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## Holism and TentMaking Ministries

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## Holism: Serving the Whole Person

Any analysis of the world's population at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reveals the fact that the vast majority of the Unreached People Groups (UPG) are extremely poor, live in difficult circumstances and are located in regions where traditional evangelical missions are not allowed or wanted. Since this segment of the earth's population represents approximately two billion people or nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the globe, they cannot be ignored or considered too difficult to reach. Hesselgrave related how his university professor had visited Japan after WWII to find a poverty-stricken and demoralized population. After Hesselgrave gave his proposal for his missionary objectives his professor commented, "You might want to do some more thinking about that. My observation was that the Japanese people want a changed economic picture right now, not a pie in the sky by and by" (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 117).

The needs of people are varied. Any mission must take into account the whole of human needs: spiritual, social and personal. Holistic mission include both evangelism and church planting as well as development and social transformation. The amount of involvement will depend upon needs in specific environments, the need of the missionary to establish credibility in a community, and skills and resources that can be brought to bear on a local situation.

"To be 'poor' means to be economically impoverished, devoid of the necessities of life, and very often, part of an underclass devoid of the necessities of life, and very often, part of an underclass that is disenfranchised and helpless to do anything to change prevailing circumstances" (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 118).

Historically Christian missions have been involved in helping the National develop themselves through physical (medical usually), social and educational needs in most regions of the world. Among evangelical churches in the era of church planting focus (especially since 1970) these efforts have been seen as a supporting ministry, definitely not "front-line" missions, and have struggled to receive church support. This is particularly seen in Gaustad's quote, "However much the missionary acts as teacher, doctor, or technical assistant, he remains primarily a missionary, an evangelist" (Gaustad, 1966, p. 349).

The Roman Catholics and Liberals have spearheaded the focus on helping the poor to the point that the poor are seen as the object of God's special love, therefore must be our special love as well. This particular focus began to emerge as the target of Evangelical missions following the 1974 Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization. At this time holism began to have a dominant position in mission strategy for a number of reasons. Demographic and statistical studies of people groups and unreached populations have made this target group the major center of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How to train for this ministry, overcome many obstacles and opposition, gain credibility and gain access to individuals within these areas looms as perhaps the major challenge of this century.

### Global Context of Missions

The global environment in which missions is to find new avenues of exposure to the gospel include the understanding of the plight of desperate people for survival and the

meeting of new social and personal needs radically different from the American culture. Demographic studies by McConnell shows three major demographic changes that need to be considered in any mission strategy. They are (1) migration, (2) the HIV/AIDS pandemic and (3) the plight of children at risk (McConnell, 2005, p. 46).

### *Migration*

During the twentieth century, the human population grew from 1.4 billion to 6.2 billion. Increasing the impact has been the regional disparity of the growth.

Economically less developed regions account for 4.6 billion people, and it is projected that 98 percent of the global population growth will occur in these regions in the next thirty years (Population Issues, 1999).

In the more developed regions of the world, nearly one in ten persons is a migrant. This, in 2002, migrants accounted for 18 percent of the total number of births and two-thirds of the total population growth in the more developed regions (McConnell, 2005, p. 47). It is no wonder that populations seek to migrate since developed nations amount to only 15 percent of the world's population yet contain 60 percent of the world's gross domestic product. McConnell quotes Bryant Myers' study of the challenges of missions saying, "The economic nature of migration is illustrated by the flow of migrants from Mexico to the United States, accounting for 8 percent of global migration" (McConnell, 2005, p. 49).

Not only for economic reasons but also because of political upheavals and rival people group warfare has forced the displacement of huge populations in order to survive. "In 2002, over 40 million--16 million refugees and an estimated 26 million internally displaced persons -- fled their homes because of persecution, war, and human rights abuses" (McConnell, 2005, p. 49). Can this mass of humanity be ignored?

### *HIV/AIDS*

Since its first discovery in 1981, the AIDS disease has become a pandemic, which has made it the deadliest epidemic of our time. "The disease has killed 22 million people, with another 42 million infected. This number continues to rise as 16,000 individuals are infected daily.... Estimates show that sub-Saharan Africa, the hardest hit, has 28.1 million cases. The disease is also spreading rapidly through the massive populations of Asia, where it is estimated that 6 million people are infected in India and 1 million in China (McConnell, 2005, pp. 49-50). These mind-numbing statistics bear witness to the claim that HIV/AIDS is the greatest humanitarian crisis in the twenty-first century.

"Over 13 million children have lost one or more parents (to AIDS), accounting for one-third of all orphans in the world." The ripple effects of this horrible disease include family destabilization, loss of income from infected members, inevitable malnutrition, school drop-outs, inevitable adoptions already burdened, and single-parent and grand-parent families of orphaned children (McConnell, 2005, p. 50). Major Christian efforts have been organized since the mid-1980s Christian organizations like MAP International and World Vision have attempted to mobilize the Christian population to respond practically to this crisis. UNICEF has documented over 686 Christian or faith-based organizations, most of which started between 1999 and 2003.

The proliferation of initiatives was strongest among Pentecostal groups, accounting for 64 percent of the total. Uganda had the highest number of faith-based organizations (194) and was the only country in which estimates indicate that the total number of orphans will decrease by the year 2010 (McConnell, 2005, p. 61).

As the churches around the world are exposed to such massive needs they are responding with their limited resources in their immediate environments. At the Lausanne II Congress in Manila a Manifesto was issued to underscore the role of the local congregations to "turn itself outward to its local community in evangelistic witness and compassionate service." This manifesto demonstrated the effectiveness and responsibility of the local congregations to respond to the HIV pandemic to demonstrate the biblical principle of how to "love your neighbor as themselves" (Matt 22:39) (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1989).

### *Children at Risk*

Sadly those who survive and are the most vulnerable to the changing world scene are the children, who had little or nothing to do with their life crisis.

Some of the categories of the risks that are faced by children which the churches need to take into consideration include:

- Disabling or bonded child labor
- War and other forms of violence
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Disease, drug abuse or disability
- neglect or loss of family or primary caregiver
- Extreme poverty
- Oppressive institutions (McConnell, 2005, pp. 51-52)

Due to the drop in infant mortality rates between 1960 and 2001 from 141 deaths per 1000 to 63 deaths per 1000 resulted in a population growth from 3 billion in 1960 to 6.1 billion in 2001. As a result more than half of the populations of most countries are below 15 years of age. As a result children are the most vulnerable and dependent segment of the population. McConnell quotes a statistic from Viva Network showing that 1.5 billion of the world's children face life-threatening risks. Furthermore, 80 percent of the 15-24 year-old youth live in developing countries where education and employment is increasingly scarce. This unemployed segment of the population becomes the major social resource either for building future economic opportunities or to be exploited by destructive political, military or criminal forces within society (McConnell, 2005, pp. 52-53).

Statistics showing over 10 million children exploited in the sex trade in virtual slavery, sometimes even sold by their parents in order for the adults to survive.

Historically the missionary movement has universally seen the care and education of children as foundational to their mission. McConnell quotes a study by David Barrett and Todd Johnson in 2000 that estimates there are 170,000 Christian primary schools, 50,000 Christian secondary schools, and 1,500 Christian colleges and universities worldwide.

However, among mission agencies targeting the completion of the task of world evangelization, few have included a Christian education component. "It is estimated that

14 percent of the \$270 billion of the annual expenditure of organized global Christianity goes specifically toward education.” However, ninety-seven percent of the total annual expenditure is on Christians, in spite of the fact that nearly 85% of the decisions for Christ are made between the ages of four and fourteen.

Recent estimates reveal that there are 25,000 projects that are touching the lives of 2 million children through the ministry of 100,000 full-time Christian workers (McConnell, 2005, p. 64). How should the Church respond to these needs? Most prefer to ignore them or

### **Three views of Holism:**

1. Liberationism leading to revolution from any oppressive regime
2. Holism (Stott) seeks an equal priority modeled after the incarnation
3. Conversionism or Prioritism focuses on evangelism of the lost.

### **1. Radical Liberationism**

Living in the 3<sup>rd</sup> world no one is ignorant of the inequities, corruption and injustices both in the judicial and business environments. The questions constantly are on one’s mind: “Do I get involved or leave well-enough alone?” Radical Liberationism is one answer to this question: a radical restructuring of the economic and political environment of a country especially along the Socialist/Marxist view of the class struggles combined with the biblical metaphor of Israel’s escape from Egypt and the allegorical application of equating the salvation from sin with the struggle of the poor and exploited for justice.

Roman Catholic priests in Latin America under oppressive and corrupt military dictatorships saw a Marxist revolution in the 50’s-70’s, which promised a serious correction to society as the only hope for a solution to the corruption in every phase of life. The Marxist thrust motivated revolutionary guerilla warfare in countries like Colombia, Peru, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Their motivation was to create anarchy in the present environment, which could only be rebuilt on the Marxist principles. Many missionaries felt that if society would not convert to Christ and practice biblical principles, then humanly speaking, the only real solution to society’s ills would be a benevolent socialism. Experience would show, however, that corruption often passed on to the next political system as well and the people only suffer more.

