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Mother and child of the unreached Central Shilha people group located in Morocco, Africa. Used with permission from John Fries of ProclaMedia, YWAM.

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Tentmaking: The Practical Dimension

Wherever Paul worked he shared his love and zeal for the Lord in the marketplace as well as in chains. The important point is he never tired of sharing Christ's love. He did this both alone and in partnership with others. The nationalistic attitudes of newly developed countries has changed the way that the gospel is and can be carried into the unreached areas and peoples of the world. The movement of evangelizing in the marketplace is not new but it has become an effective way to enter restricted access countries where the majority of the unreached peoples are found.

How the missionary and tentmaker performs in the marketplace has become of prime concern. Some churches have used the professional as a means of entering a country without regards to how his or their business operated. This policy has led to many problems, often at the cost of the Word and Truth of the Gospel.

In this special edition of the IJFM we will take a close look at the opportunities, challenges and problems related with the tentmaking mission movement. For instance the whole issue of integrity is brought into focus in Bob Morris' article as well as in various other articles.

Many denominations and congregations have battled within themselves as to where their mission efforts are directed, locally and globally? This led to competition instead of collaboration. This same occurrence has transpired in the business world where competition is fierce. But now a new era of partnering has come into being. Phill Butler addresses the great benefit of synergistic action of

cooperation and partnerships in his article. In the future, tentmaking businesses and churches hopefully will combine their efforts and unite in solid partnerships in reaching the unreached of the world.

Throughout the articles and case studies presented in this issue, it becomes apparent that if the Gospel is to be proclaimed in the marketplace, good business principles must be practiced. One of the basic principles is attitude. The person representing or starting a business must have a "calling", and the desire to succeed in business and at the same time know how to share the Gospel. Business journals say that a people's attitude is more important than their skills.

Gary Taylor carries this even further in his article as he feels that the native businessmen can be taught the Gospel as well as the skills needed to succeed in business. A successful business person is looked on favorably and respected by people of developing countries which makes for closer personal relationships and opens the door to sharing the Word and discipling and mentoring others. However, if the business is a mere front that only allows the business person to enter the country, it is quickly discovered and no amount of preaching will offset the lie that the person is living.

Actions do speak as loud as words. The principles and characteristics, including a sound theology of tentmaking, needs to be know and understood and acted upon by the tentmaking mission businessman today. These are stated and outlined

and alluded to in practically every article of this special edition.

One thing is sure, taking the Gospel into the marketplaces and classrooms of the unreached world is not only the main, and in some cases the only, strategy to grant us access (see Patrick Lai's article), but also and more importantly takes the Gospel of the religious affairs of men into the arena of relationships, and real life. Here is where the Gospel needs to be lived, heard and seen. Here is where it will make its greatest impact. Indeed actions born in true faith will speak louder than words!

God has given us today wide open doors of opportunity in Brazil (see Robson Ramos' article). Several authors help us see the close link of business and missions in tentmaking (see Nordstrom/Nielsen's article as well as David Hagen's and Patrick Lai's). Doug Lucas explores the great potential the Internet holds for tentmakers today. Kitty Purgason helps us see one of the greatest commodities in the world—the English language—and how to teach it with integrity that will produce much fruit among the unreached of the world.

For a list of additional options, needs and opportunities in tentmaking today, contact Tentmaker International Exchange at 206-781-3151 or at <tie@gati.wa.com>

*Kenneth Smith, guest editor,
General Secretary of Tentmaker
International Exchange (TIE).
Hans M. Weerstra, IJFM editor.
March 1998, El Paso, Texas
USA*

nection with others who, nonetheless, may have similar objectives.

Reflecting on the last dozen years of closely watching tentmakers in action, here are a few factors that I think make it more likely that a tentmaker will be effective.

1. Tentmakers work best when they are humble and understand that they need others to help address the full Biblical process of evangelism and planting the Church. It is very rare that a single individual does the whole job of “stone-clearing, sowing, watering, reaping, and discipling!” (John 4:3, 5-38). That is why tentmakers generally work best in Partnerships.

2. Tentmakers have a greater sense of fulfillment when, understanding #1, they can see how they “fit in” to the larger picture of what God is doing in the country or language group. In their often lonely and difficult task, working consciously in Partnership, they know that they do not have to do everything to do something of eternal value. In a Partnership, the tentmaker can see that together the group is doing virtually everything that needs to be done.

3. Tentmakers are most fulfilled, have greater integrity, are more credible, and usually more effective when they bring a skill/experience to the field that is valued by the people and their country. Artificial “platforms” which provide only a paper shell to justify one’s presence in the country are not only risky but lack the integrity which should be basic to the Gospel. Such “activities of convenience” can and frequently do seriously set back the efforts of evangelism/church-planting. A tentmaker should give serious thought as to whether they have a genuine interest in the people and seek to serve their welfare through their tentmaking role. Seeing

tentmaking only as a means for “spiritual” issues is a sure recipe for frustration and lack of effectiveness.

4. Tentmakers are most effective when they give their “professional” trade serious attention. A person cannot have a paper company complete with phony business cards and effectively connect with national counterparts.

Tentmakers need to believe in and

**Working in Partnerships
allows the tentmaker to forge
strategic alliances with
like-minded individuals to
accomplish efforts impossible
for a person “going it alone.”**

experience the power of witnessing through the relationships naturally developed in the business or technical field. Their tentmaking job is not “secular” and their witnessing platform is not necessarily “sacred.” This is particularly true in traditional cultures such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism where the worldview integrates all things within the sacred. Countless times, unfortunately, I have seen tentmakers struggling with this issue—victims of Western theological dualism and modern secularism.

A Case Study

A tentmaker I once met had a strong background in computer systems and programming. He was using this background to do contract work for businesses in the Islamic country where he resided. At that time, the country did not have a single commercial/trade school where young people could learn how to operate PCs and use even rudimentary applications

such as word processing, spread sheets, accounting systems, etc. The tentmaker lamented that his consulting time was taking so much effort and that it deprived him from the time he felt he needed to make contacts and witness! I asked if he had ever considered setting up a simple computer training school. We discussed how his home church would probably gladly fund the needed equipment and likely send out a technical team to help set up the simple installation; how the companies he now worked for would be likely clients; and how that eventually, since so many companies needed staff of this kind, he would develop a large, influential network of relationships—within the business community—with the growing number of students, and, potentially, with the students’

families. His response was, “Why would I want to do that? It would take so much time to develop and run the business I would have no time left to do what I came here to do!”

This story could have been quite different if the following had happened:

1. The tentmaker had been committed to the country, its people and its holistic development as a Kingdom priority—lending integrity to his “tentmaker” role and credibility to his life and message with the Muslims he was trying to reach.

2. He had seen “work” as a truly God-given blessing (given to us by God before the fall and only later to be distorted because of sin) and a natural context in which worship and praise to God could be realized.

3. He had not seen everything as depending on him but, rather, seen

Continued on page 18 “Partnership...

Tentmaking and Partnership for Church Planting Among the Unreached

Here's a report on eleven years of experience in facilitating the formation, development and long-term operation of strategic evangelism/church planting partnerships; on the impressive growth of diversity among the global missionary force; on the transformation of former "receiving" countries into "sending" countries; and on the diverse ways that new regional partnerships are assisting various ministries in working effectively together.

by Phill Butler

My personal experience in mission activity has been focused almost exclusively for the last decade in the Hindu, Buddhist/Tibetan Buddhist, and Islamic world. By definition, this world is, but with rare exception, inaccessible to individuals who apply for visas as "missionaries." Therefore, those doing Kingdom work almost always function in some type of tentmaker role.

In these regions, for the last eleven years, my colleagues and I have been engaged in helping launch and sustain Strategic Evangelism/Church-Planting Partnerships—and in training/mentoring those who lead these Partnerships. However, my field involvement with missions stretches over thirty-five years. This has allowed me to meet and work with hundreds of tentmaker missionaries.

In helping develop and sustain these Partnerships over the last eleven years, we have found ourselves connecting with missionaries playing every conceivable role. Scripture translators, literacy workers, literature production, radio programming, health and medical work people, environmental and business personnel, and those engaged as teachers or academics would be just some of the cat-

egories of tentmaking activity we have regularly seen.

Mission Diversity

As many know, the diversity of the global missionary force is increasing at a staggering rate. The sending countries of these missionaries, the societies who sponsor them in the field, and the roles which they play are all increasingly diverse. Former "receiving" countries are now missionary "sending" countries. So, it is not unusual, but rather typical, that a Strategic Evangelism/Church-Planting Partnership in one of the larger unreached language groups will have missionaries present from 15-20 different countries. At the moment, the Partnerships which Interdev assists in one way or another have over 300 ministries participating from more than 50 countries. Nearly one-third of those ministries are from Third World, so-called "developing countries."

One of the most beneficial aspects of a Partnership approach to evangelism/church planting is that it provides a forum in which such a diverse group can see a whole strategy and where their particular contribution "fits in." Tentmakers working in a

Partnership can, therefore, generally find greater fulfillment and more easily link with other individuals and their ministries who are playing vital roles in the evangelism and church-planting process.

Effectiveness Factors

Tentmakers working in a Partnership context frequently find that their effectiveness, or lack of it, is more readily apparent. As they meet, pray, plan, and minister with others, the extent to which the tentmaker is achieving their objectives becomes more evident. Frequently this has led specialist tentmakers to form task forces or working groups as a natural by-product of a Strategic Evangelism/Church-Planting Partnership. Gathering like-minded individuals together around common issues, such as translation, educational, or health initiatives, Scripture distribution, etc., the tentmaker is able to plan, develop, and execute strategies that are vital to the overall evangelistic effort but impossible to have done on his/her own.

This is in sharp contrast to the "go it alone" approach where the tentmaker is isolated and has little con-

Jesus practised secrecy (Jn.7:8-10), spoke in parables to keep secrets of the kingdom from the uninitiated (Jn.8:10), and repeatedly enjoined others to secrecy, for a variety of reasons (Mk. 1:44; 5:37; 7:36; 8:30). Those who disobeyed Jesus' command for secrecy surely limited Jesus' freedom to minister in the urban centres (Mk.10:17-20).

Wisdom in tentmakers, and in their supporters too, demands that we restrict the flow of information about our ministries. In some case this means writing encrypted prayer letters, omitting last names, location names, or in some cases even using pseudonyms. In the case of converts it is necessary to protect them from families or governments that will persecute them. In the case of tentmakers themselves, it is sometimes a question of protecting them from well-meaning but insensitive supporters (pseudonyms are used with supporters, not with the local government!).

Even e-mail users must learn new guidelines for communicating securely, probably without using encryption which itself raises red flags to official "snoopers."¹ In summary, God cannot lie (Titus 1:2) but he certainly keeps secrets. So should we.

4. Bribery

A Pakistani brother once asked me whether paying after a service was rendered (a tip) made it more moral than paying before the fact (a bribe). Why do we find the one so easily acceptable and the other not? If we take the original meaning of tip as "to insure promptness," there is little to distinguish between the two in many cases. Many seasoned veterans of cross-cultural living distinguish between extortion (demanding bribes) and bribery (paying them). The Bible appears to make the same distinction,

uniformly condemning the practice of demanding bribes but virtually silent about paying them, except in the desire to get what one does not deserve.

That is a helpful distinction—the ethical distinction between paying the "extra" demanded for a legal and moral right as opposed to paying to get something that is not rightly ours. The former is paid to ensure promptness, the latter to secure illegal and immoral gain. Local believers will help us navigate the minefields caused by a confusion of our cultural and Biblical values.

