

COMMUNICATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BIBLICAL TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE EVOLUTION OF MODERN LEGAL SYSTEMS

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Abstract

The Ten Commandments is the character and transcript of God. He revealed how man must relate with Him and his fellow man in the law so that man can safely dwell in society. This consciousness, well imprinted, published and communicated on the Decalogue affirmed the creed and agreement between the Creator and man for the purpose of trust and harmonious co-existence. God's ideal society was at once a moral cum religious society. The prelude to the law gave the real reasons of ownership of the universe, God's selection of Israel out of many nations, reminded Israel of their bondage, His salvation from slavery and therefore justified to give these laws and expected their unconditional obedience and performance of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments was the core of God's relationship with Israel. Obedience to it will produce peace and God's providence while disobedience resulted in God's withdrawal and consequently punishments for sin. The choices and consequences were understood from the onset and man was squarely responsible for his actions and inactions. The paper is concluded using doctrinal method of library research. The paper examined the historical evolution and contributions of Ten Commandments to modern legal systems. The paper found that the Ten Commandments and Christian teachings published via many channels and well-read have greatly influenced the world's legal systems including the Nigerian legal system as a sui generis regime for the preservation of man and orderly environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Many do not know that Judaism is the origin of Christianity and Islam. And these two leading world religions have maintained the same patterns of Judaism, in that, like Judaism, Christianity and Islamic practices are so mixed up with the lives and cultures of the adherents that, it would be impossible to separate them from the adherents. A Jew professing faith in Judaism is a Jew, such like a person is a Christian or in Islam, a Moslem. Judaism therefore laid the very foundation of Christianity and Islam.¹

Judaism and later what became Christianity and Islam was the direct consequences of God calling out Abram from cult worship in Ail, Mesopotamia.² Abram which name was changed by God to Abraham was promised a child³ but while waiting as was the custom, Sarah gave him her maid to bear a son to Abraham as she was spent in biological age of child bearing.⁴ Maid Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and later, Sarah bore Isaac to Abraham. It was from these two that Christianity and Islam originated from and consequently human strife's of religious intolerance.

God sought a special closer relationship with Abraham as the creator of the universe. Yahweh also called "I am that I am" because Abraham left his gods and idol nation, made him His friend and the progenitor of modern Israel nation.⁵

From about 1650 to about 1280 b.c, Abraham's descendant immigrated to Egypt to beat the famine. And there, after the death of Joseph, became slaves to Egyptians and therefore fulfilled God's words the Abraham's descendants will be strangers in the land he gave to him and will go into slavery in Egypt and serve for four hundred years and he rescues them and judge Egypt.⁶ God appointed Moses after the burning bush experience to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and Moses did, thereafter, at Mount Sinai, the Decalogue like the book of the law was published. Moses acted as a publisher and mediator between God and the Israelites where he went up to the mountain to receive the commandments from God. God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites not

¹ Ernest O. Anyacho, *Essential Themes in the Study of Religions*, ISBN978-2056-06-5, P.107.

² Genesis 12:25 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

³ Genesis 12:3, 16; 15: 1-18; 17:1-6 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

⁴ Genesis 18:10-15 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

⁵ Genesis 12: 1-2; see also Ernest O. Anyacho n. 1 p. 107.

⁶ Genesis 15:13-15 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

just as a law, but as a transcript of his character.

The Ten Commandments represent a moral, legal, socio-religious relationship between God and man reading through Exodus 20:1-20 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21, as was communicated by Moses to the Israelites. The Ten Commandments can be summarized thus:

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a graven image.
3. You shall not take the name of the lord God in name vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet.⁷

The Ten Commandments laid down the pattern of relationship between man and God on one hand and man and man on the other hand. Like it is stated in Exodus 24:4, Deuteronomy 31:9: Moses wrote down the commandments and the laws given by God, thus creating a written record of the covenant between God and the Israelites. This is how Carmody and Carmody puts it:

The covenant was a suzerainty type-based on relation between an over lord and a vassal in it God promised to take care of them while the Israelites pledged their fidelity. The commandment accompanying this covenant gave the binding relationship an ethics. They became the basis of the law and the revolution that bound people together⁸

It was Israel's infidelity to keep the commandments that led to the northern kingdom and southern kingdom and Judah to be conquered in 722 b.c and 586 b.c by the Assyrians and Babylonians

⁷ ibid p.107.

