

10 questions for those demanding Ten Commands

BY CHRIS HIGHLAND

State legislators across the country are scrambling to show the depth of their Christian faith ... by demanding Jewish laws be nailed on schoolhouse walls. You might want to read that line again. It seems the famous Big Ten—the biblical Ten Commandments—are all the rage right now, especially by those who rage against the imagined threat of secularism. The false-flag of fearful faith is that atheists and socialists (along with public school teachers and librarians) are marching like a huge “woke” monster across the nation, seeking to devour religion. Believing that the Bible, prayer and God were somehow expelled in the 1960’s, these “defenders of morality” are convinced the answer is to force children — of any faith or no faith — to view a list of ancient commands every day in their publicly funded classrooms (maybe added to the pledge of allegiance?). This presents an excellent opportu-

nity to ask some serious questions.

One oft-repeated argument by the Commandment Demanders is that the Ten Commands are one of the “founding documents” of America. They claim “our nation was founded on the Bible.” The Bible was certainly an influence on many who shaped our government, especially given how pervasive that one book has been in a history dominated by Christianity. All the more remarkable, our founding documents don’t mention the Bible or Jesus, and the framers made sure to emphasize “no establishment of religion” in the very first amendment. No one is saying the Ten Commandments, or any other biblical verses, can’t be posted in a church, synagogue or religious school. Religious groups can place scripture anywhere they wish, on their private property. But when a courtroom or classroom displays scripture on the wall, a whole list of problems arise.

Here are my top 10 ques-

tions, which may be good reasons for not displaying The Ten:

1 — Are religious rules, believed to be handed down by an ancient Near Eastern God, written in another language and culture, appropriate for moral guidance in a modern, pluralistic society?

2 — Are people aware The Ten are not found in specifically Christian scriptures, but in the Hebrew Bible of the Jewish religion (found in both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5)? Along with about 600 other commands, these ten instructions were given by the Lord of Israel, not Jesus of Nazareth (who famously said the two greatest commandments were loving God and loving your neighbor. His “new commandment” was to love others. I wonder why no one’s demanding that in classrooms).

3 — Are Jewish Americans demanding their scriptures be in public buildings?

4 — Do the Commandment Commanders know what each command says? (If the intent is to teach children, it

seems reasonable to ask each Decalogue Defender—including political leaders—specifically where The Ten appear in the Bible, what they say, and how they apply.)

5 — Since the first four commands are specifically directed to the Jewish people, is the intention to teach the Jewish faith in classrooms? (Think about it: can non-Jewish students be required to “keep the Sabbath”—to do no work, including homework — on Saturdays?)

6 — Are the required biblical punishments for disobeying the commands going to be posted? (Disobedience means death in seven of the commands; slavery in another.)

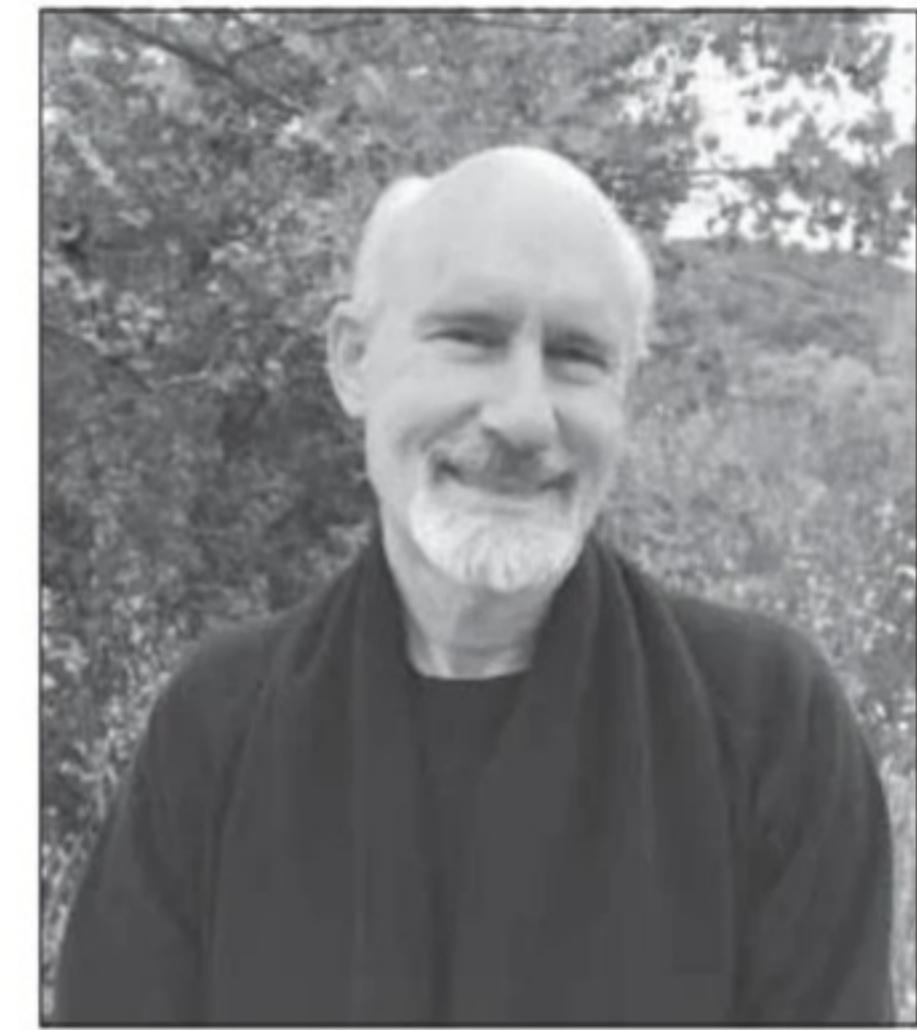
7 — How can morality, or any ethical standards, be commanded? (Do mandated rules lead to an increase in moral living?) There is a certain magical quality to this Demand for The Commands: “If they hang on the wall, they’re a blessing to all.” This makes the Bible a kind of protective talisman, an amulet used as a magnet for super-

stition.

8 — Who enforces obedience to the commands and how would they be enforced? In my view, those who are so adamant to force their religion into public schools (as well as courts, the government and the public square in general) are afraid they are losing their exclusive privileges and exceptional power. For example, if you are disrespectful to your parents, can the principal send you to a judge who will sentence you to a Sunday School class on honoring your parents?

9 — Some say: “The Ten Commandments deserve an honored place among our other historical documents. Moses is even depicted in the Supreme Court.” I wonder if they are aware that Moses is not alone in the Supreme Court. Do they know that an image of Moses appears alongside Hammurabi, Confucius, Muhammad and other lawgivers in human history?

10—How many citizens are made to feel they are second class, that their beliefs don’t



matter, when a public official or public institution seeks to “establish” Religion, or favors one sectarian faith? This is particularly problematic when impressionable children are the captive audience.

These are my 10 central questions to ask the Commandment Commanders.

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