To put things in perspective before we leave the topic of tentmaker integrity, perhaps it should be pointed out that traditional modes of ministry have an equal number of ethical questions, perhaps less examined because we have lived with them for so long. Should foreign workers, especially the myriad short-term work teams, be taking jobs from nationals? Should guests set their own agendas rather than working where they are wanted and needed as defined by the host country which grants them permission to come? Should we be establishing agencies and institutions whose ethos demands the individualism and "drivenness" that characterize so much of our ministry?

Are there some activities of both tentmakers and traditional missionaries which need to be re-examined? One example is the ethical question of exporting carpets made by children, or conversely depriving families of their livelihood by insisting that all children go to regular schools. Another dilemma relates to refusing to pay bribes to underpaid government employees whose families depend on the income. There are no easy answers to these and many other related questions.

The onus is on us—expatriate and national alike—to be shrewd but innocent and to bring ourselves under the authority of God's word as we together seek his wisdom in being salt and light in the world he has commanded us to evangelize.

End Note

1. Editor's Note: Some feel that since businesses often use encryption for the security of their companies' information it may or may not raise red flags depending on who is using it and who they are in communication with.

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of faith is integrated with our profession we will not lack integrity.

Other Ethical Issues

We return now to the other implications of integrity which come under the category of "honesty" and "holiness." Here as much as anywhere we see a contrast between accepted evangelical orthodoxy and Biblical values, which have a more Middle-Eastern or Asian flavour.

1. Double Agendas

Double agendas are a Biblical principle blessed by God and absolutely essential to the fruitfulness of tentmakers. Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord and he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases." How does he do it? Do the kings act like puppets on a string while God in his sovereignty makes them act against their will? Or is he like some master programmer writing into their decisions exactly what he wants them to do? Neither! Joseph understood how double agendas work, both to preserve man's autonomy and God's purposes. He said to his brothers on the occasion of revealing himself to them in Egypt, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen. 50:21; Isa.10:5-7, 12). God had one agenda and Joseph's brothers had quite a different agenda. Both accomplished their agendas through the same actions. Joseph's brothers had not felt manipulated in selling Joseph into Egypt; they were doing exactly what they freely chose to do, but in so doing they got Joseph to Egypt. That's where God wanted him in order to prepare him for the great job he eventually had under Pharaoh. Examples

abound in the modern world where rulers have made decisions which have furthered the kingdom of Christ.

When we understand how God uses men's agendas to accomplish his purposes, we are free to "market" our skills to Marxist, Muslim or pagan employers and adopt their agendas, confident that God will accomplish his agenda at the same time. We can be

When we understand how God uses men's agendas to accomplish his purposes, we are free to "market" our skills to Marxist, Muslim or pagan employers and adopt their agendas, confident that God will accomplish his agenda at the same time.

what we say we are, whether nurse or management consultant or engineer, and still be an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

The supreme example of double agendas is the cross. The cross was the epitome of the worst that man and the Devil can do to man or God. Yet God used it for his purposes: the demonstration of agape love and the provision of redemption for all his creation. Man's worst and God's best meet in the cross!

2. Hidden Agendas

Hidden agendas are a variation of double agendas, this time practiced by one person. They too can be blessed by God. There is no necessary contradiction between our going to Mongolia as a city planner (and presenting ourselves as doing exactly that for the government of Mongolia) yet at the same time looking for opportunities to share our faith in a

way that does not decrease our effectiveness as a city planner. God himself advised double agendas on occasion, where both agendas were legitimate. He told Samuel to present a sacrifice as a means of simultaneously anointing David without antagonizing Saul (I Sam.16:1-3).

Problems arise when one of our agendas is false or deceptive. For example, someone on a student visa who attends one university class per week and spends the rest of the time evangelizing in the villages is acting fraudulently. Someone on a student visa should be a student, and if evangelism is his calling, let him witness to the academic world that he has been given permission to enter. Then neither his hidden or overt agenda lacks integrity.

3. Truth Telling, Secrecy and Pseudonyms

The hardest lesson for Christians from the West to learn is that truth telling in most other cultures and in the Bible does not mean telling the whole truth. Because we swear in court to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, we forget that "telling the whole truth" is not necessarily Biblical, while the other two oaths are. The cardinal rule for wise tentmakers is, "Respond to what has been asked, no more."

North Americans live in a culture which has an insatiable appetite to know. In fact we have laws protecting the public's right to know. We value the free flow of information to the point of information overload, and then spend our free time surfing the net, not to gain any benefit from it but just to revel in the unlimited access to a virtually infinite amount of information. Not so in the East; not so in the Bible. either!

3. Wholeness and Integration

This is an issue far broader than tentmaking but is absolutely critical for tentmakers. In the West we live what someone referred to as “TIME-magazine lives,” with different compartments for each. Life is departmentalized into work, leisure, family, religion, etc. Even more, we have unbiblical separations between sacred and secular, soul and body, eternity and time, clergy and laity, and so on. In particular, Christians seem to separate work and ministry. When someone says, “After I come home from work I am just too tired to have any ministry,” that may be because they see work as going from 9 to 5 and ministry taking place from 5 to 9. We need to see work and ministry integrated on three levels if we are to have integrity in our lives.

a. Values and Work

God’s people must think through carefully how their faith impacts the way they do their job. In Wes Pippert’s memorable turn of phrase: “Let faith write your job description.” Christians should even question the cultural values associated with their job which may be quite contrary to Christian values. Nathan Hatch, for example, suggested in *The Perils of Professionalism* that “professionalism” measures everything in terms of success, without reference to servanthood or the way success is achieved. Self-confidence and competence are valued above humility. We are taught to believe that we deserve what we achieve, without reference to grace or other Christian understandings of how God works in the world. A good exercise for any believer, but particularly for those preparing to be tentmakers, is to write a one-page “Christian Philosophy of [whatever my work is],” whether it is a Christian philosophy of education or health care or

auto-mechanics. The idea is that by thinking through ahead of time how our faith should impact our particular vocation we can perform distinctively as God’s people in the market place.

b. Lifestyle and Work

In the West the central issue may be the challenge of living within our income from work or adopting a simple lifestyle. Overseas the challenge is to maximize our effectiveness by choosing a lifestyle appropriate to the vocation as it is understood in the local culture. Teachers in most foreign countries are highly respected as models of behavior and there are certain expectations that must be met. On the other hand, students live the epitome of a simple life-style, and foreigners on student visas should live as frugally as local students do, even though they may have access to greater resources because they come from wealthier economies. Tentmakers in business will be expected to entertain clients lavishly, and holding back in this area because we value simplicity will be badly misunderstood. But whatever our vocation, in whatever context, Christians must avoid conspicuous consumption and materialism, which invariably are wrong. Even our social lives should reflect the tension between local social norms and Christian values.

c. Witness and Work

No “secular” employer is going to be happy with a tentmaker who spends his time on the job talking endlessly about his faith, or passing out tracts, or holding Bible Studies at coffee breaks (lunch hours may be legitimate in some contexts). Christian witness on the job is usually more a matter of transformation than “addition.” That is, our witness on the job must be integrated with our job,

without compromising our work. Marketplace witness consists of living so distinctively as a Christian that people come to us to find out what makes us different. This is at least part of Jesus’ meaning when he said we are the salt of the earth. Salt makes people thirsty, and we must live so “saltily” that people thirst for the water of life, which they see at work in us.

We live out our faith in at least five non-verbal areas in our work—in *attitudes* (for example, we have the heart of a servant, we treat others with the dignity all God’s creation deserves); in *how we do our job* (the best we can); in our *behavior* (we apologize for our mistakes, forgive others’ mistakes, we do not tolerate racism or sexism or foul language); in our *values* (simple living, co-operation, encouragement); in our *choices* (not to participate in abortions, not to maximize working hours at the cost of family or church, and so on). Our Christian distinctiveness on the job then becomes the springboard for fuller articulation of our faith at other times.

By integrating our work and our witness we avoid the exhaustion of others who see ministry as something totally separate from our secular vocation and therefore done after a long hard day at the place of employment. Jesus was a model of integrating the spiritual and the physical. Matt.9:35 says Jesus went “Teaching... preaching... and healing...” Even the Greek words used to describe Jesus’ activities reflect a wholistic view of life all too often lacking in our perceptions. “*Sozein*” (to save) is used of sins but also refers 18 times in the New Testament to healing, indicating there is no necessary tension between the ideas of saving from sin or from physical ailments. “*Aphesis*” (forgiveness) similarly refers at various times to sins, debts, slavery, or eschatological liberation. In summary, if our profession

Shrewd Yet Innocent: Thoughts on Tentmaker Integrity

Integrity in the context of all of life is core to who we are in work and ministry. Specific issues such as bribery, public identity, truth telling, hidden agendas, and professionalism are discussed in a biblical context. May we have a biblical rather than a “Western evangelical” understanding of the ethical issues of tentmaking integrity!

by Robert D. Morris

Anyone who has lived in the developing world for any length of time knows the difference between the ways rats and snakes operate. Rats are noisy, obvious, and slow moving. Snakes, on the other hand, are quiet, quickly in and out, and are almost impossible to find after the first sighting. It is this very quality which Dennis Clark, one of the pioneering tentmakers in Asia, suggested constituted the “wisdom” or shrewdness of snakes in Jesus’ enigmatic command to be “shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.” (Rats would seem to epitomize the opposite—shrewd as doves and innocent as snakes). If he is right then tentmakers, of all Christian workers, should live up to Christ’s standard.

We should be as crafty as snakes in our entry strategies, skillful in avoiding danger, knowing when to act, when to speak, and when to refrain from both. On the other hand, we must never use our shrewdness in a hypocritical or deceptive way, nor be naive or stupid. Paul echoed the same principles when he told the Corinthians, “I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil” (Rom. 16:19).

So let us take this as our standard as we work our way through the

issues: shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

The Meaning of Integrity

Said to a tentmaker: “Isn’t it being dishonest when you call yourself an engineer in the Middle East when you are really a missionary?”

Said by a tentmaker: “When I get home from a 60-hour work week I am just too tired for ministry.”

As different as these statements appear on the surface, they both reflect on integrity, a quality which all disciples of Jesus Christ are expected to exhibit in their daily lives. Tentmakers, no less than anyone else, should be seen as people of integrity. Yet there is no mode of witness other than Bible smuggling that seems to raise more questions about it. When we talk of integrity there are at least three different meanings that we must consider:

1. Holiness in the Broadest Sense

All of God’s people are to be spiritually pure, uncompromising in Biblical standards. However we must be shrewd in distinguishing between our own cultural values and those supra-cultural standards God demands of

us. This is a sufficiently complex topic that we will treat it separately later.

2. Honesty in Tentmaking

One of the most frequent questions heard is, “Isn’t tentmaking deceptive? Isn’t it dishonest to say you are an engineer in the Middle East when really you go with a missionary agenda?” My response has been to say, “Isn’t it dishonest to work as a manager for Consumer’s Gas when really you are a Christian?” The point is that there is no necessary contradiction between the two, unless you think it is wrong to have an agenda that you do not broadcast to everyone. Or unless you are saying one thing in the Middle East and another at home. More on that later. Honesty demands that when we are asked directly about something we answer honestly even if not completely. David, a surgeon in Bahrain, was once asked by a Muslim colleague just as he began an incision, “David, are you a missionary?” In the interest of both honesty and the patient’s well-being, David said simply, “Yes,” and the matter was dropped for the time being. Later David explained more fully why he came to Bahrain.

poses.

3. Cover name for security purposes.
4. Don Hamilton, *Tentmakers Speak* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1987).
5. Tetsunao Yamamori, *God's New Envoys* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1987, p 56).
6. Albert Helman, *Merchant, Mission and Meditation* (Paramaribo: C. Kersten & Co. N.V. 1968).
7. Samuel Vinay and Albrecht Hauser, eds., *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way* (Oxford, Regnum Books, 1989).

