

# Moravians Women's Association

Devotional Paper

November 2015

## Messages from the Mountains

Exodus Ch 20 v 1-17

Mt Sinai is located in the Sinai Peninsula which is a triangular shaped wedge of land lying between the two gulfs of the Red Sea. A vast rocky mass fills the peninsula with an individual peak, called Mt Horeb. This is where Moses received the Ten Commandments and in fact most of the laws given in the Old Testament were given on or at the foot of Mt Sinai. It could be called the Mount of Power.

We must remember that these commandments were part of a covenant or contract God made with the Israelites. They were not addressed to Gentiles or Christians but that does not mean that they do not embody values that form the basics of what God expects from us and that are vital for any kind of good and just society. God wants us to stick to the rules because he loves us and wants what is best for us. The first four commandments tell us how to behave toward God and the next six tell us how to behave towards each other.

It is a sad fact, but true I think, that we have at some time or other broken at least one of the Ten Commandments. Which one – well that is a personal question – but how about starting with working on the Sabbath? 21<sup>st</sup> century living does not subscribe to “no work on Sundays.” To those in retail, hospitals, transport workers and many more Sunday is just another day. If I had lived in biblical times, the Sun God would certainly have got me! Need I go on? But don't get too upset. I hope we are not all murderers and thieves. Think about how we approach Sunday (no 4) has changed even in our life times. It is the underlying principle of rest, which we all need, of relaxation and coming together with family and friends that provide for making the day special. To a Christian every day is a good time to thank and praise God but weekly coming together in His house seems the natural thing to do.

Jesus brought to us two new commandments –the Two Great Commandments “love the Lord you God .....and your neighbour as yourself.”

These two encapsulate all the other ten and should be the bedrock of our lives today. It is obvious what the “messages” from this mountains top experience are for us. Modern day living may have slightly changed the way one or two are put into practise but the principal is the same now as it was when Moses received them on Mt Sinai and passed them on to the Israelites. Each one of the commandments, old or new, could provide a paper on its' own but hopefully in your discussion time each message can be addressed individually.

### For Discussion

Do you feel you have broken any of the Ten Commandments?

Do you feel any are not relevant today?

What do you think about Sunday shopping laws?

Is there respect in families and society today?

How can we, as Christians, highlight some of the underlying principles we may feel are missing in modern society?

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