



Sinning U.S. needs morals; Ten Commandments given

The nation's law enforcement leaders, shedding tears (tear gas?) for months over rapidly rising crime, announced this week they may turn in their badges soon and strike.

"We've tried everything, and we've failed," said the president of the National Assoc. of Police Chiefs. "There's no choice now but to throw out the old laws and try something else."

President Ford, concerned, immediately announced an emergency plan—the Ten Commandments.

"I got the idea after I ordered agriculture secretary Earl Butz to apologize to the Pope," Ford said piously. "That's when I realized this country really needs moral leadership. After all, the country that wants to WIN together cannot sin together."

"But Mr. Ford, the Ten Commandments?"

"You know all the controversy there's been over victimless crimes, delays in our court system, white collar crime...such a bureaucratic mess. We thought it would be much easier to follow—and enforce—10 simple rules."

"That's very noble. But that violates separation of church and state, doesn't it?"

"Oh, no," the President assured me, "we took care of that with our revisions. We hope our points are clear."

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second thoughts

Commandment One: "Thou shalt be loyal to no other countries before the United States of America, and that includes the starving nations of the world—and Canada."

(Aimed at draft dodgers, perhaps?)

Commandment Two: "Thou shalt not take the name of Ford, Thy President, in vain."

Three: "Remember the 4th of July, Veterans Day and George Washington's birthday, to keep them holy."

Four: "Honor thy father and thy mother; they're the taxpayers of the country."

Five: "Thou shalt not kill, unless of course, your armed forces commander orders you to."

But strongest of all was the eighth commandment.

"Thou shalt not bear false—or true, for that matter—witness against thy President, Vice President I was thoroughly impressed and said so. "Mr. President, these laws are even better than their original counterparts. I'm glad to see someone trying to perpetuate and glorify the power structure of the federal government."

"Well, maybe they lost a little in the translation," the President said. "But I thought all in all we were quite objective. And then they try to tell us Mr. Rockefeller would have to deal with conflicts of interest? Ridiculous."

Ridiculous, I agree.

Congress off to a new start

The nation could be in for a "do-something" Congress this January.

Caucusing this week, House Democrats stripped the prestigious Ways and Means Committee of its power to make House committee assignments.

The caucus also elected moderates or liberals to all contested party leadership posts. As chairman of their caucus, the group elected Rep. Philip Burton, the current chairman of the liberal House Democratic Study Group. In a separate caucus, the Republicans also rebuffed conservatives, generally choosing moderates for their leadership positions.

Up to now, Congress has been hampered by a few too-powerful committee chairmen and the fact that committee assignments have been based primarily on seniority.

By removing the power to make those assignments from Rep. Wilbur Mills and his Ways and Means

Committee, perhaps the Democrats can persuade committee members to be more responsive to party goals.

Hopefully, Democratic committee assignments now will be based more on competence rather than on how long a Representative has warmed his House seat.

The Democratic Caucus this week also enlarged the size of the Mills' committee from 25 to 37 members. Weighted on the liberal side, the committee should be more representative of the House membership.

The Mills committee's recent handling of such party priorities as national health insurance and tax reform has often seemed to contradict party goals.

With this beginning, Americans should look forward to a 94th Congress that realizes the status quo is less than sacred.

Jane Owens



Eternal Flame?