

Writing His Word on Little Hearts

Since the Ten Commandments aren't welcome in public schools today, Christian publishers have united to instill biblical values in the hearts of kids.

A huge, 5,280-pound Ten Commandments monument grabbed headlines last August when the Alabama Supreme Court ordered its removal, locking it in a dark room at the Alabama judicial building. Three months later, conservatives sounded an alarm across the nation when Alabama's Chief Justice Roy Moore was removed from office on November 14 for refusing to follow the order to remove the monument himself.

Moore is not alone in his fight to display the Ten Commandments. More than 20 Ten Commandments cases are being litigated across the country as the ACLU attempts to rid the nation of any public display of God's laws. Yet as the battle rages, some Christians are working quietly to get the Ten Commandments where they belong—in the hearts of children.

Currently in the United States, knowledge of the Ten Commandments is waning. Even many churchgoing children can't recite them. That isn't surprising in light of a new Gallup poll that revealed 25 million American children have never heard an adult personally read a single Bible verse to them.

In his book *Transforming Your Children Into Spiritual Champions*, George Barna affirms that a person's moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach age 9. His data indicates that in most cases, people's spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed by the time they are preteens.

If that's true, our society is in trouble.

Many kids today don't even know stealing is wrong. Teens with no moral compass are redefining sex at a time when politicians are redefining marriage.

In his newly released book, *The Ten Offenses*, Christian broadcaster Pat Robertson calls on Americans to reclaim their spiritual roots for their children. Robertson says when he hosted three public school teachers from Georgia on his show, *The 700 Club*, they told him of a question that appeared in an instruction guide published by the National Education Association and approved for use in their high schools.

The teacher's manual posed the question, "What do you say if a student asks you if shoplifting is wrong?" The approved answer was, "I cannot tell you if shoplifting is right or wrong; you must decide for yourself."

Robertson responded: "How dare the schools set these students up to commit a crime like that?"

No Foundations

More than 100 years ago, Abraham Lincoln stated his viewpoints on American education, a statement that rings with deep prophetic warning today. Lincoln said, "The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation will be the philosophy of the government of the next."

James Madison, our fourth president, said: "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of

government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind of self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”

The Ten Commandments? How can American education be governed by the Ten Commandments if our society doesn't allow them to be seen in public or taught in schools?

Thankfully, not all displays of Moses' laws have been removed from American public life. At the U.S. Supreme Court building, the Ten Commandments are engraved on the lower portions of two huge oak doors. The laws are also displayed in the Supreme Court on the wall right above where judges sit.

During the week of Judge Moore's trial last fall, a federal appeals court upheld a lower court ruling that allows a 42-year-old, 6-foot-tall Ten Commandments monument to continue to stand north of the Texas Capitol in Austin.

It's there because lawmakers used to understand that God's supreme moral laws are the foundation for all civil law.

During an interview with Charisma, Moore pulled out his Webster's 1828 dictionary and read the definition of the Ten Commandments.

Said Moore: “There's a division of the Ten Commandments into first and second tables. The first table is our duties to God; the second table is our duties to each other. God ordained different powers—family, church, government and individuals. The Ten Commandments also represent God's sovereignty over the

affairs of men and the fact that government is limited in scope.”

Although most public school history books today do not document this fact, the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence—collectively referred to as the nation’s “organic law”—are based on belief in God, including the Ten Commandments.

Moore told Charisma: “Christians do not understand what is happening to them. We’re Christian people paying money to the government that forbids teaching the Creator, yet we carry the Bible to church on Sunday and the first five words of the Bible say, ‘In the beginning God created.’ The public school system is being used as a weapon to destroy the basis on which our country exists.”

To stave off this attack, several Christian publishers have joined forces to re-educate children about basic biblical morality. Focus on the Family, Tyndale House Publishers and Strang Communications Company—the publishers of Charisma—are supporting Hollywood video producers TLC Entertainment by bringing God’s commandments to children in a media they are familiar with—colorfully animated movies. The cartoons are available in DVD or VHS, and other related products include a family board game, CD-ROMs, music CDs, kids activity books and a new Sunday school curriculum.

The Kids’ Ten Commandments Project (K10C) announces a versatile new curriculum featuring quality, video-based lessons on God’s most important rules.

The five videos titled K10C, Kids’ Ten Commandments, have

been available in Christian bookstores since 2003. Each half-hour video portrays two of God's most important rules from a child's-eye view, introducing children to a cast of appealing kids and animals who are living the biblical story of Exodus.

These stories express the value of the Ten Commandments in a media kids love. The K-10-C Church Curriculum Kids' Activity Guide is available for churches to use in their children's ministry programs, and it's sold in bookstores and through CharismaLife Publishers (see page 78).

Back to the Basics

Research shows that the new K-10-C initiative goes against the growing tide of biblical illiteracy in the United States. Even churches, the historical hub of biblical education, have weakened in recent years in their efforts to bring the Bible to children.

In 2002, researchers studying biblical literacy in young learners discovered that Sunday schools were essentially dying. Statistics showed that more than 87 percent of evangelical churches were cutting the funding of children's Christian education programs in their churches.

Ed Bez, president of a research group called Focus on the Bible, told Charisma: "When there are budget cuts, churches cut out kids ministry. The means by which we pass on not only the experience but also the content of Christianity is waning. Among the more important of key [Bible] passages to vanish are the Ten Commandments."

