

### **the “10 Commands of the Risen Christ.”**

1. **Repent**--Story of the prodigal Son. Mark 1:15, Luke 15:11-31.
2. **Believe** the Good News. Story of Christ betrayal, death and resurrection. Luke 22:39- 24:12.
3. **Receive** the Holy Spirit. John 20:22.
4. **Baptized** new believers to confirm repentance. We use the term for the monk’s ordination ceremony for baptism. Sometimes the believers add “Christ” to this term. Story of Jesus, Ethiopian and Philippian jailure’s baptism. Matt. 28:20. Acts 8.
5. **Practice the Lord’s Supper**. Myanmar Buddhist have a ceremony when they make covenants. Also brides and bridegrooms have a special ceremony and we use these terms interchangeably. Story of the Last Supper Matt. 26:26 and I Cor. 11:23.
6. **Love God**, neighbor and even enemies. This command includes forgiveness. This term is interpreted as the Buddhist doctrine of love but in obedience to Jesus. Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37, Unmerciful Servant, and the 37 One another teachings in the letters of Apostles.
7. **Pray everyday** in Jesus name in relationship with the risen Lord. Jesus’ instructions on prayer to our Father. Luke 11:1-13.
8. **Give joyfully for Christ** mission. Share the story of the Poor Widow’s mite.
9. **Deny yourself and follow the risen Christ**. Story of Paul’s endurance even in the face of death. Acts 20
10. **Make disciples of Christ** by teaching them to lovingly obey the first seven commands. Share the Story of Wise and Foolish Builders. Story of Four Seeds Mark 4. Story about the first church who practiced the above commands of Jesus, Acts 2:37-47. “If you love Me you will obey my commands” John 14:21. “I have all authority... teach all nations to obey all of my commands, and I am with you always!” Matt 28:19-20.

If we take the previous command literally then we must teach new believers and leaders to obey all of Christ commands. New believers are being trained in storying all of His commands (summarized) and are training other multiplying house church leaders. It would be ideal to train them to story one lesson per meeting, having them report about who they trained and what happened each time they trained others.

### Music

The house church leaders have made these ten commands of Christ into a song using their traditional style and instruments. Ethnomusicology is the study of how to help indigenous peoples to maintain and redeem their traditional forms of worship. The vast majority of churches in the Buddhist world do not use traditional music except on special occasions. To my knowledge this movement is the only church in Myanmar to worship Jesus through traditional music and forms on a regular basis.

All of the one hundred new Buddhist Background Churches that have been started in the since February 2004 use the *Geezee* bell in their worship meetings. Buddhist all over Myanmar use this bell to worship in their homes. The new Buddhist Background believers have declared this bell to be their bell of Liberation from the cycle of reincarnation and from hell. Buddhist Background Believers reported to me that when a Buddhist sees and hears another Buddhist praying without using the *Geezee* Bell then it means that he or she is praying to a bad spirit for manipulation of that spirit.

When the bell is struck three times, in the name of the *Buddha*, *Dharma* and the *Sangha* then everyone knows that it is the person is talking to a good spirit. The new Buddhist Background Believers are hitting this bell in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They hit the *gezee* three times as an invocation and at the end of a worship service as the benediction. New believers all say “*Thado*” (*sadhu* in Pali), three times instead of

saying the Judeo-Christian term, “Amen.” This term is also being used by the Thai Covenant Churches among the Isaan as well as in three other Buddhist Background Believing networks of churches in Thailand.<sup>43</sup>

### Turning Buddhist Barriers into Stepping Stones

Paul noted that the Greeks of Athens were very devoted to their religion and were not lacking in zeal for their beliefs. He quoted their own scholars and writings from their holy places. He used their own understanding of truth to bring the story of Christ to their minds. Everyone working with Theravada Buddhists needs to pay attention to this principle in Acts 17. There are typically three ways Christians approach Buddhists; first they usually ignore Buddhism. This approach does work with many, but it has not led to one single movement in the Buddhist world. Another method that Christians tend to employ is directly attacking the Buddha and Buddhist doctrine the way Adoniram Judson sometimes dealt with the hard-hearted Burmese. Judson made an all out assault on the deity of Gotama in his track “The Golden Balance.” In this track he pointed out the hypocrisy of the Burmese in their hatred for Indians while still worshipping an Indian, Gotama.<sup>44</sup>

The apologetic approach, when use evangelistically does not tend to work with Buddhists, Muslims or Hindus in comparison to the success of what I call, “the apostolic approach.” Apologetics is meant to help believers to reinforce their understanding of the faith so that when seekers and opponents attack, then believers can give a thoughtful, Spirit-filled reply. As good as this approach is, it has a miserable track record in bring seekers to Christ. The apostolic evangelistic approach finds truths to build bridges of understanding between opposing views.

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<sup>43</sup> Paul DeNeui, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2003. Personal interview with the author.