Heinz Suter has lived in Switzerland with his wife Isabella and their three children since 1996. He works for a mission agency and is completing an MA studies program in Missiology. A graduate of the Swiss Mercantile School, Heinz has six years experience in banking. From 1984 to 1996 he was living in Spain where he helped found PM International and was involved in tentmaking business projects.

Marco Gmur is a missiologist working with an international mission agency based in Switzerland. He and his wife Susanne have served in various countries. His ministries focus on unreached Muslim peoples. Marco is a graduate of Columbia

and professionals. These workers are then encouraged to commit themselves both to Christ and to the company and to gain a clear understanding of how Christian principles apply to the whole of life. As such, they become “businaries” and maximize the potential results for the glory of God both in their working environments and in their everyday lives.

Principles and Characteristics

From the studies conducted by the authors, we have found ten characteristics and principles that can be derived from the historical examples and case studies. These principles seem to run as a common thread throughout the centuries and are recommended to Christian business people of today.

1. A Spiritual Conception of Business

For a study of Moravian missionaries, the Basel Mission, and missionary tentmakers⁴, it was found that no distinction could be drawn between ministering the Word and serving through trade and commerce. Col. 3:23-24 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord... It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

2. Discipline and Diligence

Being disciplined and diligent in their work, Christian business people today can have a profound impact on contemporary society, or in cultures where these virtues are not promoted by the underlying religious motivation and values.

3. Honesty

To live and to do business in a dark environment is never easy, but God promises His blessing and help to those who act righteously. “You must

have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long...” (Deut 25:15). “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out” (Prov 10:9, cf. Prov. 28:18). Christian business people who demonstrate honesty in their dealings will set a prominent and clearly visible testimony, thanks to the power of their good example.

4. Fixed and Fair Prices

At present, 50% of the employees are Christians. Since the company’s policy includes a Bible devotional at the beginning of each day...the impact of the Gospel is powerful.

Dealing with clearly fixed and fair prices and maintaining Christian economic principles would be most welcomed as a trademark of Christian business, especially in this day and age. Such attitudes would impact society and demonstrate higher values and divine goodness to the producers and consumers worldwide, bringing a powerful impact for the kingdom of God.

5. Quality as a Trademark

It is glorifying to God to maintain this distinctive tradition of providing quality products, thus revealing to the whole world something of the character of God who made everything “very good” (Gen. 1:31) and for His Glory (1Cor. 10:31).

6. Highly-Skilled Professionalism

Business leaders emphasize the need for highly-qualified professionals on their staff. Yamamori calls the

Christian missionary professional “a specialist in every sense of the word!”⁵

7. Fervent Evangelism and Discipleship

We see historically that it is possible to be a skilled professional and yet maintain a burning desire to bring the Good News to the lost, evangelizing by preaching, teaching and living within the context of one’s job. If only Christian artisans and traders would obey the great commission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19) when they are in the marketplace and seize every available opportunity to share the Gospel!

8. Social Solidarity

Active Christian businesspeople will have an impact on society, whether at home or overseas. Their “light shall shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:14-16).

9. Community-Wide Impact

Moravian business enterprises and its people gradually became an integral part of the community to which they had brought economic growth, social help, and ethical change. As a result, they were able to introduce Christian principles and serve as “agents of change” for a whole society.⁶

10. Political Influence

In whatever century, whatever country, and whatever political context, Christian business people have repeatedly won the right to be heard on a political level and thus to impact society as a whole.⁷

End Notes

1. Heinz Suter and Marco Gmur, *Business Power for God’s Purpose*, (VKG Publishing, CH-3280 Greng-Murten Switzerland, 1997).
2. Cover name for security pur-

with certain contacts and a degree of experience in products such as leather articles, wood, ceramics and carpets. One of PMI's professionals became a HIE's in-country representative. He was contacted by the head office in Spain to arrange the logistics of when the van would come to load products. Then he would visit the sites, place orders and set an approximate time at which he would return to collect them. Occasionally he would also spot-check the process and quality. This provided wonderful opportunities to establish friendships and share the Gospel, especially in those remote areas of this restricted-access country where no foreigners were living.

Another PMI affiliate, with experience in the carpet business and in export, set up his own in-country export company to channel products for HIE. Already two tentmakers were involved. While both received some financial benefit from these business operations, the work grew to become a financial burden for the small Spanish company. Therefore, the owner set about building up his own network of contacts in 1993. Fortunately he was able to employ an indigenous Christian (former Muslim) who was able to lower the production price. To date, four to five small Islamic producers who work in cooperation with the company, have been exposed to the message of the living God, and at least 20 or more other artisans have received some kind of Christian witness.

Obviously, it is no easy task for a missionary to be a tentmaker. First, a tentmaker needs to be a well-qualified professional in his field. Second, he/she needs to be able to give himself wholeheartedly to his business activities. If his time is divided for instance, between ten (or more) hours of language study per week, activities in

connection with his mission agency, visits with contacts, as well as Bible studies during working hours—he cannot be very effective in the marketplace. The business world is tough. In this particular case, the small company was unable to cope with high fixed costs and needed to lower the purchase costs in order to be competitive.

Third, the partner company in the business venture needs to have sufficient financial resources to effect the necessary adjustments until the difficulties of the first two to three years are overcome and net profit achieve satisfactory levels.

HIE has meanwhile purchased land and is building its own manufacturing center in its target country. This allows it to further influence workers with kingdom principles and to share the Gospel, quite apart from lowering production costs and, possibly, even raising the quality of the products.

A Non-Western Textile Company

In March, 1994 I had the privilege of attending the first Tentmakers International Exchange Congress in Asia. There, two non-western brothers shared about their company, Angel Textiles³ (AT). The company started in the garage of the current CEO, a committed Christian. Early on, it was a small trade shop, comparable to Paul's environment in Acts 18:1-3. As God blessed the business, it developed until it was registered for international expansion in 1980. Any personnel employed had to give evidence of a deep loyalty to Christ, and the company conducted its business with great integrity. This worked like light in the darkness of the corruption that surrounded them. Other Biblical principles, such as taking a sabbatical in

1986 and 1993, were introduced into business practice; yet still the company expanded. In 1992 AT won an award for integrity from the government. The company now employs a workforce of over 2,000 people with an annual turnover totaling over US\$1,000,000,000. AT is linked to over 2,000 franchise stores worldwide, some in countries that are completely closed to the Gospel. Thus, AT has become a worldwide multinational company that is renowned for its quality and honesty in business.

At present, 50% of the employees are Christians. Since the company's policy includes a Bible devotional at the beginning of each day and mandatory weekly Bible study groups, the impact of the Gospel is powerful. Yearly company vacations with Biblical teaching bring forth astonishing results, and many of the non-Christian employees are converted. An internal business ministry institute—staffed partially by chaplains—trains workers in Christian ethics, business principles and social behavior. This leads to a holistic impact on the workers' lifestyles, business practices, work and interpersonal relationships, encouraging Christ-like speech and action. In 1991 the company also opened a foundation to aid the handicapped and deprived, and in 1994 opened a factory for deaf workers. No wonder that wherever AT businessmen work, produce, deal, sell, buy or travel world-wide, they are known as "businaries"—or businessmen with missionary vision.

Obviously, AT has anything but a low-key style of operations. Yet it seems to have a very clear idea that the Christian professional must not live in a dichotomy between the secular and the sacred. Since AT operates from a business platform, it does not recruit missionaries but, rather, either Christian or secular workers

Business Power for God's Purpose

What are the elements needed to do effective tentmaking?

The authors presents two case studies that give suggestions of elements which have proved helpful and successful as well as outline clear principles for effective tentmaking today.

by Heinz Suter and Marco Gmur

Excerpts from their recent book used by the GCOWE business consultation in South Africa state: "Since the days of the early church, to our contemporary world, God-fearing men and women in trade and business have (like Paul—the apostle and tentmaker) been playing a key role in the advancement of the Kingdom of God. We address two case studies and derive a number of clear principles that flow together into the integral lifestyle of a Christian in business."¹

Christians who have succeeded in business have a spiritual understanding of their work. They were disciplined and diligent workers. Honesty was their trademark, fixed and fair prices were their calling card. Another characteristic was the good quality of their work and products—these people were highly skilled professionals. They were also characterized by social solidarity and a fervent evangelistic zeal. Thus, their community-wide impact was natural, and their political influence a bonus. On the negative side, the issue of motivation emerges as well as the danger of getting "side-tracked". Despite all the controversies of history and the precautions that must be taken, business and trade can today still be a powerful vehicle by which missions can reach "the unreached" in the restricted-access

world. This is the challenge to the church, to Christian business people and to mission organizations around the globe as we stand on the threshold of a new millennium.

PMI Case Study

A small Spanish import-export company, PM International (PMI), has been involved in tentmaking since its official inception in 1984. From the outset, we were charged with investigating, implementing and expanding this facet of the ministry. This came about—typically, as the Lord so often leads—on a sunny day at the entrance hall of a Christian Easter conference in 1989. I, already an associate of PMI, met the owner of Heaven's Import-Export² (HIE). The owner was a Christian businessman with a heart for missions, evangelism, and the advancement of God's kingdom, and with no fear of transcultural work in the Arab world. In fact, since he had lived and traveled extensively in this part of the world prior to his conversion, he was strongly attracted to the whole concept of a company whose missionary-business personnel would penetrate Muslim lands and, at the same time, buy produce and import products in a lucrative fashion. This attraction was deepened by his desire to impact Islamic nations

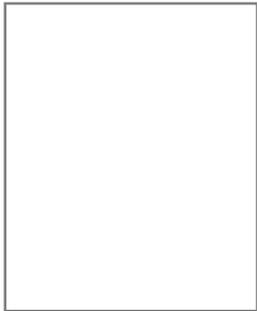
with the transforming power of the Gospel.

The small family company was founded between 1986 and 1987 with a start-up capital of roughly US \$20,000. It operated in the handicraft wholesale business. The owner would either import articles from various locations or produce them himself. Then he would sell them to shops and to the market vendors in his city of some two million inhabitants. At the time of the joint-venture with PMI, the company was worth around US \$150,000, including a warehouse and a van for distribution. The company employed two or three people.

Today HIE has become, within its particular niche, one of the most competitive importer specialists and distributors of ceramics in Spain. Annual turnover has doubled to US \$300,000. Every two months, a 6-meter container crosses the border containing five thousand items of handmade ceramics which reach the market throughout Spain. The company now has four to five employees, and five representatives. The next step could well be to sell to other European countries.

Ever since 1984, I had traveled extensively in the target country investigating various business opportunities. This enabled HIE to start out

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Jim Nielsen served with Tentmaking Franchises International (TFI) for three years. Prior to that, he was on the staff

of the USCWM as Personnel Manager and Regional Director. He has taught English in China for a year and now works with First Union National Bank as a branch support analyst.

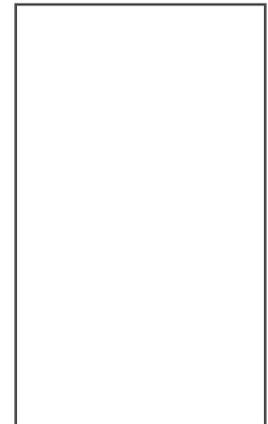


Continued from page 4 "Partnership..."

that he could have been the source of contacts and relationships with dozens, possibly hundreds of Muslims in the country. Within the wider partnership in the country, these contacts could have been successfully nurtured by a number of other sensitive and committed tentmakers who could have greatly extended this one man's impact.