### **2. Two primary types of Holism**

Holism has a variety of meanings, but as the name implies, it is a ministry to the whole person or society.

Depending on who is applying it, "holism" has a variety of denotations and connotations. Some emphasize ministering through word, deed, and sign. Others stress ministering to the whole person--spirit, mind, and body. Sometimes the emphasis is on transforming whole cultures and societies. At other times the emphasis is on transforming the whole world. The holism ...promotes the partnership of social (and, sometimes, political) action with evangelism in ways that supersede traditional theory and practice (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 120).

Hesselgrave makes a distinction between Revisionist holism and Restrained holism. The former, Revisionist holism, is not as extreme as the radical Liberationism, but does make a full and equal *partnership* of evangelism and social action, which is defined as the balance between loving God and loving your neighbor.

In the Restrained holism there is an attempt to prioritize evangelism, while acknowledging the importance of social action either to help meet a need or give the opportunity to enter an otherwise restricted community. This group sees the ministry of Jesus as the model to follow today. As Jesus' ministry was characterized by actions to "proclaim good news to the poor" (Isa 61:1-2).

### 3. Traditional prioritism

While recognizing the validity of medical, educational, economic and social needs of a people, *traditional prioritism* maintains that the primary ministry of the church is spiritual transformation, with social transformation taking a secondary role. This position denies a reductionistic view of neglecting social ministries on the one hand, while limiting cross-cultural ministries only to evangelism

### Inadequacies of Holism

Hesselgrave shows that the two foundations of holism are "reason" and "revelation," both of which are essential or the concept will fail. "Unlike Hinduism, Christianity begins with an absolute dichotomy between the Creator and his creation. It proceeds by making very different valuations of body and soul, treasures on earth and treasures in heaven, and this world and the world to come. In fact, these dichotomies and the choices they necessitate attach to the essence of Christianity (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 123).

Liberationists and holists hold that God has a certain "preference" for the poor, therefore, the focus of the ministry should be toward the poor, because they are convinced God especially listens to the cries of the poor.

As far as revelation is concerned, they view God as a God of love and compassion who cares about the poor and desperate people of the world. Second, the holist is very selective of their foundational passages, especially the definition of the "true and faultless" religion (James 1:27) is concerned with the injustices and conditions of the poor and disadvantaged. Third, the holist appeal to many deliverance passages as models of social concerns (the exodus, the theocracy in Israel, the captivity and deliverance and the announcement of the Messiah and the poor). Fourth, the descriptions of the kingdom (future) are seen as prophetic imperatives of the present ministry as well. Fifth, the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself has practical applications. Sixth, the Great Commission at least implies a concern for the poor and needy by teaching all that Christ commanded. Seventh, the apostles and early churches had a special concern for widows, the poor and the hungry (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 124).

## **Incarnationalists**

Charles Sheldon wrote a popular novel, *In His Steps*, which presents a pastor's emphasis on the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" (WWJD). His objective was to transform a whole society resulting in a "Christianization" of society. This focus seeks the extension of Christ's kingdom over the whole of life and society by transforming it to a Christian life-style and way of thinking.

Incarnationalists do not think much of priorities of confrontational evangelism, rather they see witnessing in "word, deed and sign" of Jesus as the Transformer of societies and cultures as well as individuals.

Anglo-Catholic John R. W. Stott sees Jesus making His mission *the* model for the church's mission and ours. Jesus is viewed as the great Liberator and Emancipator. Though much of Liberation Theology has died, the basic concept lives on in the "liberation-incarnationalist." John Stott holds that the greatest statement of the Great Commission is John 20:21, "*As* the Father has sent me *even so* I am sending you." He goes so far as to say that if a church is in a community which socially or physically deteriorates, it is primarily the failure of the local church (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 147).

## **Conversionist-incarnationalists**

Many of those who maintain clear priorities of proclaiming the gospel, discipling the *ethne*, all peoples, baptizing and instructing them while incorporating them into local reproducing churches reject Liberationism. They focus on a Luke 19:10 passage, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." They reject Liberationism and are not sure of a holistic emphasis.

Ron Rogers, an outspoken incarnationalist, is convinced that ministry should be modeled after Jesus' ministry rather than the principles of Paul. He would say, "such terms as accommodation, identification, indigenization, and enculturation are often used, it is incarnationalism that 'sets forth the truly biblical model for cross-cultural ministry' and that Christ is the model par excellence of a truly incarnationalist missionary ministry" (Rogers, 2002, p. 44).

## **Incarnationalist Missions: Modeling modern missions after Jesus**

The interlacing of the principles of incarnationalism and evangelical priorities become cloudy and purpose for continuing can become more idealistic than practical. When social change becomes the priority a radical position can be inevitable. It is proposed that the following characteristics of Jesus' ministry should be modeled in contemporary ministries:

- ◆ Characterized by humble, self-sacrificial service on behalf of all people
- ◆ Willing to renounce his rights and privileges as the Son of God to identify with those he came to serve.
- ◆ Became a poor servant to meet the needs of hurting people and the powerless.
- ◆ Did not hesitate to engage in a power encounter with the demons to show His power.

- ◆ Immersed himself in the affairs of local culture.
- ◆ Communicated, verbally and non-verbally that people could understand.
- ◆ Spent most of his time training a few chosen disciples who would carry on his ministry.
- ◆ Gave priority to prayer and fellowship with His heavenly Father.
- ◆ Did not have a superiority complex, rather assumed a humble attitude in working with people.
- ◆ Willing to suffer and die for the people He came to save (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 149).

### **Social Component Mandate**

Incarnationalists tend to apply evangelism while or after meeting the social needs that the people feel are more urgent than their spiritual needs. When the World Council of Churches (WCC) was dominated by liberals, missions became mostly social especially during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of the *lostness* of people it became the *plight* of people as the major focus. Paradigm shift: 1974 Lausanne Covenant: "We affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty." Both are necessary "expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ."

### **Representational Mission: Modeling modern missions after Paul**

Incarnationalists and Representationalists see different answers to the basic questions about missionaries: (1) What are today's missionaries to be? (2) What are they to say? (3) What are they to do?

First, are missionaries to be clones of Christ or ambassadors, representatives, disciples of Christ?

Secondly, What is the message of today's missionary? The message that needs proclaiming today is the completed salvation that Jesus accomplished through the incarnation, not the continuation of the incarnation. The Incarnationalists tend to identify the statement "for me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21) with their justification. However, "in biblical teaching, the truth of the indwelling of Christ through the Holy Spirit is light years removed from the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. As for maintaining the absolute uniqueness of Christ's incarnation, it must be remembered that the West faces pluralism, syncretism, new ageism, false Christs, and the disintegration of absolutes." (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 153)

Teaching the incarnationalism in the East can get confusing since they believe in certain emanations from their gods of the bodhisattvas and *manushi* buddhas of Mahayana Buddhism, or *kami* of the Shintoism, or cultic saviors of cults. At best missionaries would only be an inferior model and ineffective savior.

Thirdly, there are certain characteristics of Jesus' ministry that are not repeatable. We should certainly imitate his commitment to obedience, his willingness to give up his glory and comfort, his wisdom how he spoke to different people and his practice of prayer. But should we cast people out of the church as he did the Temple, raise the dead,



or cast demons into pigs. Some charismatic leaders attempt to be a replica of Jesus' ministry or even more dramatic accomplishments, but the comparison is hardly adequate.

All of the models have limitations, even the representational ministry of Paul. Are we apostles? Does every believer have the signs of an apostle? Are we expected to have independent authority as an apostle? Can we speak or write infallibly? Some want to claim this level of comparison.

Five times Paul points to his own life as a model (1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Cor 9:22; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7-9). Hesselgrave points out ten comparison models as the example of the apostle Paul that are to be emulated.

1. Characterized by humble, self-sacrificial service, giving up his rights to identify with and meet the needs of his target audience
2. Concentrated on centers of learning and commerce, from which the gospel flowed
3. Labored with his own hands to provide for himself and co-workers to give a model to his followers
4. Considered himself an ambassador of Christ and, on Christ's behalf, urged sinners to be reconciled to God
5. Concentrated on raising up indigenous churches that would not be dependent on missionaries or other churches
6. Did not spend a long time in each place, but chose to pick and train a few local leaders who could carry on his work
7. Maintained contact with churches he had established with visits and letters exhorting them to walk worthy of their calling
8. Encouraged believers in the churches to give generously to care for others
9. Accommodated himself to new cultures, becoming "all things to all men" to save some.
10. Maintained his authority as one commissioned by Christ while humbly confessing his unworthiness as a sinner and former persecutor (Hesselgrave, 2005, pp. 157-158).

