

The Reactor

Paul Azevedo



The 10 Commandments

Christianity has been around for a long time, well before much scientific understanding of the nature of disease. Men were ignorant of the basic causes of most diseases a thousand years ago. They didn't know about germs or viruses. They didn't know about the immune system, or the failure of the immune system. And a thousand years ago they believed a lot of things that weren't so, just as we do now.

However, people a thousand years ago included those who made observations as intelligent and sharp as those being made today. Those empirical observers noticed, in a day when no sexually transmitted disease was curable, that the promiscuous, whether they practiced homosexual or heterosexual promiscuity, were more likely to sicken and die. They didn't know about germs. They did know about behavior and what happened to those who behaved in certain ways.

These sharp observers probably noted that those who obeyed the commandments against adultery and fornication lived healthier lives on the average than those who did not. They probably noticed that the promiscuous were less healthy than those who for religious reasons had vowed to live celibate lives and accomplished that goal. They usually attributed such health and long life to God's mercy and favor, but they knew such conduct was healthier and safer than the alternative.

Lately various Pacificans have been quoting the Bible to each other in letters to the editor. I think any argument that encourages Bible reading is going to do some good. However, the Bible has hundreds of thousands of words. It's not surprising there are verses in the Bible that can be used to support almost any idea, including opinions about homosexuality, or that the Earth is flat, or that everything started at noon, Oct. 23, 5995 years ago, in 4004 B.C.

AIDS is a kind of throwback to the old days. We know that submicroscopic creatures cause it, but we don't really know how to cure it, and we may never know. We know how to cut down on the chances of getting it, but we can't eliminate such chances completely. If we insist on being promiscuous, we are taking heavy chances. Condom use is not "safe sex." It is only less unsafe. The only way to almost completely avoid AIDS is to completely avoid sex, except in a faithful monogamous relationship with another person who was also a virgin at the start of the relationship.

Then all you have to do is avoid bloody needles, or other exchanges of blood and body fluids. To be 100 percent safe you would have to avoid all surgery, dentistry, etc. because your dentist, for example, might have inadvertently picked up the virus from one of his patients. No matter how responsibly any one of us acts, we will be completely safe only when the whole community acts in a safe fashion.

All we can do until everyone is free of the virus and acting completely responsibly is cut the odds. Meanwhile, it might be wise to avoid using Bible quotes like clubs against those with whom we disagree. On the other hand, if everyone had been obeying the 10 commandments in a strict fashion, AIDS would not be a problem today.

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