Conclusion

Partnerships are a helpful context in which tentmakers can effectively work. They provide a "team" from the global Church so that the tentmaker is not working alone. Partnerships allow the tentmaker to see how their "part" contributes to the "whole." Working in Partnerships allows the tentmaker to forge strategic alliances with like-minded individuals to accomplish efforts impossible for a person "going it alone." Partnerships can provide encouragement, prayer support, and on-going relationships in what is often a lonely and spiritually-daunting task.



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to obtain a special status permit which allowed him to hire any national workers without restriction, including those members of the minority population that he was targeting.

Business has been extremely difficult and costly in the two-and-a-half years since Mark has returned to his target area. Since this people group lives in such a remote place, few Western businesses are willing to risk investment there. Mark and Roger are able to sell products produced by the other TFI factories and are working on establishing more business projects. Despite the difficulties, TFI has enabled them to become a secure, long-term presence in this area. Mark and Roger and others like them need the support of Christian businessmen willing to invest capital without seeing an immediate gain. An established manufacturing plant in this location not only allows Mark and Roger and their colleagues to share the Gospel, but also creates opportunities to raise the standard of living of the local people.

Case Study #3

Recently, TFI was able to establish a foreign-owned joint venture and place two TM managers. One of these was at the stage one level; the other was at stage two, having previously worked in this same country but having had to return to the U.S. because of difficulties in obtaining a long-term visa. In 1994, a large U.S. firm was seeking to establish a cellular telephone manufacturing plant in an Asian nation. This company needed high-quality components manufactured in-country. TFI conducted initial feasibility studies, wrote a business plan, formed a new company in

partnership with a Christian-owned antenna manufacturing firm, and recruited and trained the key management personnel. Partnering with a mission sending agency, a search was made to intentionally locate the factory in a district that was primarily composed of the Hui Muslim people group. Today, this wholly foreign-owned joint-venture has exceeded all budget expectations for profits and sales, producing ten thousand cellu-

Success will depend on much, much prayer. Also solid two-way partnerships between businesses and mission agencies are crucial.

lar phone antennas per day, employing seventy-five national people, and providing the full salaries of both of the TFI management personnel.

Despite the success realized by this project, there have been obstacles. Since the joint-venture has a contractual relationship to a large multinational firm, the TM managers are less able to dictate their schedules than if they were running an independent operation. This leaves them less time for family and ministry. The factory is located in an area where the government scrutinizes foreign activities intensely. Also, TFI's goal of hiring a majority of Hui workers has not yet been realized. However, this project is providing a solid entry platform for TFI's managers, has a great potential for creating more openings for TMers, is leading to a greater Gospel presence and, eventually, to a church planted among the Hui.

Conclusion

These three scenarios are a sampling of TFI's activities throughout Central and Eastern Asia. In the eight years since its founding, TFI has trained thirty-four people and invested nearly a million dollars to recruit, train, set-up, and maintain tentmakers in their target areas. There are many ways in which the company could improve and we need to learn from our mistakes. We have had management problems, break-ups of families, exaggeration and overestimation of our ability to provide a legitimate business that will sustain a team of expatriates. TFI has also been slow to adapt to changing market conditions. There has been much spiritual warfare and Satan has amplified our weaknesses.

But many lives have been changed and some churches have been planted. Of the thirty-four people trained by TFI, twenty-five of them remain in their target areas either with TFI or in some other business. Success will depend on much, much prayer. Solid, two-way partnerships between businesses and mission agencies are crucial. Capital is needed to enter the newly emerging market economies located in unreached people areas. A tension-creating profit motive is a key element to viability.

Are businesses integral to the cause of world evangelization? There can be no question that international businesses are here to stay and can and will be a factor in world missions. Mission executives, are you as effective as can be in strategies to reach the unreached? TMers, are you doing all you can to prepare to stay for the long haul? Christian businessmen, are you willing to risk capital for the sake of the kingdom?

Some individuals arrive at TFI in Stage One, having had no previous experience with their target people group. Their first objective will typically be language-learning and they will be involved in studying for at least two years. Others have been working and studying among the people already, much like Robert in the scenario given earlier. They usually have some degree of fluency in the language and have been involved in some ministry but have no means of staying in their target area. We refer to these people as being in Stage Two. Our goal is to help each person reach Stage Three. In this stage, a TMer would be fluent in the language, involved in significant ministry, and have an appropriate, stable, and long-term means of securing a visa. From TFI's perspective, this means establishing a business.

Case Study #1

The year was 1989, the Berlin Wall had yet to fall and the Soviet Union was crumbling before our eyes. Brad was with a large denomination which was targeting the peoples of Central Asia and seriously looking at the means whereby he could get individuals into this area. Brad had heard about TFI and even though our company was new and had limited proven experience, we had made several significant manufacturing equipment deals in a large country in Asia just the year before. A survey trip was planned and it was determined that Frunze (now called Bishkek), the capital of Kyrgyzstan would be the best location to set up a business platform.

At the time there were less than 10 known Christians and no known Christian witness among the Kyrgyz people. There were no Western businesses operating in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Based on its performance making several major manufacturing

and assembly equipment deals in other Asian nations, TFI was able to gain entrance into Kyrgyzstan and a business office was set up in Bishkek by September 1990. The office was manned by three people representing two different sending agencies. All were at the Stage One level.

To date, each office with TFI has been started in a similar manner which is to develop a business plan tailoring the approach to meet the needs of the local area. The Bishkek office chose to focus on two major activities: international education and engineering. A proposal was submitted to US AID and eighty thousand dollars was granted to bring in foreign experts to teach English, business, and finance. In the first year and a half, the TFI Bishkek office was able to support fifteen expatriates from five different Western countries and three different sending agencies.

The educational services operated in conjunction with a Kyrgyz partner. The International Education Center was opened to initially offer small, intensive English courses. Eventually, partnerships with corporations, businesses, and the Kyrgyzstan Academy of Sciences opened up the opportunities to provide business and finance classes. The caliber of teaching was unmatched in the Republic due to the emphasis on developing relationships with individual students.

In the time since the office first opened, a total of twenty-three Westerners have been supported by the TFI Office and five remain (stage three) to operate a business which has been much less than successful and has been a significant cash drain for TFI. A small, compact fluorescent lamp factory employing ten nationals is currently still in operation. While the business side has not flourished, the impact of the ministry cannot be diminished. Through the establish-

ment of the TFI Bishkek office, over four thousand people have come to know Christ and a number of Kyrgyz churches have been planted. The transition from stage one to stage three has successfully taken place. This effort could not have been established and maintained without effective partnership between a business and a variety of mission sending agencies.

Case Study #2

Mark and Roger were at Stage Two when they came to TFI. They were fluent in the language and were involved in significant ministry among their target group. However, Mark and Roger were having a difficult time finding a way to stay in their chosen area. Mark considered teaching but found that that was not a good strategy for long-term work. The government in this area routinely sends teachers home or transfers them to other areas if any spiritual fruit is seen. As God has called these men literally to the ends of the earth, starting a business would be a challenging endeavor. However, this was deemed necessary if Mark and Roger were to stay. Roger spent six weeks at TFI's training headquarters. Mark had no business background but he did have an entrepreneurial spirit and a "go-getter" attitude. He extended his six-month TFI internship to one and a half years in order to learn the ins and outs of international business. During the time of his internship he was able to secure a major contract for another TFI branch in the same country. His language fluency was a great help to him at this time. Mark and Roger were able to set up a branch sales office to sell products produced by TFI manufacturing plants elsewhere in the same country. Because TFI was already well established in this country, Mark was able

How Business is Integral to Tentmaking

The function of Tentmaking Franchises International is to assist Christian professionals develop a profitable business return in creative access countries. Three case studies are presented emphasizing the importance of good business practices in tentmaking as well as long term commitment and accountability to mission agencies.

by Dwight Nordstrom and James Nielsen

Robert has just received word that his visa will soon expire without hope of being renewed. He prays and wrestles through his thoughts of what to do next. Robert has been living, studying, and ministering in a creative access nation for four years. He spent several years gaining fluency in the local language and developing relationships with the people. He is actively discipling a small group of seekers and believers. Now he is faced with the question of how to maintain a credible presence in this restricted country. He first turns to teaching English, as have several of his colleagues. Robert quickly finds that he is neither a gifted teacher nor one who enjoys the teaching profession. He thinks back to his career prior to his missionary calling. Robert had been a successful engineer with six years of experience at a major chemical company. When he first began exploring options for overseas service, no one encouraged or even suggested that he might be able to go as a professional, using his already established career and skills as a ministry base. Instead, Robert went the traditional route of earning a ministry degree and being appointed by a mission board. As he struggles

with the question of how to stay in this nation that he has grown to love, he wonders if his old skills might be useful to him now.

Tentmaking Franchise International

Robert is an example of many people who came to Tentmaking Franchises, International (TFI) which operates as a Great Commission company with goals to enable Christian professionals to do strategic and significant Great Commission work, reaching unreached peoples; to reproduce other Great Commission companies in creative access nations; and to find a mutually agreed upon rate of return for investors. Established in 1989, TFI is a for-profit company providing business consulting services to creative access nations. TFI has established six joint ventures in Asia making such products as energy-efficient lighting, electronic assemblies for original equipment manufacturers, and antennas for major telecommunications companies. People like Robert come to TFI to receive international business training and assistance in establishing a franchise office in an unreached people area or country.

Case Studies

In this article, we will provide three case studies which we hope will stimulate your thinking concerning the importance and application of business in tentmaking (TM). First, the TM issues we will deal with are best considered in light of the following assumptions:

- 1) This article addresses TM only among unreached people groups in creative (restricted) access nations.
- 2) Business is only one of many options in the realm of TM. However, we maintain that it is an important and often overlooked avenue of entry and ministry for the TMer.
- 3) TM is most effective when a long-term commitment and presence is maintained. We suggest a minimum of three years.
- 4) TM produces cogent results when intentional and measurable evangelism, discipleship, and church-planting occur, and
- 5) The TMer is most successful when he is accountable to and interacting regularly with a mission sending agency.

Those who come to TFI arrive in many different stages of experience and preparedness for the TM task.

teaching is so strong in Muslim Central Asia that even secular leaders can make allowances for Christian teaching. In one case in Kazakstan, a teacher has been given permission by a school administrator to hold a Bible study on school grounds during an elective class period. The administrator was very supportive and told the teacher that she thought that the students needed to learn about the Bible. The Bible study is open to all students and about eight to ten students attend every week.

In Uzbekistan there is a much greater need for caution in ministry. Being Muslim is an integral part of the ethnic and national identity for the majority of Uzbek people. Thus, while most Uzbeks don't pray or attend services at mosques, they strongly identify themselves as Muslim. Explaining Jesus' relevance to a nominal Muslim presents a challenge. Because an Uzbek might perceive Christianity as a threat to his or her identity, tentmakers need to take as much of western culture as they can out of Christianity and dress Jesus in the clothing of an Uzbek.

In Kazakstan some teachers are able to hold investigative Bible studies in their homes. When students become Christians, they are encouraged to join a local church which most likely operates on a cell model with home meetings throughout the week and one large service on Sunday. The almost entirely local leadership of one church are thankful for tentmaking teachers who bring new brothers and sisters in Christ to their meetings.

Cells are concerned about living out a vital Christian witness and have initiated projects to feed street children and care for elderly people.

While the zeal of these new believers is inspiring, there is a strong

need for discipleship and theological teaching. Mature Christians who can model their faith are clearly needed in order for this church to grow.

The spiritual needs of Uzbek churches are similar. However, worship and service in Uzbekistan is much more low-key. Churches in Uzbekistan meet in small groups in people's homes out of necessity, and Westerners who have contact with Uzbek Christians must be careful about the times and places of meeting.

