

# What's a Dentist to Do? Standing in the Fire

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Moses\*\* was born of a Hebrew mother, Jochabed, who placed him in a reed basket in the Nile River. Discovered by the Egyptian royal family, he was raised by the Pharaoh as his own. According to the Book of Exodus in the Bible, Moses' father was Amram, son of Kehath, who was one of the original 70 of Jacob's household who immigrated to Egypt. Moses had an older brother, Aaron, and an older sister, Miriam.

His wife, Zipporah, he met while exiled in Midian, after killing an Egyptian soldier. Moses may also have had another wife, the daughter of an Ethiopian king who fell in love with Moses while he was on a military campaign against the Ethiopians.

Ten plagues, parting of the Red Sea, Ten Commandments, Mount Sinai, manna from heaven, wandering in the wilderness – most Christians know Moses' story as told in the first five books of the Bible's Old Testament. He died at the age of 120 years atop Mount Pisgah, east of the Jordan River overlooking the "land of milk and honey", and was buried in an undisclosed location by God himself. Moses also figures in many of Jesus' messages in the New Testament. He, along with Elijah, is with Jesus at the Transfiguration. Christians find several parallels between Moses and Jesus which remain relevant today.

In Judaism, stories of Moses appear in the Jewish apocrypha. Some Jewish historians believe he was instrumental in teaching the Phoenicians their alphabet. To Orthodox Jews, Moses

is called Mosha Rabbenu, "our leader Moshe", "Servant of God", and "Father of All Prophets". In their view, Moses received the Torah from God and also the revealed (oral and written) and hidden laws. He is considered the greatest prophet.

In the Mormon church, the Biblical accounts of Moses are accepted. However, the Mormons also include a Book of Moses as part of their scriptures, and this is believed to be the translated writings of Moses. They also believe Moses entered heaven without ever actually dying. The Mormons additionally believe Moses appeared to Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery on April 3, 1836 in the Kirtland Temple in Kirtland, Ohio.

In Islam, Moses is considered both prophet and messenger. The Quran mentions Moses (Musa in Arabic) more than any other prophet recognized in Islam. Most of the key events of Moses' life as narrated in the Bible are found in the Quran, with one difference: The Bible emphasized the rescue of the Israelites, the Quran the relation between Moses and God.

Some archaeologists claim Moses and the Exodus never existed. Sigmund Freud believed Moses was an Egyptian nobleman who was murdered in the wilderness.

Nevertheless, Moses as a lawgiver is the only forward-facing figure in bas-relief in our House of Representatives in the U.S. Capitol building. He is also depicted on the U.S. Supreme Court building

Seventy-five percent of us think we're above average.

Please e-mail us at [jackchurchill@msn.com](mailto:jackchurchill@msn.com) or fax us at (612) 339-3618. We look forward to hearing from you not only regarding this article, but also if you have any ethical dilemmas you would like to present to the membership. Perhaps we can help you decide what to do.

holding the Ten Commandments. The Washington National Cathedral depicts three stages of Moses' life in a beautiful stained glass window.

Why all this talk of Moses? According to the Bible, during the Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, God provided miracles for them time and time again only to receive grumbling in return. God on many occasions wished to destroy the Israelites, but Moses interceded on their behalf. God listened, and God relented. Moses had God's ear, but yet was the most humble man on the face of the earth.

We too need to intercede for others as Moses did. Our society and our profession are full of opportunities to intercede. It is difficult, though, isn't it? It is difficult because none of us wants conflict. Conflict is not just uncomfortable. It's painful. Yet some situations demand intercession, done

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*\*\*Information extracted from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses>*



# Ethics Committee

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so, of course, for the right reasons – not self-serving, but for the benefit of others or our profession. It is done out of love or caring for that person or profession, to help that person or profession become better. Tough love? Maybe so.

That brings us to my favorite topic: Top Dentists lists. Yes, I know. Broken record. But give me one more shot. Please.

You know when the fire alarm goes off in your building, and no one reacts? That is how dentistry is treating this issue in Minnesota. Yes, I know that we have other more “important” issues to deal with, such as the dental therapist et al. But this is something we cannot afford to ignore. This issue defines who we are. It is a character issue. It’s visceral. These lists diminish our industry by (1) misrepresenting facts; that is, a Top Dentist is not a

fact, but merely a popularity contest, (2) omitting a fact to make a statement misleading; that is, the omission of the hundreds of other dentists who serve their patients admirably day in and day out, (3) creating unjustified expectations; that is, the expectation that these Top 300 can achieve for their patients more than others, and of course, (4) claiming superiority without reasonable substantiation. (An aside: We generally think we are better at something than we actually are. Seventy-five percent of us think we’re above average.)

These lists are misleading and deceptive. They are an apostasy, an abandonment, a total desertion of our principles as a profession. I understand the many facets of this issue. The MDA’s Ethics Committee has dealt with it for many years. Notwithstanding, I also believe that

there are nowadays too many shades of gray between right and wrong, and these lists are just plain wrong.

It is time to intercede to help others help our profession. Ask the question, “Do you believe these lists have merit?” Ask, “Do these lists make us better?” Engage. Exchange ideas. Convince others that they are being played by these magazines whose simple goal is to sell advertising.

Luke 18:48 says, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

We are entrusted, and thereby judged. So there you have it, but after all, “Life is not tried, but is merely survived, if you’re standing outside the fire.” (Garth Brooks) ■

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