⁸ Carmody and Carmody, 1984.

respectively.⁹

The Ten Commandments forms a positive law even though, some aspects are purely moral and religions;¹⁰ for instance the sixth commandment ‘‘thou shall not kill’’ is intended to promote life, well-being and happiness of everyone.¹¹

The Ten Commandments should not only be read and seen as prohibitory ‘‘thou shall not--’’but also of mercy. It balances up as a vast wall of protector if obeyed and to shield man from sin or breaching the law which ultimately was for his good. But unlike positive law, which can be made, changed or repealed by man, God’s laws are immutable and perpetual in nature and is for all people and ages at all times.

The law functions as the basic principles of judgments-it is by means of God’s laws in the Ten Commandments that served as the basis of God’s righteous judgment. God does not judge Israel without the Ten Commandments and he is unlikely in our case too in due time to deviate. For this should weary us most. For long before the act, God writes and warns us of the punishment of our action in advance in a way complying with the known criminal law principle that is now codified in most constitutions and positive laws that nobody should be punished by an offence which punishment is not stated in a written law.¹²

This compares with our current systems of laws that prohibits or promotes certain activities and judgment of court is based on the interpretations of the extant laws. The Ten Commandments sought to eliminate crimes, evil, sins, violence among Israelites. It achieves these by way of pre-stated curses, blessings and consequences.¹³

2.0 The History of Near East Legal System

In the ancient near East, law and religion were separated. The reason for this included, the multiplicity of religion at that time but this was not for too long as ancient Mesopotamia place law in a relationship with religion there was therefore not marked difference between ius (human law) and fas (divine law). There was no large subdivision, no logical or systematic conception of the

⁹ Ernest O. Anyache n.l. p.108; see also Deuteronomy 28:1-68 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

¹⁰ Exodus 20: 3-12, 14 & 17, New King James version of the Holy Bible.

¹¹ Seventh - day Adventist beliefs (2nd ed.) General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Silver Spring, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Boise 2005, p.265.

¹² S 36(12) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)

¹³ Proverbs 14: 34; 16:12; Proverbs 3:33, Deuteronomy 28, New King James version of the Holy Bible.

law considered as a whole.¹⁴

Although, the law giver gave the code to apply to the whole realm, there was no evidence that it applied universally and a contributory reason was that, it lacked the enforcement institutions. So at best, it applied on case by case instant. The other reason of course, was that the ancient near East had not a state government in the sense of the word today as the king was the head of government, kingdom/ people, and commander of the armies. His rule was supreme and he was under duty to protect his domain and subjects or fall to infamy and domination as such becomes a subject like all or risk execution by the conquering king.

2.1 Summerian Law: This is the oldest known law.¹⁵ The Summer law can be found in entries in the Annaitti su series, the code of Ur-nammu and the code of Lipit-Ishtar.

2.1.a. Entries in the Annaitti Su Series, written in 7th century B.C is a bilingual series which consist of twelve paragraphs in two different groups. The first six paragraphs provided for family law while the last six paragraphs dealt with public life, contract, and property rights etc.

The Sumerian code was written for the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh and could be as old as the third dynasty of Ur C. 2060-9050.¹⁶

2.1.b. Code of Ur-Nammu was preserved by the first king of Ur between C. 2060-2043 b.c of the third dynasty is a tablet from old Babylon and contained a preamble in which the king states historical events of his reign, speaks of his authority and victories and how he has received authority from the gods to be king and establish justice in the hand. He closes the code with curses and invokes the gods to punish the violators of the laws.¹⁷

2.1.c. Code of Lipit –Ishtar-is an early post Sumerian law by the king Lipit-Ishtar, 5th king of the Semite Dynasty of Isin (c 1983-1733bc) and written in Sumerian language and consist of 38 laws covering areas like hiring of boats, real estate, slaves, taxation, inheritance, rent of ox and animals and marriage.¹⁸

¹⁴ Law, ancient near caster carnage, <https://www. Encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias –almanacs-transcript-and-m> accessed 14/9/2023.

¹⁵ Law, ancient near caster carnage (n.14).