While life in Muslim Central Asia can be difficult, most tentmakers in Uzbekistan and Kazakstan would agree that the benefits of living there far outweigh the drawbacks. Tentmakers are apt to cite the warmth and hospitality of the local people as the best part of their overseas experience. The enthusiasm and passion that students have for their countries to succeed is infectious, and the depth and seriousness with which they take relationships is deeply appreciated.

"If you're thinking about going to Central Asia, I'd encourage you to stop thinking about it and just go!" says Robert Filback, CIS Program Director for Educational Services International.

"The need is indisputable, your contribution would be invaluable and I know the rewards are immeasurable!"

After her graduation from Stanford University, Sabrina taught English as a Second Language in East Asia for two years. She

currently is director for recruitment at Educational Services Int'l (ESI) a non-profit organization that trains and sends Christians overseas to teach English and Business. For more information please contact ESI at 800-895-7955.



willing to go.” Miller says.

Miller has found that most of his frustrations don't stem from the relatively low living standards, but rather from a lack of information and miscommunication.

“One day our landlady met my teammate and I at work and told us that we couldn't go home. She told me that I was going to live with her son and that my teammate was going to live somewhere else. Under no circumstances were we to go back to the family we had been living with for the past several weeks.

I thought we had made some huge mistake and offended our hosts. She was so serious about it; we weren't even allowed to go home and get our books or our clothes. Later, I found out that we had been living with the President of a bank and that the Uzbek KGB thought we were a security risk,” said Miller.

English as a Second Language has become a popular avenue of service for many tentmakers in Muslim Central Asia and, for that matter, many developing countries. As English has become the lingua franca of the modern era, the need for ESL teachers has grown dramatically worldwide. Facility with the English language is needed not only for the establishment and maintenance of international business contacts, but also to keep up with the latest technological developments.

In Kazakstan and Uzbekistan, employers highly value the ability to speak English. ESL teachers are thus able to see the fruit of their labor as their students get jobs that will improve their lives and the lives of their families.

“I had one student who got a great job with an international airline

company. His English wasn't that great when he started our classes but he improved quite a bit. After he got the job, he came back to thank us and say that he couldn't have done it without our help,” says Karen Jones, an ESL teacher in Kazakstan.

Teachers also have the opportunity to build relationships and influence many of the region's future leaders. Just as a dash of salt can

Frustrations do not stem from the relatively low living standards, but rather from miscommunication and lack of information.

flavor a whole meal, a handful of faithful Christian witnesses can influence a whole community.

One of my Kazak students is on a track to be a highly-placed government official. All his future course work will be in English. Although he hasn't become a Christian, he thanked us for giving him a better understanding of service and morality.” says English teacher Tina Smith.

While tentmakers realize that teaching ESL fills a real need, they also realize that ultimately their students' greatest need is to know Jesus. But, being an effective witness for Jesus can be difficult in any country.

Incarnational Life

Wherever they are, Christians must earn the right to be heard. As students and colleagues observe the

lives of a Christian English teacher, they see a person who faces the same everyday problems and frustrations that they do, but with a peace that surpasses understanding. The consistently Christ-like attitudes and actions of tentmakers lead to genuine friendships and create natural opportunities to share the Good News.

“In Muslim Central Asia, sometimes just willingness to live in a place where utilities are irregular, clothes are washed by hand and water must be boiled and filtered can open up opportunities to share about God's love. One of the major questions I get asked is, “Why are you here?” Karaganda is such a difficult and desolate place that people can't imagine why an American would choose to visit there, let alone stay there to live,” says one teacher.

“My typical answer is that I came to help the people by giving them tools to grow economically. I also tell them that I am confident that it is God who told me to go and serve people. This is very meaningful for some of them because they have ancestors who are Russian Orthodox or Muslim and at least believed in a Creator God.”

Ministry opportunities in Muslim Central Asia are varied and can involve the participation of both foreigners and nationals. For most English teachers, in-depth discussions about God take place outside of the classroom, but appropriate opportunities to share about Christianity inside the classroom do arise.

“In my American culture class we study American holidays—there's no way to talk about Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter without talking about God,” says one teacher.

The need for hope and moral

Teaching, Tents and Telling the Good News

Economic development is the felt need of the post communist world. We can endear ourselves to them if we take these developmental issues seriously and come along side in a humble and non-threatening way. Christ will be Good News to them!

by Sabrina Wong

To the casual observer, there isn't much to see in Karaganda—no ancient mosques or cathedrals, no breathtaking landscapes or snapshot-worthy scenery, not even any major historical monuments. But there is something very exciting going on in this city, and if you have the opportunity to visit, you just might find yourself face to face with the radiant smile and twinkling eyes of a new Kazak brother or sister in Christ.

Historically, the peoples of Muslim Central Asia have had very little opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel. Today, however, a small number of dedicated believers are using the regions' unprecedented openness to the West to let their light so shine that people may see their good works and give glory to Father God. Most often, these believers are "tentmakers" who can look beyond dusty streets and cement buildings of the newly created countries of Kazakstan or Uzbekistan and find beauty in the countenances of their local friends.

While most people know that the Apostle Paul made tents to support his ministry, few realize that this leather-working trade probably occupied as much of his time as his preaching ministry. And while most are apt to consider Paul's tentmaking as primarily a financial consideration, it is clear that this social identity built

rapport with people and gave him opportunities to share his faith with other members of local trade guilds.

Today, the term tentmaker commonly refers to a Christian with a secular job which supports his or her cross-cultural Christian witness. But, just as leatherwork was more than Paul's means of support, today's tentmaking jobs serve many purposes. In newly independent countries such as Kazakstan, providing viable service means participating in vital economic development and growth. Such service is not to be offered in exchange for souls, but in the genuine spirit of a *servant*.

Educators Wanted

The republics of the former Soviet Union don't necessarily want Evangelicals. What they do want are educators and business people who can help them modernize and join the international community. "By sending qualified teachers to Muslim Central Asia, we are meeting the real needs of the people as well as providing incarnational Christian service" says Ron Nicholas, President of Educational Services International, (an organization which trains and sends teachers overseas).

You can't just go into these countries and say that for the past 75

years under atheism that they were wrong and that there is a better way. For them the better way is economic development. Their big questions are: "How am I going to provide bread for my family?" and "What kind of job will I have ten years from now?" says English teacher Tina Smith.

Tina Smith and other tentmakers in Kazakstan see this country as a strategic bridge to Muslim countries in which it is more difficult to engage in Christian ministry. Portions of Kazakstan lie in the 10/40 window, with most of the country bordering it. And, while Kazakstan is nominally Muslim, there are no national laws against Christian proselytization or gatherings.

Kazakstan is a great opportunity for high-impact short-term Christian service. Smith says. "For me it has also served as a stepping stone to visit the much more conservative region of Western Uzbekistan. From that short visit, I've been encouraged to pray more and harder!"

Joshua Miller is a tentmaker in Uzbekistan who became interested when a recruiter described the tough living conditions he might encounter.

"When the recruiter mentioned that Muslim Central Asia was not for the faint of heart I knew that I was up for the challenge. I wanted to go where other people might not be

- Systematically replicate and multiply such businesses across the world.

Potential disadvantages are for negative publicity from one operation impacting the effectiveness of other operations, and for losing sight of our goal. One East Asian business with such a vision has already established over 200 stores and has begun establishing stores in the 10/40 Window.

One strategy is to first establish such businesses in predominantly Christian regions. Then identify and train prospective managers and teams, working with local churches and mission training programs. This lays the ground work to multiply similar businesses into other regions, using trained and motivated teams.

Strategic Opportunities

For rapid effective outreach in the 10/40 Window and other regions, one way is to form modular businesses that can be widely replicated in most urban and rural locations. Here are a few of many opportunities for micro-to medium-scale businesses.

1. Drinking Water

Do you know any cities, towns or villages in the developing world where the local water is safe to drink? Typically 80% of diseases in developing countries are attributed to contaminated water. Over 1.2 billion people in almost all developing cities drink contaminated water. The greatest improvement of health in the Third World will come from providing clean water for both the middle class and the poor.

2. Water Purification

Water purification using ultraviolet light destroys bacteria, using 30,000 times less energy than boiling the water. Equipment has been developed to treat the water for a village of 1,000 people (or a restaurant, hotel or home) for less than \$300.

How well are industrial wastes treated, and how polluted is the water in most 10/40 cities? Middle-class families in this region of the world are purchasing activated carbon water purification systems as soon as they can afford them even though most are probably ineffective. This indicates a huge market for quality water purification systems with the on-going service of carbon reactivation and delivering fresh cartridges.

3. Basic Medical Lab Tests

There are about 2 billion poor with little access to basic medical facilities. Where clinics are available, they usually have no basic diagnostic lab equipment. Diagnosing 10,000 people per year once every five years suggests the potential for over 40,000 basic medical lab kits. Through 20 years of supporting medical clinics in remote regions, one innovative medical laboratory manager developed a portable laboratory kit with a battery-powered centrifuge for clinics in remote rural areas (or private urban surgeries). This kit has most of the basic diagnostic tests needed. This technology is available to be mass-produced and marketed by like-minded people.

4. Marketing Potential

A market of 20,000 urban areas and 2 million villages suggests the potential to train and engage 10,000 non-western salespersons to reach this market with water purification systems and medical lab kits. Sales of replacement parts and supplies would provide on-going income.

5. Processing Local Resources

Another prospect is to sustain processing of local resources in developing countries and market the products into urban areas; e.g., there are over 10 million small farmers who grow 90% of a major tropical cash crop. Over 90% of this crop is produced in the 10/40 Window, particu-

larly in Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Most farmers earn about US\$100 per year for their crudely processed crop which is shipped to large centralized facilities for further processing. Well distributed processing systems could locally process this crop into high value products. Small to medium factories could make water purification systems, personal care products, and food products.

Competitive advantages come through better quality, greater efficiency, higher value for the same resource, and fewer levels in the marketing chain. This would justify higher returns and wages. This strategy can give 3 to 10 times higher revenue to the local community. A major market penetration would involve establishing several thousand small-scale factories or several hundred medium-sized factories across the region. Similar numbers of packaging, distribution and sales operations would be created in most urban areas to market these products.

Establishing effective operations suggests giving all stakeholders suitable returns and incentives. Rapid expansion requires high profits that are plowed back into growth coupled with effective leveraging of rapidly-expanding commercial financial resources. However, maintaining a strategic goal of "business with a mission" requires continuing control of policies and operations. Strategic training, patents, corporate bonds, international commercial expertise and networks are some ideas to accomplish this.

Conclusion

Multiplying modular businesses can establish sustainable teams in

Continued on page 46 "Strategic..."

Strategic Impact Through Multiplying Modular Business

How can we make what we do “on the job” a part of ministry? Are there new methods to effectively obey our mandate to bless all the peoples of the earth? Can we develop and use commercially proven models to disciple all the peoples of the earth?

by David Hagen

In the great commission, Jesus calls us to work with Him to reach more than 2 billion people, of which about 53% are rural in 2 million villages, and 47% are urban in 20,000 “suburbs” of 10,000 people average.

Of these

- Most unreached are in developing and underdeveloped countries
- Over 80% live in areas requiring “creative access”
- Over 50% of Christian workers are non-western
- Growth of population and Christian workers are fastest among non-westerners.

Strategies and Resources

Our “Lord” has said “Go!” He has the strategies and resources for us to do so. The Word teaches us that

“...no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ ... but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.” (1 Cor 2:9,10)

“God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Cor 9:8)

Blessed to be a Blessing

God’s covenant and plan is blessing in all areas of life: “.. I will bless you...you will be a blessing...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:2, 3) “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” (Gal 6:10) God’s blessing covers the full range from salvation, fellowship, and mercy ministries all the way through to business ventures. Gainful employment blesses people, enables them to support their own families and fellowships, to give and provide mercy, and to support their own outreach programs.

