Dialogue Decalogue

30.04.2013 | Leonard Swidler

These principles of dialogue were formulated by Professor Leonard Swidler of Temple University. The text is printed in the Journal of Ecumenical Studies 20:1 (1984).

FIRST COMMANDMENT

The primary purpose of dialogue is to learn; that is, to change and grow in the perception and understanding of reality, and then to act accordingly.

SECOND COMMANDMENT

Inter-religious, inter-ideological dialogue must be a two-sided project within each religious or ideological community and between religious or ideological communities.

THIRD COMMANDMENT

Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT

In inter-religious, inter-ideological dialogue we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practice, but rather our ideals with our partner's ideals, our practice with our partner's practice.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Each participant must define himself... Conversely, the interpreted must be able to recognize herself in the interpretation.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard-ançl-fast assumptions as to where the points of disagreement are.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Dialogue can take place only between equals... Both must come to learn from each other.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Dialogue can take place only on the basis of mutual trust.

NINTH COMMANDMENT

Persons entering into inter-religious, inter-ideological dialogue must be at least minimally self-critical of both themselves and their own religious or ideological traditions.

TENTH COMMANDMENT

Each participant eventually must attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology 'from within'; for a religion or ideology is not merely something of the head, but also of the spirit, heart, and 'whole being,' individual and communal.

Source:

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