## **Redefine or Balance**

There are times in the ministry when the primary task of teaching and preaching the gospel can be a full-time occupation. Generally speaking, the people groups where this is still possible are in regions that are already reached with the gospel and a reproducing church. Now it is the unreached people groups (UPG) where freedom to minister is not an option. A secondary role or reason for being is imperative. Some of these areas obligate a social platform to justify presence (i.e. RAC/CAC).

Some opportunities can be integrated with evangelism (i.e. schools, clinics, orphanages), at least on a private basis. In other regions the temptation to avoid evangelism is tremendous in order to be successful or at least continue.

Financial aid, medical, community development programs often become an end to themselves. Depending how you define of the purpose of the ministry: if living a godly life and serving others is seen as the model of Jesus, thus often defined as *presence evangelism*, which minimizes the proclamation aspect of mission work.

As a general rule void such programs that create dependency. The problem with many incarnational ministries is the tendency to do for others what they cannot do for

themselves. Paul avoided this weakness by engaging in *temporary programs of evangelisms* that result in *autonomy* and *self-sufficiency*

### **Why is the danger so prevalent?**

What model of social-evangelistic ministry do you know of in the US?

What business-evangelistic ministry?

What medical-evangelistic ministry?

What Aid-evangelistic ministry?

What engineering-evangelistic ministry?

What sociological, linguistic, anthropological ministry?

With very few, if any, models in our culture, that are effective, the missionary has the foreign task difficult to establish and maintain in prioritism in ministries that he has never seen in favorable environments, much less in resistive regions.

The overwhelming belief is in "Presence" Evangelism – a silent witness, which is ideal in the incarnational ministry, thus their theology tends to be framed to justify their practice.

Some such agencies have economic benefits (i.e., financial support of specific relief or medical ministries) that obligate a minimum of offense (i.e. evangelism or biblical stance on issues).

### **Summary of Holism**

Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps*, helped develop a practical ethic around the question, "What would Jesus do?"

His objective was the hope that "the application of Christian principles to the ordering of society would lead to the rectification of serious social evils and pave the way for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth"

The results of its popularity and practice was the loss of the real gospel message, for the social gospel

Once again the Incarnationalist WWJD has surfaced to become a priority in political, social and Charismatic focuses, often to the lack of the true gospel message.

Hesselgrave who understands the often desperate need for holism in many areas yet concludes his analysis of the holism focus of missions with four warning statements:

- (1) The gospel is both "true" news and "good" news quite apart from anything that we may do without having to tailor it to special needs or interest groups.
- (2) The announcement of this good news to the "poor" was primarily referring to a generous salvation offer to a spiritually sinful and needy, regardless of their economic or social status.
- (3) The focus of the Christian mission has to do with making the "true and good gospel of Christ known to those who are most separated geographically, ethnically, and religiously from centers of gospel knowledge and influence." Though the commands to "love your neighbor" and "do good to all people" (Gal 6:10) and the fact that spiritual and literal poverty often go together they cannot get confused, paralleled or equated.
- (4) Our task is to seek out individuals and people groups who, "by whatever means," even poverty, have been

made open to hear, understand and respond to the gospel of Christ. If economic or social help is to be provided, it should never be seen as a conditioned benefit of having received the spiritual "Bread of Life." Spiritual hope is the primary and best hope to offer anyone (Hesselgrave, 2005, pp. 135-138).

David Hesselgrave quote: "There are strong indications that the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be marked by major sociopolitical upheavals and a succession of natural disasters. Unless this new – among evangelicals – understanding of mission is successfully challenged, the likelihood of retaining the biblical priority of world evangelization in the face of unprecedented needs of every kind will become increasingly difficult."

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## Tentmaking, Platform Ministries and NGOs

From the decades of the seventies and eighties there has emerged a large variety of means to go to the nations. Much of this variety has been the result of creative thinking and daring innovations to penetrate areas of the world where traditional missionaries are not welcomed. Christianity is not a social order imposed on different cultures as political structures and economic imperialism was the norm in the nineteenth century. Rather Christianity is driven by the passion to communicate the love of Christ, as His ambassadors, to every people, even if they are resistant and disinterested. This chapter will explore some of the creative ways in which His ambassadors have elected to pour out their lives to gain entrance into difficult regions of the world, build relationships and thus open ears and hearts, and share the greatest story ever told.

In 2003 a sophomore student came to Liberty University to study Bible and nothing else. He had just finished one year at Princeton University where he aced all the general education courses (English, math, history, etc.). His third year he was going to (and did) transfer to a university in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he was going to major in petroleum engineering. His goal was to establish his career in one of the Arab republics as a respected professional, to build relationships and make disciples of Christ. He had literally poured out his life to reach others for Christ just as a tribal missionary would do in order to reach an unreached people.

"In his book, "God's New Envoys," Ted Yamamori, the president of Food for the Hungry, showed that upwards of 80% of the world population lived in countries which did not permit the unrestricted entry of fully supported traditional missionaries. ...Penetration in restricted countries is hindered by the growth of more militant Islamic states; the hardening of attitudes in China, despite apparent liberalization of economic and political postures and resistance to anything that is perceived as Western and thereby undermining of ethnic identity (Cox, 1997, p. 111).

For any number of reasons a series of different structures has been developed to enable Evangelicals to enter countries or regions of the world that would normally, but not exclusively, be closed to traditional missionary endeavors. These types of ministries are called Tentmaking, Platform Ministries and NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations]. The following topics will be discussed:

- Tentmaking
- Platform Ministries
- Non-Standard Mission Structures
- NGOs

Stephen Bailey became the director of the Alliance Graduate School of Missions after serving as a missionary to refugees and as a tentmaker for seventeen years. He wrote, "If the remaining unevangelized people in our world are to hear the gospel, then Christians will have to enter nations that restrict the access of foreign missionaries. Many of the people who live in these nations are religiously confident with long traditions in Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. They are generally poor nations... They are nations that also often violate international standards in the area of religious freedom and

consider the propagating of Christian faith a disruptive Western influence. Some refer to these nations as ‘creative access nations’ or CANs” (Bailey, 2007, p. 368).

### **Tentmakers**

Since the early 70’s a concept of ministry called “Tentmaking” has developed for a variety of reasons that is called “tentmaking.” This term refers to the activities of someone in the ministry who receives little or no pay for his service through the ministry itself. This person supports him/herself by secular work unrelated directly to mission activity. Not only can a tentmaking ministry become self-supporting, it can also be instrumental in opening doors for a residential ministry in resistive or restrictive regions. This is a “market-place” ministry on the international scene. Dr. William Danker said that "The most important contribution of the Moravians was their emphasis that every Christian is a missionary who should witness through his daily vocation" (Cox, 1997, p. 112). It was this kind of conviction in the hearts of present day Christians that led to the establishment of the Tentmaker International Exchange (TIE).

The question in today’s world of unreached peoples is how can we place credible people into areas where traditional missionaries are not permitted? How can we find, train and send “marketplace Christians” that can carry the gospel into regions where no one else is allowed?

As teachers and educators, Christians communicate eternal truths of Scriptures through the schools, universities, and training institutes of the world. As workers in nongovernment organizations, they demonstrate the love and mercy of Christ through the relief and community development channels for a world in need. As business people, they trade concepts of discipleship through the commercial networks of a global economy. They strive to bridge the gap, to connect with those who are isolated from the truth of the gospel. Most focus on least-evangelized peoples. All are part of a vast company of ambassadors, tentmakers, envoys, and kingdom professionals being raised up, trained, and sent out to disciple all peoples on earth. They are creating the future of a church that will not take ‘no’ for an answer when it comes to global evangelization. They are living out a model of evangelization and church planting that depends on everyday disciples of Christ for witness, teaching, mentoring and community. They are part of today’s world of creative-access platforms (Barnett, 2005, pp. 210-211).

The region of the world where tentmaking is going to be practiced will largely determine the nature of the tentmaking ministry. When the Colombian government began to make overtures against American missionaries in the 1970’s, I thought it would be wiser to renew my visa as a pilot-mechanic instead of a missionary. We were operating two planes in the province of Amazonas giving life-saving service to remote villages and tribal people. Our thought at that time was to have a non-missionary visa in hopes that the impending restrictions on missionaries would not apply to a technical visa. In our case it did not work, because the restrictions were to be placed against all foreigners living in tribal areas who then had to relocate out of the jungle region.

The renewal of tentmaking in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is due in part to the focus given in the Lausanne conferences of the 70’s and 80’s, which turned the

attention toward the 10/40 window.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation of this vast unreached portion of the earth's geography which houses most of the unreached people groups left to be evangelized, showed how they are not open to traditional missionary endeavors. Many of them had been dominated by colonial powers for over a hundred years and presently have little interest in welcoming representatives from the West. All the major religions of the world are based in this 10/40 window so there is little interest in allowing evangelistic missionary activities. If the gospel was ever going to penetrate into these restricted areas, high-risk, creative justification for being there had to be developed.