Paul said that “these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.” (Acts 20:34) Operating a business provides natural opportunities to employ workers and meet people on an ongoing basis, both keys to blessing and outreach. How can we create opportunities for Christians to support themselves and their teams wherever the Lord of the harvest sends them?

Modular Businesses

Chain and franchise operations have demonstrated very high commercial multiplication; e.g. Coca Cola now

operates in 195 countries, selling 280 billion “servings” per year and has a marketing goal to “put a Coke in every hand.” Through its “hamburger university,” McDonald’s trains about 600 managers per year. They have set up more than 12,000 stores in over 62 countries. Wal-Mart started with one \$10,000 store and has become the world’s largest retailer, selling over \$105 billion per year in over 3,050 sites. (Multi-Level Marketing is the other major growth model providing high earnings for a few.

Modular Growth Strategy

These effective commercial models suggest that a major strategy towards achieving the task is to form like-minded groups to:

- Create modular businesses suitable to rural and urban areas
- Ensure they are commercially practical and self-sustaining
- Especially designed for non-westerners to operate in the 10/40 region of the world.

Then...

- Provide and arrange the commercial and financial resources needed,
- Establish such modular businesses and train Christians to operate them,

are the difficulties of any revolution.”

That revolution will probably continue to impact nearly every area of life. Take the problem of finding a job in a particular country. Greg Machler, owner of Enterprise Integration Corporation and an active Brigada participant, feels that one of the Internet's primary contributions to tentmaking is its ability to create new and innovative contracts and job opportunities—in and of itself! “In the area of tentmaking, the Internet enables access to research on all business subjects worldwide. This enables smaller groups of engineers and researchers to develop products or implement projects that were not even thinkable in the 70s and 80s. At that time only very large and fairly large corporations had the budgets and staff to own large repositories of scientific and research information which their staff alone could benefit from.” The impact of this factor is probably not yet fully realized. We need engineers and designers who are creative enough to spot global opportunities, then patch them together with the people who can live for Christ while meeting a real felt need. Pardon me for pointing out that Greg is right—that's a job that was made for the Internet.

Friendships

Do these work relationships ever turn into Godly friendships? You bet! I can speak from personal experience on that. One of the “techs” who helped us launch Brigada in January '95 has become one of my best friends. I know that night or day, regardless of what time it might be in the morning, I could call Jonathan Marsden and ask him for the shirt off his back. (He'd find some way to send it to me in electronic packets, I'm

sure.) If you add up all the time we have spent with one another in “real” situations (that is, face-to-face), maybe the sum would not be more than a few short hours. But, we've learned to appreciate one another's gifts across the last 30 months even though most often we live on opposite ends of the country! Funny how I never had a “paper mail” pen pal before in my entire life. But sometimes, I will write Eric Derry, another on-line associate, and just say, “Good morning, “How's your day going?” And

Like the Internet, we all share in the future of its applications—if we are willing to bring something to the table, there is a place on the Internet for all of us.

that's it. Because the Internet has provided a way to do that... cheaply, quickly, efficiently, and still carry meaning.

So will face-to-face communication disappear? Not likely. In seemingly every situation we are seeing, those who perhaps first met on the Internet are creating forums and opportunities that eventually result in face-to-face encounters. When I first met Jonathan face to face, I was quite surprised. He wasn't anything like I pictured him. But then, that's not surprising. The person we get to know on the Internet doesn't really have to “look” or “present him/herself” well. In a way, the Internet levels the playing field. You can email a famous researcher like Patrick Johnstone, author of *Operation World* and prob-

ably get an answer back overnight. Of course, your uncle will probably answer you in about the same number of hours—if he's already Internet savvy, that is.

However, if your uncle wants to talk to you while you are working in some lowland area of Bangladesh, he had better become Internet savvy, because in the future the Internet is probably the best way for him to stay in touch.

In this article we have briefly explored some of the security pitfalls, and merely scratched the surface of the potential and future of the Internet. But with millions and millions of users, and thousands and thousands of places to go, people to see, things to do, it is fitting that a brief article like this should remain only a “teaser” of the real thing. Like the Internet, we all share in the future of its applications—if we are willing to bring something to the table, there is a place on the Internet for all of us!

End Notes

1. To receive a free subscription, just send email to <hub@xc.org> with these words in the text of the message: subscribe brigada.
2. For information about sending PGP encrypted mail go to: <http://www.ifi.uio.no/pgp/>
3. There is a discussion group in the Brigada family called Brigada-projects-security where ventures like those can be addressed. To join, just send email to <hub@xc.org> with only the words “subscribe brigada-project s-security” (without the quotes).

Continued on page 46 “Internet....”

MS in Missions from a website and am in the process of beginning that degree, as the formal training portion of my preparation. My contact, in the city that I will be going to, communicates with me via email. (We went to graduate school together and do some joint work, which will become my 'tentmaking' while I am over there). Finally, I anticipate that one of the early aspects of my work will be to establish email links between US and believers in the city—electronic prayer partners of sorts."

Job Assistance

Many tentmakers are using the Internet for help in their job. In those arenas, there is absolutely no compromise whatsoever when it comes to international communication. For example, Brigada participant Dave Henry is putting together a mining operation in Mexico (which he hopes to use for God's glory in global missions). He wrote, "We were in serious need of an extractive metallurgist and I didn't know where to find one. They aren't on every street corner. I put an ad out on the Internet. Within a few days two qualified gentlemen emailed back to me their interest. One did his Ph.D. thesis at the university of London in precisely the kind of metal extraction that we are employing. He also is a Christian from a region of Africa where we are being offered a large mining concession. This week we are flying our prospective metallurgist out to our mine site and laboratory for the purpose of hiring him. It appears to be a beautiful fit from our interviews with him. We can make a lot of tents with this operation and by God's grace we will."

Do these issues imply that security concerns are ill-founded? Not at all. Thorough discussion of issues such as encryption, "tunneling," and using satellite telephones to generate

"vertical" connections to the Internet must continue.² But these are beyond the scope of this article.³ Even more importantly, we reckon that someday all those issues will be a thing of the past. Just as printed mail was less secure in the old days (remember the Pony Express?), somewhere in the Internet's future is a solid form of communication that cannot be read by every Tom, Dick and Mohammed. In that day, security concerns will not disappear, but they will be minimized by technology and good practices.

Network of Support

One of the key areas already mentioned above is preparation. Remember "Mike," the tentmaker headed to the Middle East? He is doing his grad degree on the Internet! Another user did his homework prior to departing and located many Christians in the area where he was going to live, not the least of which was his success at finding a local church to join immediately upon arrival! And remember Richard in Japan? He shared, "If I have a problem, personal, prayer need, administrative, etc., I can quickly contact others for help and get many people praying within hours if needed." On the surface of that comment is his assurance that people will pray for his needs. But there is something much deeper, if you stop to think about it.

In past years, when certain tentmakers took on individual contracts in remote countries, sometimes that meant isolation and certain despair, especially for those who longed for camaraderie with other like-minded souls. But the potential of the Internet is to unlock global networks of encouragement and support—and to do so in a timely, cost-efficient manner! Heinz Suter, a Swiss Brigada participant, wrote, "The Internet could become a great network, if it would be

linked with the different Christian business people around the world, where a potential tentmaker could search for professional cooperation, assistance and linking. Also vice versa: Christian businesses around the world could launch new ventures in the restricted-access world, and via the Internet, discover professional tentmakers who would fill the gap. Through the Internet they could 'find' each other (match making)."

Let's not forget the "significant others" back home. Church members, children, parents, friends, and in certain situations, even spouses can stay in touch with each other across oceans. One Brigada user in Singapore, PohLeng Yu, described an example of this when remembering a recent mobilization event on the other side of the world! "The greatest impact came during the 1996 Olympics. From the Internet I was able to find out on the latest update and read the testimonies on how God moves during the event. It was encouraging to read of the fervency and unity of the Christians." So the potential actually becomes broader than the tentmaker alone!

The Future

So what lies in the future for those who want to use this tool? Well, for one thing, there will be more of it! And that volume of information will force us to be "smarter" about our Internet consumption. Ron Kernahan an active Internet contributor and Brigada participant, wrote, "The Information Revolution is taking its toll. While there is energy anew among many leaders, all are being bombarded with pressure to be yet more informed. Now there is a cry of 'information over-load'—too much input—so much it cripples output. Indecisiveness, lack of communication or inability to concentrate are but a few of the symptoms. But such

The Internet: Tentmaker's Coffeeshop for the Nineties

Years ago friends used to gather at coffeeshops to talk about struggles, interests, and discoveries. The practice has not changed, but the venue has. The Internet has become the most effective, efficient, and productive mission meeting grounds for the nineties into the 21st century.

by Doug Lucas

The Internet is proving to be the most effective, efficient, and productive meeting grounds for the nineties. I began to discover this personally around the beginning of 1995 when I was asked to lead a missions mobilization event in Lexington, KY for the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. Focus groups had advised us to concentrate on building "action projects" that sought to adopt frontier people groups. The first problem I encountered was trying to get information about which groups were already being approached by church planting teams and which groups were seemingly left untouched.

Brigada Network

I ended up proposing a network of email discussion groups on the Internet, grouped under the name Brigada. (Brigada is Spanish and Russian for "Brigade.") The idea was that we would form a kind of "bucket brigade" to hand ammo our pails of water to the next person in our line of frontier workers. I thought these discussions would be people-group focused, small, and relatively narrow in focus. What I didn't realize was the way in which the Internet would create a forum for previously unrelated people to come

together to share victories, trials, and discoveries. The first month the network took off and has not stopped growing since. Within a few short months, hundreds of people were involved, many of them tentmakers serving in all parts of the globe. Now, just over two years later, we are closing in on some 6000 participants. There are conferences on language learning, medical issues, urban realities, frontier missions, and dozens of people-specific conferences (with dozens more topics and information).¹

Security Issues

One of our early concerns in this project was the issue of security. We were hearing all kinds of horror stories about tentmakers and their fear of the Internet. Many were concerned that their lines were "bugged" and that in turn, their Internet activity would be measured and monitored carefully. But we were surprised by tentmakers' willingness to be involved.

First of all, many live in non-restrictive "friendly" lands. A Department of Ecological Engineering specialist tentmaking in a Japanese university wrote, "While I am fully

appreciative of the security problems of some tentmakers, Japan does not have such problems. Unfortunately some people do not understand this and are reluctant to release my address and other information to other tentmakers and potential tentmakers. I am trying to 'advertise' Japan because the door is wide open here to anyone who has the right qualifications to work here." (R. Brown, <brown@earth2.eco.tut.ac.jp>)

Preparation

Just as important as the security issue, many tentmakers are relying heavily on the Internet during the preparation phase of their ministry. Even if their field position will not allow them to use it quite so heavily once they have reached their destination, that will not change their appreciation of its usefulness prior to departure. One Brigada participant—we will call him "Mike" because he would like to remain anonymous—is headed to a Middle Eastern city in the next few months. He wrote, "From your Brigada newsletter on the Internet, I first learned details of the Caleb project, AD2000, Joshua Project, the 10/40 Window, etc. I found out about Pacific Christian's distance learning

Kitty Barnhouse Purgason

reconsider some misconceptions about Christianity or be introduced to a Jesus they knew nothing about. But the ideas are just the beginning. They lead to the second benefit of being an ESL teacher-student relationships. The classroom provides a wonderful “nest” for the fostering of relationships. Since being a Christian is about a relationship with God, it stands to reason we must be a witness through relationships. Whether it is responding to a dialogue journal or preparing students for a field trip, we are building relationships with our students² and being a witness. God has given ESL/EFL teachers a wonderful opportunity. Be sensitive to what is appropriate, but be creative with the many possibilities that are available to you!