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

2.2 Babylonian codes –successor of Sumerian law, Semites of ancient Mesopotamia Sumerian law with certain adaptations for current situations. The Babylonian laws are preserved in two codes of kingdom of Eshnunna and the Hammurabi.

2.2.i. Code of Eshnunna (Asnar) Eshnunna was the capital of Amorite kingdom in the Diyala region east of Baghdad between (c 1950bc) and rise of Hammurabi empire in (1728-1686 b.c)

The code contains some 60 laws with maximum prices including hiring of wagon and boats, wages for farm workers, donkey, trespass, business transactions, unlawful distraint, engagement and marriage, defloration of a slave girl, raising of children among others other than their parents, deposit, sales and purchases, bodily injury, slaves, damage caused by animals or falling masorily, divorce, neglect in guarding a house, etc

The language of the code is apodictically in style and not casuistic. It is one eye for an eye and not if you blind a man, then your eye shall be blinded.

2.2.ii. Code of Hammurabi-is by far, the most important and advanced codes of the ancient near East during the reign of Hammurabi sixth king in (1728-1686 b.c) of the first dynasty of Babylon and inscribed in diorite stele, seven and half feet high, represented a later revision of the temple of E-Sigil at Babylon but was carried off to Elam as war booty about twelfth century b.c.

Although it is believed that the king derived his authority from the gods, the law as given are his and there is no indication that the gods gave the law,

The Hammurabi - consist of 282 section law. The principal head of the law include:

False accusation, retraction of judgment by judge, theft, kidnapping fugitive, slave, burglary, robbery, ransoming of soldiers, rent, irrigation, fields, orchards, loans, sale of fermented liquor, debts, embezzlements, slander, marriage, sexual arrives, inheritance, legitimation and/ or children's adoption, substitution of another child by a wet nurse, maltreated, damage done by a surgeon, houses and ships, cattle? Damage done by cattle, theft of gram seeds, and farm tools, hurling of people and animals, cattle breeding and slaves "etc."¹⁹

The code stratified citizen into awelu-free citizens with full right, muskenu-free citizen with limited right and wardu, slaves. The code seems to cover an advanced-agrarian civilization.²⁰

It is probably the nearness of the Hammurabi code with the Mosaic Law that a relationship has

¹⁹ ibid.

²⁰ ibid.

been discussed- such as seen in Genesis. 21: 9-14; Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-20 and Deuteronomy 19:21.

Writers do not think, it was a kind of near experience and cultural background (i.e. Semites culture).

2.3 Assyrian laws discovered in Assur (modern city of Qalat Sherqat) dates back from the 1st century of the 2nd millennium b.c. It contains some 116 laws dealing with issues of sacrilege, theft, receipt of stolen goods, assault, murder, rape, slander, abortion, flight of married woman, adultery, married divorce, debt and surety, veiling of women, window and wives of prisoners of war, sorcery, bodily injures, deflowering of a virgin, manner of inflicting corporal punishment, sale of real estate, irrigation, sale of slaves, animals theft, shipping, blasphemy, hereditary right etc²¹

The law provided for corporal punishment as penalty for infraction of the law. It further provided for fines rather than incarceration as punishment for crime.

2.4 Hittite law consist of two tablets containing one hundred paragraphs each of which precisely clearly casuistically stated legal rules collated from the middle of the 2nd millennium b.c. The tablets were discovered during archeological excavation from 1906-1912 at the Hittite capital in Bogazkoi.

The law dealt with many subjects as seen in the Hammurabi code. Of interest is that this code provided against bestiality, burglary, incineration, mutilations, fugitive, feudal estate among others.

Westbrook greatest contribution to tracing the origin of near Easter law is his ‘diffusionism’ of system of law. He opines that the Sumero-Akkadian civilization having existed before the 3rd millennium with a complex legal system and culture must have greatly influenced the biblical law code. The rational is that if the Jewish legal system did not exist prior to the Near Eastern codes, and the Jewish nation did not exist in isolation, it is deducible that, the covenant code had substantially borrowed from the Near Eastern codes although, the legal functions may differ, as this is suggested by the borrower’s culture not lender’s culture.²²

It is noted that the laws were disorderly arranged and very repetitive.²³

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Westbrook See 1754-1755.

