

Tribal Church Planter Profile

New Tribes Mission surveyed over 100 tribal church planting veterans to design a tribal church planter profile with a top of the line training program which results in a missionary effort that would not only understand the “what “ and “why “ of church planting but the “how” as well. Excellent overview insights emerged from this conference, and the results follow in this article.

by Bob Strauss

Sensing the need to evaluate its three-phase, four-year training program, New Tribes Mission (NTM) formed the Training Evaluation Committee (TEC) late in 1994. TEC sought to answer two basic questions: 1) Is the 40-50 year old training program culturally relevant for missionary candidates today? 2) Does the training adequately equip missionary candidates for the foreign fields as they exist today? This article describes a tribal church planter profile that emerged from the research.

Early in 1997 NTM conducted two profiling workshops that addressed the tribal church planter. The intent of the workshops was to define the personal qualities (being) and capabilities (doing) needed for a missionary to plant a church in a tribal setting. This profile would become the foundation for the NTM training program, beginning in the fall of 1998. Training objectives would be based upon the tribal church planter profile. These

cal Seminary, and an associate with the WEF Missions Commission. Ferris' (1995) edited book entitled *Establishing Ministry Training: A Manual for Programme Developers* provided helpful insights in the profiling process.

From the NTM workshops, a skeleton outline emerged that defined what the tribal church planter should *be* and should be able to *do*. Over one hundred experienced tribal church planters participated in the workshops, providing the expertise that was needed. NTM started at the end and worked backwards in redesigning its training program. The skeleton outline identified six quality categories of “being” and fourteen capability categories of “doing.” The outlines were rough and not necessarily in any order of arrangement or priority.

These twenty categories of subjects were then dispersed to subcommittees that were asked to “flesh out” the outline. The subcommittees were created based on experience and

mittees into a four-year training program for NTM. Their goal: Upon the successful completion of the NTM training program, the candidate will be equipped to plant an indigenous New Testament church in a cross-cultural tribal setting, starting from within a pioneering context. He will understand not only the “what” and the “why” of church planting, but also the all important “how” (methodology). The candidate will be able to demonstrate a satisfactory working understanding of this gained knowledge, prior to his field assignment, through classroom discussions, reports and essays, practical ministry within the context of life in the training setting, ministry outside the training context within the local community, and his own developing spiritual walk and character.

Tables 1 (see following pages) is a summary of the tribal church planter profile. The twenty categories are listed down the left side column.

by-pass the Bible Institute phase of the NTM training. Other categories are included because of the specific people groups NTM targets. For example, NTM's training includes: linguistic analysis, Bible translation, culture acquisition, and the chronological teaching style (effective with "high-context" cultures).

For a detailed analysis (Version 1 [14 pages] or Version 2 [225 pages]) of the tribal church planter profile, contact the Training Coordinating Committee at <tcc@ntm.org> for further information. NTM is currently redesigning their training program, using the tribal church planter profile as the basis for training objectives. It is anticipated that the full redesign will take several years to complete.

References

Ferris, Robert W., ed. 1995 *Establishing Ministry Training: A Manual for Programme Developers*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Photo here
of
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*Bob Strauss
is the
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Tribes Mission Bible Institute in

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Tribal Church Planter
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Table 1: Tribal Church Planter Profile
New Tribes Mission

QUALITIES: Each quality category is described as the church planter's **RELATIONSHIP** to . . .

Table 1: Tribal Church Planter Profile
New Tribes Mission

CAPABILITIES: Each capabilities category is described as the church planter's **RELATIONSHIP** to . . .