In today's world of missions, there are many kinds of EFL teachers. One may be a professional teaching long term in a university in Kuwait and gradually building the kind of relationship with current and past students which enable her or him to share the Gospel with them. Another may be a volunteer spending a summer in Mongolia with a specially-designed English program for secondary teachers and college students. One may be part of a multi-skilled church-planting team which includes people gifted in personal evangelization, mercy-ministries, and administration. Another may teach in an intensive training program for Brazilian missionaries en route to West Africa. The best word to associate with TESOL in missions today is “many”—many needs, many training possibilities, many opportunities for witness and service.

TESOL Resources

The Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, IL (www.wheaton.edu/bgc/

bgc.htm) and Berry Publishing have produced a very useful *Handbook for Christian EFL Teachers* by Lonna Dickerson and Dianne Dow. Here you will find lists of training opportunities, teaching opportunities, and resource material.

For a handbook which lists TESOL certificate and degree programs in the U.S., order the *Directory of Professional Preparation Programs in TESOL, in the U.S. and Canada, 1998-2000*, from TESOL, Inc., 1600 Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751, (703) 836-0774, tesol@tesol.edu. Membership in TESOL, our national professional association, can include membership in the Christian Educators in TESOL Caucus.

For a list of Christian schools which offer training in TESOL (there are more than 20), consult Dickerson & Dow's handbook or e-mail me at the address below.

For a directory of centers which offer courses leading to the RSA/Cambridge CELTA, or the diploma, write to Director of EFL, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge CB1 2EU, United Kingdom.

For one view of where the paying jobs in TESOL around the world are, try the web site of English International (a CELTA training institution): www.english-international.com/jobmarket.html.

There are more than 40 Christian organizations recruiting English language teachers. Some specialize in TESOL; others use TESOL as one of several strategies. Dickerson & Dow's handbook provides a list of such agencies as well as resources for finding jobs with secular agencies.

For a list of useful resources for the novice EFL teacher, consult Dickerson & Dow's handbook or e-mail me

at the address below. If you just want one book to start out with, consider Don Snow's 1996 *More Than A Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad*, published by TESOL (address above).

To start exploring the many TESOL resources on the web (which include teaching ideas, job opportunities, resources to buy, and opportunities for students), try Dave's ESL Cafe, which is well-established, comprehensive, and easy-to-use: www.eslcafe.com.

Foot Notes

1. Let me emphasize, however, that translated materials and study in one's first language is preferable and will ultimately result in a more deeply-rooted Christianity and a more relevant theology.
2. Don't forget that the teacher-student relationship is governed by cultural norms EFL teachers must be sensitive to.

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show a section of the *Jesus* film and ask students to make use of those listening strategies. Look for sections of dialogue in the video which relate grammar patterns which you have been studying. For example, Luke's account of the Golden Rule is full of "if" statements: "If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also...If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?.. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?" Show that section of the video at the time your grammar book is covering "if" constructions. And it doesn't matter that you haven't shown the whole film—interested students will ask to borrow it so they can see more at home.

6. Encourage critical thinking.

In many parts of the world, students are taught to accept and believe everything they hear and read. The governments and educational systems are not interested in producing students who will question the status quo. The first step for many students in considering Christianity is to re-think what they have been taught, for example, that religion is something you are born into, not something you choose, or that religion is like superstition and only fit for peasants and the uneducated. Whether or not our content is about religion, any time we encourage students to think for themselves, we are laying the groundwork for them to consider the claims of Jesus.

Presenting students with two opposing points of view is a good way to foster critical thinking. One of my colleagues, who teaches at a private language institute to prepare international students for study in American universities, uses this lesson for advanced students. She gives them two articles on the origin of life. One is from a 1993 article in *Time* maga-

zine called "How Life Began," deals with the formation of synthetic RNA. A counter position is presented in a reading by Hugh Ross called "Building Life," from his 1993 book *Creator and the Cosmos*. It claims that RNA could not be formed by random chance. In her reading class, Peggy has the students look for the author's assumptions, for unsubstantiated claims and conjectures, in short, to think critically about what they've read. Then in her writing class, students are asked to critique one of the texts in light of the other.

Obviously, we will have students of varying educational backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. For some we may do a series of simple lessons on fact versus opinion. For others we will need to be well read and skilled in apologetics, good critical thinkers ourselves.

7. Choose materials wisely and adapt judiciously.

There are dozens of publishers of ESL/EFL materials. There are thousands of textbooks. Of course, we need to choose books which are the best in terms of language learning, but we should also be aware of the content. We can try to avoid books with gratuitous references to materialism, the occult, drinking, etc. The least we can do as Christian teachers is help prevent our students from being influenced by all the junk that the English-speaking world has to offer. If we are required to use a certain book, we can help students make choices by questioning what's in the text, by asking, "Would you spend your money on this?" or by stating, "I don't think it's healthy to use alcohol this way." Again encourage critical thinking. We can also supplement and adapt materials.

8. Use everything, large and small, creatively.

I've already given examples of many kinds of things you can do in the classroom. All kinds of media can be used to spark students' interest in spiritual things: literature, non-fiction reading, film and video, and music. Whatever skill you teach, whether reading, writing, listening, or speaking, you can weave significant content into it. Even the seasons can be used, as we center lessons around holidays and celebrations.

Sometimes we may take on something very big such as a multi-skill project over the course of several weeks in which students read a published survey about different religious beliefs, write their own survey questions, interview a variety of English speakers in the community, and present the results of their surveys in class. Sometimes it may be something very small, such as the proverb of the day on a corner of our blackboard.

Nowadays there is an emphasis on content-based ESL, that is, teaching language and content at the same time. Christian teachers who are in a position to develop curriculum can work on a larger scale. What about choosing a theme like "identity" or "life and death" and bringing in stories and films and songs that provoke students' ideas on these significant issues? But if we are only in a position to use someone else's curriculum and book, we can still communicate values and truth in the little things, such as a quick explanation of a Biblical reference in a piece of literature the students have read.

Being an EFL teacher may give us a visa, but it also offers more. First we have the chance to integrate language with significant ideas. Some of the ideas may simply get students thinking about spiritual issues for the first time. Some ideas may help students

haps once a week. Sometimes particular directions for content are given, e.g., write about your reaction to the story we read today. The teacher responds in writing to the content (not the language). Everyone who has used dialogue journals talks about how rewarding it is to get to know students in this way. Students who are shy in class often open up in the privacy of writing. Teachers can also express things which may not be appropriate in class. For example, in one class after a reading and discussion on people who influence us, several students chose to write in their journals about an influential person in their lives. The teacher decided to respond to these students by writing a few lines about her grandmother who had influenced her by introducing her to Jesus. By the way, if you teach a conversation class, you can use oral dialogue journals on audiotapes.

3. Use the classroom as a bridge

What happens in the classroom is a bridge to after-class discussion with individual students. It is not the final event. It is not our last chance. It is a chance to offer some bait and see which fish are hungry. Then after class, we can follow the lead of these eager ones. Our time should always be scheduled so that one-on-one or small group discussions outside of class are welcomed.

Let me give two examples of the bridge concept. One teacher loved music and incorporated songs into his speaking and listening curriculum. Among the songs, he used songs by Christian artists. He chose ones with no overtly Christian message, such as Amy Grant's "Helping Hand" (from *House of Love*) or Michael W. Smith's

"Color Blind" (from *Change your World*) or Ken Medema's "Time and Time Again" (from *Just One Dance*). He related the songs to the ESL curriculum. For example, "Time and Time Again" came with the unit on future tense because it has lots of lines with *I will* and *I'll*. But he also made tapes available for students to check out on their own, including sheets with the lyrics all written out. Now, out of the class, students were exposed to more songs by these artists, ones with more explicit Christian content. That, in turn, led to further discussions with students as they raised questions outside class.

I do not advocate direct evangelism in the classroom. It violates the teacher-student trust relationship. To preach to a captive audience who came expecting something else is unethical.

Another example is a lesson plan for Hemingway's story, "A Clean Well-lighted Place." The story is rather bleak, about meaninglessness in life and death. But in the course of the discussion the teacher is able to say a sentence or two (no more) about her reasons for living, for choosing life over death. Those students who are seriously thinking about the meaning of life seek her out for further discussion after class.

4. Be even-handed in content.

Let me give you three examples of what I mean by this. One teacher in Egypt showed the *Jesus* film to his students but he also showed a film called Mohammed the Prophet. The authorities did not complain because he had been even-handed.

When I talked about Christmas with my Chinese students, I presented three points of view. First, Christmas as a family holiday—people, no matter their religious persuasion, like to send cards, give gifts, decorate, and have family reunions. We compare it to Chinese New Year which features similar activities. Secondly, Christmas as a merchandising event—the advertising, buying, and selling. We talk about issues such as materialism, wealth and poverty, and advertising. Finally, Christmas as a religious holiday. I present the historical events which believing Christians celebrate. This was fair and even-handed and no one perceived it as being biased toward Christianity.

Here's another example of balance. I like to use Eric Clapton's song "Tears in Heaven." It's slow enough to use as a beginning listening comprehension exercise, it fits in with a grammar lesson on conditionals, and it gets students thinking about the after-life. I supplement it with two

short readings on heaven—but not just Christian conceptions of heaven; we also read about the Muslim view of heaven. Whatever the issue, try to be fair to other points of view in your class content. This does not mean being relativistic; it does not preclude your taking a stand for truth when the time is right. It just means allowing other points of view to be heard and talked about.

5. Make sure there is a language learning objective for every activity.

Tie each activity to the rest of your curriculum. Students will become suspicious if you leave the grammar book and show the *Jesus* film. But it is much more acceptable, not to mention professional, if we are teaching listening comprehension strategies and we

term status. Since extended relationships are more powerful for evangelism and discipleship, you will want to keep your visa, not get kicked out of the country; you will want to keep your job, not lose your contract in the following term. Unwise speech and actions also jeopardize other believers. What seems like boldness will be perceived as foolishness or even harmful to the Gospel when negative repercussions affect teammates, all other Christians in the area, and local believers. The urge to do bold things should be submitted to the discernment of a group of believers to whom we are accountable and who know the local situation.

Well, if we cannot use the four spiritual laws in our class and ask for decisions, what can we do? I will be offering various ideas under eight general suggestions.

1. Lay a foundation in who you are.

Who you are as a person is a witness. When you work hard, care about your students as individuals, demonstrate kindness, are fair and impartial, and respect local customs or school regulations, you show yourself to be different from many other teachers. Your commitment to working “as though for the Lord” (Col. 4:23) will make you stand out in what Paul calls a “crooked and perverse generation.” You will indeed “shine like stars” (Phil. 2:12.). Your character and your professionalism should not be the end of your witness—there is much more we can do—but they are a strong foundation for it.

Connected to this is the fact that you can use the classroom to communicate to students your basic identity, using whatever terms are most appropriate: You are a religious person, you are someone who cares about spiritual issues, you are a person of faith, you are a follower of Jesus.