²³ A.Goetze in J.B Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 188-197.

2.5 The Ancient Israel code: The ancient Israel code are three legal codes found in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy (tribal confederation and the first kings) covering religious, social, contractual relations with politics commanded by God and of slightly variant version. The law giver reigns eternally and there is no need as we have in the Near Eastern code where successive kings decree law or alter existing one.²⁴

The law does not admit to alteration because of its divine nature and lays no procedure for human to make changes to it, thus, it has remained the same from inception because God put a caveat saying: “ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish out from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you”.²⁵

3.0 Evolution of Modern Legal System.

It is good to study the origin of our legal system as the absence of understanding of the law or predecessor of a legal systems together with lessons learnt will portend significant danger in legal history and that new legal system will deny itself of the assistance and useful tips, the processor system could have offered.

It was said that the very idea of law and legal system started long ago before history was recorded and it developed from customary and private legal system directly reflecting the needs of the society and conducts of individual.²⁶

The laws and legal systems were rudimentary and as the needs of society changed and means of production, so were laws changed. When society achieved the status of state, the finest state of political growth, from individual norm system to impersonal law system with a finite state structure the legal system must change to achieve coercive method to obtain compliance of legal subjects just to protect and preserve itself. At this stage of customary law and private legal system, the law is discovered naturally and applied in adjudicatory process. This in turn evolved as customs that can be subsequently relied on in future cases.²⁷ This practice is much akin with what is called

²⁴ Michael Walzer, The Legal Codes of Ancient Israel, Yale Journal of Law & Humanities, Vol.4, Issue 2, January 1992, p.335.

²⁵ Deuteronomy.4:2 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

²⁶ Edward W. Younkins, The Evolution of Law, Montreal, 5 Quote 2000/no.65, www.quebecoislibre.org/000805-11.htm accessed 14/9/2023.

²⁷ Younkers (n.26).

judicial precedent or loosely put, a system of determination or attitude to follow previous decisions.

So generally, the principles and standards of law at the earliest time was based on reason and natural laws. They were discovered and not man made. This explains its immutable nature and the corresponding ‘morality’ of the law gave it legitimacy. It was because the legal system appealed to the people’s direct needs, protection and orderly operation of society with needs and expectation firmly ingrained in the people’s way of life, it was accepted and all members took it as a task for its functionality. Although, the modern court systems inherited adjudication, the early systems differed greatly as it did not rely on technicalities and strict formal setting to adjudicate disputes. Its key methods were both arbitration and mediation and both were targeted at reconciliation most of the times.

4.0 Ten Commandments and Contemporary Legal Systems

There is a growing concern to consign the Bible to the dustbin and out of public life in many western nations²⁸ even in America today; the place of religion particularly Christian teachings is debated and there are many which suggest that the Bible and Christian teaching should be removed from public schools²⁹ but Steven K.Green³⁰ is emphatic that:

It is axiomatic that many of the principles contained in the Ten Commandments are fundamental to the western legal tradition. Prohibitions on murder, theft, and perjury are found in nearly every legal code. Notions of respect for one’s parents and admonitions against adultery are also implicit, if not explicit, in the quasi-legal realm of normative rules that order many societies. Few people, if any, would dispute that the Ten Commandment and its parallels from other ancient cultures as well as other directives contained in the Pentateuch of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, inform our notions of right and wrong and, as such, have influenced the development of western law of which the American legal system is

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas: Political Philosophy, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, iep.utm.edu/aqui-pol accessed 29/9/2025.

²⁹ Tim M. Sigler, The Top Ten attacks Against the Bible’s Historical Reliability-And How to Answer Them, Shepherd Theological Seminary, shepherds.edu/top-ten-attacks-agai... accessed 29/9/2025; Amy Thomas, Is Christianity Still Relevant Today, activechristianity.org/is-christianit... accessed 29/9/2025.

³⁰ Steven K. Green, The Fount of Everything Just and Right the Ten Commandments as a Source of American Law and Religion, Vol.14, No.2 (1999-2000) p.525.

part.³¹

The Ten Commandments have been seen as the most influential law codes in history.³² Harold J. Berman had stated that:

[p]rior to World War I, and into the 1920, America professed itself to be a Christian country. Even two generations ago, if one had asked Americans where our constitution or, indeed, our whole concept of law came from, on what it was ultimately based, the overwhelming majority of them would have said, “the ten commandments” or “the bible”, or perhaps “the law of God”.³³

In *Ex parte State of Alabama v. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)* 711 S 2d 952 (Ala, 1998).

