

Thought for the Day – Keeping the Law

The world comes up with some very wacky laws - especially, it seems, in America.... though I'm sure most of them are never enforced. The good church-goers of Alabama, for instance, are protected by a law which says it is an offence to attend church wearing a false moustache (I struggle not to do that every week - matter of fact, I think false moustaches should be compulsory...for *both* genders). In Georgia, it is an offence to attend church *at all*, unless you take a loaded firearm: Yes, 'Annie get your gun – we're off to communion!' And in West Virginia, you can be prosecuted for telling humorous stories from the pulpit....though that wouldn't affect most preachers I know. Some of their sermons made me glad I *wasn't* carrying a loaded firearm.

It's not just in the church, either - in various towns and states, the following activities are illegal: Allowing monkeys to smoke in public; pulling faces at dogs; tying elephants to parking meters without paying; looking at a moose from an airplane; tethering giraffes to lamp-posts, teasing skunks and lassoing fish. All these simple, everyday pleasures – now banned by heartless bureaucrats.

One state insists on licensing beards (but only goatee beards), while another prohibits the gift of chocolates to sweethearts in quantities of less than 49 lbs. (For any ladies suddenly gripped by the urge to emigrate, *that* state is Idaho.)

In Britain, we've had some odd laws, too. Perhaps the strangest of all, was the Liverpoolian by-law which made it illegal for a woman to appear topless within the city limits...*unless* she was working - as a clerk - in a tropical fish store. I'm sure that happens all the time.

Our legislation these days is dominated by the EU, and by what might be described as the 'politically correct' agenda. PC activists champion the idea that each and every expression of human nature, inclination and thought – is equally valid. *Unless*, of course, someone happens to disagree with any part of *their* agenda....that can *never* be valid. It seems we have the right to agree, or to remain silent.

Keeping laws (however daft) only makes people 'law-abiding'. Political correctness may engender a feeling of self-satisfaction among its adherents, but it never produces righteousness....only *self*-righteousness. *Real* righteousness is a function of relationship with God – it's as simple as that. But of course, when we've come into that relationship – we have to keep *his* laws.

Jesus summed them up for us – 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength', and 'love your neighbour as yourself'. How difficult can that be? True, it might seem tougher than resisting the temptation to lasso a fish (or to sneak a look at a moose from an aircraft), but keeping God's laws is really just a natural response to getting to know him. The more we do that, the more we'll find ourselves effortlessly moving towards his standards. *His* laws are for *our* benefit – he wants us to enjoy this life and beyond, and he's telling us how that can happen. As for those *other* laws – who knows why they came up with them? Perhaps I'll ask my monkey when he returns from the tobacconist!