One example will suffice. Last spring in Turkmenistan, I was asked to speak at the English Language Club, a bi-monthly social meeting with fifty or so university students in attendance. My husband and I decided on a talk entitled, “Meet the Purgasons: A Typical American Family?” We talked about where we live in relation to our families of origin—explaining typical American mobility. We talked about our family in relation to statistics about Americans and marriage, divorce, and number of children. We talked about religion, with a two-sentence summary of the Gospel, and we said that in this area we are not typical since although most Americans say they believe in God, only 30% take their beliefs seriously. Finally we talked about interests and hobbies. Our last statement was: “As you have seen, in some areas we are typical and in other areas we are not. I think that’s true of everyone. We look forward to getting to know you better and to learning about Turkmen families as well.” During the informal chatting time after the program, several students who had picked up on our comments about belief came over to talk about their beliefs. The seed was sown for future conversations. Now they knew. You will have many opportunities in and out of the classroom to let students know about this crucial aspect of your identity. Sometimes just a sentence is enough.

2. Listen before you speak.

Make it a goal to understand your students. Witness is not just talking, explaining, proclaiming. Jesus spent about 30 years of what must have included much listening before he set out on his two years of proclamation. Students should think of us not so much as people with answers (though we do have some), but as people who will listen to their questions. Students

should think of our class not so much as a place where they will find out what we believe but a place where everyone’s ideas are valued. When we listen we can come to understand our students: how interested are they in spiritual things, what problems do they have in their lives, what issues are important to them, how familiar are they with Christianity. When we listen we also create an open atmosphere in our class. When everyone’s ideas are welcomed, encouraged, and appreciated, if you say something about Jesus, students will not hear it as propaganda or proselytizing, but as one opinion among the many which have been expressed. Besides, our students need more practice speaking English than we do!

There are two specific ways I like to listen to my students. The first is through surveys. I do surveys to find out how to adapt my teaching to their needs. Here in the U.S. I ask whether students need English for school or work, whether they want to focus on speaking or reading, and so on. In a reading class I try to find out what kind of reading they are most interested in: fiction, non-fiction, history, romance, etc. Why not include the Bible on such a list? In a speaking class I ask what topics they want to work on: cross-cultural communication? roles of men and women? technological advances? world problems? heroes? the elderly? I try to include some spiritual issues on the list as well—I want to find out if they are important to my students.

The second way to listen to our students is through dialogue journals. These are widely used in ESL writing classes as a means of engaging students in a written dialogue with the teacher and promoting fluency in writing. Generally, the students write as much as they want about whatever they want to on a regular basis, per-

Foreign Language to Adults) taught in many locations in Great Britain and a few in North America. By the way, most, but not all, courses at this introductory level are at the graduate level, that is, they require you to have a bachelor's degree. It is a good idea to have a bachelor's degree in any case, because most agencies and employers have that as a minimal requirement for an English-language teacher (except some short-term opportunities for current college students).

The second level usually requires at least one semester, or more often an academic year, of full-time study. You end up with what in the U.S. is called a "Certificate in TESOL" and in the U.K. is called a "Diploma."

(By the way, do not confuse this kind of "certificate" with "certification," "credentialing," "licensure," or "endorsement" which is what is required if you want to teach in a U.S. elementary or secondary school. The content of the latter is usually mandated by the state and it is usually earned through a department of education in a university and will not be relevant to you if your goals are to work in an international setting.)

The third level involves study for a Master's degree. There are nearly 200 institutions in the U.S. that offer a master's degree related to TESOL. Some employers are quite definite about what qualifications they expect you to have; others, particularly mission agencies eager to fill positions, are less rigorous in their expectations—it is up to *you* to determine whether you have adequate training for the job. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where are you personally in terms of your commitment to TESOL?

If you are just exploring the field, an introductory course will give you a good taste of what is involved and enough training to make your first experience a good one. If on the other hand you have decided that this is the career and ministry for you, it may be time to invest in a Master's degree.

2. In what kind of teaching context will you be?

You can enjoy teaching with little TESOL training if you are in a well-established program with materials provided, good supervision, and no surprises such as students of all different proficiency levels in one classroom. Otherwise, get more training!

There are complaints all over the world from TESOL professionals who see untrained Christians calling themselves EFL teachers but really just being "missionaries."

3. What language skills will you be teaching?

If the course is in conversational English, you may not need much training; however, if you are teaching skills such as listening, reading, and writing, you need more training in how to help non-native speakers improve in these areas. A course in the structure of English is especially important if you will be teaching students who want instruction in grammar.

4. What responsibilities will you have?

If you are just teaching, you do not need a Master's degree. However, if you are expected to take on tasks such as program administration,

materials evaluation and design, program assessment, student placement, and teacher training, you need the kind of specialized course work and experience you will get in a Master's program.

When your training is adequate for the job, you will enjoy it more, be able to do it for a longer time period without discouragement, and will have energy left over for additional ministry.

It is very important to communicate to our students what kind of training we have and what kind of language program they can expect from us. There are complaints all over the world from TESOL professionals who see untrained Christians calling themselves EFL teachers but really

just being "missionaries." We would do well to defuse these criticisms, first of all, by getting the training which is needed for our particular job and doing our teaching in a professional way. The more effective our service is to students, the more credible our witness is. Secondly, let's be up front if our EFL program is

taught by untrained volunteers. The program can be effective because of our love for students, creativity, and hard work—but integrity is maintained because we are not claiming professional status that we do not have.

In the Classroom

I must say very plainly that I do not advocate direct evangelism in the classroom. It violates the teacher-student trust relationship. To preach to a captive audience who came expecting something else is unethical. It also prevents genuine response, because students are usually culturally bound to please their teacher. Furthermore, it jeopardizes your long-

exposed to the Word, or a fellowship group or church where they will experience worship. Of course, the English teacher can also be the church planter, but practically speaking, it is much more effective to have a team. For one thing, teachers can experience tremendous time pressure when asked to prepare lessons, teach, and then also be responsible for the ministry. Another reason is that it keeps the teacher-student relationship clean. Students aren't tempted to come to their teacher's Bible study just to please their teacher and possibly get a better grade.

Another role, common in places where a church already exists, is that of partner. This is how I see the role of the many EFL teachers sent out by agencies such as English Language Institute China or Educational Services International. By their presence in the classroom, these teachers can pique students' interest in Christianity, and many teachers also bring their students to a knowledge of Christ and continue to disciple them. This is a very important role in nations where these students would otherwise have little chance to hear about Jesus. But the organizations make it clear that their teachers' main role is to teach and the students should ultimately be absorbed into a local church.

One additional area of use for TESOL is the preparation of Third-World Christians. The growing wave of Mexicans preparing for missionary work in Morocco, or Koreans preparing for Kazakhstan, often require English as a bridge language to assist them in studying the local language or in communicating with the international community. In addition, seminarians and Bible school students in places from Moscow to Jakarta want English in order to read theological and devotional materials not yet available in their home languages.¹

Before we leave this theme of TESOL in missions, I would like to make two points about what TESOL should *not* be used for. First, it should not be used as an excuse for not learning the local language. Although it is not necessary for the teacher to use the local language in order to teach English, it is nonetheless important to learn our students' home language for several reasons: 1) it helps us empathize with our learners in the task of language acquisition, 2) it conveys respect to our students for their language, and 3) it is ultimately the language of our students' hearts, through which they are more likely to come to an understanding of the Gospel.

Second, one should not always count on using TESOL to be a lucrative source of income. TESOL in "tent-making" might make us imagine that as language teachers we will earn enough to pay our own way. In wealthy contexts with strong economies such as Japan, Korea, or Saudi Arabia, salaries can include enough to live well and even pay off school debt, and benefits usually include round-trip airfare for qualified teachers. However, many countries where it is strategic for Christians to have a presence cannot pay their teachers a living wage. In the Central Asian nations of the former USSR, for example, one can easily get a job as an English language teacher, but one will have to have an outside source of income in order to live.

Qualifications and Training

What qualifications does an EFL teacher need? First, let's consider background. You don't need to be an English or education major. People from a wide variety of majors or life experiences have made wonderful teachers. Since much of the demand

is for business and technical English, people with professional or technical backgrounds like business, computing, engineering, and agriculture have much to offer as teachers of special-purpose English.

As for training, some will tell you that all you need is to be able to speak English. Others will tell you that you need a two-year Master's degree in linguistics or TESOL. The reality lies in between these two extremes and depends on the kind of teaching you will be doing. If you are teaching in a well-established program, with easy-to-use textbooks and teachers' manuals and with experienced supervisors to help you out, then you don't need as much training in advance. However, if you are expected to design the curriculum, place students at different levels, choose (or even write your own) textbooks, teach all aspects of English (reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and pronunciation)—then you need more training. Without it you may end up feeling that you are cheating your students who expected "real" teaching, you will soon burn out from the effort of inventing the wheel again and again, and you will not have energy left for other ministry goals.

Briefly (and somewhat simplistically), there are three levels of training.

The first level provides an introduction. It usually takes 45 to 100 hours, and ideally it provides practical information and hands-on experience. It may be a single course (possibly called Introduction to TESOL) given by a university, intensive in-house training offered by an agency or language school, or the widely-recognized RSA/Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (RSA/Cam CELTA) (formerly known as the Certificate in Teaching English as a

Teaching English to the World: Options and Opportunities

Teaching English has been one of the main tools people have used to share faith and culture. Many of the simple yet insightful ideas presented here combined with effective preparation help us to understand how this tool can be used to further our witness with sensitivity in the marketplace of life.

by Kitty Barnhouse Purgason

The English language is an important commodity in today's world. From Tunis to Tashkent, from Harbin to Hanoi, people are studying English. They study it in elite elementary schools, in ill-equipped high schools, in classes of a hundred in public universities, in classes of three in pricey language institutes, over the radio, via the Internet—in short, everywhere. The demand for English instruction has made Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) an activity which immediately springs to mind when a Christian wants to become what is popularly known as “tentmaker.”

As we focus on the needs of unreached peoples, it is important to note that demands for English language teachers are great in the least evangelized world. Arab people groups in the Mid-East and in North Africa, Turkic peoples across Central Asia, Han Chinese and many other people groups in China, and Thai and Malay peoples in Southeast Asia all welcome English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers.

This article will discuss three aspects of TESOL: first, the uses of TESOL in cross-cultural missions in general; second, training requirements and options; and third, witness opportunities in the classroom.

TESOL in Missions

How is TESOL used by Christians in international settings? One of the first uses people think about related to TESOL is as a “visa.” In limited access countries where a missionary would not be welcome, the English teacher is often welcomed. However, to see the teaching as merely a means of getting a visa is short-sighted. TESOL can be a vital part of an individual or team ministry, and as will be seen much of spiritual value can happen in the classes as well.

Another use that missionaries make of TESOL is to offer English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes as a community service. These classes meet a felt need, create goodwill, and build receptivity for other things the Christian workers do. A Christian organization in Central Asia runs English classes through a low-cost language institute. A ministry in Eastern Europe runs summer English camps for young people. A Christian individual in Siberia teaches her neighbors out of her home. The ministry can take place in the English class itself or in other settings and activities.

A third approach is to use EFL classes an incentive. This is frequently done by churches which hope that their EFL classes will encourage

students to come through their doors and thereby discover more about what happens in church. Again, ministry can take place in class, but also frequently occurs in “chapels” during break times or through invitations to other church events.

The quality of the service is crucial. Students who experience excellent teaching, qualified teachers, effective materials, and an enjoyable class are more likely to say “yes” to further invitations. Also students who find that their teacher is knowledgeable and skilled in TESOL matters are more likely to trust what their teacher has to say about spiritual matters.

Role of the Teacher

As we consider how TESOL is used in missions today, it also is important to consider the role of the EFL teacher. One role, common in frontier church-planting areas, is that of front-line outreach person. Working in conjunction with a team of other evangelists, disciplers, and church planters, the English teacher is the person on the team who has ready-made relationships with a range of people. The teacher gets to know students and their families and then in turn invites them to social events where they will meet other believers, Bible studies where they will be