

Reflections on the creation of a set universal core values as a prerequisite for building long-term peace and co-prosperity

Stephen Stacey

August 3, 2013

Unificationists seem to enjoy the ideal of world peace. Some talk about religions working together to create such an ideal. All well and good. One of the many issues that needs to be agreed upon by religions along the path to creating a peaceful world, and one with lasting prosperity, would be a common set of core values. Also, these values would need to be lived to some level by members of the majority of various faiths. This is because building community can only happen if there are agreed ground rules to guide and protect interaction. For example, the Jewish nation was founded on the 10 commandments and America was founded upon the constitution.

I was looking at the 10 commandments a few months back to see how they, from a Unificationist perspective, might be slightly adjusted so they might stand as a set of core values that the majority of faiths might sign up to in order to create common ground for lasting and sustainable peace. In their current form, the 10 commandments look something like this.

- 1) I am the LORD your God. You shall have no other gods but me
- 2) You shall not bow down to any other gods but me
- 3) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
- 4) You shall remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
- 5) Honour your mother and father
- 6) You shall not murder
- 7) You shall not commit adultery
- 8) You shall not steal
- 9) You shall not bear false witness (spread rumours and tell lies)
- 10) You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour

These commandments might be divided into two parts. The first are more ‘vertical’ – asking us to think about our personal relationship with our God or our physical parents. These commands or words of advice invite us to consider how we were created and thus how we might individual take care of the priceless soul we have been born with. The last five are more ‘horizontal’ – a set of community core values – asking us to think about how we create trust when interacting with others – thus creating the fundamental basis for lasting community.

With the insights of Rev Moon, at least two of the commandments – 1) and 7) – look like they need updating to something like:

- 1) We are your Heavenly Parents, your Heavenly Father and Mother. Our love is fundamental, primary – the source of all life.
- 7) You shall honour the power of your sexuality to create life – and also to create immense harm – and thus it shall only be used within the context of a committed, marital relationship.

The insights of Rev Moon concerning human sexuality – in his words ‘Absolute sex’ – are very much in line with modern research on the very negative, long-term effects of pre-marital, ‘free sex’. One of the challenges for western societies is that – unlike murder or theft, where the consequences are immediate – the negative effects uncommitted or social sex sometimes take years or several generations to appear. Since the 1960’s, the pill and other contraceptive devices have disconnected the natural link between sex and the creation of life. Among young adults especially, this disconnection has led to the development of social sex – something singles do as a pastime with someone they feel close to – like eating out or playing tennis. Extensive research clearly shows, however, that even though casual sex is enjoyable in the short term, it actually leads to consequences that harm marital dynamics and ultimately creates social decay. Thus, as casual sex has extended throughout society, ever fewer couples seem to be able to build lasting marriages. The primary four negative consequences of large numbers of the population using their sexuality in a casual way seem to be:

A growth in the number of single mothers who never married – with the result that there are ever growing numbers of children who are being exposed to harmful risk factors that are associated with single parenting, which in turn increases rates of both personal and social trauma for the next generation.

A growth in the number of young men – primarily from lower income groups – who find that they can act in ways that are totally at odds with the basic standards of being a husband and father – and yet still get their sexual needs fulfilled. The natural development of many males is being harmed.

Casual sex with several partners – and breaking off with each one – sometimes leads to the development of attitudes that make it more likely that people divorce once they do marry, leading to more children possibly experiencing harmful risk factors – which in turn harms their ability to create their own families.

The growth of social sex has led to a growth in cohabitation – leading to a growth in the number of couples having children without being married. Since cohabiting is a highly unstable form of family building, even more children are left open to possible harm. In all Western nations the number of children being raised by a single parent just keeps rising year on year, and social finances are coming under ever-increasing pressure.

Each of these negative outcomes has its own list of negative outcomes, for example:

- A growth in AIDS, drug resistant STD's, and infertility causing chlamydia
- With more and more children having no father present there has been a rapid growth in the sexual abuse of children due to visiting boyfriends of the mother
- With children suffering from the loss of love – the drug culture emerged and prison rates skyrocketed; etc; etc.

Put simply, a healthy, sustainable, peaceful society is impossible to build without a deep social recognition that individuals need to learn to control their sexual urges, striving to use them solely within the context of a marital setting.

