cake in a shop and covets it, buys it and eats it and enjoys it. Not every lady would be tempted by a wicked cream cake. Had she not seen the cake she would not have purchased it. Seeing it was the temptation. Not every man would be tempted by a girl dressed provocatively but, as with the lady with the cream cake, some are.

Here is the next new commandment — 'Try your best'. While the Bible does not put this in the same way that principle is a Biblical one. One example in the New Testament is, 'as far as is possible, live at peace with everyone.'

But there are problems. We live in days of competition and rivalry and it begins in the home... if not, among parents, it is among their children, a quest for superiority. It happens in schools with grade systems. It happens in the search for a job. Several are interviewed for a position and that, in itself, is a competition. One sees the unfortunate attitudes and outcomes of rivalry. How, for example, people make a big deal because Tim Henman has not won Wimbledon and, believe me, in such situations there is a lot of ill-feeling, jealousy and spite, which overflows into violence and misconduct at times.

As we are to look after our health this must include our mental health and there is stress in competition and rivalry and in our attitudes to defeats and failures.

The next new commandment was 'Be true to yourself'. In other words be honest. This principle was likened to a pop song Search for the hero inside yourself. But this new commandment really means 'Do your own thing' which combined with another new commandment 'Enjoy yourself' presents other problems. We are

told to get out more and to enjoy life. Life is to be enjoyed not endured. We must be who we are, complete with all our flaws. It is further said that we have one life and so we must enjoy it. This shows the flaw in the argument for there is a life hereafter and how we live this life governs where we spend eternity.

Flaws, which can be sin, are now said to be accepted and not condemned. We do not have to account for our sins or flaws.

It is not a new philosophy as the final words of the book of Judges takes this line.

What it really means in this new commandment for the 21st century is license and amorality. I will do what I like and what I do is not wrong because it is right for me. If it is illegal or questionable, well, too bad!

That is the attitude.

However, it is important that we do have fun and relax. Laughter is good for your health. We should prescribe laughter not pills.

But one person's fun is another's dismay. There is a great deal of adult humour on the television which many of us find offensive.

There are many young women who go out clubbing, get drunk and have one night stands and say this is fun, but this binge drinking and sexual misconduct is a very great concern socially, nationally and individually. Surely some of these girls parents worry and care.

Yet another new commandment is 'Appreciate what you have'. That is not new either. The New Testament corollary is 'I have found that in whatever state I am in to be content'.

Are people really happy with wealth and power? Are they happy with sunbathing glamorously and their good looks? Wealth and beauty may not last for ever. These things are transient.

'Respect your parents' is our next new commandment but when we consider binge drinking, one night stand girls who conduct this lifestyle every weekend, where is their respect for father and mother?

Parents may not have an easy life bringing up their children. Things were tougher in decades gone by. Children abuse parents today.. And we live in a world of children's rights and often the children win over their parents. The tail wags the dog. The government tells us how to bring up our children and we are not allowed to chastise them. The Biblical statement 'Spare the rod and spoil the children' is still apt.

Most parents spend 16 to 18 years with unconditional love for their children by looking after them. They gave them life and opportunity, nursed them through illness and protected them.

Then the new commandment that follows is 'Protect your family'.

Do we need a commandment to tell us this? It is an established Biblical principle.

If we cut out adultery and resultant divorces as well as cutting out living in sin, more children would be secure and therefore feel protected. If we cut out drunkenness, children would be safer. If we cut out bad language, and used language properly children would be safer. If we allowed children to be children they would be safer. If children were not spoiled and made into adults long before their time they would be safer. If we made the media decent and moral, our children would be safer.

If the Labour government had not legalised homosexuality we would not have so many children now who have a mother and father of the same sex.

The current Labour Party under Tony Blair has introduced into the National Curriculum the following things which must be taught in schools:.

Homosexuality is to be regarded as acceptable; living together as man and wife, although not married to each other, is acceptable; a child born out of wedlock is not a bastard or illegitimate but a love child; condoms can be given to girls as young as eleven so they can enjoy safe sex; girls can have abortions arranged via some schools without any reference to the parents; God did not create the world, it was the result of chance, of evolution.

The next commandment says 'Never be violent'. If we cut out all types of violence our children would be safer. This is not a new commandment and the Lord Jesus said, "Do violence to no man".

Adultery and drunkenness cause violence.

Violence has to stop, as does all crime, much of which is violent. But there are people who like violence. It gives them a buzz. It has a strange glamour attached to it. Women thrill at men boxing and wrestling shouting out, "Kill him" and other such phrases being very aggressive themselves. They love rugby because of the violence and some handsome man might get his shorts ripped off. Many people love violent films which can engender their feelings of wanting violence to befall people they do not like and, when it happens, they rejoice.

September the eleventh was a dreadful act. But then so was the war in Iraq, which was illegal and immoral, a war as a means to secure oil for the prosperous West. It was not a war, but an illegal invasion and occupancy.

There is a lot of nonsense talked about the extended family but the family is really its closest members.

We invent words and foolish expressions such as the nuclear family.

Other say that the whole world is our family as shown in the tremendous response for help in the appalling tsunami on Boxing Day 2004.

