

## Form and Function

**Form** — the Gospel message must always be expressed in cultural terms in a language, cultural symbols and behavioral practices that will, in part, mold the message. Forms can change according to the culture.

**Function** — Universal principles and practices that transcends any one culture— the message functions need to be preserved and cannot change.

1. Is the gathering of believers on Sunday for teaching and fellowship an issue of form or function?
2. Are bread and juice part of the function or form of communion? Could fish and water or coconut meat and coconut juice be used instead?
3. Is reading the Bible out loud in church an issue of form or function?
4. Is reading the Bible weekly an issue of form or function?
5. Is abstaining from food sacrificed to idols, from meat from animals that have been strangled, and from sexual immorality, an issue of form or function?
6. Is calling for people to make a public decision to follow Jesus part of form or function?
7. Is the celebration of the birth of Jesus an issue of form or function?
8. Is the church meeting in homes an issue of form or function?
9. Is singing songs of praise during the corporate gathering of a church an issue of form or function?
10. Is baptism with complete immersion in water an issue of form or function?
11. Is baptism of believers (and not infants) an issue of form or function?
12. Must the Old Testament system of sheep sacrifice be used to explain the meaning of Jesus sacrifice if sheep are foreign to a certain group of people? Are Biblical types an issue of form or function?
13. If the phrase “bread of life” is translated instead as the “rice of life,” has form or function being changed?
14. Muslims customarily kneel and pray five times a day. Is this an OK practice for a follower of Christ to continue, or should a Muslim-background believer be encouraged to avoid it? Is it an issue of form or function?
15. Can a Jesus follower worship God in a mosque? Or should s/he never go to a mosque again after beginning to follow Christ? Is it an issue of form or function?
16. Can a believer honor saints or martyrs that have lived sacrificial lives in the past by praying in front of pictures of them? Is praying like this an issue of form or function?
17. At birth, if a child is given the name of a Hindu god, should he/should change his/her name after becoming a Jesus follower? Is changing the name a matter of Form or function?
18. Is wearing a head covering for women a matter of form or function?

How many of the 18 did you identify as forms? Functions?