Strang Communications is moving to the forefront in bringing

biblical literacy back into the heart of church classrooms. Through its CharismaLife division, Strang released the new K>10>C Church Curriculum in February with the vision of bringing the Ten Commandments to students who attend kindergarten through fifth grade. These video-based lessons are formatted for a full 13-week program and include an additional five-day vacation Bible school program. The lessons are presented in a kid-friendly way that helps children experience both the spirit and the letter of God's laws.

The publisher of CharismaLife, David Weldon, and his team added new object lessons; recorded a high-energy, sing-along DVD music video; and inserted a "secret code" that helps kids memorize the Ten Commandments.

Weldon told Charisma: "We took practical things in a kid's world to communicate that the Ten Commandments come from a motive of love toward God and people. Rather than teaching them to 'just do what you're supposed to do' we want kids to experience the Ten Commandments as an outflow of the love of God in their hearts."

The difference is already being felt, one child at a time. While visiting a friend, one child of a single parent saw the K>10>C video that included the commandment to keep the Sabbath. When the child went home that day, she asked her mom, "Why don't we go to church anymore?" That weekend the mother took her daughter to church again for the first time in months.

In a unique way, K>10>C brought the Ten Commandments home. Distributors hope this story will be repeated in a million different ways as children write God's forgotten laws on their hearts.

Answering to a Higher Law?

Alabama Judge Roy Moore started a national debate when he hung a copy of the Ten Commandments on his office wall.

When Alabama Deputy District Attorney Roy Moore was elected as a circuit judge in 1992, he told everyone that God put him in office. Later, as he searched for a picture large enough to decorate his courtroom, he spied the large rosewood Ten Commandments plaque he'd carved when he was 33 years old.

Moore thought, If I hang that plaque, I may lose my job. At that moment another thought came: I thought you said I put you here.

Moore told Charisma: "I'd told everybody God put me in office. How can I say God put me there and not acknowledge God? So I put it up."

Little did Moore realize that day that his decision to display the Ten Commandments would prove to be the pivotal moment of his career.

The plaque offended an ACLU lawyer. As a result, two cases were filed: one in 1995 and one in 1997. Both were dismissed, reflecting the concurrent resolution of both houses of Congress in 1997 that the "public display, including display in government offices and courthouses, of the Ten Commandments should be permitted."

Moore's victory made him increasingly popular among Alabama's

citizens, who called him “The Ten Commandments Judge” and elected him as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court in November 2000. Three years later, on November 12, 2003, Moore was on trial before his peers for acknowledging God.

During cross-examination, Attorney General Bill Pryor questioned Moore three times about his religious faith. Court transcripts reveal the official conversation:

Attorney General Pryor: “And your understanding is that the federal court ordered that you could not acknowledge God; isn’t that right?”

Chief Justice Moore: “Yes.”

Attorney General Pryor: “And if you resume your duties as chief justice after this proceeding, you will continue to acknowledge God as you have testified that you would today, no matter what any other official says?”

Chief Justice Moore: “Absolutely. Without—if I can clarify that. Without an acknowledgement of God, I cannot do my duty. I must acknowledge God. It says so in the Constitution of Alabama. It says so in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. It says so in everything I’ve read. So—”

Attorney General Pryor: “Well, the only point I’m trying to clarify, Mr. Chief Justice, is not why, but only that in fact if you do resume your duties as chief justice, you would continue to do that without regard to what any other official says; isn’t that right?”

Chief Justice Moore: "Well, I'll do the same thing this court did with starting of prayer; that's an acknowledgment of God. Now, we did the same thing that justices do when they place their hand on the Bible and say, 'So help me God.' It's an acknowledgment of God. The Alabama Supreme Court opens with, 'God save the state and this honorable court.' It's an acknowledgment of God ... acknowledging God is the source—a moral source of our law. I think you must."

Moore further riled the ACLU when he placed a huge granite monument in the state's judicial building. It bore a likeness of the Ten Commandments along with inscriptions of the Pledge of Allegiance and the national motto—"In God We Trust."

Ultimately, Moore's defiance led to his removal from office—even though he enjoyed a 70 percent approval rating the day after he was removed from his position.

Yet some Christians have questioned Moore's ethics in violating the judge's rule of law. Moore defends his position: "I am not disobeying the rule of law. What I'm sworn to uphold is the law, which is not what a judge says it is, it's what the Constitution says the law is."

The former chief justice is now appealing the decision of the court. He hopes to retrieve his job—as well as the right for the people of Alabama to acknowledge their faith.

Moore has offered the infamous, more than granite monument to the U.S. Capitol for public display.

Capitol officials have not made a decision on the offer yet, so Moore's new organization, Moral Law (), is encouraging

supporters to call their representatives or senators during this election year to encourage them to put the monument in the Capitol.

Spread the Word!

Designed for versatility, this exciting kids Ten Commandments curriculum can be used for a variety of programs, group sizes and age groups in your church or ministry, including:

- * 13-week, summer Sunday schools
- * vacation Bible schools
- * children's churches
- * Bible club ministries

You can even choose the Bible version you prefer: The New Living Translation, New King James Version and New International Version.

To order your complete K-10 Church Curriculum, call 800-451-4598 or log on to [www.hopeflinchbaugh.com](#).

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