

New Roots Review

March 2024



**NEW ROOTS
MINISTRY**

Is There a Commandment More Often Broken Than...?

by Fred Wilgenburg

God is clear in Exodus 20:16: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (New American Standard Bible). “No lies about your neighbor” is what is written in The Message’s contemporary version.

God made that one of His commandments, and I wonder if it is because it is one of the biggest sins of us humans. While the commandment states that we are not to lie about others, Jesus expands on it in Matthew 5:33-37: “...The ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ But I say to you, take no oath at all... But make sure your statement is, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil origin” (NASB).

My wife and I watch reality TV shows like *Survivor* and *The Traitors*. The shows are entertaining, but I can handle only so much of them before I need to watch something else; so much of the contenders’ ability to win or lose depends on their level of deception and lying to the other contenders. I know, “it’s just a game,” but that ability to deceive is clearly brought into the game, and probably also taken from it.

Lying was a major pitfall in the Bible. The devil himself started it, in responding to Eve in Genesis 3:4-5— “You certainly will not die! For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.” Well, that was partially correct—their eyes were opened—but the lie was big in that by them eating the fruit of the tree, the consequence ultimately was death. ***(Please read through to eventual good, positive news, in the last paragraph. Honestly.*** 😊

Disciple Peter denied knowing his master, Jesus, after Jesus’ arrest. That dishonest denial caused deep pain for Peter, and it required some rebuilding of their relationship. Ananias and Sapphira, in Acts 5:1-11, lied to the Holy Spirit and to the apostles about the money for some land that they sold. God took this dishonesty very seriously; they both died immediately as a direct result.

While there was often a sense of guilt and shame, and consequences, in those Bible stories, a sense of guilt and repentance seem largely absent in 20th century events, as well as today within societies where dishonesty has become rampant. My parents came to the US in the 1940s and 1950s largely because their home country of The Netherlands was severely impacted by World War 2, which was begun by Germany. Its leader, Adolf Hitler, deceived his own people, and lied to fellow world leaders, in his insatiable hunger for power and world domination. His “giving false testimony against” others, especially Jewish people, caused the murder of millions.

New Roots Ministry is in existence because so many former refugees have come to Sioux Falls within the past thirty years. Many of them had to leave their home countries due to dangerous, uninhabitable situations caused by corruption, dishonest gains, and broken promises by political leaders. These refugees have come from the African countries of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, the Democratic →



I am very pleased to have Jean-Claude Diaminda join our team as a chaplain at Smithfield Foods. With his fluency in 7 languages, his education and experience in psychology, and his years of experience as a pastor, this former refugee of Congo is doing well for us.



Donations are always appreciated!

Gifts can be given through the mail, or through our website—www.sfnewroots.com/donate/

Fred Wilgenburg
Director & Pastor
1915 E 8th St, Suite 104
Sioux Falls, SD 57103
phone: (605) 376-6330
sfnewroots@gmail.com

Desire' Jansen, Liaison
Jean-Claude Diaminda, Chaplain

[Facebook.com/SFNewRoots](https://www.facebook.com/SFNewRoots)

During the early years of his leadership twenty years ago, he said he recognized Ukraine as an independent country. Just over two years ago, he declared a full-scale war on Ukraine, with the support of the majority of his Russian people because the state-controlled news stations tell lies to the people, though by now 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed, a much larger number of Russian soldiers have been killed, and numerous civilians have died.

But, dishonesty is in our country, too, isn't it, impacting all of us, and this insidious sin probably afflicts each of us, personally, to certain degrees. American politics seems to share many half-truths, about national debt and deficits, about climate change, about border control and migration of people, and about issues like abortion. And, which half of the truth you hear depends much on which leader or news outlet you follow.

Interestingly, sometimes deception comes through religion. While we Jesus-followers believe in a perfect God who does not deceive, and who tells us not to falsely testify about others, Islamic theology teaches that Allah is not bound by his own laws, and that he can deceive, and that he created the devil and demons. As well, Islamic theology does not have a doctrine of sinfulness or of sin. If "sins" are discussed, they are categorized as lesser or greater mistakes and disobediences with various determined punishments. And, mistakes and disobedience are not seen as an offense against Allah, but a violation against man. This is not to write bad about Muslims, some of whom are good friends of mine, but to just highlight some teachings of their faith.

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Here's some great news: our perfect, holy, gracious, and personal God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is about making all things new, including us. He doesn't deceive and He doesn't want people to deceive or be deceived. Romans 6:1-10 is a powerful, Lent/Easter passage. We can put our old self, and with it, slavery to sin, to death, with and through Jesus. And then, as Jesus resurrected from death, we can live new, redeemed lives through Him. So, the deception and dishonesty within our societies are not of God. He has much better for us all! **Happy Easter!!!**

Continued...

Republic of Congo, and Burundi, from the Mideastern countries of Afghanistan and Iraq, from the Asian countries of Burma (Karen people), Bhutan, Nepal, and Afghanistan, and from the European countries of Ukraine, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Besides refugees, many others have had exceedingly difficult times in their home countries, due to corruption, lies, and danger, and if not caused by political leaders, by drug gangs, causing them to flee their central American countries.

Today, there is a big influx of Ukrainian refugees, including some to this region, due largely to the lies of Russian leader, Vladimir Putin.

What is New Roots Ministry?

It's "a springboard for new Americans & their churches." This is done through workplace chaplaincy (we provide chaplaincy at Smithfield Foods & we train & place bi-lingual chaplains on commercial farms), through Timothy Leadership Training, through hosting special educational events, through empowering new American pastors, leaders, and their churches, through offering unique Service Opportunities—serve in, or visit, stores owned by new Americans, then hear their stories, through helping people navigate the American system and achieve their goals, like education, through driver training for new Americans, and through Everyday-Ambassadors Practicum.



Marlys (2nd from left) taught Vidya (left) to drive and get her license. The rest of us benefitted; out of appreciation, Vidya and her husband, Pratt, took us and our spouses to an Indian restaurant for some of their best cuisine—excellent! If interested in this fulfilling opportunity to help somebody drive, please let us know.