

The Ten Suggestions? - Part 2

Written by Alex Baer

Sunday, 19 February 2012 19:22

We've already asked a few questions meant to be considered and answered by religious believers, with the answers kept private, shared only between them and God. We now have a final question to ask, with the answer meant for us all, as Americans living in this land.

We need to ask the continuing patience of religious believers in this question, to help us all find an answer to this question -- an answer for atheists, agnostics, for any group or non-group accidentally left out here. An answer for all of us, for every American.

The last question we have is about the apparent mismatch we see between stated beliefs and demonstrated action and speech -- an area of behavior many of us struggle to understand.

For example, in a recent Republican debate, in South Carolina, candidate Ron Paul made mention of a few statements of kindness and gentle reciprocation, and the crowd all but verbally massacred the man.

This is confusing to us on so many fronts. First, there is the undeniably ear-catching moment of hearing any Republican candidate speak reasonably and rationally about anything! We mean no offense here -- but, to us, most of what is said comes across as re-heated, rehashed sound bytes and well-researched hot-button blurbs, just total nonsense strung together willy-nilly.

Then, to suddenly hear gentle, logical, and sane statements being made -- almost as if Jesus or His disciples were speaking among us today about wars and killing -- those words stood out like fireworks against the darkest night's sky -- they blazed to the forefront! They really caught our attention!

Then, to immediately hear the crowd interrupt him, all but crucify him, for his reasonable statements using the Golden Rule, to hear and see the crowd's open displays of vehement anger and striking intolerance, all the catcalls, hand gestures, shouts and boos, we find these things even more shocking and monstrous, interrupting, as they did, gentle statements as Jesus or his apostles might have spoken!

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It is shocking no matter the crowd. It is triply shocking to know this happened in South Carolina, when almost any poll will show the state right near the top in the percentage of people who say religion is an important daily practice in their lives -- with many reporting multiple daily practices of religion. *(80% of respondents saying so in South Carolina, with only two states being higher: Mississippi at 85% of respondents, and Alabama at 82%.)*

It does not add up for us: A rare, reasonable series of statements is made, catching our ears, apparently spoken in a very Christ-like way, from what we can tell. Then, add to that, the voraciously angry reaction and response by audience members in a highly religious part of the country...

You may see why it is we are so confused. Any light you can shed will be helpful. While most of us would not be able to support Ron Paul in all his policies, it is incredibly refreshing to hear any candidate address issues in ways that appear to be reasonable. Paul also brought standard religious beliefs out into the open as support for his own action and speech. We applaud Ron Paul for his reasonable voice that day, and salute him for both using and standing up for his beliefs -- not hiding them, not believing one thing and doing another.

We think this is something Jesus must have talked about -- standing firm on his behalf, using his words. Please correct us on that if we are wrong.

We may not understand you, but, we keep trying. □ We are trying very hard to not simply dismiss you as hypocrites. □ We ourselves know how imperfect we ourselves are.

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You are sincerely and earnestly invited to read Mary Fairchild's piece, referenced below. It is an excellent piece, from all appearances. It is short. It is a boiled-down, plain-English piece about the Ten Commandments. Her bio is noted below, too, so you can quickly and easily see her Christian credentials.

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There are two more boiled-down, plain-English phrases and statements that can be easily carried and used in our days. One is the *Golden Rule: Treat others as you would have them treat you and yours.*

It has been around in different forms, as early as 1800 years before Christ. The other is one many writers, including atheist and humanist Kurt Vonnegut, have boiled down, saying it could easily summarize the world's religions. Here it is: *"Be kind."*

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These boiled-down thoughts make good and honorable sense, and are sane, no matter what else you may or may not believe. As we approach another election, it seems an especially good time to take inventory of our actual beliefs and shore them up, demonstrating them by our own actions -- by what we choose to do, and by what we choose to say, day after day, during our stay on this Earth -- wouldn't you say?

References:

"A Modern Day Paraphrase of the Ten Commandments," by Mary Fairchild:

<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblestorysummaries/qt/tencommandpara.htm>

About Mary Fairchild:

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<http://christianity.about.com/bio/Mary-Fairchild-16017.htm>