The hanging of the Ten Commandments behind the bench of the Circuit Court judge in Alabama and prayer said in the opening of sitting were contested as being contrary to the establishment clause and should therefore be removed. The Supreme Court of Alabama held otherwise and dismissed the appeal but did not pronounce on Moore’s claim that “(I)t is axiomatic That our nation and its laws, the laws of the State of Alabama, were founded on a belief in and dependence upon God”.³⁴

Further, the display was seen as merely an acknowledgement of God consistent with the history of our country and the source and foundation of civil as well as our criminal law.³⁵ Moore’s argument that the Ten Commandments is part of the America law is in many respect similar to the larger argument that Christian principles have been incorporated in the American common law.

In *Stone v. Graham*³⁶, a Kentucky legislation requiring the posting of Ten Commandments on the walls of every public school was struck down, the assertion at the bottom of the legislation that “the Ten Commandments served as the fundamental legal code of western civilization and the common law of the United States” was left unrequited.³⁷

It can be said that when the origin and functions of the Ten Commandments is tied to the Jewish

³¹ Green, (n.30); see also Contrast with Surah 2 Al-Bqarah 53 which provides that “And remember We gave Moses the scripture and the criterion (between right and wrong), there is a chance for you to be guided aright.”

³² John T. Noonan Jr. *The Believer and the Powers that Are* 4 (Macmillan Pub Co.1987).

³³ Harold J. Barman, *Religion and Law. The First Amendment in Historical Perspective*, 35 *Emory L.J* 777, 788-89 (1986).

³⁴ In *Ex parte State of Alabama v. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)* 711 S 2d 952 (Ala, 1998).

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *Stone V Green*, 449 us 39, 41(1980) Per Judge McWilliams Jr. of the Franklin Co.ky Circuit Court.

³⁷ *Stone V Green* (n.36).

and Christian morality. Its role of laying the root of the secular order is strengthened and the debate as to the foundation of this weakly challenged proposition is never in sight because either party hold article of faith they wish never to offend. In the United State of America, the Supreme Court decision in the two matters did not make issues better in which the court allowed posting of Ten Commandments the Texas capital³⁸ and declared unconstitutional in Kentucky Court house.³⁹ This position is not far from the basic acceptance that in England there were two separate systems of law before the Judicature Act of 1873-75 which united the administration of common law and equity in one court system. Equity before then were a set of doctrine religiously developed by ecclesiastics. The legal reasoning in equitable doctrines was based on conscience and religious beliefs in God. This is how William puts it:

Not surprisingly, chancery drew heavily from existing cannon law in developing civil rules of equity. Based on these origins, equity was viewed as applying Gods law and mercy as a check on the arbitrariness of an increasingly formalized common law. Though technically a separate system, chancery was in fact an integral part of the civil law system and greatly influenced the common law by reinforcing notions that civil law could not contravene Gods law.⁴⁰

Steven K.Green, has reasoned that the development of equity by chancery alone cannot account for basing English law on God's law, and calls in aid, the book 'The Doctor and Student'⁴¹ which demonstrated that the Christian scriptures had greatly influenced English legal system and therefore concluded that law eternal was the first law and English law drew squarely from it. Positive law and customary laws were to conform to divine law which was supreme.

5.0 Some Contribution of the Ten Commandments to Contemporary Legal Systems

The idea now is to turn to Ten Commandments and see how particular references can be inferred in contemporary laws. The Ten Commandments is at the heart of the United Nations Declaration

³⁸ Van Orden V.Perry, 545.US.677, June 27, 2005.

³⁹ McCrery County Kentucky v. America Civil Liberties Union, 545 U.S.844, June 27, 2005.

⁴⁰ Williams Searle holds worth, a history of English Law 5:275-83, Little, Brown Co, 1924.

