

## ***TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR MISSIONARIES*** (as seen by nationals)

- I. Thou shalt not have any other objective than the glory of God in the building of churches in foreign countries.

Remember that first and foremost is the establishing of a church, one that is indigenous, native, national, and natural to that country and culture. To evangelize is the first step, disciple is the next, but the work of the church, as described in the New Testament is much greater than just these steps. Please do not come to us calling a meeting place a church; the building is a temple. The people make up the church. Your objective has nothing to do with the reputation of your church, denomination, or mission here. Please do not exploit us for the benefit of your constituency.

- II. Thou shalt learn the language well.

Why do you think that one-syllable words, infinitives and the present tense can communicate to us the eternal gospel of the infinite God. To acquire our language, to speak to us adequately of the triune God and profound truths of the word of God will take all your life. Do your own devotional studies in the language rather than your native tongue if you really want to one day speak to our heart. Do not translate literally from English. You will never communicate truth in this manner.

- III. Thou shalt respect our culture.

Do not look down your nose at our culture. Do not compare our customs to yours. Neither is better than the other. The question is not which is best but how best to build an indigenous, national church in our culture, not an American church. "And hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation".- Acts 17:26b God has determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their distinction and extent of our cultures. Let us be very careful in these areas and respect each other. You come to help us and bring a life-changing message but you also bring many prejudices.

- IV. Thou shalt not underestimate us.

You look on us as inexperienced and immature and we might be in North America. But in our own country it is you who lack the background and maturity to deal with problems and opportunities we have. Why do you always feel that your ways and evaluations are best? You are inconsistent in your treatment of us. Please do not judge us all by a few foreigners that you possibly may have known in your limited experience. If you do not have faith in the word of God and the Holy Spirit to do the same thing in us, through us and for us that they have done for you then please do not come! We are looking for truth and reality, not hypocritical sham. Please trust us and have confidence in us to carry on the work of our great God.

V. Thou shalt not send us your rejects or washouts.

If anyone has not had success in North America, if he cannot preach in his own language, if you think he might fit in on a foreign field, you are wrong to send him to us. A foreigner in our country is faced with more major decisions per day and is under greater tensions than he would be in his own country. These decisions will be on a wider range of issues with more at stake than he will find in his own country. A second rate person in an overseas position either produces confusion, is a disaster for all of us, or achieves nothing. We need your best! We need those who have experience, maturity and wisdom and truly know how to walk in the spirit.

VI. Thou shalt not impose ready made, cut and dry North American solutions or programs on us!

Just because something works in North America is no indication it will work here. We have experienced too many projects promoted from your country by someone in a remote office who really never knew or understood us. We have seen too many political and religious programs that have just bombed out. Do not try to tell us what we need but why not ask us what we need. We are not talking about economic aid but that which will enable us to find and establish something here that will remain until Jesus comes.

VII. Thou shalt not bring the evils of North American churches and Christians to us!

U.S. movies, TV programs, the latest fashions, and ugly Americans have convinced many of us that Christian America is decadent and rotten. We are not sure we want the fruits of your technology. It appears to have destroyed you as an individual, a family, and as a nation. We think you have paid an awful price. Please understand many people of the world have put technology, economic aid, politics, and religion in the same bag and have labeled it western or American. They not only reject it they consider it a threat. They hate it and are ready to fight it fanatically. You have brought much of this baggage with you, yes, even as missionaries. Your lifestyle may have to be drastically different and simple. It may be true that the way you live here would qualify you for welfare in your own country but remember you came here to minister. Most of you here however really live like the wealthy in my country and own cars, cameras, appliances, in addition to employing servant help. It might be time for U.S. missionaries to indigenize themselves in some new ways. Missionaries can find creative ways to divest themselves of their Americaness and of those things that make them suspect in the eyes of the nationals. It is not the time to sound retreat but it is the time to map out new strategies for the stark realities that are engulfing the world. Many missionaries easily and readily justify their actions with the excuse that everyone does it back in their home church and that I will never be able to be a person of another culture. A nominal Christian cannot make an impact on our country. Many of us have paid a great price to become Christians. Our families have disowned us, we have lost our jobs, and some have been jailed and run out of their villages and towns, even tribes. We count it a privilege to suffer for the Lord. Please bring us a live, vibrant, powerful witness and example. We consider you super Christians and pace setters. Bring us revival and life not that dead thing that many of you have in your churches. Christ must be our all. We must be more dedicated than the communists and cultists.



VIII. Thou shalt be a servant.

We have suffered long enough under colonialism and paternalism. Our entire society is permeated with people who exploit and rob us under the name of public service in some form. We want to see something and someone that is different and real. If you really have come as a representative of Jesus Christ will you not possess his attitudes? Did He not say, the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:28) He also said the servant is not greater than his Lord. Jesus said a new commandment I give unto you that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another, John 13:34,35. Show us your Savior and your Bible not in word but in visible lives and actions. It is true that we cannot hear you many times because your actions speak so loud.

IX. Thou shalt treat us as equals and brothers!

We have been bought and washed in the same blood. We do have the same Lord and Savior. Our Bible teaches the same as yours. There is neither Jew or Greek there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus, Galatians 3:28. We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, Galatians 3:26. If children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17. We thank you for bringing us the truth of the gospel. We appreciate all of the sacrifice and effort that has gone into this fact. However please do not treat us as little children forever. We now are together in the work of the lord. We are your brothers and co-laborers. We are human beings and have feelings just like you do. We are not inferior. The Holy Spirit can do for us what He has done for you. If you cannot have victory over your prejudice do not come. If you are insecure and always feel threatened by any leadership potential on our part maybe you do not have any business being here.

X. Thou shalt take much thought in the equipment that is brought to my country!

A vehicle, camera, projector, light generator, typewriter, computer and household appliances automatically put one in the class of the wealthy and professional people in my country. Are all these things a necessity for the work? They just may set you up to get your house robbed. Will it come across to the preachers and students of the ministry that it is impossible to carry on without these things? What do we do when you are gone with all of your equipment? You will expect the same results from us and yet you relied on these things as tools. Will you leave them with us when you go? If not then please show us how to do a work by just depending on the Lord.