And we come to the next new commandment — 'Look after the vulnerable and disabled'.

This is not new either. It is a Biblical principle. And yet Darwinism and evolution rejects this, stating that only the fittest should survive and that the sick and vulnerable should be allowed to die, and to spend money on their medication and health is a 'deplorable waste'.

The survey showed that the Scots were the most caring people and those living in the West Country were the least caring.

People are not objects or disposables. People matter more than things. People matter more than politics. People matter. Most believe that we should help people from other countries who are being persecuted.

As we might expect another new commandment was 'Protect the environment'. There is the serious problem of global warming in which we have only ourselves to blame. Most disasters are made man. Pollution is a man made disaster as is global warming.

The earth belongs to God and we have been allowed to participate in His creation but not to exploit it. The injuring of God's creation must be sinful and we are reaping the benefit of such sin.

The government says that we must make profits, and to do so, there is bound to be pollution. Money matters more than the threat to the world.

We are cutting down trees at an alarming rate. Toxic incinerators are being built regularly. There are more nuclear power stations.

Never forget Chernobyl.

Cynics say that the most trouble caused in the world is because of religion. That is not true. Science, or its

application, has put this planet at risk. If only we had never split the atom and made atomic and nuclear bombs... if only we had heeded the Old Testament instructions to live at peace and not disobey God.

The next new commandment is 'Protect and nurture your children'.

The survey complained that this was not in the original ten commandments. But it is a Biblical principle. For example, God raged at the heathen who made their children pass through the fire in pagan worship. The Bible teaches 'Train up a child in the way he should go'.

A lot of the problem is that parents themselves are so young today that they are children themselves. Children are exposed to television, pop music and glamour and these issues have already been commented upon.

'Do not steal' is said to be a new commandment but is one of the originals. To steal is immoral but what if you steal because you need to eat?

We are to share the world's wealth, but we don't.

There is a lot of regular shady dealing which is stealing. There is insider trading and other crimes connected with it. Wherever there is cash, there are villains.

Robert Maxwell stole pensions monies from The Mirror Group of Newspapers. Tony Blair has taken millions from the Pension Fund and used it, or, rather, misused it for his political ends and now is saying that Old Age Pensions are not safe because we did not save enough. But we contributed what the law demanded.

To commit adultery is stealing as you are taking another person's partner. To defame, libel or slander someone is stealing their good character unless what you say is true.

And a new commandment is 'Be Honest'.

This is really the existing commandment 'Thou shalt not bear false witness'.

But people say, "Is the odd white lie wrong?"

Here is your wife who comes in and asks you if you like her new outfit which you think is hideous. So as not to offend her do you say you like it? Do we protect people's feelings rather than be honest? Is the Press honest? Are we to believe what we read? We create images that have nothing to do with reality.

If we are proud, which is a sin in itself, we are being dishonest. There is none good, not one.

Katharine Gun worked for the Secret Service and was aware that Tony Blair's government was bugging meetings including those in the United Nations Security Council prior to the last Iraqi war and such matters were life and death issues. Although she had signed the Official Secrets Act she thought the matter to be so dishonest that she reported it. She was arrested and charged with an offence. She was arrested for being honest.

As she explained, "The Oath of Secrecy is fine if no one is to be hurt."

The next new commandment is an existing one 'Do not kill'.

And yet 70% believe in euthanasia. As the Labour party spokesperson said, "It cuts the waiting lists for the Health Service!"

Some doctors are reported to have admitted that switching off a life support system can help the NHS particularly if they are waiting for some organs for an outstanding transplant.

The majority in the survey approved of abortion and did not consider the rights of the unborn to be important.

Many women said that abortion was the ultimate contraceptive.

Do not kill must indicate a reverence for life. The majority disapproved of the war in Iraq saying, "You can't go to war for oil!" However, 50% agreed that we should go to war if our country was under threat.

The new commandment was 'Take responsibility for your own actions'. In other words don't blame someone else. "I was following orders," is not good enough. Blair's party shred many documents by 1 January 2005 fearing that they might fall into wrong hands.

The problem with this is that people will not take responsibility for their actions and will not admit to being wrong or, if they do, it is grudgingly or conditional. Most apologies are not meant.

Recently, a man has argued on aspects of law and education. When presented with the evidence that he was wrong he accused someone of an adulterous affair. That matter was irrelevant as well as untrue but he would not take responsibility for his errors and libel.

We live in the age of the Compensation Cult. So many people have BSE. Blame someone else.

We can now sue at will and organisations pay out millions.

There have been many cases where a good teacher has been sacked from a state school because he or she was not state registered and therefore in the eyes of some educational bigots not qualified. In each case the sacked teacher has won and rightly so and been awarded damage and compensation. Non-state teachers have a far better success rate indicating that they are better qualified than those state registered.

Excuses are always made.

There is the famous Jewish joke of a Jew in Court charged and found guilty of murdering his parents. He threw himself on the mercy of the Court on the grounds that he was an orphan.

The top of the list for new commandments was 'Treat others as you would have them treat you'. If that means being kind and considerate to everyone this is a clear Biblical principle. It is nothing new.

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