⁴¹ Christopher St. Germain, The Doctor and Student or Dialogues between a Doctor of England, R. Clarke & Co.

of 10th December, 1948-in that it provided for right to life, which includes freedom from tortured, family life and marriage environment, religious freedom, freedom from discrimination because of sex, race etc, and presumption of innocence, equality before the law, property right, right to reputation and economic right.⁴²

These rights are referred to as human rights because they are inalienable, natural to human and any derogation divests man from his very nature and lowers his very esteem to that of a beast⁴³ and most countries of the world including Nigeria have adapted the Universal Declaration of Human Right and domiciled same in Chapters two, three and four of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

There are serious attacks on the proposition that the current legal order may have been modeled after the covenant code which started from Exodus 21:1, immediately after the Sinai encounter where Yahweh personally wrote and gave the Ten Commandments to Moses at mount Sinai for the Jewish nation. Those who do so believe that, outdated models of legal development had been relied on to reach a historical evolution of our current system of laws.⁴⁴ Beliefs that not only were such models discredited, they are largely inappropriate, descriptive and non-scientific.

It is this evolutionary trend of covenant codes which he greatly opposed as such were never legislation in the sense of or like the royal edicts which are authoritative sources of law, other than the codes which are consultative.⁴⁵ There is a point to be made here, that, if we consider the time in which Benard wrote, it was correct to judge laws as authoritative if made by the Monarch. Today, a specialised arm of the government such as the Legislature or in military rule, the Armed Forces Ruling Council is saddled with the primary law-making powers of a state, although, it could make laws that empowers other arms of government to make secondary legislation such as rules, orders, regulations etc and such is still authoritative.

Again, the court system in ancient times and likewise today, in resolution of legal disputes must

⁴² Exodus 20:4-17 New King James version of the Holy Bible. The declaration also provided for work, citizenship, security, employment, education, full and free community etc.

⁴³ Eric Buehrer, Ten Commandments & Inalienable Rights: Christianity as a Force for Good in the World, go gateways. Org/blog/2018/4/12/fcyhcsn2k5ya32n230ccfgo/mc4n29 April, 12, 2024.

⁴⁴ Raymond Westbrook. What is Covenant Code? In theory and Method in Biblical and Curie form Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development, ed. B.M. Levisohn, Sheffield: Academic Press, 1994, 15-36.

⁴⁵ Bernard S. Jackson. Modeling Biblical Law: The Covenant Code, Chicago-Kent Law Review, Vol 70, Issue 4, 1995, 1747-1748.

have had recourse to application of legal rules. We cannot deny the existence of rules in a legal system and if courts today apply rules to settle dispute, it must have been a fore knowledge of man to adjudicate disputes and settle it by well-known and developed legal rules to the parties. The subtle suggestion of this settled rule been followed in adjudication is akin to precedent. What can be said further now is that, such rules and adjudicatory processes have become progressively refined and made more formal than it was in the code time which was more conciliatory.

The conceptualization of litigation model is of immense benefits to contemporary legal system. The Ten Commandments enjoins witnesses in legal disputes not to bear false witness or withhold vital facts that will lead to proper determination of the case and justice. It also warns judges not to take bribe to pervert justice⁴⁶ as a dishonest judge an erosion of society values and entrenches corruption in the system. The statement by the offender, lets meet in court is an assertion that the justice in the courts of the land is for the highest bidder not the innocent and this should worry all as to the direction society is heading to.

The requirement of corroboration in evidence law and criminal law before establishing a case is a contribution of the bible Ten Commandments that thou shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.⁴⁷ The extension of the rule lead to swearing on oath before giving evidence in court. A fall out of this is the offence of Perjury. Today the person need not profess any religion to swear to an oath.⁴⁸

On corroboration, the bible prefers: “on the evidence of two or three witnesses he who is worthy of death shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness”.⁴⁹ The above is an extrapolation of thou shall not bear false witness and the sanctity of human life of the innocent. In our contemporary legal system, it is said, it is better of ten criminals to go scotch free than to execute one innocent person.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Exodus 23-4, 8 New King James version of the Holy Bible, contrast with Surah 2 Al-Bqarah 42.

⁴⁷ Exodus 20: 16 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

⁴⁸ Section 207, Evidence Act 2011.

⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 17:6, see also section 179 (2) Criminal Code Act, 38 LFN 2004, see again Numbers 35:30 New King James version of the Holy Bible.