<sup>44</sup> James Khong “Bible Translation issues with the Judson Standard Version” (Master of Miss. diss., Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, Ca. 1998), 3.

The roughly 400,000 baptized converts in Bangladesh take a remarkable loving attitude towards Mohammad. They use the very words of Mohammad that point to Christ by using the Koran as a bridge. A Bengali evangelist asks listeners, “Do you follow the word of Mohammad?” The listeners predictably respond, “of course we do!” Then the evangelist asks, “Why don’t you read the New Testament (*Injil*) and follow Jesus or *Isa*?” According to Bengali believers, Mohammad lifted Jesus up higher than himself and far above all other Prophets.” This usually leads to whole families responding to Christ and new churches starting through household leaders.

In Thailand the Thai Covenant Church older leaders do not call themselves Christians but “*Children of God.*” They use the story of the Coming Buddha, and they use the very words of Buddha to point to “the Coming One.”<sup>46</sup> Lifting up Gotama, instead of putting him down is a more biblical approach to take than the ignoring and attacking approaches with Buddhists.<sup>47</sup>

Jesus also said, “Unless your righteousness does not surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees then you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” This is the connection point with Buddhism. The key question is, “How does one achieve this?” Jesus’ answer is, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!” Only through Christ’s righteousness being imparted to Buddhist through his death on the cross and resurrected life living through us can we become the Righteousness of God. Most Buddhists practice making merit, and they think that they are getting many merits by doing Buddhist activities; but according to true Buddhism, this is not enough.

#### Bridge Terms for Buddhist

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<sup>46</sup> Paul DeNeui, 2003, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Interview with the author.

<sup>47</sup> Acts 17:13-34.

“Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.”<sup>48</sup> While challenging a new Buddhist Background pastor to follow Christ in a Buddhistic way. He replied, “Yes, even the snakes and lizards do that! They blend into the background for safety and for offensive maneuvering.”

There is a tremendous need to not make it difficult for large numbers of Buddhist to come to Christ in a relatively short time. Missionaries in the Muslim world have identified common contextualized or indigenized terms based on Arabic and Persian term that help Muslims keep more of their cultural identity than if they joined non-Muslim background Churches in Islamic countries. With the publication of several contextualized Bibles across the Islamic world, Muslim peoples are responding like never before to the Good News. Those working with Theravada Buddhist would be wise to pay attention to these recent successes. Having a unified, contextual language is one of the greatest needs. The best way to analyze these terms is inside an obedient and naturally multiplying network of interconnected churches.

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew 10:13.

## Key Terms for Theravada Buddhist in Myanmar

Terms	Proposed terms in Burmese
Church— <i>ekklesia</i> (the call out ones)	<i>Chritdaw wine</i>
Bapitism/to Baptize	<i>Shin Phyu-Ya Han Khan Bwe</i>
Heaven- <i>ouranous</i> /paradise	<i>Nibban Shwe Byi, or simply Shwe Khan Chin, or Shwe Myodaw by itself w/o Niban</i>
Pastors- <i>presb</i> , elders, Shepherds	<i>Wine Lu Gyi mya, Thot Kyaung thama</i>
Sin- Harmetia	<i>Kiletha (Kilesa-Pali)</i>
Lord’s Supper/Communion	<i>Thitsa Phyu Bwe</i>
Angel	<i>Shwe Myo daw Nat kaung Nat Myat</i>

The Judson word for church is also a barrier term in this movement. Judson used two terms for “church.” First is *paya kyoung* (church building), and the second is *athin-daw* (*congregation*). The first term in modern usage is directly related to a building, which is extra-biblical. The second term also is difficult because of the heavy affiliation with the extra-biblical Christian tradition of a non-participatory, sermon centered, worship service and organization.

### Bridge Ceremonies

The Buddhist peoples hold a “*Shin Phyu*” (ordination celebration) when a young person enters the *Sangha* (priesthood). Participants parade the candidate through the neighborhood and hold a party in their honor. The Buddhist Background churches are the first group of churches in the Buddhist word to use the Buddhist term for ordination instead of the usually transliterated term, *baptism*. The Burmese Muslim community

commonly use this term for their circumcision ceremony without any problem. Traditional Burmese Christians have also considered using this term since it is so culturally acceptable.<sup>49</sup>

Buddhists seem to accept this term; however, a monk friend of the leaders questioned, “isn’t *shin phyu* for children only? How can it be used for adults?” The response was given, “Jesus said that unless you become like a little child you may never enter his kingdom.” The participants are taught the Ten Precepts (commands) of Christ *Critdaw Say pha Thila* and are asked if they are willing to follow Christ unto death if need be. After a day or few hours of teaching all of participants agree together to obey Christ’s commands not to earn merit but because Christ’s merit is sufficient for them. The new resurrected life is emphasized and the participants say, *amaboni*, in unison, which means, *we agree!*

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<sup>49</sup> James Khong, 72.