Many readers will be familiar with the Manila Manifesto [Lausanne II Congress] which epitomized a new commitment to World Evangelization. What is less known is the statement issued by the Tentmaker Track. It affirmed the tentmakers are Christians who, in response to God's call, proclaim Christ cross-culturally, witnessing with their whole lives. It affirmed also the vital central position of the established missions movement and drew attention to the need for structures of accountability by tentmaker practitioners to these agencies, as well as to local Christian fellowships and partnerships, and above all to the home churches. It recognized that the tentmaker, especially in his "secular role," was inevitably in the front-line of spiritual warfare<sup>2</sup> (Cox, 1997, p. 114).

This kind of activity is not so strange in the history of missions, but only unique from the way missions have developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century through the financial support of Europe and American churches for full-time missions. The notion of living by "faith" and being fully supported by churches and individuals has taken on a spiritual respect that is enviable: to be supported by donors (who supposedly are led by God's Spirit) implies God's special blessing on an individual. To some missionaries anything less than full-time ministry is not quite as "spiritual." Even a denominationally supported missionary is seen as requiring less faith, much less someone earning a salary from a business. However, the faith to establish a business and see it perpetuate is not a lot different than starting a church that endures.

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<sup>1</sup> A band across N. Africa through the Middle East, India, S. China and S.E. Asia, between 10° North latitude and 40° North latitude, where most of the unreached people groups and most of the poor people of the world are located.

<sup>2</sup> The Lausanne Congress statement [Manila Manifesto] identified seven proposals for the church that the future history of tentmaking should prove to be effective for the Lord:

- 1) To encourage Christian lay people to seize opportunities for cross-cultural positions to extend God's Kingdom.
- 2) To recognize the key position of church congregations in mobilizing and equipping the laity for world evangelization.
- 3) To identify and enlist people for cross-cultural witness among unreached people groups.
- 4) To produce training materials and programs for tentmakers in the Scriptures, inter-personal relationships and time management.
- 5) To involve home churches in assisting in placement and orientation to face culture shock successfully.
- 6) To nurture tentmakers through faithful pastoral care to include prayer backing, good communications and visits.
- 7) To assist in re-entry culture shock, and to use tentmakers efficiently in challenging and recruiting others.

### ***Definition of Tentmaker***

What do we mean by the term “tentmaker?” The term originates in the example of the Apostle Paul who made tents in order to support himself and his team in their mission outreach. In Acts 18 and 21 Paul was described as making tents to support himself and his team. He chose not to burden the churches with his support (1 Cor 9) since he had been ordered into the ministry directly by Jesus and had no choice in the matter. What Paul wanted to offer the Lord was a ministry that did not cost the church anything, although, in this context, his example was not to be taken as the norm, but rather an exception. Even Paul could not do this all the time, since he was itinerating and later spent 6 years imprisoned (Jerusalem to Rome) and thus was forced to depend on others for his support. His intent, however, was to earn his support by making tents, thus the term “tentmaker” as his offering of thanks to his Lord.

John Cox was the International Coordinator of TIE since its inception in Manila in 1989. He traces the historical origins of tentmaking back through the Old Testament; to Abraham as he left the security of home pastures and ventured into new unknown territory; to Joseph as he used his administrative wisdom in the service of the Pharaoh; to Daniel, as he rose high in the diplomatic service of Nebuchadnezzar. “In the New Testament, Jesus himself was best known for a number of years in his secular role as a carpenter before he devoted Himself to His ministry” (Cox, 1997, p. 111).

William Carey, known as the father of modern evangelical missions, was, in fact, a tentmaker missionary in India, who worked as a factory owner, university professor and printer while fulfilling his missional activities. It was four to five months travel each way back to his churches in England whose support could not be relied upon. Thousands of missionaries went to the ends of the earth without any stable or even promised support that they could count upon.

This same conviction was behind the words of William Carey who said, "My business is to witness for Christ. I make shoes to pay my expenses."... What bothered Carey was "why should we enjoy hearing the good news of salvation through the atoning work of grace of our Lord Jesus time and again, when there are still millions in this world who have never had the opportunity of hearing of the love of God even once?" (Cox, 1997, pp. 112-13).

Today a *tentmaker* is a person, who wishes to use his skills (professional, business, or trade skills) to work in a cross cultural situation modeling a Christian work ethic, build relationships, faithful witness, build disciples and hopefully share in the planting of a church in partnership with others.

Why do governments allow tentmakers into their countries when they know there is a dual purpose for our coming? Stephen Bailey, experienced tentmaker, gives several reasons for this flexibility:

1. The governments became convinced that we were worth having in the country. Bailey helped develop a small village silk business that was not cost effective for most business people, but ideal for helping a small community develop an economy through their traditional handicrafts. He states, "The ethic of the Kingdom of God required us to be concerned for our neighbors, risky venture or not. Acting on this Christian impulse taught us a more holistic sense of Christian vocation. We became thoroughly

- convinced that our work in the company was an act of worship to God and of witness to the people. Our work with silk farmers was our ministry."
2. The government tolerated our presence because we had partnered with a local group of people whom the government trusted. Bailey reports, "The local partners were not Christians; however, they were sympathetic with our goals for working in the country. Most of them are followers of Jesus today."
  3. The government accepted us with a "well, we-will-see" kind of plan. Bailey said, "If we had crossed the line we would not have seen our visas renewed. But what exactly was the line that could not be crossed?" When people began to become Christians the government would give a warning that Bailey was pushing the limits of acceptability. He said, "I always answered in a relaxed and interested way designed to acknowledge their concern, show respect for their authority and assure them that my intentions were for the good of the local people. Sometimes I said something like, 'Yes, my faith is important to me as I am sure your Buddhist faith is important to you' or 'Thank you for bringing this to my attention. We want to always be good guests who show respect for the authorities of the nation'" (Bailey, 2007, pp. 370-71).

### ***Types of Tentmakers***

Tentmakers are sometimes viewed as "spare time" Christian workers, since they are forced to work long hours at a secular job then after-hours can be dedicated to reaching people. However, the primary objective of the tentmaking task is to be able to be a witness on-the-job. Jonathan Lewis said,

"Tentmaking is an opportunity to turn secular work into a vital, strategic ministry for world evangelization. Tentmaker's effectiveness, however, depends largely on their ability to exercise two essential ministry skills -- personal evangelism and discipling activities. Full-time Christian workers, even those who are missionaries, are often so caught up in administrating institutions and programs that they log very little time in personal evangelism and discipling. Their work with Christians often insulates them from everyday opportunities for witness. Tentmakers, however, can dedicate ministry time to these vital activities, particularly in settings which are almost totally unevangelized (Lewis, p. 109).

A common misconception of a tentmaker is that someone else is going to pay him to do mission work. Dave Brown of the Evangelical Alliance Mission (Wheaton, IL) reported that some of the mission communities still view tentmaking "as a financial ploy of people who don't have the guts to do deputation" (Guthrie, 2000, pp. 120-21). The truth is that many tentmakers do raise their own support when they are affiliated with a non-profit organization and many of their platform ministries receive little or no remuneration.

There is no stereotype of a tentmaker, rather there is a variety of different approaches to tentmaking that are common according to Barnett: (1) Employees whose assignment takes them to a foreign country, not of their choice. This could include Diplomatic Service, education, health, engineering, banking, technology, business, etc., as well as study-abroad opportunities. These can become invaluable opportunities to impact lives internationally. (2) Christian consultants with specific skills can be used to provide expertise, advice, training and stimulus to nationals in their attempt to establish viable businesses, education systems, relief and development programs, and volunteer



schemes. (3) Still others may see that this means of gaining inroads, subsisting internationally and develop a platform of respect in antagonistic regions could be the means for them to build disciples internationally, especially where traditional missions are not welcomed or permitted.

Business delegations traveled to restricted-access nations to find opportunities for entry and access. Intercultural and educational exchange agencies initiated projects in hopes that doors to the restricted-access world would open. Humanitarian relief and community development alliances were formed in hopes of meeting needs and adding value inlands where Western missionaries were unwelcomed but Western aid was well received (Barnett, 2005, p. 213)

David Befus writes a practical guide for international businessmen who want to "apply economic development... as a tool in evangelism and discipleship" (Befus, 2001, p. 13) entitled

*Kingdom Business: The Ministry of Promoting Economic Activity.*

Taking Tentmaking another step, author Tetsunao Yamamori answers the question posed: How do we communicate and demonstrate the gospel to a growing population of globalized people focused "more on finding a job and attaining economic development than on investigating the claims of Christ? His answer is "In a word, the answer is business, or, to be more precise, 'kingdom business'" (Yamamori, 2003, pp. 8-9). Yamamori proposes that tentmakers go beyond securing a paying position in an existing company for contacts to developing their own entrepreneurial business with world evangelism in mind, specifically in restricted-access countries.

