

Let's Get Ethical!

An American Ship docked in the port of Mombasa, Kenya. Like many navy men do, a sailor by the name of Sandstrom went to a bar called the "Star Club." Alcohol tends to rid humans of self-control and Sandstrom got into a fight. He stabbed a Kenya woman to death and was left behind when his ship left port.

Back in New York, Sandstrom's mother pleaded with the state senator to do something before Kenya could enforce a verdict—capital punishment. Because of various arm-twisting techniques the Kenya government pardoned Sandstrom. Back in the U.S. while hugging her son at the airport the relieved mother said, "This is an answer to prayer." Evidently her church had been praying for her son's life. The Kenya newspapers published the mother's statement: "This is an answer to prayer."

A Kenyan professor, head of the university Law Department, got up before the 15,000-member student body and said, "Kenya has lost all sense of justice." Notice that he didn't blame the Kenya government, nor did he blame the British from whom Kenya received its' Legal System.

Guess who he blamed? He blamed the Christian church: "It is Christianity that has taught us, that you can sin, and transfer your sin on an innocent man called Jesus, who died on a cross, and the one who sinned goes scott free." That same law expert continued . . ." There is no law that will allow that. That is the most unethical, unlawful [unjust] religion that ever has existed."

Every law professional I meet, I ask if law, any law—anywhere, will allow the innocent to die for the guilty. Thus far, all have confirmed what that Kenya law professor stated before 15,000 students. As I study the Bible I find that God's

government, founded on agape love, is the same.

God has many types of laws: the 10 Commandments, ceremonial laws, banking laws, health laws, agricultural laws, and marriage laws. Even the gospel is a type of law (1 Peter 4:17). In Deuteronomy 24:16 we find one of God's civil laws. "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin."

This law means that you cannot transfer guilt and punishment. If I steal a cookie, then I am guilty. Bernardo or Olson's horrid offenses cannot be transferred to anyone. God's law is simple, straightforward, fair, and just. If you break the rules, then you need to expect the consequences.

Ancient Israel had two types of kings—faithful and unfaithful. Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1-6) was a good and faithful king. When he came to power he had the murders of his father executed but he spared the murder's sons because they had done no wrong themselves.

The entire chapter of Ezekiel 18 deals with the fact that you cannot transfer guilt and punishment from a guilty person to an innocent person. Instead, "the soul that sins shall die." The people back then were punishing the children for their father's wrongs. They had twisted an ugly proverb, but God didn't want them to use that saying any more. The apostle Paul agrees with Ezekiel by saying, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Well then, how could Christ come and take away our attitude of rebellion and sin if He repeatedly and specifically says that you cannot transfer guilt and punishment? Good question! We will discuss that next week.