⁵⁰ R V Itule (1961)1All. NLR 462.

In *Igbine V State*⁵¹ the court defined corroboration to “mean confirmation, ratification, verification or validation of exiting evidence coming from another independent witness or witnesses.”⁵² This rule is a caution to carefully and thoroughly examine all evidence and hear from more than one person before deciding a case. This to one’s mind makes common sense, good legal sense and logic.

In Tort law, the Ten Commandments and Israel code had made profound contribution. One of such contribution is seen in Jesus’ answer to the question of the young lawyer as to ‘who is my neighbour’? Is a continuous debate from Exodus 20: 16-17? The episode is found in Luke 10:25-37. His response:

And he answering said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thy self⁵³

The question of who is my neighbour which is now a question of law received judicial nod in the watershed case of *Donoghue V Stevenson*.⁵⁴ Per Lord Akin:

The rule that you are to love your neighbour becomes in law, ‘you must not injure your neighbour’ and the lawyer’s question, who is my neighbour? Receives a restricted reply. You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour. Who then is my neighbour? The answer seems to be – persons who are so closely and directly affected by any act that I ought reasonably to have them in contemplation as being so affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question.⁵⁵

The result is that the person affected by actions and omissions of another person, the person so affected in law is a neighbor, and that person causing the action on the neighbour, owe him a duty of care to act in such a way not to injure the neighbour and if not, liability may attach. At least, in contemporary times, this is very much applicable in terms of compensations and damages.

⁵¹ *Igbine V. State* (1997) 9 NWLR (519) 101 @ 108.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Luke 10: 27 New King James version of the Holy Bible

⁵⁴ *Donoghue V Stevenson* (1932) A.C.562, 580.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

6.0 Conclusion

In practice, the Ten Commandments and the Christian teachings have helped to shape contemporary legal systems and public morality. There is no doubt that societies that practice faith and duty of care towards each other have been dubbed great and progressive. Each person is responsible for the good of the other man and does not deliberately injure him or takes what belongs to him or covert same to permanently deny him of the ownership.

The Ten Commandments an eternal law, published and enshrined in ecclesiastical code have been squarely communicated and replicated in circular positive laws which re-echo the commands, thou shall not kill with extension of dignity to life and freedom from torture; the prohibition not to steal⁵⁶ by necessary implication included not to covet and conversion of someone else's property, to be in possession of stolen property, to have knowledge of same and not report, to alter the state of a neighbour's property, etc

The practical usefulness of the command not to bear false witness in the body of evidence law today is far reaching and is connected with 'thou shall not kill' and in a way this is correct. If you think of it that a person who forcefully takes from another his property has killed the person or whoever bears false witness against other kills same. This is judging from the effect of the action which may be ripple. It is therefore useful to think of the Ten Commandments as one inter connected body of laws than a stand-alone disconnected body of law.

In the final analysis, it is good to state that the first five commandments summarized as you shall have no other gods before me; you shall not make for yourself a graven image; you shall not take the name of the lord god in name vain; remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy and honor your father and mother are for the common good of man and in recognition of God as creator of nature who specifies the law of all creature for the order of our physical universe.

Particular reference is made to the observance of the weekly Sabbath rest for the healing of the universe. This was altered by the purported change of the weekly rest day to Sunday⁵⁷ based on human philosophy and conjectures which has harmed man and his environment and the recent push by the same church for Sunday to be adopted as a compulsory rest day worldwide to heal the

⁵⁶ Section 390 of the Criminal Code Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

⁵⁷ What the early church believed: Sabbath or Sunday? www.catholic.com>tract>sabbath-... Accessed 1/10/2025.

earth⁵⁸ is an attestation to the need for the world at large for a compulsory observance of Sabbath day rest and solemn worship to heal the earth and return it to God's original design and in deed, the observance of all the law given in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy as they relate to lifestyle, diet, family life and worship.

⁵⁸ Slow Sunday: The simple solution to global warming/Satish Kumar...www.theguardain.com> sep ' 1...; see also The Earth ITSELF is to worship the papacy- Climate Change and Revelation 13 [www. End-times-prohhecy.org](http://www.End-times-prohhecy.org)>sun... Accessed 1/10/2025.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have disclosed no conflicts of interest.

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