### ***Mission Board Relationship***

There is no requirement to be a part of a mission board to be a Tentmaker. Often the areas where Tentmaking is recommended in order to have an entrance into the country would not look favorably on a mission board affiliation. This aspect of a mission organization is not going to be a highly published ministry. Most of the stories of people referred to are surnames and places. Security in this kind of work in most parts of the world is high. Foreigners are closely monitored in publications, especially on the Internet. As a result it may take some perseverance to find the information that a future Tentmaker may need.

Some are able to find normal employment openings (i.e., professor in a university) as the best way to initiate their overseas service. Not everyone is mature and flexible enough for the venture of tentmaking. For the majority, a distant relationship with a mission agency is best. They will provide guidance, support and encouragement, but it will be vital that this agency have had experience in this area of the world, already have contacts or networks in-country for vital practical and spiritual support. Most major mission agencies have separate departments for this type of ministry that remain totally independent of the rest of the agency.

Typically these mission agencies will form a separate organization with little or no paper trail to the mother agency primarily for what would be called, a "nonresidential missionary."

The nonresidential missionary became the prototype for the current role known in some circles as strategy coordinator. Nonresidential missionaries were assigned a specific unreached people group in a restricted-access area and asked to initiate a strategy to reach them. They often established a residence in an "outside" city with a significant population of their people group where natural networks in and out of the restricted-access world existed. Nonresidential missionaries researched their people group, mobilized prayer, developed a strategy, traveled in and out of their unreached region, and facilitated others with access to communicate the gospel and plant churches (Barnett, 2005, p. 214).

As these reports came back to the home office they discovered that many opportunities for long(-er)-term residential personnel was possible among their people group. However, to live in those restricted areas required some sort of a legitimate function or platform from which to help their people. "What had been considered restricted areas simply required some ingenuity on the part of the missionaries. It was not a question of restrictions but of creativity and determination" (Barnett, 2005, p. 214).

Some opportunities for professionals willing to serve short-term do not include a salary, but possibly a small stipend. Personal support would have to be raised or arranged from another source, which would funnel through the Tentmaker department of a mission organization. Many of these opportunities would be serving along side of present traditional missionary personnel in areas of teaching in secular schools (or Christian Day Schools, which are predominantly non-Christian students) or colleges, medical work, sports ministries, ESL/TESL, and business opportunities.

### **Essential Skill of the Tentmaker**

Certainly as much if not more so, the Tentmaker must have a strong personal Bible study skill and experience in leading investigative or Socratic-type Bible study groups for evangelism. Without this experience the best a tentmaker can offer is a nice person working in a foreign country. This is called "presence evangelism," but there has never been anyone won to Christ nor a church planted by merely practicing presence evangelism.

Since tentmakers are usually professional people, they will be interacting with other professional people who generally know their religion, values, traditions, beliefs and personal philosophy remarkably well. Persons not as well trained in their distinct Christian beliefs, Bible content and application, worldview, Bible doctrines, and comprehension of the Scriptures will not be respected, even though secularly and professionally they may be very competent. Biblical and cross cultural studies are vital if there is any hope of communicating the gospel to other people groups, because most of them are extremely well trained in their doctrinal beliefs.

Tentmakers need to learn to answer questions, including the difficult philosophical ones such as why there is so much suffering. They also need to know the religion of the people they seek to win. In cross-cultural situations, tentmakers will find new problems and questions seldom encountered in their own culture, such as the worship of ancestors, the spirit world, arranged marriages, polygamy, and many other issues. Sometimes these issues must be resolved before people will believe in Christ. Thus, evangelism is a process of bringing light through the Scriptures (Lewis, p. 130).

Marian McClure, former director of worldwide ministries of the Presbyterian Church (USA) says a public misconception abroad is that Christians want to "foist" their beliefs on others. "On the contrary, most Christians today suffer not from a tendency to foist our faith on anyone, but from a tendency to be excessively private about our faith," she argues. "I have never met a follower of a non-Christian religion who would respect someone who could not and would not express his or her beliefs" (Marquand, 2007).

### **Platform Ministries**

Mike Barnett sees platform ministries equally as legitimate as any other spiritual ministry, especially when trained professionally and biblically/spiritually. He said, "Platforms are a product of God's calling, equipping, and gifting. They provide a legitimate reason and right for sharing the faith among the nations. They are not a cover for covert activities but a basis for living among, interacting with, and communicating the gospel to those around us" (Barnett, 2005, p. 211).

In answer to the question, why do we need a platform? Barnett gives the following summary:

1. Accessibility – Reason for entering- If the only way to get someone who is willing to share the gospel into a region is through a non-religious activity, then it must be considered. At the very least, it can become a starting point.
2. Legitimacy – Reason for staying - In order to establish credibility it takes a longer duration than a transient ministry. Permission to enter a region is contingent upon actually providing a service to the people, which validates the foreigner's presence.
3. Identity – Right to be heard - Being identified as a contributor to their society and being observed in a daily work environment gives credibility and genuineness to the Christian witness.
4. Strategic Viability – Basis for relationship - When serving a genuine felt-need of people, inevitably life-long relationships can be built and can become redemptive.
5. Integrity – Witness for discipling - There is nothing like the work environment to reveal the true character of a person. By modeling the lifestyle of a disciple of Jesus a tentmaker demonstrates the sincerity and honesty of a Christian (Barnett, 2005, pp. 235-239).

David Befus' book, *Kingdom Business*, proposes that today's businessmen replace the old paradigm of hospitals and schools with five substitute paradigms of ministry service, endowment, tentmaker support, business incubators, and micro-credit (Befus, 2001, p. 13). His book presents a trend to develop viable platforms that benefits a community and becomes a "bridge" for witness and evangelism.

Today's creative-access platforms generally are used only where the objective or mission cannot be accomplished through official Christian organizations or by those identified as vocational missionaries. Where a missionary visa is unavailable due to prohibitions of governments or cultures, creative-access platforms offer a strategic solution. Though the trend has increased over the past twenty years, creative-access platforms still stand on the leading edge of mission strategies. It is a high-risk, entrepreneurial venture with ample failures to inspire skeptics, but it is a strategic approach to missions with a strong biblical basis and an impressive historical heritage (Barnett, 2005, p. 212).

The term “platform” ministry is used in different ways. It can sometimes mean a generic tentmaking profession or business or it could be a consulting or service ministry that may or may not have a pay structure, i.e. coaching a community volleyball team or TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). If the individual is receiving his salary from the exterior (mission support, US business salary, etc.), then he is not looking for an income, but rather a justification for being in the country and a means for building relationships that can have a redemptive result.

Platforms seemed to fall into one of two major categories, individual or corporate, depending on strategic objectives, abilities, and inclinations of the mission workers. Individual platforms such as the direct hire teacher, medical worker, nongovernment organization consultant, field worker, or agriculturalist are generally seen as preferable because they did not require significant infrastructure or human and financial resources. ...

In some cases, however, these individual tentmaker platforms were not sufficient for engaging and influencing a people group for Christ. For example, in many 10/40 Window countries, the activities of Westerners were highly restricted. If a direct-hire contract was obtainable, the job was of such intensity and the freedom to interact with locals was so restricted that the platform was ineffective. In these cases, larger-scale corporate platforms were developed that met various felt needs of communities. These generally required significant infrastructure and investment of human and financial resources. At the same time, they often offered a more stable, long-term option for large numbers of mission workers (Barnett, 2005, p. 221).

The most common types of platform ministries, which open most doors for relationship building and witness according to Barnett are (1) becoming a student in a state university studying the language and culture which can open the door to any number of future platform opportunities; (2) tourist with a multi-entre visa, though short-term in nature, allows for residency up to six months to a year in some countries; (3) educators serve the key felt-need of civilization: learning English; (4) sports developer can train in sports that are not common to the country but are common internationally (basketball, volleyball and track) as well as connecting key national players with scholarships, and other sports contacts; and (5) businessperson is perhaps the most effective, but likewise the most difficult to tackle due to different ethics, labor laws, accounting procedures, tax structure, and competition (Barnett, 2005, pp. 240-245).

### ***Challenges to Tentmaker/Platform Ministries***

Selling the idea of Tentmaking to the American Christian public is not an easy task. Anytime money comes into the picture or appears to be involved, immediate suspicions arise or the impression is made that someone is making more money than they should. Raising support for this kind of ministry demands a considerably confident relationship of trust.

"Over the past two hundred years many evangelical missions (and churches) have pushed business ventures to the sidelines. Certainly, the hostilities in the colonial era between missionaries and other business organizations played a role in that. In

addition, missionaries and mission agencies were concerned that missionaries making a profit could too easily become profit-focused rather than kingdom-focused and risk being swallowed up with business decisions to the extent that their ministries would suffer" (Moreau, 2007, p. 380)

In 1991, I was asked to start a ministry/business by creating a Christian Day School Textbook Publications. For two years a company was willing to give a subsidy to start the company, after which we were to operate on our own. It was a massive effort and way beyond my business expertise. I had to learn all about the educational system in Latin America, the Educational Reform Acts for Hispanic countries, Latin-American accounting (7-column system), tax structures, employment laws, page-layout computer software, printing and binding techniques for producing the textbooks and then I had to promote the textbook, educational philosophy and get the government approvals. In spite of enormous odds against this project ever being successful, we were able to gain a beachhead in schools which has now grown to over 600 schools in 14 countries. I have never undertaken a more difficult task. We were able to employ 35 nationals, gain national recognition and commendations by the President of the country.