Getting back to the topic of creating a set of core values to guide community building on a global scale, it's interesting to look at various core values expressed within the 10 commandments and to see how various cultures around the world tend to see them. For example, different cultures tend to place core values 5, 7 and 8 in a different order of priority or importance.

- 5) Honour your mother and father
- 7) You shall control your sexuality both before and after marriage
- 8) You shall not steal

One might say that a typical westerner might place them in the order of 8, 5, 7; someone from the Middle East rank them 7, 5, 8; and someone from the Far East might keep them in the same order as written. Of course, a failure to uphold each of these values leads to social weakening, but still cultures have a tendency to point the finger at each other. For example, some westerners might point the finger at the some countries in the Middle East and blame their lack of development on the rampant corruption there. On the other hand, many in the Middle East will point at the social decay happening in the West – and blame it mainly on the misuse of sexuality. Once again, many from the Middle East who come to settle in Europe find it hard to integrate. The sexual values of the West appear so destructive. So, communities of immigrants form, social integration suffers, and social tension lies under the surface. Of course, there cannot be true social integration until there exists a set of core values that all major cultures can agree with.

One of the questions that needs to be answered is, in a 'post traditional religion' society, how might individuals make something like the 10 commandments their own personal moral guidance system. If we are all children of Heavenly Parents, then this is what we each individually need to do, and inner conscience and guidance system. This has yet to be answered. But for ease of use, one can transform the 10 commandments into something more personal, something that forms the foundation for one personally to be able to contribute to a world of lasting peace and prosperity. For example, an individual might re-write them as follows:

- 1) My Heavenly Parents are the source of my life – they love and care deeply for me. They also deeply suffer as Parents when I act in unloving ways.

- 2) I realise that I have been created with the innate ability to seek out love or meaning in a wide variety of false ways – from addictions to self-harming behaviours – but I understand these are false gods; that are no substitute for the endless and varied love and goodness of my Heavenly Parents
- 3) I honour the fact that my Heavenly Parents created me to succeed through the living of certain Principles – and taking these Principles in vain increase the risks of me being led down a path to destruction
- 4) I will honour the fact that my Heavenly Parents created me in such a way that I can only give the best of myself to others inasmuch as I regularly take in and receive truth, beauty, goodness, joy and meaning from this wondrous world. To this end, I will give myself adequate time for rest, community, and spirituality – so that I may continually re-enter the world refreshed, energized and loving.
- 5) I seek to value and treasure my relationship with my father and mother. I seek to acknowledge and feel gratitude for all the good they have given me. Whatever they gave, it was enough to allow me to go forward to create my extraordinary, unique life. To hold-on to feelings of anger for the love they couldn't give or harbour feelings of resentment for hurtful things they found hard to stop doing to me can only lead me to a less fulfilling life where I might dwell on past hurts and so miss out on present opportunities. To this end, I treasure the life my parents, and only they, could give me.
- 6) I seek to treasure and respect the physical life that God has given to everyone; to murder or harm only as an act of last recourse in a moment of self-protection. The same applies to the natural environment; I am a steward, not a selfish owner. I seek to work with nature in a non-destructive, sustainable way.
- 7) I seek to honour the power of my sexuality to create another person's life – and also to create immense harm. I shall only use it within the context of a committed, marital relationship – in a relationship where both my spouse and I are committed to be there to love and raise the child we have been blessed with.
- 8) I seek to honour myself and others through clearly realizing other people's property is not mine and thus I shouldn't take it to be my own. I also seek to be honest in my financial dealings with others, and will not abuse my position in society for the sake of unfair financial gain.
- 9) I seek to say nothing about others that I could not say to their face.
- 10) I seek to rejoice in the good fortune of my brothers and sisters, my neighbours and others.

These are my thoughts on the most basic set of values that might allow us to live as one world family, as a community of nations. Any thoughts or suggested amendments would be nice to hear.

And of the other issue – how we get there? Well, religious leaders have to agree on something first. If they can't, we can't expect world citizens to take the task of building world peace seriously.

*Stephen Stacey is the author of Understanding Marriage: Partners, Friends, Lovers.
Understanding Marriage*