As an auxiliary area of ministry, we started a "School for Parents" to help parents understand the principles of child-rearing (where else in a secular society is this taught?). The Bible was not mentioned until the fifth lesson when I introduced the fact that all the principles previously taught, which they had already had begun to apply to their families, were actually straight out of the Bible. Their respect for the Bible was established and, thereafter, each week I laid down another foundational principle of the gospel. Soon a number of parents were willing to accept the gospel and come to an evangelical church in a fanatical Roman Catholic country. As the movement has spread over two hundred churches have spun off this Christian "business" in Paraguay alone. Now *Libros Aguila* Publications is supplying textbooks and training to over 900 schools (as of 2007) in 15 countries.

Tentmaking is not a utopia. As with any enterprise there are innumerable difficulties and complications that discourage the faint-hearted. Any one or more of the following have quenched many a tentmaking effort. The way to understand these items is to project yourself into a tentmaking environment, then one of these challenges surfaces. Reflect on how you would/will respond in these conditions:

1. A tentmaker's employer may restrict his witness or freedom to express his faith.
2. Demands on the tentmaker may limit his ability to learn the local language.
3. Terms of overseas employment are often limited to a couple of years.
4. Time demands of the job may limit time for witness and ministry.
5. Some will accuse tentmakers of being missionaries in disguise.
6. Christians back home do not support tentmakers with prayer and member care because they are not seen as missionaries.
7. Expatriate (foreign) workers are often isolated in compounds or are limited to working with only fellow expatriates.
8. Tentmakers may not receive adequate orientation for crossing culture and being effective witnesses or church planters.
9. Tentmakers may lack Christian fellowship and accountability for their mission work (Barnett, 2005, p. 215).

One of the reasons for the creation of Tentmaking ministries is to creatively enter into countries that are antagonistic or restricted and possibly dangerous (esp. from kidnapping or assassination). This is the challenge of independent aid groups and shows the need to protect one other, especially in Muslim lands. This was evident especially in 2007 as we saw that outsiders are more at risk in many parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. "Missionaries and humanitarian groups must coordinate: conduct local assessments, know the unwritten codes, work with locals, and work together as a way to deflect harm that might ensue through rash decisions, they argue" Marquand, 2007).

"Many tentmakers struggle with their identity. Are they business people or are they missionaries? Which should take priority? How should they allocate their time?"

Stephen Bailey gives several responses to this question: he clarifies the concept of a Christian vocation. "Whatever Christians do, they must do to the glory of God. A double-minded person will not only become frustrated in a tentmaking role, but fail the ethical test." The tendency is if they see their business as a platform just for ministry, they will do it half-heartedly, not as for the Lord and in service to the people. Tentmakers must accept that they are Christian business people. "They are in mission because all Christians are to be in mission and to live by the principles of the kingdom that require the disciples of Jesus to care about their neighbors." (Bailey, 2007, p. 371)

Some of the struggles of reality in another country especially for a tentmaker are seen in the following testimonial of one tentmaker:

Finally, the day of departure arrived. Flight delays made Jose and Maria miss their contact person in the Middle East airport when they arrived, but this inconvenience did not cause them much anxiety. They just stayed in a hotel for a few days. Real stress began to build some six weeks later, when the excitement of the new language, new friends, new sights, new flavors, and new smells gave way to everyday existence. Life was not easy in this new land and city that was to become the Rubios' home. A sense of spiritual oppression was a daily reality, and the lack of fellowship with other believers added to a sense of displacement. The couple began to compensate by deepening their personal relationship with the Lord. Meanwhile, Jose was facing the realities of his occupational task. His tentmaking work required him to establish a branch office for his home company that would open a new market for the firm's products. Jose soon discovered that he was not the only qualified person in the city in this field. Even worse, big multinational companies were also breaking into the same market. The ideal job that was to generate Jose's income, provide him with "contacts," and let him share the gospel had to be carried out in an environment of stiff professional and well-funded competition.

Beyond his secular job, Jose was expected to learn the language so he could communicate the gospel more effectively to Muslims and nurture new disciples. He was also expected to provide leadership to his "church planting team," a group of university-educated, professional Christians who were full of zeal. He would keep the churches back home properly informed about the progress of the ministry. He would measure up to his family responsibilities and would engage in all the time-consuming visits with friendly neighbors (the couple's real target audience). On top of these responsibilities, he would cheerfully provide tours for visiting church members from his home congregation (Lewis, p. 160).

## Ethics of Tentmaking

The basic question is whether it is ethical to present yourself to a local government as a businessperson without disclosing your missionary agenda when the government is clearly opposed to the propagation of Christian faith by foreigners. Is it deceitful or untruthful to not tell them that your purpose for being there is both to help and to convert people to Christ? Stephen Bailey answers the question, "Is business as a mission honest?" stating:

First, it was very clear to the government that I was a Christian and that I worked for a Christian non-government organization (NGO). While they never asked me in an official meeting if I was a Christian, they did ask indirectly. Interestingly they did directly ask if I was working for the CIA. ... I always communicated directly that I was a Christian and that Christian people had sent me to try to contribute to the development of their nation. The government kept tabs on all foreign Christians and occasionally would let us know that we were crossing lines that might threaten the renewal of our visas (Bailey, 2007, pp. 369-70).

When a CAN ("Creative Access Nation") allows tentmakers into their country they do so "with eyes wide open." The idea that these governments are somehow ignorant to the Christian faith of the people they grant business, diplomatic and expert status visas is nonsense. "In most CANs, governments regularly say things for political (and sometimes geo-political) reasons and then act differently. The practice of looking the other way when something violates policy but benefits the nation is a common occurrence" (Bailey, 2007, p. 370).

Bailey's observation is that these governments throw people out of their countries more often for reasons related to "honor and respect than they do because tentmakers violate their laws. Law plays a different role in these societies than it does in the West. Authority does not rest in the abstract legal system but is directly placed in the hands of real people. These societies remain steeped in a tradition of personal power and are only beginning to adjust to abstract concepts of law" (Bailey, 2007, p. 370).

The whole question about the ethics of a missionary doing business as a sphere of contacts for witnessing and discipling seems out of context. "In the Western church, pastors and ministerial staff members are professional, ordained specialists. We put them on the apostolic pedestal of highest calling. The act of clergy and missionaries returning to the world of the marketplace seems ill conceived and even wrong." (Barnett, 2005, p. 224)

Barnett describes Buddhist priests who hold jobs, Muslim imams that are generally businessmen as well, and Jewish rabbis who are trained for self-support. Only in the Western church is there a culture against clergy holding a secular position as a teacher, farmer or businessman. The vast majority of the pastors around the world are bi-vocational.

One hundred and twenty years ago, England won the bid to build the railroad system in Argentina, and Chile. The Plymouth Brethren church in England saw this as a great missionary opportunity so they recruited church members to migrate to Argentina and Chile with the railroad company and plant churches wherever the railroad went in this resistant Roman Catholic country. They entered as railroad workers but won souls in

towns along the new rail system. Today there are over 600 Plymouth Brethren [*Hermanos Libres*] churches throughout Argentina. Was this illegitimate?

David Barrett and James Reapsome contend that "from the Christian perspective, legality is not an ethical matter, but it is a purely descriptive term describing the secular government's requirements, which may well be arbitrary, harsh, cruel, unjust, ephemeral, inconsistent, unstable, or even impossible to comply with." To put it another way, creative-access missionaries may be illegal, but that does not mean they are unethical. Though Christians normally make every effort to obey the laws of the government, when those laws prohibit them from obeying the Great Commission of Christ to share the gospel with those who have not heard, they may decide to act illegally. After all, time after time the apostle Paul preached, witnessed, taught, or wrote from prison. He did not get there by civil obedience. Strategic questions, not ethical ones, are critical in such cases. Mission workers must ask, Will civil disobedience jeopardize future work in the area? Will we be evicted from the land? Will our platform(s) be vulnerable? Will it threaten the well-being or lives of locals with whom we work? Will our lives be at risk? If so, they must weigh the risks against the potential for accomplishing their objectives, and they must be prepared for the consequences. The question whether to be legal or illegal may be a tough one, but it is not an ethical one (Barnett, 2005, p. 224).

### **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Wikipedia defines a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) as a private institution that is independent of the government although many NGOs, particular in the global South, are funded by Northern governments. Anheier places the number of internationally operating NGOs at 40,000. National numbers are even higher: Russia has 400,000 NGOs. India is estimated to have between 1 and 2 million NGOs ([Http://en.Wikipedia.Org/Wki/NGO](http://en.Wikipedia.Org/Wki/NGO)).

Christof Galli of Duke University says, "NGOs address a host of issues, including, but not limited to, women's rights, environmental protection, human rights, economic development, political rights, or health care. In numerous countries, NGOs have led the way in democratization, in battling diseases and illnesses, in promoting and enforcing human rights, and in increasing standards of living" (Galli, 2007).

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the 9/11 attacks, and especially the invasion of Iraq, have resulted in more fragmented and weaker states, the rise of guerrilla groups, land and power grabs, and manipulation of ethnic and religious feeling. The environment in places like Iraq, Darfur, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Haiti and Gaza is a turbulent mix. On the ground is every type of foreigner - undercover intelligence, civil society groups, private security, and state military, doctors, construction teams, mine clearing groups, journalists, humanitarian aid workers, and church people, some of whom do both gospel and aid work.

Views on missionaries whose chief aim is sharing the gospel in hot spots vary widely among the nongovernmental (NGO) and religious communities. But even those who accept missionaries argue that good intentions, enthusiasm, and bravery must conjoin with a professional approach (Marquand, 2007).



Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) are an increasingly popular structure for involvement in world affairs without governmental ties. Though they can be political, they are primarily focused on social, economic and humanitarian objectives. The 20th century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. Many problems could not be solved within a nation. International treaties and international organizations such as the World Trade Organization were perceived as being too centered on the interests of capitalist enterprises. Some argued that in an attempt to counterbalance this trend, NGOs have developed to emphasize humanitarian issues, developmental economic and agricultural aid and sustainable development. A prominent example of this is the World Social Forum which is a rival convention to the World Economic Forum held annually in January in Davos, Switzerland. The fifth World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005 was attended by representatives from more than 1,000 NGOs. Some have argued that in forums like this, NGOs take the place that should belong to popular movements of the poor. Others argue that NGOs are often imperialist in nature and that they fulfill a similar function to that of the missionaries during the high colonial era.

### **Categories of NGOs**

Galli states that it is difficult to categorize NGOs by their specific activities; many NGOs perform a variety of activities and often shift the balance of the activities they pursue. However, in broader terms, “most NGOs can be classified as operational or campaigning. Operational NGOs achieve small-scale change directly through projects, while campaigning NGOs achieve large-scale change indirectly through influence on the political system” (Galli, 2007).

Nongovernmental organizations are a heterogeneous group. A long list of acronyms has developed around the term 'NGO'. These include:

- INGO stands for international NGO, such as Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières;
- BINGO is short for business-oriented international NGO;
- ENGO, short for environmental NGO, such as Global 2000;
- GONGOs are government-operated NGOs, which may have been set up by governments to look like NGOs in order to qualify for outside aid or promote the interests of the government in question;
- QUANGOs are quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations, such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). (The ISO is actually not purely an NGO, since its membership is by nation, and each nation is represented by what the ISO Council determines to be the 'most broadly representative' standardization body of a nation. That body might itself be a nongovernmental organization; for example, the United States is represented in ISO by the American National Standards Institute, which is independent of the federal government. However, other countries can be represented by national governmental agencies; this is the trend in Europe.)
- TANGO, short for technical assistance NGO.

An idea of how prolific the concept of NGO has grown is evident from a quick search on Google that brought up 41 million hits containing “NGO.”

Over the past several decades, NGOs have become major players in the field of international development. Since the mid-1970s, the NGO sector in both developed and developing countries has experienced exponential growth. From 1970 to 1985 total development aid disbursed by international NGOs increased ten-fold. In 1992 international NGOs channeled over \$7.6 billion of aid to developing countries. It is now estimated that over 15 percent of total overseas development aid is channeled through NGOs. While statistics about global numbers of NGOs are notoriously incomplete, it is currently estimated that there is somewhere between 6,000 and 30,000 national NGOs in developing countries (Galli, 2007).

### **Risks with NGOs**

The primary areas where NGOs tend to focus are the poorest and most undeveloped areas of a country. Humanitarian efforts are not the only ones interested in these same areas of a country. Often guerrilla groups want to recruit from these segments of the population. Muslim efforts to win these people groups over to their religion often utilize similar projects to aid in their development. From their perspective, NGOs can be seen as competition or threats to minimize the Muslim efforts to do the same thing.

“In the past decade, the number of NGOs [in harm’s way] has risen sharply; as have incidents of violence against them,” say Larchu of Médecins du Monde and Martin of Mercy Corps. “More than 80 humanitarian workers were killed in 2006 - that’s more than U.N. soldiers,” says Larchu. (Jerome Larchu, a director of the Paris-based *Médecins du Monde* [Doctors of the World], which has volunteers in 55 countries (Marquand, 2007).

### **Funding of NGOs**

Even in the projects supported by groups like the AIFO (*Associazione Italiana Frantoniani Oleari*), providing salaries and/or incentives for Governmental personnel is generally not taken in to consideration for reasons of sustainability. For projects managed by NGOs and missionaries, AIFO can provide limited amount of funds towards the costs of personnel. In such cases, AIFO accepts that the salaries provided be at the most similar to those provided by local/national Government in the project areas. The financial costs for salaries in a NGO/missionary managed project should not be more than 35% of the total project costs. Finally, isolated requests like providing a vehicle or buying of equipment are not taken in to consideration by AIFO *Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau* (AIFO, 2007).

### **Effect of Tentmaking and Platform Ministries**

It is clear that hundreds of mission workers are effectively engaging people with the gospel through creative-access platforms. The “Mission Handbook” reported 3,200 agency-supported tentmakers in 1999, a growth trend that occurred at the same time the number of “full-time traditional missionaries actually declined” (Barnett, 2005, p. 228).

Actually there are no comprehensive statistics showing how many tentmakers exist, not to mention success or failure rates. Universal agreement on the precise definition of tentmaking is elusive, as each group nurtures its favorite nuances. Nevertheless, interest in tentmaking by US Protestant agencies, although minor when compared to the traditional support-raising missionary, continues to grow. Yamamori, author of the 1993 book on the need for humanitarian tentmakers, "Penetrating Missions' Final Frontiers," says the recent interest in the 10/40 Window "has really accentuated the need for tentmaking." (Guthrie, 2000, p. 120)

When Mike Barnett was asked, "So do creative -access platforms really work?" He responded, "Yes. Where creative-access methods are necessary to achieve the purpose of missions and when platforms are developed to fit that purpose, they work. They may be unnecessary in the midst of a church-planting movement. They may become ineffective when a platform becomes the end more than the means. But they are proving to be pivotal throughout the least-reached world" (Barnett, 2005, p. 228).

Ralph Eckhardt, Director of InterServe, a tentmaking agency, stated, "Certainly, tentmakers are usually not going to build churches and equip other saints for ministry, but that is not necessarily their task in the overall scheme...Their responsibility is simply to witness, by word and deed, to people who have never been introduced to the gospel message before" (Guthrie, 2000, p. 121).

## Conclusion

A review of history over two thousand years does show that the growth of the church has largely depended on the faithful witness of ordinary men and women, great and insignificant alike, who were going about their daily business (Cox, 1997, p. 112).

It was an American Christian [Ford Maddison] working in Central America as a business man to who is attributed the comment, "In the first Reformation, the people of God were given the Word of God. Now we need a new reformation when the people of God are given the work of God." (Cox, 1997, p. 112)

Unknown to Christian leaders, unknown to the structured church, such people [tentmakers] have gone out in faith to pitch their tents wherever God has led them. In consequence, there are many unsung heroes of the Gospel whose reward will be in Heaven. Very few of their stories will be told. The most significant characteristic of tentmaking is that, in many it has merely been a natural expression of their walk with God who has been the totality of their walk through life (Cox, 1997, p. 113).

**Appendix 1**

# The Tentmaker's Preparation Checklist

## Preparation Needed and How to Get It

Retrieved 9/3/07 from <http://www.globalopps.org/101/tmprep.htm>

**The tentmaker's work**

1. **Choose a vocation** considering your aptitudes, gifts, interests, what is helpful in a needy world, what skills are marketable and what will support a family.
2. **Vocations needed** most are education (TEFL, math, science, teacher education, curriculum development), science and engineering, computer science, business and finance, health care, agriculture, business development, and operating a business.
3. **Background job research.** Use the Internet to research the kinds of jobs needed related to your vocation, the credentials required, the companies and organizations involved, and how to customize your resume or CV to fit openings. This research can help you determine where you might need additional training and experience.
4. **Degrees needed.** Most positions require at least a bachelor's degree. Many require more. Requirements are rising. Sometimes experience counts more than a degree. The exception is TEFL which often accepts any native English speaker. As Christians our goal is to genuinely serve people well and bring honor to Christ. A minimal approach is inappropriate.
5. **Experience required.** Besides a few entry-level jobs, you generally need two or more years experience. Employers are also looking for successful cross-cultural experience. You can use work study programs, internships abroad, multinational organizations, Peace Corps, the Mennonite Central Committee, etc.
6. **Terms of employment** usually include round trip travel for the family, good salaries and health insurance, sometimes housing and schooling for the children.
7. **Language learning.** Many positions abroad are in English, yet learning a local language will enhance your cultural adjustment, gain the confidence of local people, and help to sensitively share the gospel.
8. **Finding employment.** Consult your own college department, professional journals, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and the Global Opportunities web site. Network with people and befriend internationals.
9. **Starting your own business** can demonstrate Christian values and give needy people jobs. But you usually need experience, capital, and far more hours than a salaried position. Red tape and excessive taxation are problems too.
10. **More practical skills** such as cooking, sewing, homemaking, home maintenance and auto repair enhance daily living. Practical skills can help you make friends in another culture and earn the right to talk about the Lord.
11. **Recreational skills.** Sports and hobbies are also valuable bridges for friendship and sharing the good news.

**Spiritual preparation to live out & share the gospel.**

1. **Relationship with God.** Everything flows from the quality of your relationship with God. How are you doing at being filled and renewed daily through time alone with God in devotional reading and prayer.
2. **Relationship with family.** You will face great stress in a new culture. Work proactively on your family life: read, attend seminars, and seek counsel from sharp, godly couples. How healthy is your marriage and family and how well prepared are you for the stress of cross-cultural work and witness?

3. **Relationship with work.** Work is central to human beings created in the image of God. God is the great worker and we were designed to be co-workers with him and rulers under him to manage and care for the world. Thus legitimate work in itself is meant to be a sacred, God-honoring activity through which we “feel God’s pleasure.” We are called to honor Christ through our servanthood toward employers, customers, co-workers, and the larger community. Excellence, ethical integrity, genuine caring, Kingdom values, and natural, meaningful witness should mark us as Christians. We should also be engaging and impacting the thought world of our vocation. How well do we understand the areas of honoring Christ in work and how well do we practice them?
4. **Relationships with others.** Team building and conflict resolution skills help work together, overcome disunity, and put common goals first. How much of a team player are you? How well do you do conflict resolution and ongoing cooperation?
5. **Bible knowledge.** How would you summarize the whole Bible in a few sentences? How many books of the Bible can you summarize? What O.T. prophecies about Jesus were fulfilled in the N.T.?
6. **Bible memorization** is a good way to have your sword always ready. Then the Holy Spirit can help you recall them at crucial moments and locate them in your foreign language Bible.
7. **Inductive Bible study skills** observe what the passage really says and interpret what the writer meant with application for today. How effective are you in Bible study, especially in discovering what the writer is doing in a passage?
8. **Leading Bible study discussions inductively**, whether evangelistic or for discipling and fellowship. Ask questions to help participants discover and draw conclusions from the details. Adapt your leadership to nonbelievers. How effectively can you lead a group to discover the message of a text versus telling them what it says? And how well do you lead a group to respond to and act on the truth?
9. **Evangelism—learn to fish.** Tentmakers answer questions about God from seekers made hungry for God by observing Christians around them—their integrity, quality work, caring relationships and words about God. How effective are you in the workplace? In each of these areas?
10. **Investigative Bible studies for nonbelievers** are discussions of Gospel narratives. Participants answer questions about the text. They discover who Jesus really is and commit themselves to him. How effectively can you lead a group to discover the truth of a passage for themselves without telling them what it says? How effective are you in understanding the author’s purpose in a text and in preparing questions to lead people through a text?
11. **Christian doctrine.** Learn the main Christian doctrines as propositions with supporting passages. What would you include in a half-hour talk about God? Or justification by faith? Or the incarnation of Jesus?
12. **Defending the faith** when your Christian beliefs are challenged. How do you answer that there is no God? Or there are 33 million of them? That all religions are basically the same? That the Bible is not true?
13. **Church-planting and other ministries.** Self-reproducing, indigenous churches are the ultimate goal. How ready are you to start one? To lead people to Christ and disciple them in a group and coach them into becoming a church which is led by the local people from the outset? What do you know about baptism, communion, church leadership? Can you preach, teach children, or sing?
14. **Spiritual warfare.** Sin and temptation assault us also through the evil world system and our own sinful vulnerability. We must put on the full armor of God. How prepared are you to maintain your focus and spiritual vitality in an alien culture, with minimal support, and many pressures?
15. **Missions training** including the biblical basis of missions, its history, geography, growth, trends, issues, strategies, mistakes to avoid, current ideas, cross-cultural living and witness.



### Where to prepare

1. **Christian institutions** offer science and philosophy, etc., from a Christian viewpoint and a wide variety of Bible, theology and missions courses.

2. **Secular universities/colleges** have better name recognition overseas and offer a whole range of careers. The secular campus is one of the best training grounds in the world. Throw yourself into the campus Christian fellowship and it's training. You are already on your first mission field.
3. **Why not combine schools?** The best academic and spiritual training can occur on a secular campus, supplemented with Christian training courses.
4. **Financing your education.** For ways to avoid being burdened with debts, see our GO Paper, Students and Graduates: Financing an Education.
5. **How long will it take?** All of the pieces mentioned above can be fit into four or five years, if you take advantage of all the learning opportunities

*Ruth E. Siemens & Dave English*

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**Appendix 2: Resources for BAM sites**

- Business as Mission Resource Center ([www.businessasmission.com](http://www.businessasmission.com)) is part of the YQAM connected family of mission sites. The BAM site has three purposes: (1) promoting BAM as a concept and mission model; (2) connecting those who seek to pursue business as their ministry strategy; (3) train and network likeminded players into a team to multiply business as a mission initiative.
- International Coalition of Workplace Ministries (ICWM) is a “fellowship of workplace believers who want to ignite leaders for workplace transformation by modeling Jesus Christ.” (see [www.icwm.net/apps/directories/default.asp?searchid=97](http://www.icwm.net/apps/directories/default.asp?searchid=97)). Their list includes over 1,300 organizations listed in five categories (Christian CEO, Business Owner, Self-Employed; Educational Institution, College, University; Workplace Believer; Church; and Non Profit Workplace Ministry)
- Urbana Resources ([www.urbana.org/u2006.ofb.cfm?article=15](http://www.urbana.org/u2006.ofb.cfm?article=15)) which lists papers, BAM companies, organizations, business plan development resources and more.
- Holistic Transformation Resource Center ([www.wtrc-tmed.org](http://www.wtrc-tmed.org)) with a focus on the microenterprise development and twenty-one links to microfinance and microenterprise sources and forty-two links to Christian microenterprise organizations.
- EC Institute ([www.ec-i.org](http://www.ec-i.org)) wants to see “business professionals ministering, encouraging and empowering one another to use their business to glorify God, both locally and globally.” They provide consultation for global businesses, internships for MBAs.
- Global Disciples ([www.globaldisciples.org](http://www.globaldisciples.org)), focus on church-based discipleship strategies and a program “to bring together churches, mission agencies, businesses and concerned individuals to find ways for Christians to access restricted areas.”
- Global Opportunities ([www.globalopps.org](http://www.globalopps.org)) is “to help the church to understand and engage the biblical model of tentmaking by sending committed, everyday, workplace Christians as mission workers, and to mobilize and equip these Christians to serve abroad as effective tentmakers, primarily to least-reached peoples.” This site includes pages that provide links to jobs, short-term opportunities, secure email sources and more. For those who become associates there is the opportunity to become a coach and mentor with other local tentmakers or agency workers.
- Integra Ventures’ ([www.integrausa.org](http://www.integrausa.org)) vision is to develop businesses which will “impact society, change communities and touch lives with the gospel.” Integra focus is Eastern Europe, with local independent NGO partners in Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Slovakia.
- Oikocredit ([www.oikocredit.org](http://www.oikocredit.org)) is a privately owned cooperative society. Investors can buy shares in the cooperative which typically yield a 2% return rate. The invested money is loaned in various microcredit ventures (especially some

local cooperative societies) in developing countries. They presently concentrate on 31 countries across four regions of the world supporting 467 projects.

Regent University Center for Entrepreneurship ([www.regententrepreneur.com](http://www.regententrepreneur.com)) came out of the Consultation of Holistic Entrepreneurs.

Tentmaker Net provides a short list of Best Practices on BAM ([www.tentmakernet.com/articles/bestpractice.htm](http://www.tentmakernet.com/articles/bestpractice.htm)) and YWAM offers an extensive set of guidelines ([www.ywam\\_connect.com/ubasicpage.jsp?siteid=29315&pageid=328906](http://www.ywam_connect.com/ubasicpage.jsp?siteid=29315&pageid=328906)) includes definitions, parameters for BAM and YWAM policies and resources.

Newsletter for Tentmakers: <http://www.globalopps.org/goworld/index.htm>



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